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nose WEEK

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Christmas Wishes



More Christmas wishes inside

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Welcome, Dear Reader

At least three people we know had high expectations of the Appeal Court - and in particular the Chief Justice, Mr Justice Corbett - to guide South Africa's courts and legal system into a glorious new era of justice and liberty for all. Micky Corbett is, after all, such a nice chap. He's English speaking; he comes from the Cape. For Pete's sake, he went to Rondebosch Boys' High, and to UCT, and to Cambridge. Why, he was even a member at that erstwhile bastion of anti-Semitism, Kelvin Grove. So he has to have good manners.

Here at noseWEEK we set little store by the "right" WASP school and the appropriate blue tie. But then good manners are probably not our strongest point either. Which doesn't mean that, even here, hope has not sprung eternal - until 2 December 1993, that is, when Corbett and his brothers Hoexter, Nestadt, Nienaber and Nicholas smartly knocked all that shit out of us with their judgement in the appeal of General Lothar Neethling vs Vrye Weekblad and the Weekly Mail. You could just as well call it The Judges of the Old Order vs the Press of the New.

The public of this fair Republic might not love the press. But if the people don't vigorously support the press in this battle, they should start contemplating what life will be like in the new era with an ill-informed, authoritarian judiciary accustomed to serving a fascist State - and no free press.

Bookshops controlled by CNA/The Literary Group, which include all branches of Exclusive Books, Bookworm and Pilgrims, still continue to banish noseWEEK from their shelves "for business reasons". Many reputable, independent bookshops and newsagents do, however, stock us. Call us for the supplier nearest you - and remember this when you are shopping for books.

With all its obvious faults, the press has pleaded the cause of justice and been available to support the individual citizen at insignificant cost. The Appeal Court and Supreme Courts can hardly claim to have been the standard bearers of rationality, principle and justice in the past half century, which might otherwise have justified the hundreds of millions it costs the taxpayer each year to keep "their Lordships" (for so it pleases them to be called) in the style to which they have become accustomed. With very rare exception, they have long ceased to be of service to the ordinary man. Costs are so prohibitive, and the risk of arbitrary and eccentric judgements so great, that only the very rich, the criminal and the insane willingly make use of their services.

South Africa's court of last appeal has now declared that the public had no right to be informed of the continually growing body of evidence which indicates that servants of the state have secretly, and on a nationally organised scale, been murdering, molesting and otherwise terrorising opponents of the government. It's none of our business, the judges say. As far as these judges are concerned, two of this country's very few independent newspapers must be put out of business for daring to believe otherwise. For, make no mistake, when the Appeal Court judges, in their discretion, ordered Vrye Weekblad and Weekly Mail to pay costs far in excess of a million rand each, that is what they must have contemplated.

Join us for the good fight in 1994.

LETTERS

To the Editor

FASHIONABLE DESIGNS

Dear Sir

Bravo noseWEEK for exposing the scandal (or should I say scam) of the Radio Good Hope Designer Collection! Many have suspected it for years and just not had the guts to say anything out loud for fear of the big nobs in this town. Issue 5 was your best yet. It was time someone revealed Tony Jackman for what he really is - a puffed up with his own importance member of the "Foodie mafia" of Cape Town. Keep digging!

Concerned Citizen
Cape Town

SEASONAL GREETINGS

Dear Sir

As a devoted reader of your excellent magazine I wish you a bright future. In the "Good Old days" you would undoubtedly have had a visit from the heavies, with words of wisdom regarding your health and wellbeing, perhaps accompanied by a "taai klap of twee". Had you not heeded the sage advice, there was nothing like a small conflagration to cause a sinner to repent, or maybe some "druppels" from a general who must remain nameless, or an unauthorised panel beat and spray paint job ...

Keep up the good work - you have a lifetime's activity ahead of you. And don't become a permanent part of the Waterfront's future foundations!

DM
Paardeneiland

Dear Sir

May I congratulate you. Your publication has introduced a much needed element into our midst - someone prepared to speak their acerbic and investigative mind frankly and with the added spice of humour.

A Duncan
Johannesburg

DES & DAWN

timeo Dawneos et dona ferentes
[some racist Roman remark about
Greeks bearing gifts, we think]

To all three chords on his guitar
A tuneful grief they lay;
This latest CD's sold at Spar
But not at Pick n Pay,

- Robert Kirby

MIF PENSION FUNDS AND HEAVY BREATHING ATTORNEYS

Dear Sir

The huffing and puffing from the old established Jeppe Street firm reminded me of the famous *Pressdram v Arkell* case occasionally still alluded to by Private Eye. I thought your readers might appreciate the enclosed extract from the Private Eye Story.

For my part I appreciate your Pigging Out column - such a change from the fulsome and predictable reviews one reads elsewhere. I have certainly eaten at plenty of places that deserve inclusion in a list such as the (London) Times Magazine's "One star restaurants of the year" list. I have also searched John Platter's latest offering in the vain hope he might agree with my assessment that there are a fair number of wines around with a bouquet similar to that of the well used jock strap and a taste to match. As with the grotty restaurants, so such luck.

All the best in 1994.

John M Bell
Sandton

In a 1971 report, the British magazine, *Private Eye* had suggested that Mr Arkell, a Granada Group credit manager, was taking back-handers. They promptly received a letter from his attorneys, Goodman Derrick & Co:

Dear Sir

We Act for Mr Arkell. His attention has been drawn to an article which appeared in Private Eye. The statements made about Mr Arkell are entirely untrue and clearly highly defamatory.

His first concern is that there should be a full retraction in Private Eye and he will also want his costs paid. His attitude to damages will be governed by the nature of your reply.

Yours etc.

The reply was as follows:

Dear Sirs

We note that Mr Arkell's attitude to damages will be governed by the nature of our reply and would therefore be grateful if you could inform us what his attitude to damages would be, were he to learn that the nature of our reply is as follows: fuck off.

Yours etc.

Private Eye

NONE SO BLIND AS ...

Dear Editor

I was sad to note the frankly cruel manner in which your November editorial referred to the fact that Viva Trust chairman Dr William Roland is blind.

Regrettably I cannot ask you to cancel my subscription, as I do not have one.

Julia Nicol

Observatory, Cape

Dr Roland is not only blind, he is also grown up. He is quite capable of giving as good as he (occasionally deserves) to get. He does not need pity. You do - you don't have a subscription to noseWEEK. (Dr Roland does.) - Ed.

**AN OPEN LETTER
To First National Bank**

FNB Head Office
Johannesburg

December 1993

Attention: Mr Basil Hersov, Chairman; Mr Garden, Mr Paynter, Ms Tensfeldt

Dear Sirs and Madam,

I have received, with disbelief, a copy of your promotional newsletter, 'First Talk'. With all the good things FNB have written about themselves, I find it hard to believe that this is the same bank which has caused me to lose R435 000 as a creditor of KPL-Etsa (Pty) Ltd.

Returning 'First Talk' to you gives me an opportunity to raise the moral aspect of FNB's actions.

My company, built from scratch six years ago (no handouts or loans, pure hard work and ability in a particular field) was beginning to prosper when I had the opportunity to supply artisan labour to KPL on the Genref re-vamp. We started with a small number of people in February 1992 and increased to about 40 people by the end of May. When we realised that the numbers were to increase to perhaps 150 persons, I sought reassurances from Mike Duncan (Financial Director of KPL), who advised me to contact David Paynter at FNB. Paynter gave me no reason for doubt. Had I received a negative comment, then logically I would not have committed my company's resources to supplying a large labour force to the project.

Had he told me that his optimism was based on a "cash flow projection" and that FNB in fact had a secret "wind-down scenario" for KPL designed to ensure that the bank was preferred above other creditors, I would have pulled out immediately. This was intentional dishonesty on his part.

With a loan from my bank we proceeded with the project. I was given no cause for alarm - until September, when ominous rumblings in the marketplace about KPL's creditworthiness prompted me to again approach FNB. Now nobody would take my calls. I was continually fobbed off by Gail Tensfeldt, who said I should speak to Paynter. Next I was told Paynter was unavailable - but Tensfeldt was handling the account. I once held on for 30 minutes from Durban in an attempt to speak to her, but eventually the phone was put down from your end. I was not advised that FNB had "frozen" the account on September 3rd. On the day of liquidation, September 30th, I still had people employed at Genref and Moss gas, working to complete KPL's contracts (thereby letting you off your guarantees).

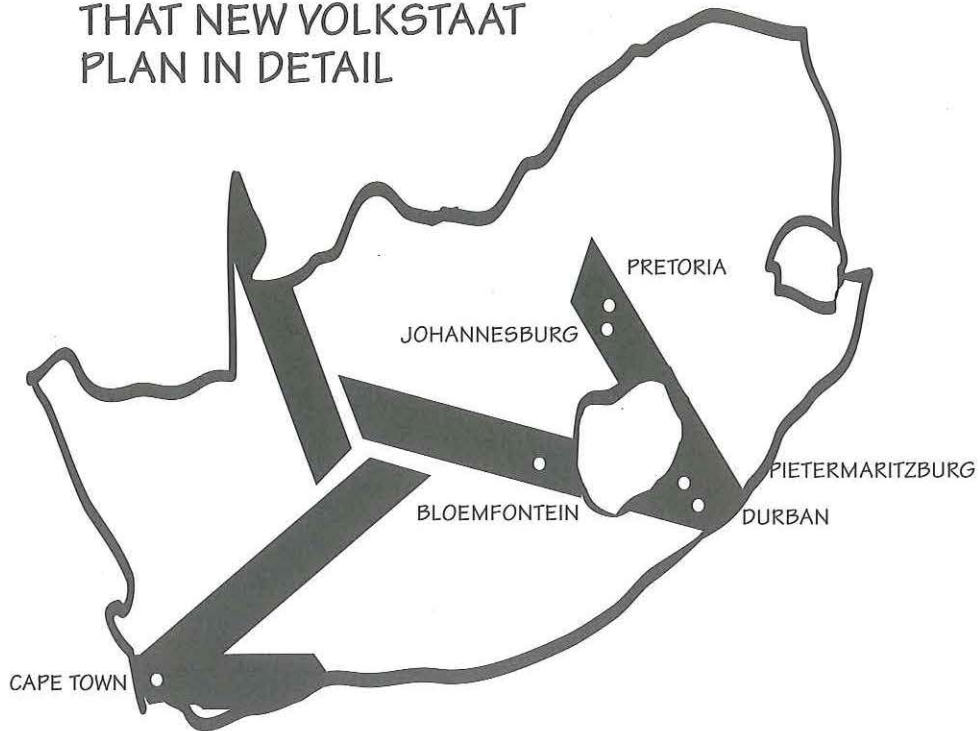
The harsh reality was that I still had to pay salaries, knowing that I had no hope of ever reclaiming my invoices. I also had to repay a loan over a long period of time, with money that still had to be earned.

I am not going to burden you with stories of mental anguish, broken marriages and trauma, with some creditors suffering even more than I did. I am sure none of you are really interested. The bank has my money; the attorneys and the liquidator are all doing quite nicely. Mr Hersov, Mr Paynter, Mr Garden, Ms Tensfeldt - I wonder what your stance would be if all of the above had happened to you?

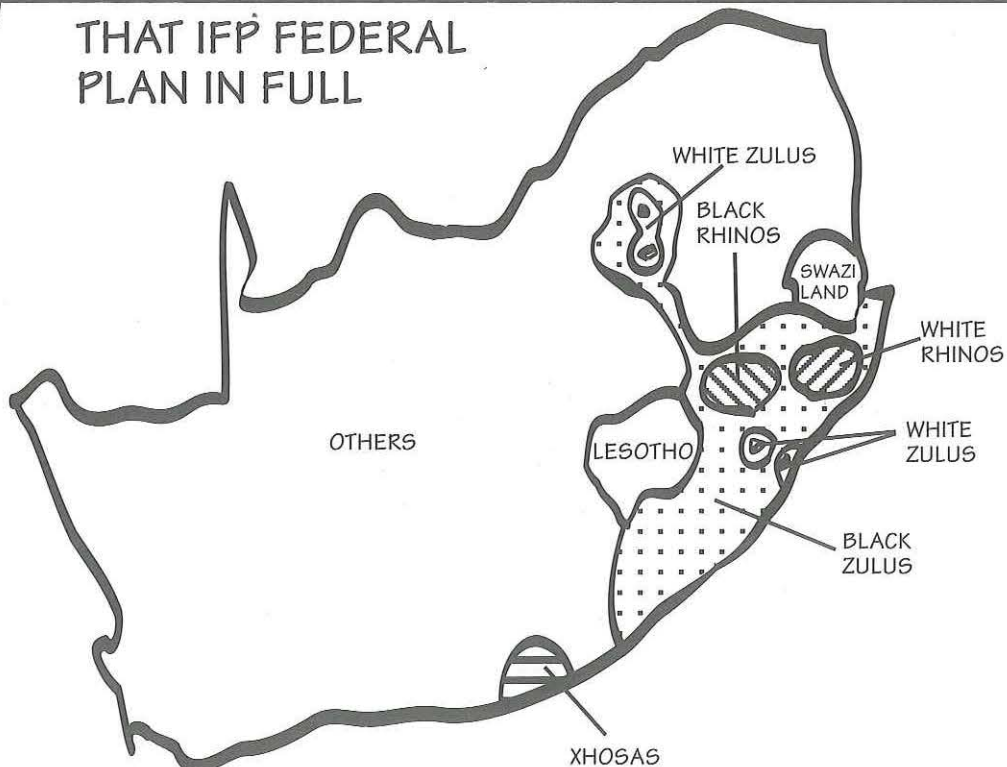
Whenever I see a First National sign, I get a feeling of revulsion, hence my instant reaction to your happy little magazine which landed on my desk yesterday. I do not expect a reply to this letter, but perhaps you will give it some thought.

Pat Marsh
Durban

THAT NEW VOLKSTAAT PLAN IN DETAIL



THAT IFP FEDERAL PLAN IN FULL



Looked at dispassionately, the balance probabilities has always been very much against the Chief Justice, Michael Corbett, and the other Lordships of the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein heralding the way to a New Order of justice and liberty in South Africa.

And, as that court has declared, it's the balance of probabilities that counts.

The issue has been brought into sharp focus by the Appeal Court's recent judgement in the case of General Lothar Neethling against Vrye Weekblad and the Weekly Mail. The demonstrable errors of fact and logic contained in the Appeal Court's judgement; the ignorance, and the attitude and outrageous assumptions of the judges, not only demand repudiation. They also suggest that a very serious reassessment of the Appeal Court, as it is presently constituted, is urgently called for.

In 1989 Vrye Weekblad published a detailed account by former security police captain, Dirk Coetzee, of his activities in the early Eighties as a leading member of police "hit squad" - one of several set up to secretly murder and molest people identified as enemies of the apartheid State.

Amongst the many and diverse incidents included in the story was one in which Coetzee told how General Neethling, head of the Police Forensic Laboratory, had provided him and his senior officer with a special poison with which they planned to kill two of their victims. Neethling had told them, Coetzee said, that the poison would cause the victims to have fatal heart attacks - and then be untraceable in any post-mortem examination. When the poison failed, however, said Coetzee, the victims were simply shot and their bodies incinerated. The victims he named, one of them previously abducted from Maputo by South African security forces, have, in fact, disappeared without trace.

Captain Coetzee was prompted to speak out for publication - and Vrye Weekblad decided to publish his shocking story, after significant parts of it had been corroborated in

JUDGE AND BE DAMNED

a statement from death row by another former security policeman and hit squad member, Almond Nofumela.

Neethling sued the newspapers for libel, and the newspapers, in their defence, said that in the extraordinary circumstances of the case, publication of Coetzee's story had been justified in the public interest. Central to the Appeal Court's judgement in favour of the head of the Police forensic laboratory, and against the two newspapers, was

The errors of fact and logic contained in the Appeal Court's judgement; the ignorance, and the attitude and outrageous assumptions — suggest that a very serious reassessment of the Appeal Court, as it is presently constituted, is urgently called for.

the judges' view that,

• on a "balance of probabilities", Neethling's denial that he had been involved in providing poisons was more believable: a man of the status of general Neethling, the Appeal Court stated, was unlikely to get involved in "criminality". What made Coetzee's story implicating Neethling even more improbable, the judges said, was his claim that the poison had not worked. In the unlikely event that Neethling had provided poison, than a man of his professional skills (he has a doctorate in the study of

poisons) would have provided a poison that worked;

• as the probabilities were in favour of General Neethling, so they were against Coetzee. Coetzee - and Coetzee's story - the Appeal judges found totally unbelievable: "The status of the subject-matter communicated was nothing short of deplorable," the Appeal Court found. "Its sole source was a disaffected and retired police officer who was a self-confessed murderer and thief [*and liar, too*]." Insofar as it had inculpated General Neethling, they said, Coetzee's story was "riddled with inherent improbabilities".

• Not only did the judges find Coetzee's story unbelievable. They went further and found that "The readers of the Weekly Mail [and Vrye Weekblad] had no possible legitimate interest in having communicated to them these untested, and largely hearsay, allegations by an informant whose credibility and motive alike were suspect."

Also the credibility and commitment to the public good of the press received short shrift from the Appeal Court: without any evidence or argument, the motive of the two newspapers in publishing Coetzee's story was declared fatally suspect - simply by virtue of the court's own amateur - and arrogant - assumptions about how the press functions and what its motives are generally. For this purpose the court elevated the personal, prejudiced and otherwise banal view of the press expressed by Chief Justice Corbett in an earlier case, to the status of law:

Corbett first expressed his view of the press in the now notorious "Sage Holdings" case (where, too, it was totally unwarranted by the facts). In the Neethling/Vrye Weekblad case, Corbett's views are quoted, without further ado, as a "useful" authority for damning the press out of hand:

"There is a wide difference," [*said the perceptive Chief Justice, by way of introduction*] "between what is interesting to the public and what it is in the public interest to make known ...

"The media have a private interest of their own in publishing

what appeals to the public and may increase their circulation or may increase the numbers of their viewers or listeners; and they are peculiarly vulnerable to the error of confusing the public interest with their own interest ...”

To settle the issue of the credibility of “the media”, in the Neethling case the Appeal judges found it “not inappropriate” to, in addition, quote a rhetorical question [*a quaint euphemism for an expression of vicious prejudice?*] posed by one Lord Macnaghten in 1908:

“Is it in the interest of the community, is it for the welfare of society, that the protection which the law throws around communications made in legitimate self-defence, or from a bona fide sense of duty, should be extended to the communications made from motives of self-interest by persons who trade for profit in the characters of other people?”

“So much for the law [*on the matter of the rights of the press*],” concludes Mr Justice Hoexter - and four Appeal judges - Nestadt, Nienaber, Nicholas and Chief Justice Corbett himself - nodded their concurrence, thereby damning the motives of Vrye Weekblad and Weekly Mail in publishing Coetzee’s story as selfish, vulgar and malicious.

The judges may just, I believe, in fact have damned themselves. (But the subject of the press and the law, as raised in this case, is such a major one that that it must wait to be dealt with in a future edition).

To the probability of the actual existence of police hit squads, most significantly, the Appeal Court gave no consideration at all.

Are we condemned to accept this judgement as the last word on all these very serious subjects? Surely not!

Those who, like the judges of the Appeal Court, think that it is most improbable that General Neethling (and those of his status in service of the Afrikaner Nationalist State) would in the Seventies and Eighties have been party to killing the (mostly black) enemies of the

Apartheid State, may continue to think so. On the other hand, those people who, with all their own intelligence, wisdom, knowledge and experience of life in South Africa (judges, readers might be amazed to learn, do not have a monopoly on those commodities) - on the farm, in the army, in the press, in the police - on hearing Coetzee’s story, found it entirely credible, are entitled to believe otherwise. When it comes to probability, they may justifiably believe that it’s most *improbable* that very senior police officers were *not* involved, one way or another, in such killings.

A thought: Their Lordships could, of course, themselves have been party to the killing of several such enemies of the Afrikaner Nationalist State - probably labelled by the courts at the time as

One of the features of Afrikaner nationalism was its need to escape - and to justify its escape - from the standards and demands of the civilised world. And the Appeal Court of the Republic is that Afrikaner culture’s handiwork.

“terrorists” and “agitators”. [*They only gave the orders - Ed.*]

Unlike judges, newspapers do not condemn people to death, to imprisonment, or to pay heavy financial penalties and ruinous costs. The press does not claim Papal - or Appeal Court - infallibility. The press does not punish those who beg to differ, or who think the judge (of the information) - in this case the editor - is an ignorant, arrogant arse. The result is that many do think - and say - just that. Errors in an Appeal Court judgement are therefore far more serious than errors in a newspaper report. There are many serious errors in the Appeal Court’s judgement.

The Court is shockingly amateur in its reasoning and insights - apparently not only ignorant about the role of the press and how it functions, but when it comes to analysing and understanding the evidence of Captain Coetzee, ignorant of the philosophy of logic and knowledge, and of the well developed field of social science.

Has the lack of a cultural and intellectual component in the training of lawyers finally reached our Appeal Court? South African lawyers have long since not been required to read the classics of Western thought and Civilization. They are not trained in logic or even the basics of the philosophy of knowledge; instead they are forced a mass of ineptly drafted and increasingly arbitrary rules, precedents and conventions, accumulated by generations of mediocre South African lawyers and law makers, who have been demonstrably arrogant, insensitive to the dictates of morality and devoid of respect for their fellow citizens.

But before we deal with some of the errors in the judgement, how - on a balance of probabilities - are we to rate the credibility and moral judgement of the current Appeal Court of the Republic of South Africa? And it’s commitment to truth and justice and the human rights of all South Africa’s people?

One of the features of Afrikaner nationalism was its need to escape - and to justify its escape - from the standards and demands of the civilised world. And the Appeal Court of the Republic of South Africa, as it exists today, is that Afrikaner culture’s handiwork. Might it not be fair to argue that the probabilities are that the Appeal Court of the Republic is fatally tainted by it’s own life “beyond the law” - it’s forty years of loyal service to apartheid, found by the rest of the world to be a crime against humanity?

The legitimacy of the court derives neither from an aristocratic idealism, as did that of the classical judge committed to the search for justice (Let Justice Prevail, Though the Heavens come Crashing Down, remember?), nor from a demo-

cratic foundation; it derives from the naked power of a fascist state. Lest We Forget.

Until the recent token appointment of Mr Justice Mohammed, every single one of the judges currently on the bench in South Africa was appointed by, and met the approval - and racial criteria - of an undemocratic, authoritarian, racist Afrikaner Nationalist government. All of them were happy to accept that approval and appointment. (Chief Justice Corbett himself became a judge in the Cape in the era of Verwoerd, and an Appeal Judge by the grace of John Vorster.) All are white. All are male. (Miss Justice Leonora van den Heever is undoubtedly the exception that proves the rule.)

Is it surprising, therefore, that South Africa's courts lack a broader, cultured and informed view of the world, and moral sensibility?

Now let's look again at one of those elements of Coetzee's story that the Appeal Court judges found so improbable as to be impossible to believe: Judge Hoexter finds Coetzee's behaviour in obtaining poison from General Neethling to be totally bizarre, to the point of being unbelievable. Why, he asks, would Coetzee want or bother to

use a poison which was supposed to be untraceable in the corpse, in a case when there was no need for this subtlety? In a case where, in the end, they would in any case shoot the victims at point blank range and then incinerate their corpses? There was no need for the court to be puzzled. Coetzee's motive for wanting to use poison is clearly stated in the record. "I thought poisoning is a better method of killing a bloke ... than shooting him at point blank range while looking him in the eye," he says. It is noteworthy from his evidence, that while Coetzee was party to several murders, he did not personally execute a single one of the victims in cold blood. He witnessed colleagues do the deed, or ordered or authorised others to do it. Coetzee is always consistent.

To anyone who has chosen to take a pet to a vet to be "put to sleep" rather than slaying the creature himself with a blow to the head or a bullet through the brain, the motive is perfectly comprehensible. Judges condemn men to death, but prefer not to have to do, or even witness, the hanging themselves. It is, after all, purely a question of aesthetics - rather than of morality. According to Coetzee's account,

three attempts, with increased dosages of the poison supplied by Neethling, failed to have any effect on the victims. Their Lordships find it totally incredible - and therefore reason to dismiss Coetzee as a liar - that a leading toxicologist such as Neethling might provide a poison that did not work.

It appears their lordships have not read a decent detective thriller for a while either, or they might have been able to work it out. (They have also not read the history - as recorded in official congressional records - of similar bungled projects conducted by Neethling's senior scientific colleagues in the CIA, or they would not have found the possibility nearly so unbelievable.)

The judges need, in fact, only have read Coetzee's evidence with more care and then applied some logic: Coetzee not only says poison appealed to his sensibilities; there are clear indications in his evidence that it was to be used on the two victims *as an experiment*. He told the court that he had gathered from Neethling that the poison had been used successfully in experiments with sheep. Think about it - no matter how accomplished a scientist Neethling is said to be, he or any of his colleagues in the Western World are unlikely to have had much chance to conduct clinical trials on a sample of human subjects to prove the efficacy and establish the dosage of a drug which they believed would precipitate a fatal heart attack and then be untraceable in the corpse. The reasons why Neethling (as alleged by Coetzee), or, for that matter, anyone else involved in developing such a drug might have supplied it for use on victims who, in the normal course of events, were to be shot and incinerated anyway, are therefore completely rational, if still reprehensible: they presented a rare opportunity for a clinical trial in order to establish whether the drug was as effective in killing humans as it was in precipitating fatal heart attacks in sheep.

This also explains another aspect of Coetzee's story which the Judges found damningly unbelievable: they simply cannot understand why

NOSE NOTED IN '93

THAT Cape Town accountants are even meaner than we thought. Some have apparently even decided as a matter of principle not to give to charity. They are only prepared to take charity. In September the Cape Society of Chartered Accountants held its annual dinner at the Cape Sun. "As usual", so the Cape region's newsletter reports, the dinner was generously sponsored by Investec Bank. 350 accountants rushed to attend and exploit the generosity of this public spirited bank. So much so that all available seats were filled and many accountants had to be turned away. Then came the charity event. The Western Cape region of the Accountants association only holds one fund raising event for charity each year. This year it was a charity premiere at the Theatre on the Bay. Tickets were sold at R35 a piece. Only 60 accountants bought tickets. One major firm of accountants is reported to have passed a for-

mal resolution that it would not buy tickets for the show.

THAT when Johannesburg's most eminent WASP firm of attorneys, Webber Wentzel, was offering - through its Luxembourg branch - as a service to its clients to set up fake foreign trusts so that they could evade tax and hold money illegally off shore, the firm's senior partner, Mr Edward Montagu Southey, when not actually president of the Association of Law Societies, was chairman of the Association's subcommittee for foreign exchange. But then, of course, in the same week last year that the noseWEEK article appeared, revealing it all, Webber Wentzel persuaded the Chief Justice, the honorable Mr Michael McGregor Corbett, to propose the toast at their centenary celebrations. The Rand Club toasted by Kelvin Grove? Who knows, with friends like that, maybe you don't have to explain ...

Coetzee and colleagues should have travelled around the countryside for nearly two weeks with the two victims in tow, periodically trying a different dosage of the drug on them - without success - before shooting them.

I would say that the particular clinical trial "conducted in the field" simply revealed that the drug was better at giving sheep heart attacks, than it was at giving human beings fatal heart attacks. Of course this clinical trial was so limited that, to be perfectly scientific, we would have to allow for the possibility that black ANC members have a peculiar immunity which a respected Aryan toxicologist could not be expected to predict.

The drug was obviously not essen-

tial for the actual extermination of poor "Peter" and "Vusi" [*nowhere in the Appeal Court's judgement do their Lordships do the unfortunate victims the courtesy of mentioning their surnames, so that it is not clear of they were foundling minors, or merely "boys" as traditionally described in certain Old South African circles - Ed*]. But if the efficacy and required dose of such a drug could be proven (and according to Coetzee's own statement, it clearly had not been, or General Neethling would not still have had reason to ill-treat sheep with it, or have had need to ask those who administered it to the human victims to keep notes of their observations), it does not take an Appeal Court Judge to realise that such a drug could be a

devil in the hands of a secret killer-and dirty tricks department. The Medicis already understood the value of being able to kill a victim in such a way that the actual killer and real cause of death might not even be suspected - let alone be traced. That's if you know who the Medicis were.

— Martin Welz

Next month:

The Press and The Law: The Appeal Court makes findings about Coetzee which are, to my direct personal knowledge, simply untrue. Why should I, a mere journalist, know better than a full bench of the Appeal Court? And what right have I to say it?

Millions disappear through VAT loophole

FOR LOVE AND MONEY

In November Mrs Helena Coetzee, a senior official in charge of the VAT inspectorate at the Receiver of Revenue's office in Pietersburg, pleaded guilty in the Transvaal Regional Court to two charges of corruption.

At her trial it emerged that she had assisted a fraud syndicate which had defrauded the Receiver of several millions of rands by exploiting serious loopholes in the VAT refund system. The charges against her accomplices relate to only 11 VAT refund claims totalling R4,5 million, but the State has been unable to establish the full extent of the fraud. Evidence in the trial suggests that numerous false claims have gone undetected.

A 34-year-old divorcee and the sole support of two teenage children, Mrs Coetzee was sentenced to five years in jail, and was refused bail pending an appeal, as the Regional Magistrate was concerned that the public should not gain the impression that offences against the financial interests of the State are taken lightly in South Africa. [*No, sir, our*

impression is that only murder, especially when done according to 19th Century Sicilian custom, is taken lightly in South Africa - Ed] The trial exposed not only yet another human tragedy, but what could be some very serious shortfalls in the government's Value Added Tax system.

The VAT system has no built-in controls. It relies simply on trust. Asked why "Mrs Coetzee and her integrity" appeared to have been "the sole barrier between a criminal world and the Treasury", a senior Revenue official testified: "We have always had a high regard for the integrity of our officials. We have never had to play policeman or to question the actions of an official." However he also testified that one of Internal Revenue's biggest problems at the moment is fraud, especially fraud involving VAT.

Mrs Coetzee testified that, while she had helped initiate the Pietersburg scheme - as a "one-off" to help her lover out of some financial difficulty - much of the subsequent fraud had taken place

without her, or any other inspector, being able to detect it. The scheme, she said, had been taken over by an organised gang of white-collar criminals that she thought were part of the "Boeremafia", a long-established national network of predominantly Afrikaner con-men and fraudsters.

The ease with which Mrs Coetzee and her accomplices were able to pull off the fraud suggests that the type of fraud could, indeed, be widespread; it would certainly go a long way to explaining why VAT has not produced the amount of revenue for the State that was originally contemplated. The system of VAT collection and assessment, it emerges from the case, is not only extremely cumbersome and labour intensive for the small businessman, it is equally cumbersome and impossible for the State itself to operate. Revenue offices have been forced to take shortcuts which, in turn, have created opportunities for fraud and corruption on an organised scale.

Mrs Coetzee had worked for the

Department of Inland Revenue since 1982. She had had a traumatic marriage - from the age of 18 - to an alcoholic who periodically assaulted her and failed to maintain his family. She found solace and support in tranquillisers prescribed by first one and then two doctors, and in a love affair with a colleague at the Pretoria Receiver of Revenue's office, one Charl Daneel, who was sympathetic and always prepared to listen to her troubles.

Mr Daneel eventually resigned from the department and became a businessman and tax consultant in Pietermaritzburg, Natal. Mrs Coetzee took a transfer from Pretoria to Pietersburg in the far Northern Transvaal, where she tried, unsuccessfully, to resume her marriage to her by now unemployed husband. The love affair with Daneel continued with almost daily phone calls and monthly trysts, midway in Johannesburg. (The magistrate would later find that the fact that she was "satisfied" with only monthly sexual contact meant that she could not have been completely in thrall of Daneel.) In February 1992 Daneel came to see her and told her that he was in terrible difficulty as a business he and friends had bought - an abattoir - had failed and he was about to go bankrupt. At last she was presented with an opportunity to do something for her lover, in return for all the help and support he had given her over the years. She would solve his problem by approving a false claim for a VAT refund. In her evidence in court she claimed she could not remember the amount - and the State apparently has no way of establishing what the amount was. All she could say was that it was probably "less than R100 000". One of the short cuts that operated in the Revenue office was that, provided a VAT vendor had made at least two VAT payments, all his subsequent refund claims, if for less than R100 000, were automatically approved without checking. The computer was set that way.

So simple was the scheme that it is not altogether surprising that, the next Mrs Coetzee knew, lover

Daneel had involved a whole syndicate in a massive, continuing fraud on the Revenue Department.

Businesses which did not exist were registered as vendors for VAT purposes, using the names and taxpayer numbers of real taxpayers, but who were in fact resident in other areas and knew nothing about the scheme.

False invoices and export documents were printed.

The frauds took place at a time when, according to Mr Jacob Frederick Heydenrych, the Head Office inspector who was sent to Pietersburg to investigate, there were still "many problems with the VAT system as such" and when "not only the taxpaying public but also officials" were largely ignorant of how it worked.

As Mrs Coetzee became more anxious and guilt-ridden about the fraud scheme she had helped launch, syndicate members supplemented her supply of tranquillisers with parcels of pills sent to her once a week from Durban. She was eventually so drugged she spent most days at work sleeping over her desk.

They supplemented her R5000-a-month salary with occasional payments "to make her life easier". But not that much easier - she still could afford only a small town house and her ten-year-old car. Most of the estimated "R25 000 to R30 000" she admitted she received, she used to "spoil" her children.

Meanwhile syndicate members were handing in up to five and six false claims at a time. The claims simply passed through the "audit" system and were paid out as normal.

"I have no idea," she said when asked for how long the scheme continued. "Many of the [refund] payments went through when I was not even in the office. I was on leave. And I would not have known of all the files, because not

all of them came to me."

She added that, in any case, the Receiver's audit manual required only every one-hundredth invoice to be checked, "so the people missed a whole lot of them."

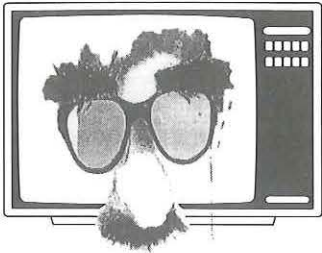
Mrs Coetzee had feared detection only because of the extent of the continuing fraud which, she said, had "got out of hand". So, on occasion when syndicate members did tell her they had posted more claims (up to six at a time) in the Receiver's post box - they called her from their car phone as they drove out of Pietersburg - she rushed to remove the claim documents from the post box and tore them up before anyone could approve them for payment. (It took till September, seven months after the syndicate had gone into operation, before the Department knew there was something seriously wrong with Pietersburg's VAT recovery figures, and sent Mr Heydenrych to investigate.)

When Coetzee's crime was discovered, Mr Heydenrych said, the Department decided "for humanitarian reasons" that she should be given the opportunity to resign, rather than be fired, so that she could leave "with a clean record" and retain her full pension benefits. She would, however, never again be employed by the Receiver of Revenue, he assured the court.

• This month four men are to appear in the Pretoria Regional Court charged with conspiracy, fraud and corruption in connection with the scheme. The accused - M J O'Reilly, a building contractor; H J Swart, the owner of Northmaster cc; R E Earle, who supposedly operated businesses called R G Roofing cc and Noordelike Beton Produkte cc; and Surrie Maharaj, a tax consultant who ran a business called Interbond - are alleged to have obtained payment from the Receiver of Revenue, Pietersburg, of R4,5 million in VAT refunds, based on only 11 false claims.

• The jailed woman's lover, Pietermaritzburg tax consultant Charl Daneel, is not named in the charge sheet. It is believed he will testify for the State in exchange for indemnity from prosecution. ■

Maureen Barnes writes from London on (British) TV and Radio



Some South Africans returning from visiting Europe have gleefully reported how British TV has gone down the tube and is no longer worth watching. Sorry to be unpatriotic, chaps, but you're wrong. It's different, certainly, especially for us, used as we are to a diet of American pap, but it is far superior to anything we are likely to produce in SA for a long time to come. Not only that - watch any of the four British TV channels and the occasional American material soon looks and sounds artificial and strangely sanitised.

The rage in Britain has for a while now been BBC1's *To Play The King*, and I was lucky enough to see the final part of this masterly production. It's a political thriller set in Westminster with a demonic right-wing prime minister (played superbly by Ian Richardson) locked in a vicious battle with the king, who is divorced, depressed and burdened with a social conscience. Two royal ex-wives, various politicians, powerful advisors, and nefarious doings, including murder, complete the picture. Some of the characters are thinly disguised - Charles, Diana and Fergie, for instance - and the local press has had a great old time matching other characters to real life people. Brilliantly scripted, the work was dramatised by Andrew Davies from Michael Dobb's novel.

Two other current series - *The Bill*, set in a police station and showing the police, warts and all, and *Casualty*, set in the casualty ward of a busy hospital - are both excellent. The settings, of course, provide an endless supply of plots. The standard of investigative journalism on British TV is extremely high. A documentary in the series

BRITISH IS BEST

The Cutting Edge which investigated a tragic spate of suicides in a Scottish mental hospital was riveting, if a bit harrowing. But it retained a sense of compassion throughout, and did not stoop to the voyeurism that some of the American producers seem to feel is necessary. At the end of the programme I felt involved and enlightened instead of embarrassment - something I frequently feel after watching something tacky on M-Net's *Carte Blanche*.

Of course British TV is not all of this quality. The sight of Dr Ruth interviewing three black leather and suspender-clad English strippers on a midmorning chat show will remain with me longer than I

would wish. "So some of your clients like to be beaten," she squeaked. "Show me the whips, I want to see the whips!" But there is seldom a time of day or evening that there isn't something interesting to watch on the box.

I think what strikes me most about good British TV is that similar productions could easily be made here. We've got the actors, we should be able to find the writers, we've got the expertise, and heaven knows we have got enough local excitement, so what holds us back? And these modern settings should be a lot cheaper than the interminable historical dramas we seem to be so keen on.

RADIO:

Far from declining, British radio has grown and improved over the years and has a huge listenership. I spent an interesting and often nostalgic Sunday listening to BBC's Radio 4.

First came the omnibus edition of *The Archers*, a farming serial which has been broadcast daily for over 40 years and is still as popular as ever. Later I heard *Desert Island Discs* - you know, where celebrities choose the records they would

want to be marooned with. This show must be over thirty years old and apparently hosting it is still a sought-after job - Sue Lawley currently is in the chair. Articulate cockney boxer Frank Bruno, made a smashing guest. Was boxing a dangerous sport?, he was asked. He thought not. "Love-making is dangerous these days ... buying a house is dangerous."

Among the other Sunday items was a frank and interesting panel discussion on the lines of *The Editors* where the question "Do TV and Radio portray the police as they are?" Nigel Murphy would do this well. And a travel programme where the reporter

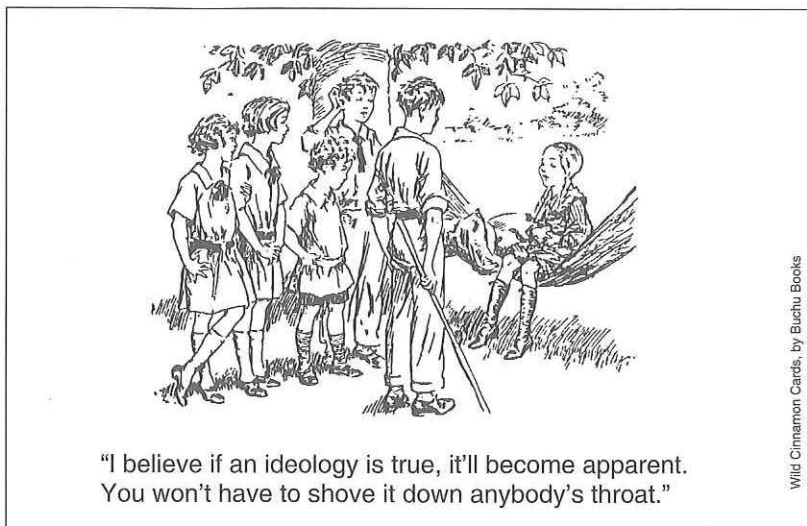


"Marriage is a desperate compromise for a woman"

Wild Cinnamon Cards, by Buchu Books

went on the tour and, instead of merely giving free plugs for hotels and tour operators, not only asked the right questions, but gave fellow guests the chance to honestly say what they thought - and they didn't always come up with compliments. There was also a section of listeners' letters giving their experiences of various destinations. This programme was entertaining and informative.

An item of children's radio gave me a new insight. Many children were interviewed and they all wanted to hear more children speaking on their programmes. Apparently Africa leads the way here. In Botswana a children's programme is successfully produced by two children aged 10 and 12, who get help only when they ask for it. It was amazing to hear of the resentment felt by children who have to listen always to adults. "They don't want to listen to us," said an Irish child. "They don't want to know how we feel



Wild Cinnamon Cards, by Buchu Books

about the violence. We hate it." This programme made me realise, for the first time, how little we hear from children - when we do see and hear children on TV or radio, they are "cute kids" mouthing clever little sentences scripted for them by grown-ups. A young Namibian girl said: "I

don't see why people should speak for me, I've got my own mouth and my own thoughts. If journalists are going to speak about children they should bring children to the studio and ask them what they think."

Out of the mouths of babes! ■

*nos*ing about the art world with *Pince Nez*

EDUCATING THE VOTERS

The report some while back on Johannesburg's not-so-nice Councillor Bass came as no surprise to this columnist. Two huge monuments stand between the City Hall and the Rissik Street Post Office in Johannesburg. Each has two ornate plaques which one must raise one's eyes to read. The four plaques, each in a different language, bear the same message: that the "Civic Spine" was completed on 18/4/1991. There follows a list of the six worthies on the Management Committee, and then a second list of the sixteen on the Planning and Development Committee. Lost tourists who pass by are, I am sure, awe-struck - the sheer vanity of the gesture is almost sublime in its contempt for the onlooker. It is tempting to recast some lines from Shelley's Ozymandias: "Two vast monoliths of stone ... testifying to the wrinkled lips and sneers of cold com-

mand of their commissioners; Telling that the names which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things, mocked the hands that paid for them. And on the pedestals these words appear: 'Davidson, Magid, Roets, Asherson, Bass, Marx: Look on our work, ye mighty, and despair.'" When it comes to Bass and friends' ambitions to host the Olympics, I am sure none of their critics, such as James Clarke in the Star, have either their wisdom or their foresight. But at least now we know why Bass & Co have lumbered us with this enormous, pale pachyderm - they have left just enough space between the two sarcophagi for an Olympic Commemorative Monument, to be inscribed with councillors' names and with room for plaques in 64 languages. And then, of course, should Johannesburg succeed in hosting the Games, Bass & friends could

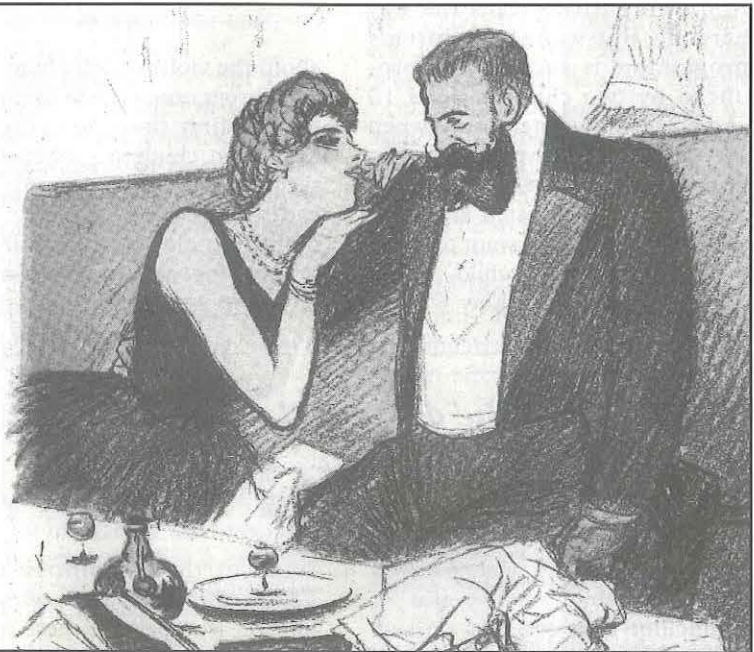
revive their previous contribution to Johannesburg's cultural life - their 087 sex lines. Perhaps as a cable service to hotels this time? More than the holiday season, more even than Election fever, it continues to be the Olympic spirit which infects the city fathers and sometimes the citizens of all the contending cities. All that can be said for it is that it does, at least, take our minds off local politics and its attendant horrors into a larger world. In the end, will China's claims be greater than South Africa's, again politically speaking of course. What a waste of money it all is. The cost of the large billboards [bullboards? - Ed] alone which announce our claim to the dubious honour of hosting the 2004 Olympics would provide a decent subsidy to theatres and cultural bodies around the country. And presumably in the event of either success or failure in

the bid, these amounts will be written off and we will never really know how much the preliminary rounds have cost the ratepayer. I note, for instance, the Alderman Keegan of Cape Town has supposedly polled his ratepayers on whether - or for what - they want to pay higher rates this year. But nowhere in the list of options to be accepted or rejected is the Olympic campaign mentioned. On that, Cape Town's ratepayers are to be given no vote. In the case of corporate sponsor-

ship, we will also never know how much or from whom those funds have been diverted. The only other area in which major funding is available for a multiplicity of purposes, cultural as well, is voter education. It is difficult to know where and how to begin to educate new black voters, especially in South Africa where it is probably the old white voters who need the education more than anyone. But any number of cultural groups are prepared to have a go at it. Some propose simply creating a

general atmosphere of "peace and reconciliation", others believe dramas, concerts and so on should be used to give more specific advice and information to voters. I would like to propose a comic strip series to illustrate the misadventures of the newly enfranchised, with a happy ending to appear on the eve of the election. That way we can create our own version of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum/Ballot Box*. It's likely to be the only funny thing that happens on the way there. ■

Dining out on the Blue Train



When I arrived at Johannesburg Station to board the Blue Train there was nothing to suggest the magical adventure that awaited me. In fact, arriving at Johannesburg Station is everything you ever expected of the SAR — the worst. Remember that the S A Railways (or whatever it's called these days) is a lower middle-class institution. Porters proudly show the way to the Blue Train waiting room, leading one to expect something like SAA's First Class lounges. Wrong. The room is dark and dingy. Around the walls are arranged an assortment of sixties chairs; in the middle of the room is a low coffee table with a large doily. In the corner a table appears to have been hastily set up with piles of thick railways cups and an old urn.

Coffee or tea? Most passengers, I noted, preferred neither. 10 a m we were on the platform, studying the intricate arrangement of gutters slung beneath the overhead concrete slab to catch the leaks - which makes one wonder, with all those cracks, when the roof's going to come crashing down? Never mind, there are solid, First War railways benches to shelter under. They'll get you out eventually. Then the train rolled in, blue and silent; no, not silent, just a huge, powerful, confident hum. It purred out, on time, with its full complement of 92 passengers, most of them foreign - Japanese, German, British, Dutch, Canadian, French - in that order - all beautifully dressed, all with beautifully appointed luggage - even some trunks! - all now embellished,

1920s-style, with Blue Train labels. We are all young-at-heart, sort-of-middle-aged, I notice - just old enough to be able to afford to relive the age of travel in the grand style. My single compartment is certainly not what the SAR used to provide in the days of my youth on the mail train. Large view windows, a choice of soft upholstered bunks - either along the window or across the compartment - neatly set at sill level, so you can lie back and watch the passing scene. At the head of the cross bunk there's another little window onto the corridor. Very convenient (only later will I discover that it is the source of another serious moral preoccupation of railways staff across the land). And there's a hanging cupboard for your tux, with a shelf for your topper - and a dinky little bathroom. I

pause to mourn the passing of fold-down wash basins, but am quickly consoled when, where the basin used to be beneath the window, I discover a fold-out table with, on it, a welcoming bottle of bubbly (which must instantly be drunk while it's cold) and - a miracle of the Japanese art of paper-folding - a blue-bowed box of chocolates!

The windows won't open. No more flying grit and schoolboy pranks with green bolsters; instead, perfect, civilised air-conditioning and electronically controlled roll-down blinds. I roll them up to admire the view of Krugersdorp. A knob provides a choice of four music channels that, when I tried, produced - on and on, for the next twenty-six hours - (1) a tape of Simon & Garfunkel, (2) Radio Kontrei, (3) the same tape of Simon & Garfunkel, and (4) silence. The magazine rack was sadly empty. But on the blue train there are other distractions ... there's that old,

demanding clatter at the door: Frikkie to introduce himself as Man Friday for compartment 5c, and to demonstrate the use of the button which, genie-like, will conjure him up, day or night.

I walk out into the corridor to read the name tags on compartment doors and see who's in. Kuenstler, Mr & Mrs; Yamahoshi, Mr & Mrs; Jones, Kamurai, Hooageboom, Mr X and Ms Y ... why, this is like boat trips used to be! Back to my compartment. Strange. The blinds are down. And everything is perfectly tidied away. Every time I leave the compartment I will discover the same on my return: Frikkie has been in to tidy - and to roll down the blinds.

I head for the cocktail lounge in search of conversation - when suddenly, without lingering, you understand, I am riveted by the view through the little corridor window into the Yamahoshi's compartment. It's a charming picture straight from the golden age of

Japanese art: the ivory lovers, oblivious to the passing scene to left - and right - are delicately entwined, feet, elbows, hands, legs, smoothly sculpted buttocks; his, hers on the single, window-height bunk. *[The illustration used here is rather more chaste than the author had in mind - Ed]*

At the end of the coach I pop in to check the shower compartment. This is great! There's room for two or three, even four, under the shower. But somebody else has planned to use the shower before me - in a corner of the shower cubicle there's an ice bucket with a chilled, but as yet unopened, bottle of Veuve Cliquot. Next to it are two champagne glasses and a single, white, scented camelia. Might I join them - if I bring my own glass, of course? - I fleetingly thought. Maybe not. *[If you take an 'A' grade suite, you get a shower of your own. Much less interesting.-Ed.]*

This train glides along - no more

wagon train is what romance is made of.

We "detrained" for an hour at Kimberley for a sight of the Big Hole - an interruption best forgotten. Perhaps the pause did help to heighten the suspense for what might happen next when our journey continued. I couldn't wait to get back on the blue train.

Evening. In tux and bow-tie I head for a pre-dinner cocktail and to exchange polite nods and a little conversation with the glittering company at the bar. Velvet and silk rustle and slither around in the most wonderfully exotic - but formal - styles and colours. Black, silver, gold, wine red, midnight blue ... Opium. Arpege. The Royal Shakespeare Company has arrived to re-create a scene from the Orient Express, surely? I order a dry Martini, fully expecting water with a plastic olive. No, that's real. The sun has set over the plains. Little lamps are glowing at each shimmering table in the

dining car. All have emerged from their cabins and are seated. Dinner is about to be served.

Garlic snails in phyllo pastry - a great starter for a mere observer of romance. And more bubbly - why not? I am not quite sure exactly how much later, but I had just studied the menu to order

my main course of breast of duck with blackberry and ginger sauce, put down my glasses and refocused on the tables around me - when, it appeared, a miracle had happened. All were seated as previously, but without their fabulous clothes.

Why, I thought, look at Mr and Mrs Klauswitz (a rather younger couple at the table opposite mine)! The pearls of her necklace drooled down her gentle, lovely, left breast - and then tinglingly climbed back up the milky right breast, just touching the pink nipple as it crossed to fold round under the loose, wispy blonde curls that caught a shimmer of light in the



Through the corridor window . . . ivory lovers oblivious to the passing scene

rocking gadunk-gadunk, gadunk-gadunk clatter, clatter, clatter ... gedunk-gedunk remember? Gone forever. Gliding on air, this is a train for sophisticated, experienced lovers in search of romance. No wonder Frikkie's so preoccupied with keeping the blinds rolled down. These passengers'll be upsetting the sheep and station staff from Bloemhof to De Aar and beyond. All that magnificent sky and open plain viewed from the

nape of her neck. Her eyes gleamed as she looked at him, totally absorbed; her right hand travelled up to her mouth. When her middle finger reached the upper edge of her top lip, she paused, and then lightly, almost not touching, she stroked back and forth over the perfectly articulated little ridge there. His mouth opened slightly in sympathy, as her little finger came to rest on her bottom lip. Immediately her lips closed around the tip of her finger in a little pouting, lingering, kiss. He, meanwhile, broad-shouldered, tanned (had they just come from Hawaii?, I wondered) pressing on with his riveting tale of success and adventure - what else could it be that had her so enchanted? His hand shot forward impulsively to stroke away an imaginary curl on her forehead. Now and then his eyes would slide down the string of pearls and across her gentle ... gentle ... breasts. And then back up again, to meet her eyes in further conversation.

The waiter arrived to top up their glasses of champagne. The spell momentarily broken, they both leaned back a little in their seats and raised the shimmering Stuart crystal glasses to their lips. Perhaps still distracted, a few icy drops escaped from the side of his mouth and ran down his naked chest. She laughed a delighted, purring laugh, and lent forward to stroke the cold moisture across his chest with the tips of her fingers, then leaned back again as a soft blush rose in his cheeks and neck. His hand slid over hers, then slowly withdrew, dragging the tips of his fingers down the valleys between hers; she opened her fingers to receive his embrace.

Being stripped of their clothes provided most of the gentlemen and some of the ladies with welcome release. Love is a fullsome thing.

My eyes travelled under the tables to the Canadian couple's table where, I was pleased to find, things were progressing on much the same lines, except here a finely shaped white foot with toes perfectly arranged, nestled comfortably on the inside of a black inner thigh - a startling Benetton image, besides evoking the cool-on-hot skin touch that makes the little hairs rise on the backs of one's hands. They

were eating the grilled crayfish in oyster sauce (which I, too, had enjoyed), with forks often poised in mid-air as they finished a sentence. Unhurried and relaxed, clearly all was fine at table nine. But what would their daughter in Seattle think of this?

"We have really got the most amazing plans for marketing the new ..." I vaguely heard a colleague say from the far side of my table. I gave a brief nod to indicate I was duly impressed as my eyes wandered further down the row of glowing tables. I wondered how the Yamahoshis were getting on. Ah, yes, the perfectly sculpted ivory figures were there, again, miraculously



ly, liberated from their clothes, now glowing smoothly in the yellow light of the table lamp. She gentle, fragile; he also small but ... what was the phrase? Ah, yes ... perfectly formed. At this table there was something of a gentle afterglow - arms, hands and expressions appeared perfectly relaxed; conversation soft, murmuring. The bodies, yes, altogether like my woodcut. But the faces were a surprise. Much more animated, plastic, amused - now a curved, raised eyebrow, now an ironic little smile with just the left corner of the mouth. And the eyes! Oriental, yes, but not those cold slit-eyes of the old woodcuts; these were warm, shining almonds... mm, now I see what's up: he's stroking her with his eyes. Very discreet. The blush on the delightful peaks of her cheeks could easily pass as rouge. Underneath the table their bare feet were in writhing embrace.

"We're going down to Plet after

we've done the Waterfront and checked out the property market in Bantry Bay and Clifton. Thought we'd take a couple of bottles and go and do some spear fishing off Donnie's new boat. Whyn't-yuh come along?" the voice across the table rumbled on. "H'm, I'm thinking about it," I mumbled. I had caught the eye of frau Humpfstangl as she gaily prepared to pop a grape into the mouth of her Bubi. A waiter steamed by with their third bottle of wine; and one gathered they'd already had a little schnapps or two to start. Her ample breasts bounced with glee and I laughed along, nodding away nuttily, really beginning to enjoy dinner on the Blue Train. Yes, Plet next week sounds OK by me, the chaps across the table assumed I was saying. But the widow Tamahori knew differently. She raised the sweep of wavy black hair from over her right eye, and winked at me! A cold shiver whipped up and down my spine - reminding me that, like the rest of the company, I had been subject to the same magic ... Nobody seemed to mind, and the widow Tamahori was definitely amused. I vaguely wondered if my tux might have found its way back in the compartment and was hanging neatly in its little cupboard.

Chocolate pot with mango mousse. Rich, dark coffee. A little liqueur? Drambuie - no, far too sweet and smoky over the scent of Arpege. Rather, a sharp clean Cointreau for contrast and to clear the mind.

I awoke as we glided into De Aar, to see through my window a sky filled with stars - and a row of cheeky railway porters, lined up under the platform lamps, ready to gawk.

Dawn arrived at Matjiesfontein. As the sun rose and the Blue Train curled down the Hex River passes into the vineyards of the Cape, so the magic sadly faded. A grand English breakfast with shining railways silver (and boerewors with gravy) brought back memories of long ago. Frikkie collected my suitcase. We were in Cape Town station. Like all good plays, it had ended too soon.

A trip on the Blue Train is still a dream - or maybe it's something I ate.

— Amatori

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Season's Greetings

WELCOME TO OUR NEW READERS, who have received subscriptions as Christmas gifts, with greetings as listed below! (Those that arrived too late to be included in this list will have been informed by letter.) -

To ANNA in Adelaide, Oz - Well I never! What next? - from Bob & Gerda.

To WILLIE L. - with love, love, love, love, love and more love - from Hazy Baby et al.

To PETER LOUW - Happy Christmas and Happy reading for 1994 - from Allan.

To LEE FOX - I know you'll enjoy; Happy Christmas! - from Gus.

To R A HEUGH - Merry Christmas, Dad! with lots of love - from Dave & Geraldine.

To SHAUN SCOTT, Happy Christmas, love from Peter & Poppet.

To R R B from J B B - My Christmas wishes will be personally conveyed.

To A L JOHNSON - Happy Christmas, Happy 1994, Happy Reading, Happy, Happy, Happy! - from Dave & Geraldine.

To MUIR BRYCE, "Every thinking South African should read this" - from Noel.

To KEITH BRADLEY, Happy Christmas, love from Peter & Poppet.

To PIERRE ETELLIN, Happy Christmas, love from Mom & Dad.

To RICHARD COLLEDGE, for a man who has a nose for a good thing, from Archie.

To DANIEL MAPP-MORONI in Perth, Oz, happy Christmas from yr. Dad.

To CRAIG PHILLIPS in Minneapolis, Happy Christmas from Mother.

Aan GERHARD SWIEGERS, Geniet dit! van Danie Uys.

To HARRY DILLEY: We wish you a happy Christmas and good things for 1994 - The Team.

To HOWARD ROSS, a good Xmas and a very happy year, from Gerald Nowitz.

To BEN STOLTZ in Perth, Oz - Enjoy! - from Danie.

To NICKY FOCHE, with fond love from Sally and Bob.

To ROELNA BASHEW in Georgia, USA: We look forward to having the Bashews back in SA - maybe this will help - from Chris & Alex.

To BILL SCOTT - Happy Christmas Dad, from Tracey.

To DONN JOWELL - Read all about it, do not be read about - from Clive.

To YVONNE & DAVID BAXTER - Hope you enjoy this [So do we -Ed.] - with love from Faith.

To JURGEN BRENNER in Blomberg, Germany - Happy Christmas and best wishes for a corruption-free 1994, with love from Hendy & Carol.

To JOHN PLATTER - A bit *de trop*, maybe, but here's one for you for Christmas, with love from Erica.

To TOM ROERING - wishing you a great 1994 and hopefully some interesting reading, from Leigh.

To ANTHONY & MARY ALLEN - Happy Christmas. Enjoy reading this, but take care not to be in it - from Bo & Anthea.

To GILBERT COLYN - All the best for 1994 and Xmas - A C Riley.

To H BROWN - Happy Christmas & New Year; enjoy the *skinner* - from Mini & Ridge.

To ANN BERTELSMANN - Dear Annie, more intriguing than just another puzzle (I hope!) - lots of love from Helmut.

To SHELLEY BINDER, New York - To keep you in the nose! Happy Hanukah, with much love from Adie.

To A W RICHARDS - Happy Christmas from the Mellville family.

To BERNARD & LORETTA - Enjoy noseWEEK! You're the greatest friends. Love, Shayne.

and from gus



"Have a Harry Krishna and a peaceful New Year"

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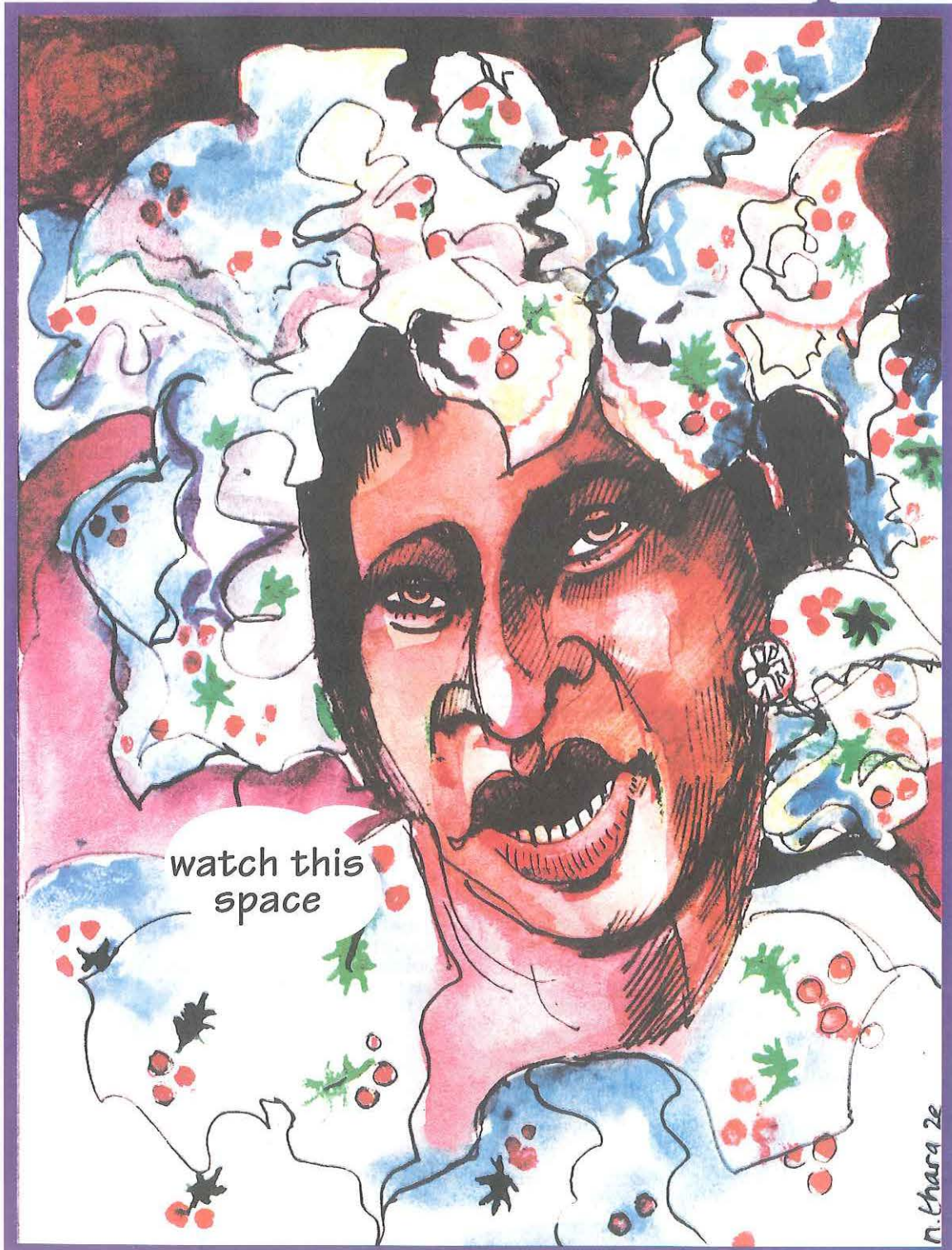
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Winnie's Xmas Wrap...



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