

news you're not supposed to know

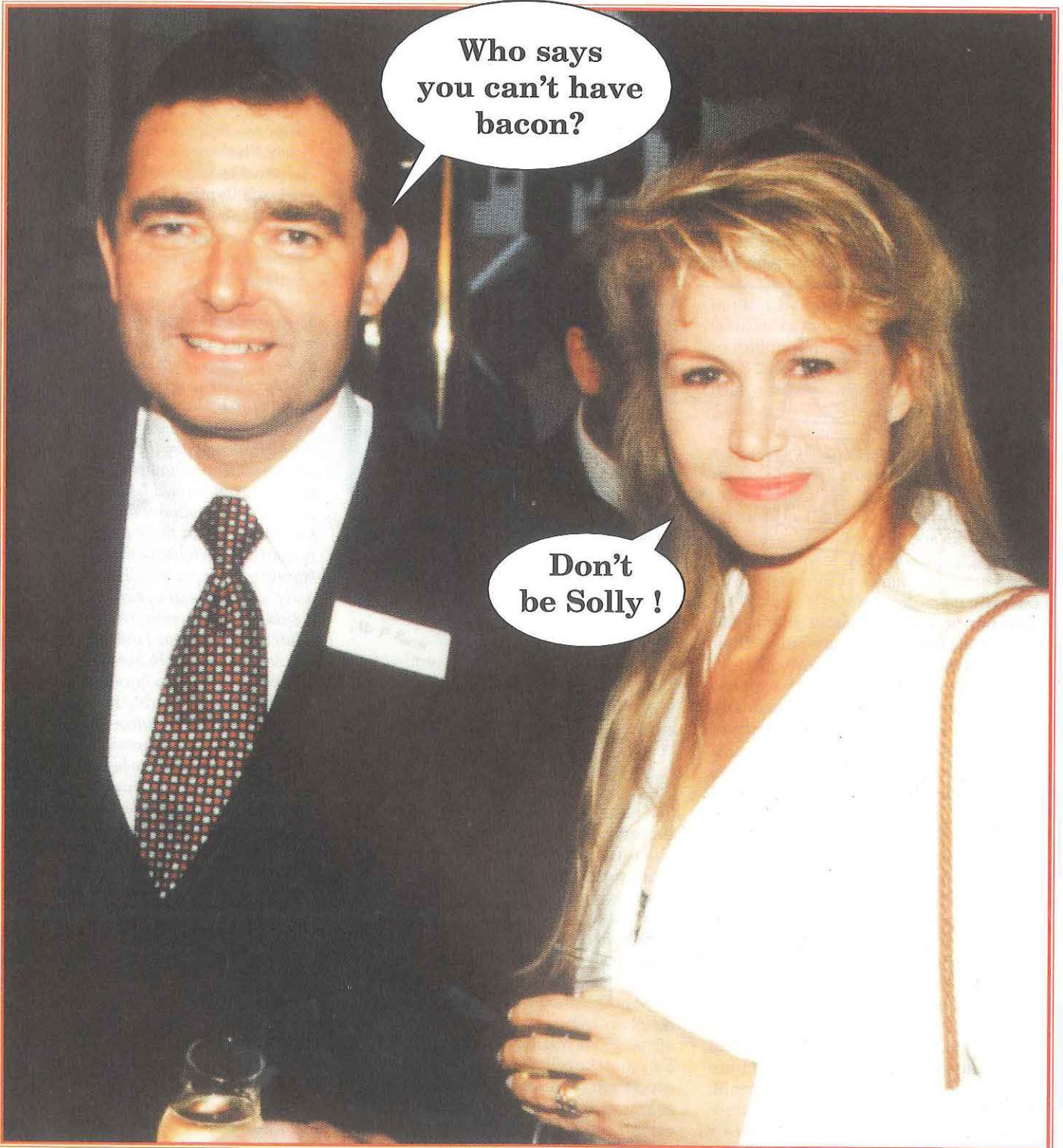
nose WEEK

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TOP OF THE NOSE



Mr Peter Bacon and Mrs Anneline Kerzner-Tucker - who both formerly worked under Mr Sol Kerzner - reunited at a recent Mandelado.

Welcome dear Reader,

To noseWEEK 12 which we are sure will give you as much pleasure and insight as any before it. So the first dozen are in! And already what we want to talk about is what you will find in our next issue. Such as curious facts and figures about the people closest to Mr Raymond Ackerman's Olympic bid committee. Did you know that Mrs Patricia Kreiner's accountant has been charged with murder - and the accused accountant says his speciality was moving hot money out of the country for his clients? And that he has given a Cape Town newspaper a list naming 20 such clients, including ... ?

We also know quite a bit more about the rev Mr Boesak's more intimate knowledge of business, which we hope to share with you soon. Meanwhile a senior member of the government has personally assured us that "the only thing Allen is guilty of is contravening the Eleventh Commandment - Thou shalt not get caught!" Which about explains all the recent disappointing developments on that front.

And perhaps we will be able to tell you more about the reasons for the imminent departure of South Africa's ambassador to Rome, His Excellency, Mr Glen Babb. As always, watch this space.

May 1995



Dear Sir

Your business section smalls ad no.2433 (nose11) says "Elephants pass wines" from the beautiful Franschoek Valley - to be released soon. I have always wondered where some of the stuff came from. Many years ago it was believed to come from "Nanny goats"

Phil Freeman
Simonstown

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Dear Sir

Following on your interesting tale of Liston Ntshongwana (nose11) and his incredible ability to survive disclosure of all his misdeeds. Is their possibly a clue to be had from the following detail your report missed. When on 27 July 1984 the then Transkei Minister of Commerce, Madikizela, wrote to MD of the Kei Development Corporation ordering him, "as directed by the Hon Prime Minister [K D Matanzima]" to "turn over with immediate effect" the Transkei Fuel Depot to a company set up by Liston and friends, he

also informed the TDC who the other directors of the company were: The Hon Paramount Chief B Mtirara, Chief G Matanzima, and Paramount Chief K D Matanzima.

Your readers might have noticed the young lady, a young relative of President Mandela, who has recently taken up residence in the Presidency in Pretoria and who so elegantly accompanies him at State occasions. Her surname is Mtirara. Could Liston's fortunes may be a question of family connections - then and now?

Joe
Braamfontein

Dear Sir

I am all for a little creative licence when it comes to noseWEEK's literary style, but there were a couple of glaring inaccuracies in your piece on Vergelegen in Somerset West.

Anglo American did not acquire it from Punch Barlow in 1966; the great corporation bought it from Tom Barlow in 1989. Secondly, despite the uncustomary enthusiasm (for noseWEEK) for affirmative action expressed in the review, the facts are again at variance with your correspondent's text. I happen to have visited the winery the day before I read the review and asked the cellar master, Martin Meinert, several questions relating to the employment policies of the winery. Several senior members of his winery staff are coloured (if you go for nuance of shade) [We don't. - Ed.] and the cellar hands have all had the opportunity of attending training courses at Elsenburg. Since I am concerned about skills training in the wine industry, I obviously wanted to know whether Vergelegen

would help or hinder change in the Western Cape and I was more than satisfied with what I discovered.

These cavils notwithstanding, keep up the good work: it is better to have the axe grinding than to live in abject silence.

Kind regards,
Michael Fridjhon
Johannesburg

Maureen Barnes replies:

At noseWEEK, accuracy counts and we'd much rather apologise for "our little inaccuracies" than have our readers insult us by indulgently suggesting that errors are our style.

As for the two "glaring errors" in our food revue of Vergelegen. (nose11). The first "fact" came from Vergelegen's brochure which reads;

After the death of Sir Lionel and later Lady Florence Phillips, the estate was acquired by Charles 'Punch' Barlow and his wife Cynthia in June 1941. Punch Barlow's son Tom took over the running of the farm in 1966. Anglo American Farms Limited purchased Vergelegen in October 1987.

The copywriter having been anxious to avoid nasty words like bought and sold, makes it a trifle difficult to follow. Surely that brochure was written when you were a director of Vergelegen, Mr Fridjhon? Never mind, when they next consult you - they tell us you are their consultant - you can give them a few tips.

But on to our second "glaring error" - you object to our comment on the lack of affirmative action at their shop, winery and restaurant. Well we, in turn, object to your saying we at noseWEEK are not customarily enthusiastic about affirmative action. Wrong, sweetie, we cheer every time a fatcat gets affirmed out of his cushy billet. Anyway, back to the kinder, gentler, Vergelegen. We merely reflected what we saw that day. No doubt, down in the fields there were many, many people of races other than white, who were busily occupied, but they weren't to be found up-front, as it were - at least not on that day. I lie, I omitted to tell our readers that there were a couple of dusky ladies, quaintly fancy-dressed like the good old retainers of yore, in mob-cab and pinnys, whose duty appeared to be bearing dishes from the kitchen to hand to the white waitresses (all in "civvies") who, in turn, passed them on to the diners.

Dear Sir

In Maureen Barnes' column (nose11), under the heading ABSAlootly Fabulous, this statement appears: "There is a thief at ABSA [Again! - Ed.]." Should that not be "Still!"?

Attorney
Sandton

WILLIE HOOD

AND HIS BAND OF BROEDERS

Do their bit for Stellenbosch

Councillor Willie van Schoor, formerly Bellville's Management Committee chairman, and now the Big Shaker on Greater Cape Town's new Metro Council is not a great believer in transparent government. In fact Broeder Van Schoor is not averse to secretly helping to direct public funds into Broederbond causes.

So powerful has the Broederbond's call been to "save Stellenbosch University" from having to enter the new South Africa, that even a respectable citizen like Professor Christo Pienaar, who, besides being a TV star and nature man, was also a Bellville town councillor, found himself pressured into condoning an underhand Broeder deal.

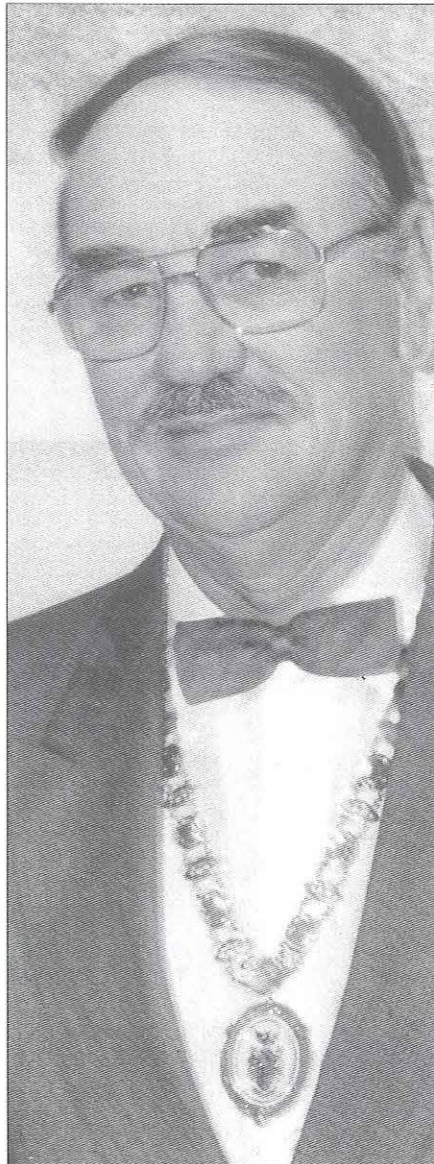
The University of Stellenbosch and its business school sought to obtain vast tracts of land in the Bellville and Durbanville areas - mostly on posh, high-lying view sites - either as gifts or at nominal prices from the respective municipalities and from the Railways. With the right Broeder connections, all are traditionally sympathetic to Afrikaner causes.

In August 1982 Bellville, a working class, Broederbond-dominated Afrikaner centre, daily transferred a large tract of prime land to the University of Stellenbosch for a mere R205 200. In fact the Bellville council immediately undertook to refund the full purchase price plus interest to the university: For reasons which only become clear much later, the refund was disguised as an annual donation: at the same time as the sale was concluded, Bellville promised to donate R25 000 a year to the university for the following ten years.

The agreement was signed by the then Rector of Stellenbosch University, Professor Michael Josias de Vries and the Financial Registrar, Theunis van Schalkwyk.

The ostensible intention was to build a city campus on the land. Idealistic in a racist way, Bellville's elders wished to make university education available to working-class urban Afrikaners, who would otherwise be unable to afford to attend university full time and away from home.

The working-class Afrikaners of Bellville were, however, apparently



even then wary of the snobs of Stellenbosch. They stipulated in the agreement that the university could not sell the land without having erected university buildings on it, and then only with the written permission of the council. In addition they wrote a special reversionary clause into the contract which provided that, if the University did not build within a reasonable time, the land would revert to the Bellville municipality.

The land in question is one of the few attractive natural features of the area and has become a haven for many species of birds that have been driven

from the Peninsula by urban development. Many intelligent people believe the river and cliff site should be preserved for that reason. If that is not to be, then the land should be put up for tender, so that the public - rather than Sanlam and the University of Stellenbosch - get the benefit of a market-related price. Which is estimated at tens of millions of rands.

That is exactly what the Broeders hoped the public would not find out. In December 1993, as the dawning of the new South Africa approached, they met secretly to scheme up a new plan to rob the ratepayers of Bellville.

In these hard ANC times, rather than build a Bellville campus, the Broeders wanted to sell the land to raise R40m to R60 millions with which to subsidise old Stellenbosch. Sanlam could develop it as a luxury office park / townhouse / penthouse / medi-clinic / casino complex ... or even as an Olympic headquarters! Meanwhile employment will be provided for scores of yuppy Broeder urban planners, development consultants and other remnants of the Afrikaner technocratic era, to clothe it all in a ton of beautifully illustrated "environmentally sensitive" proposals. All they really want, of course, is the cash. With the profits, Stellenbosch could afford to thumb their noses at the Government for another year at least.

The land in question totals 69 hectares. Nearby Sanlam recently bought 5 hectares for R40m on which it is erecting a R400m development.

Already planners are talking of a R500 million-plus commercial development on the university ground, to include the latest in Afrikaner culture: a farm dam re-christened a "waterfront development" - which will without a doubt persuade millions of international tourists to abandon the natural attractions of Table Bay, with its an international harbour and backdrop of Table Mountain, in favour of a Sanlam shopping complex at Bellville's old quarry dam. In these enlightened times, the complex might even provide the latest in strip shows and slot machines.

Which is why the Broeders who last year still controlled the Bellville Town Council set about making sure that the

The first Whiskey
came from Ireland.

The smoothest still does.



JAMESON The Spirit of Ireland

newly empowered, not-so-white citizens of Bellville (who will vote for the first time later this year) did not get to hear about their new scheme. Publicly, of course, it would be hard not to agree that the citizens of the Cape Flats have greater need of a R60 million windfall, if there is to be one, than the Afrikaner elite of Stellenbosch.

The Deputy Town Clerk, Sakkie de Villiers, claimed in reply to questions from some rather better-informed ratepayers, that no amendments had been made to the agreement and there were no Council resolutions on the matter "that I can find".

In fact, of course, the agreement had been amended at a "very confidential" council meeting held on 14 December 1993. Two councillors were elected at the same meeting to represent the council in further negotiations with the University. They were our TV hero on the environment, Prof Christo Pienaar, and Willie van Schoor, chairman of the Council's finance committee, chairman of the Golf Club, president of the Bellville Sports federation - and twin brother of the mayor of Stellenbosch (who in that capacity sits on the University Council).

When the Broederbond pulls the strings of government, the decent citizen simply cannot win. All is perfectly co-ordinated with the arrogance and careless dishonesty of a criminal dictatorship.

The citizens of Bellville were supposed to have been stumped by the sophisticated, lying reply of their deputy Town Clerk (who would plead ignorance and incompetence if caught out). But, they thought, they were fortunate: they managed to obtain a copy of the minutes of the secret meeting - the minutes that the Deputy Town Clerk just happened not to find - from another source which shall remain nameless. Outraged, they instructed attorneys to write to the Administrator of the Cape, his excellency Mr Kobus Meiring. The Administrator, they believed, was the enforcer of law and court of appeal in local government matters.

Silly chaps. Mr Meiring is an eminent Broeder himself - so just could not find the time to attend to the ratepayers' letter for several months ... and then left office to make way for a new, interim dispensation ... in which his fellow Broeder, P J Marais, ran the show as "Minister of Local Government".

By now the Broers had cooked up a new, totally nonsensical explanation as to why the scheme they had secretly engineered was really not worth noting. The University's plans for commercial rather than university buildings on the site had still not materialised, Mr Marais informed the dis-

tressed ratepayers in September last year. So, he said, the reversionary clause was "not relevant". Which, by his reasoning, meant that the fact that the Broeders on the council had cancelled the reversionary clause was also "not relevant".

But if your logic has advanced beyond kindergarten stage, Broeder Marais has a further argument why you should cease thinking. "I may just mention," he just mentions, "that the council had wanted to donate the land to the University at the time, but the then Administrator (Gene Louw) had insisted that they sell it to them for R205 000 (that is, market value).

"In this regard it is not clear [to whom? - Ed.] why the reversionary clause was still included in the contract, as it was policy that only land alienated for a nominal amount should be made subject to a reversionary clause."

Mr Marais, like his fellow Broeder, the Deputy Town Clerk, also dishonestly pretends ignorance - in his case of the fact that the purchase price was a fiction - the council simultaneously donated an equivalent amount of money to the university, so that the land was, in effect, given free. That is even before we take a closer look at the true market value of hectares of township land in the millionaire belt of the Tygervallei. But if that dud argument didn't settle it, men like Mr Marais and the erstwhile Administrator can always produce others. They had prepared the ultimate cop-out route for themselves.

"In any case," said Mr Marais, "the Administrator had, in 1989 already, accepted as policy that, in future, when it came to how local authorities administer their fixed property - which includes the sale and leasing of such property - they would be responsible to their voting public, and not to the

Administrator."

So, in January 1989, the Administrator delegated all the necessary authority to local councils to sell or give away fixed property "in the interests of the community". Clearly, from 1989 onwards, Mr Meiring was only there for the cocktail parties and his very substantial pension. And the "community interests" Mr Van Schoor and his fellow councillors served were those of the Broeder community of Stellenbosch.

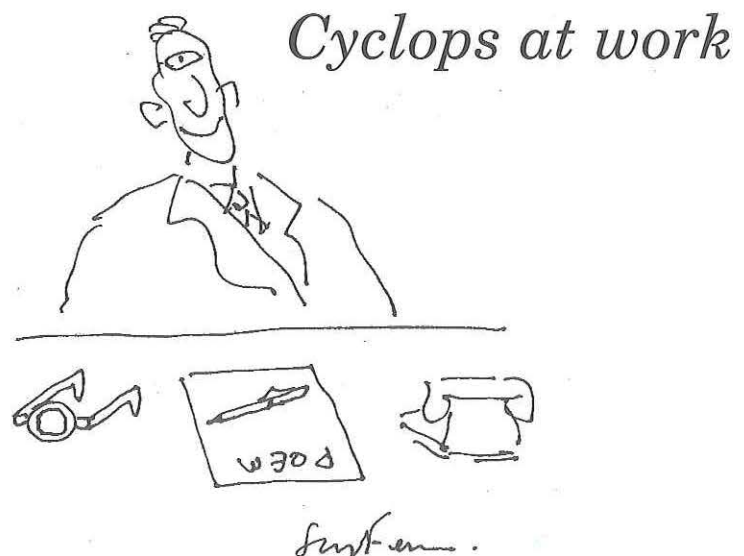
Where do these men learn to practise this extraordinary perversion of logic and morality? Why at Sunday School and the University of Stellenbosch, of course! No wonder they take such good care of their Alma Mater.

On 29 March this year the Cape Times excitedly reported with a front page banner headline that Bellville is to get its own Waterfront. Blissfully ignorant of the appropriately ironic overtones, the paper reported that the "waterfront" is to be called Watergate.

The report was prompted by an application to the new Cape metro Council - of which Mr Van Schoor is a leading executive member - to amend the existing land use guide plan, according to which the university-owned land is zoned for government and public use only. It notes that the University of Stellenbosch "does not feel obliged to retain the site for academic expansion, but wants to sell to private developers instead."

The plans talk of a floating restaurant, pubs, movie houses, a theatre, commercial and office space, a conference centre and a hotel nestled in the cliff-face amphitheatre. What's left of the site to be filled with high-density housing ... Naturally the Bellville officials recommend the rezoning.

Who'd have thought we've had an ANC government for the past year? ■



THE MAN AT THE CENTRE OF

THE NEW YORK CONSULATE RIP-OFF

Last month the South African media reported extensively on the fact that Parliament's public accounts committee has instructed the auditor-general to conduct a full investigation into the sale of the former SA consulate in New York.

This followed a report from the auditor-general which revealed that the 20-storey building was bought for \$12 million in 1984 and refurbished at a cost of a further \$11 million - only to be sold ten years later for a mere \$2,9 million. In a letter tabled by the committee, New York lawyer, Alan Michigan, said that the purchase price probably exceeded the property's true value by a fair margin. And the final cost, he said, was in his opinion, "due in large part to outright theft". Mr Michigan was the consulate's attorney at the time. Curiously, though, the only thing recent press reports do not mention is

the name of the man at the centre of the scandal. So, once again, it falls to noseWEEK to tell the story of jolly Abe Hoppenstein's career in the National Party and as a diplomat appointed by John Vorster at the height of his nuclear and propaganda intrigues in the Seventies. An old attorney pal of Vorster's from the East Rand, Abe went on his first mission for his master in 1975, when he was appointed South African Trade Commissioner in Tel Aviv ... and we all know what sort of trade South Africa was doing with Tel Aviv. Abe it seems, was just the sort of Jo'burg lawyer and man of business who would have been one of Vorster's great pals. He was, after all, one of the few members of the Jewish community to declare his support for the old, dyed in apartheid, National Party; the sort of man who would happily accept a diplomatic mission to persuade the people of Israel that there was nothing wrong with doing a good deal with apartheid South Africa. But who, at

SA diplomat is entertained by New York's mayor

DAILY NEWS
Daily News Foreign Service
15-09-1983

NEW YORK: There is one senior South African representative in New York who suffers little or no political rejection and for whom all doors are widely opened.

He is Mr Abe Hoppenstein, who in the three years he has been South Africa's Consul-General in New York has experienced none of the political cold shouldering or social ostracism sometimes encountered by African diplomats.

Hoppenstein was the guests entertained by New York's mayor,

Corps.
Mr Hoppenstein, fully at home at the glittering event, enjoys consular immunity not always accorded to other South African diplomats, particularly those on the UN Mission staff, where Soviet bloc and some Third World representatives make their political attitudes fairly public.

"I consider myself a friend of the mayor's, and I am always glad to accept his invitations," said Mr Hoppenstein.

"Being South Africa's

Hoppenstein may be envoy in US

17 APR 1978
Mr Abe Hoppenstein, unsuccessful National Party candidate for Bezuidenhout in the last general election, may be appointed consul-general in Washington soon, according to a report in the Johannesburg newspaper, Die Transvaler.

Mr Hoppenstein was a member of the South African diplomatic staff in America before returning to South Africa to contest the seat for Bezuidenhout against Mr Japie Basson.

When contacted in Johannesburg today Mr Hoppenstein said he would prefer not to comment on any speculation concerning his future.

If appointed Mr Hoppenstein will be the first South African consul-general in Washington.

the same time, wasn't all screwed up with things like patriotism and idealism. Abe, it seems, was only in it for what was in it for him. In 1976, after only a year in Tel Aviv,

Oom John sent him on an even bigger mission: to lobby the American Jewish community against sanctions. As Counsellor in the Washington embassy he was South Africa's third most important diplomat in America. (Number one was the ambassador: Mr Pik Botha.)

After a year in Washington, Abe was summoned back to South Africa - this time to lobby the local Jewish community for the Nat cause. In the General Election held in October 1977, (marred by the mysterious assassination of the Springs candidate Robert Smit) Hoppenstein was the Nat Party candidate in Bezuidenhout - and lost by a hair's breadth to Japie Basson. Abe's reward was not long in coming. In April 1979 he once more answered Pik's call - to become South Africa's Consul General in New York. While not quite as senior - in protocol terms - as his previous diplomatic posting, it offered plenty of opportunity for cultivating some personal legal and business connections.

One of a few political appointees at the time - another was his friend Gerald Kalk, SA consul in Chicago - Abe quickly became known as the wheeler dealer consul, apparently accountable to no-one. It was not too difficult to imagine why he was so hated by all the professionals in both the consulate and the embassy. He became a regular at

one of New York's most expensive eating places, the 21 Club, where he reserved a table twice a week (at taxpayers' expense) to entertain his business cronies - and enjoyed being addressed as "Mr Ambassador" by the less well-informed.

Soon after his arrival in New York he moved out of the official South African consular residence on Park Avenue and signed a lease for an expensive new house in Larchmont, outside the city, which became the new Consulate General. He did not have the approval of the ambassador - Donald Sole at the time - for the move - but when you have such powerful contacts back in Pretoria, why let that bother you? Abe was not only breaking the rules of the Department; his move to Larchmont broke the diplomatic convention which requires all consulates in New York to be situated on Manhattan Island.

What was the reason? You might have guessed it - Abe Hoppenstein had "an interest" in a company that had bought ... an expensive house in Larchmont ... that needed a wealthy tenant who would pay a large enough rental to pay off the purchase price very quickly. Preferably before Abe Hoppenstein's term as Consul General ended.

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs was the perfect tenant, especially since Abe was also the man who signed the lease on behalf of the

department. Needless to say, he did not find it necessary to inform the ambassador in Washington or the Department in Pretoria of his very personal interest in the matter.

Then the ANC - or someone like-minded - bombed the South African mission's offices in New York, whereafter no landlord with a decent sense of self-preservation would have South Africa as a tenant. The only thing to do was to buy a building. Voila! Our new Consul General and friends were presented with the perfect development opportunity.

He found an extraordinary, thin, wedge of a building on Third Avenue, and after Mr Green from PWD in Pretoria had paid a brief visit of inspection, proceeded to spend the unbelievable sums Parliament has only now, thanks to the efforts of the Auditor-General, heard about, but which Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha and Brand Fourie, his Director General, presumably approved at the time.

Mr Michigan, the consulate's New York attorney, recalls how he became concerned at the huge amounts being charged for the renovations to the building and took it upon himself to renegotiate some of the contracts. When confronted by him, a contractor had readily reduced his bill by 50%. But next morning, when Mr Hoppenstein was given the reduced bill, he angrily rejected it and insisted on paying the full original amount ...

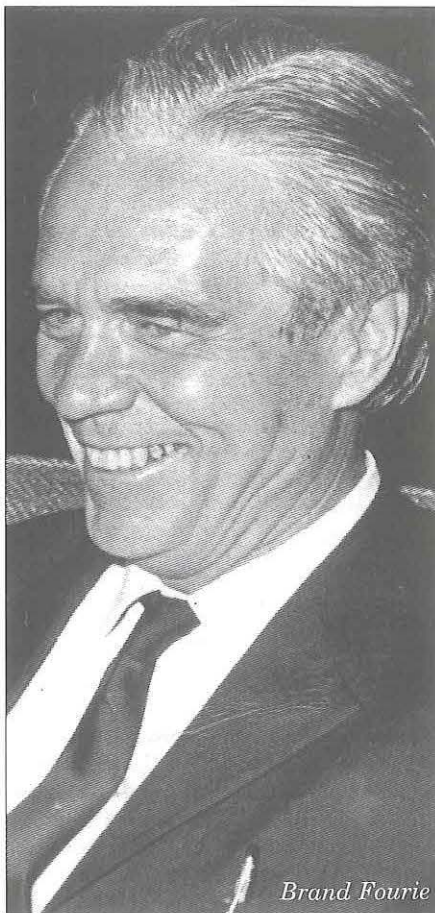
After six happy years at the New York consulate, Abe developed the belief that he was due for promotion - to Ambassador to Ottawa. It was not to be.

Disappointed and angry, he cleared out all the consulate's records of his stay, and left in a huff.

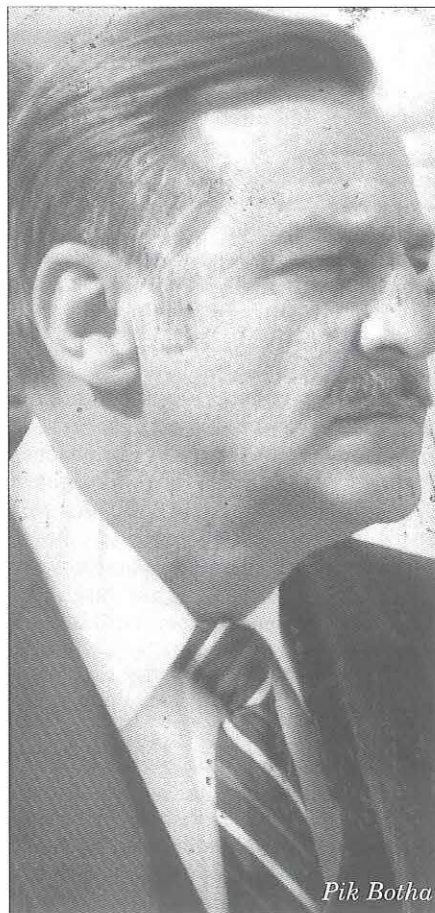
Not, mind you, back to sunny South Africa, where a patriotic Nationalist might have been expected to go. Oh, no. Mr Hoppenstein moved across the road to become Vice President of a small family-owned bank, Allen & Co. And promptly used his contact list from the consulate to write to all the American businessmen he knew to have interests in South Africa, offering them his expert services if they wished to pull out of South Africa in a hurry.

And, of course, Honest Abe never really supported Apartheid. He just did what he was paid to do.

Ever since his departure from the consulate, he is never seen at South African functions in New York. With one exception: Last year he once more entered the limelight - to introduce his friend Raymond Ackerman as a guest speaker in The Big Apple. ■



Brand Fourie



Pik Botha

nose

NOTE



NO CHANGE AT THE GOLD COIN EXCHANGE

Unnerved after being held up by robbers at her home in October last year, a Johannesburg widow, Mrs Noelle Bolton, decided to dispose of a valuable collection of coins and medals she had inherited. After consulting a friend, Mr Barry Turner, who she knew was also a numismatist, she decided to take the entire collection to the Gold Coin Exchange in the Carlton Centre.

Mr Turner accompanied her to their offices in December. At the Gold Coin Exchange they were attended to by an assistant, Mr Johan Louw. After some negotiation the Gold Coin Exchange agreed to buy the entire collection, except for some Krugerrands. The gold price was low at the time and Mr Louw advised Mrs Bolton to wait till at least February in the expectation that the price of Krugerrands would have risen by then. In the meantime, because Mrs Bolton was nervous of keeping valuables at home, it was agreed that the Gold Coin Exchange would keep them in safekeeping until a buyer was found at a satisfactory price. Mr Louw typed out a receipt (number 9405), on the Gold Coin Exchange's letterhead, for 11 one-ounce Krugerrands. They are worth in excess of R15 000.

In March Mrs Bolton thought it was time to investigate what had become of her Krugerrands. But when she phoned the Gold Coin Exchange to make an appointment she was told by a new assistant that Mr Louw was "on holiday". When next she called, Mr Louw had still not returned and the assistant now informed her that they were "not happy" with her receipt. She rushed in to see them, only to be told that she could not see the MD, **Daryl Goodman**, as he was "in a meeting". She decided to sit it out in the waiting

room. It then transpired that Mr Goodman was in a meeting with Major Trevor Johnson from the John Vorster Square Commercial Branch, and that Maj. Johnson is investigating several cases involving the Gold Coin Exchange.

When she finally saw Mr Goodman, he first informed her that Mr Louw had left their service. Then he asked her: "have you read the small print on our wall?"

No, said Mrs Bolton. "I don't make a point of first studying the artwork on the walls before transacting business with a firm."

"Well," said Mr Goodman, "what guarantee have we got that these coins weren't given back to you?"

Mrs Bolton does have her receipt. And her honour.

It remains to be seen what a receipt from the Gold Coin Exchange is worth. So far, more than a month later, the receipt they gave Mrs Bolton appears to be worth not a cent.

For easy reference: Gold Coin Exchange (011) 3313341 - Chairman: Alan Demby.

Maj. Trevor Johnson (011) 4977122

NORTHERN CAPERS

Recently the Sunday Times Magazine carried an article on Manne Dipico, the Northern Cape premier. A homely man, they explained, he still lives with his mother in her original house in Galeshewe. In fact he has purchased a house in Kimberley's most expensive suburb, Royldene.

Meanwhile, back in the cabinet, Broeders will still be Broeders. The Nat Party **Minister of Finance, Jan Brazelle**, is aggressively urging the cabinet to give the contract for designing a new Legislature and complex of administrative buildings to the firm of **Goldblatt & Yuill**. No transparency wanted here. Mr Brazelle's daughter, Elmarie, was recently put on this firm's payroll by the owner, David Yuill, a smooth operator who knows a good move when he sees it (and who incidentally lives in Bloemfontein).

OLD COLONIAL WAYS

Shepstone & Wylie, that old Colonial Durban law firm, has derived no small benefit from being retained by both the Durban City Council and Natal

Newspapers (Pty) Ltd. Swylyies have enjoyed all the privileges attendant upon those appointments for many, many decades.

It must be comforting to every ratepayer who drives up Aliwal Street to see their magnificent and luxuriously furnished building standing as a monument to our tax contributions over the years.

Turning to their retainer from Natal Newspapers (Pty) Ltd - who publish and control all Natal's daily newspapers and the Sunday Tribune - this, too, has been extremely beneficial. In addition to getting to do all those newspapers' lucrative legal work, there are a number of great spinoffs. For example, Shwylie lawyers and assistants feature on a frequent and continual basis, ad nauseam, in all their client's newspapers. In addition to the legal column they provide "for the benefit of the public" each Saturday, readers are assailed daily with colour photographs of Shepstone articulated clerks in advertising T-shirts (incidentally in competition with many other equally worthy causes), or their well-Wylied partners, dressed in unusual garb to promote the latest in project. In the news columns they appear to be the only attorneys in Natal willing and able to express legal views on topics as diverse as "pantie chain letters" and the gallows. The old press tradition of informing the public of the names of firms of attorneys who achieve forensic success in their cases appears to have been unilaterally abrogated (unless, of course, the forensic triumphs are attributable to Shepstone & Wylie). Other Natal attorneys must pay to advertise. So much does one monopoly love another.

THE BOKSBURG BLITZ

The pension capers of Strand's Town Clerk - as reported in Maureen Barnes' column (nose11) - are not unique, judging by the extraordinary account in Paddy MacAvin's Boksburg Boobs and Cape Town Capers: When the ANC promised to honour civil service pension arrangements, they may have been a little hasty. They should have reserved their position on the "buy back" situation - because it was fundamentally crooked. Normal pensions, honour as promised. But by reclaiming those shady special payouts they could fund their RDP plans for the poor. We will not go into the golden handshakes given to police and army generals granted early retirement because of

crime. Let's just look at the deal the town clerks arranged for themselves. Nearly all SA town clerks are white, died-in-the-wool, right-wing South Africans. But do not confuse their sons-of-the-soil protestations with a love for or desire to support their country via the Receiver of Revenue. So how did Blitz Coetzee of Boksburg cope with the impending new South Africa? Last year Boksburg hosted a meeting of town heads from other right wing municipalities. All said no to handing over power - no matter that the ANC, not the NP, actually won the elections. Problem one solved. Problem two: Coetzee stood to pay 20% tax on his special retirement gratuity - rumoured to be in the millions - due to a new tax to be implemented in February. He and others like him near retirement were entrapped by the deadline on the new tax. So they devised a shifty scheme: they retire before the deadline - and are immediately re-employed in their existing posts, on contract. Problem two solved.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Two Pretoria attorneys are currently working hard at developing a real-life L A Law script which could see one of them in serious trouble. Long before he gets to Hollywood. The story so far: In July 1993 the brothers Daniel Wilhelm Schoeman and Fredrick Wilhelm Schoeman, tough, 30-year-old identical twins, got involved in a late-night incident, in the course of which one of them severely beat up a man who had been critical of their driving. The victim promptly laid a charge of assault with the police, who arrested who they were told was Daniel Wilhelm Schoeman. He was released on bail the next day. It now transpires that the brothers sought the advice of an attorney Tertius Rademeyer of the firm Rademeyer and Naude. Young attorney Rademeyer has made something of a name for himself as defence attorney for various members of the *Boeremafia*. His advice to them was that Daniel/Wilhelm should admit to being the one who assaulted the complainant since no-one, including the complainant, would be able to tell the difference. It was, said the lawyer, in any case a minor matter, but a conviction would prove most inconvenient for brother Fredrick Wilhelm, since he already had a conviction for assault and was more likely to get a prison sentence if convicted. This would be particularly unfortunate for Fredrick

Wilhelm in view of his poor financial position and the fact that his fiancée was pregnant.

Since this appeared no problem, come the trial day on 20 August 1993, Daniel Wilhelm schoeman appeared as the accused in Q Court, the magistrate unexpectedly didn't share attorney Rademeyer's view that assault is a minor matter - and sentenced a relatively innocent Daniel to six months' imprisonment - leaving his dear wife, Marie Rieta Schoeman in distress.

A desperate attorney Rademeyer thought he could salvage the desperate situation by taking the matter on appeal. Judges of the Transvaal Supreme Court, he was sure, would be much more understanding of assault. So Advocate Toweel (who else?) was briefed - but left innocent of the substitution. Despite the advocate's best efforts, however, Judges Van Dyk and Goldstein went along with the magistrate. No luck for Daniel or his attorney Mr Rademeyer.

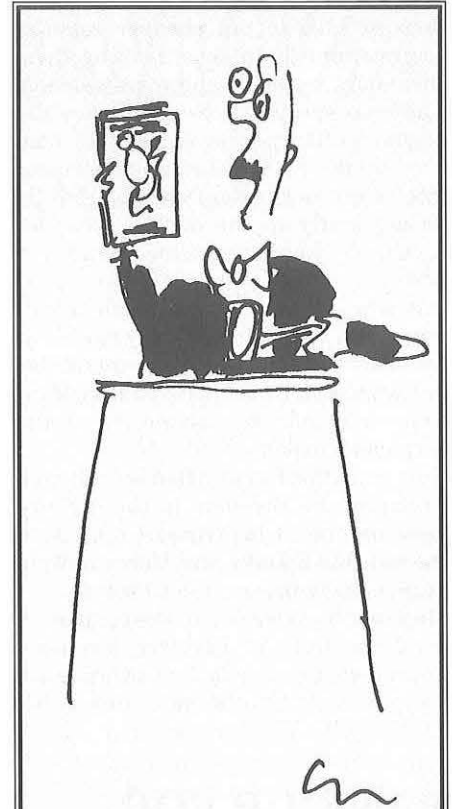
It was at this stage that Daniel - quite understandably - found a new lawyer - the renowned Ike Swartzberg. Mr Swartzberg quite properly called his predecessor to be filled in on what had transpired so far. He also took the precaution of recording the conversation in which Rademeyer admitted his role in a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice.

Might the twins be innocent - because they were only doing what their attorney advised them to do? Or lead it in mitigation? And what of young attorney Rademeyer? What might his defense be? Attorney Swartzberg has set the case down for review in the Supreme Court. Don't miss the next thrilling installment in noseWEEK.

AIRY FAIRY

Following our report on Rembrandt's misfortune in acquiring an instant private airforce (noses 9&10), a knight in shining armour has visited Die Braak. For no other reason than sympathy for the good doctor en sy mense, Gert de Klerk of Wonder Air [and of the SAAF's secret projects Payload and Gauntlet - see nose8] proposes to relieve Rembrandt of at least part of their burden. He has offered to buy the Canadian PT-6 turbine engines that Neels de Villiers had installed in the fleet of Ayres planes when he had them converted from crop sprayers into military surveillance planes. Those engines came at about \$400 000 a piece. Rembrandt will, presumably,

Continued on page 10



Olympic Bid

Olympic enthusiasts wishing to assess the extent of Mr Raymond Ackerman's commitment to worthy causes, might consider the following anecdote:

Last year the Cape Flats Distress Association (CAFDA) held a celebrity book auction to raise funds for this somewhat neglected charity. Auctioneers Stephan Welz & Co / Sothebys donated their services to run the auction. Various prominent people, headed by Mr Harry Oppenheimer himself, contributed precious books from their personal collections, which were either autographed by the donor for the occasion, or by the author. Mr Oppenheimer donated a numbered copy of a limited-edition botanical text which went for several hundreds of rands. Mr Ackerman donated an out-of-date International Who's Who, and the 1986 and 1987 editions of the Directory for Southern African Trade, Business and Industry. He did actually sign them. A charitable member of the audience actually bid R5 for them. The auctioneer suggested he make sure he attended next year's auction - when he was sure to be able to buy Mr Ackerman's old telephone directories.

then be able to put cheaper, smaller engines into the planes, making them once more usable - and more saleable - as crop sprayers. Gert will use the bigger, military-style engines to convert some old Dakotas and Hercules into smart new turbo-Daks etc. that fly oh-so-silently in the dark - great for profitable behind-the-lines trade in Africa.

But why should Gert bail Rembrandt out, when he could get the engines at fire-sale prices? Charity it might be, but when the Broeders look after their own - it's safer to assume it's at the taxpayer's expense.

Gert can afford to pay Rembrandt well - because the Broeders in the Airforce have organised for friend Gert to get the old SAAF Daks and Hercs ... well, at give-away prices, if not for free.

Meanwhile, Gert's airstrip, just a smidgen North of Pretoria, has been upgraded to a length and breadth exceeding Jan Smuts' main runway 03-21. Truly it's Wonder Air

BANK UP FOR FRAUD

A criminal summons recently issued by the Transvaal Attorney General may be the first indication of fundamental change in law enforcement in South Africa to reflect a fundamentally more democratic approach. In particular it suggests a far greater willingness to prosecute the rich and powerful in defense of the rights of the poor and weaker citizen than has been evidenced for decades.

It also appears to lift the blanket of immunity that until now has effectively surrounded the banking industry - largely by leaving it all to the Reserve Bank to control, or by the police dismissing charges laid by members of the public as "civil disputes", thereby leaving individuals with the impossible odds of launching a legal action against a corporation with, effectively, unlimited funds available with which to spin out and complicate court cases almost indefinitely.

Now the Witwatersrand AG is suggesting a bank can be guilty of fraud - and actually be prosecuted for it!

The facts of the case could also be a precedent which opens the way to prosecutions involving one or two major South African banks on an issue that the banks have fought for years - successfully until now - to suppress.

The issue is, of course, that of overcharging on interest on loans and overdrafts. The issue first arose ten years ago when a Pretoria computer expert, Jaap Speld, designed and patented a

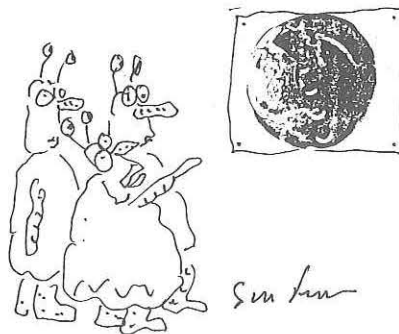
programme to check the calculations and entries on standard bank statements over long periods.

He discovered that some banks were in fact rarely charging the interest rate they declared they were charging - and that usury was the norm rather than the exception. The frequency with which struggling farmers and precarious businesses were overcharged on their bank loans indicated that it might well have been a deliberate strategy to surreptitiously bump up the bank's claim - and share in a subsequent distribution - should the farm or business go bankrupt. Obviously the strategy would itself have hastened bankruptcy - with possibly more sinister benefits for the perpetrators - but bankruptcy was usually a very effective means of preventing the victim from fighting back.

Many of these issues arise in the case which the Transvaal AG has now launched against Fidelity Bank and its Chief Executive, Mr Jakobus Christian van Tonder. They are charged with having fraudulently claimed that a farming company, Northern Transvaal Sisal, owed the bank R944858, whereas that company in fact only owed the bank R437850 - less than half the amount claimed.

The alleged false claim by the bank - made in 1991 - is said first to have dissuaded a buyer who had intended buying a 50% share in the company for close on R1 million, from doing so, and thereafter to have led to the company being declared bankrupt. The overcharging which gave rise to the inflated bank loan only emerged when the former director of the Sisal farm learned how a friend, Mr Andries Pretorius of Potgietersrus, had succeeded in recovering R194 000 from a very reluctant FNB as a result of a check run by Mr Speld.

ALIENATION



"This is planet SB391 - a beautiful, swirling blue biosphere but badly infected with Homo sapiens"



OF THE MONTH

The increasing number of successful American lawyers who combine a passion for law, money and art into a money-spinning, legal art-form is extraordinary. Some, like Scott Turow, John Grisham and Richard North Patterson do it very well indeed and deserve their success. Others less so.

Certainly, as the rest of the world looks on, bewildered, at the daily serial known as the O J Simpson trial, it is obvious that United States lawyers are a breed unto themselves. Spawned from three decades of TV thrillers and larger than life Hollywood movies, it is difficult to see the defence lawyers in that trial as anything but actors playing key roles in an over-the-top drama. Judging by their performances, that is certainly how they see themselves. Who can blame them, or us, for wondering where fiction ends and reality begins? We've all been brainwashed for years, from early *Perry Mason* - where Perry's client was always innocent - to *LA Law* - where actors portraying glamorous, beautiful and incredibly intelligent lawyers played out weekly dramas, usually based on real-life cases, in our very living rooms. No wonder we forget Mrs von Bulow, Mrs O J Simpson and her dead friend, Mr Whatsisname. Who's got time for victims?

But the victims should be remembered when reading the latest in trial fiction - or fact? - **THE ADVOCATE'S DEVIL** (*Headline*) which is the first novel by Alan M Dershowitz, real-life lawyer to the stars.

Mr Dershowitz is possibly America's highest profile lawyer. He teaches at Harvard Law School and in his early days was known for his liberal views. No more. His recent clients include Mike Tyson, Leona Helmsley and O J Simpson. He represented Claus von Bulow at his appeal against his conviction for the attempted murder of his wife, and succeeded in getting the guilty verdict overturned. Mrs von Bulow lives on in a vegetative state while the Count may be seen at all the glittering international jet set functions. Dershowitz wrote a book about it all, which was made into the film *Reversal of Fortune*.

ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

★ Lawyer to the Stars ★

... and other stories

Anyone who saw the film, or who watches his regular TV appearances on *Larry King Live* will know how Dershowitz presents himself: rumpled, intellectual, humorous and liberal. All of which doesn't fit with his latter-day persona or client-list. (I know, I know, the very rich have the same right to be defended as the very poor. Unfortunately, Mr D doesn't represent the very poor any more.)

Anyway, in his first novel, the hero, Abe Ringel, a rumpled, intellectual, humorous and liberal lawyer (surprise!) defends a handsome professional basketball player charged with date rape.

But the rumpled lawyer gradually begins to believe his client is guilty, which raises all

sorts of ethical questions. - most of which made no sense to me at all.

Never one to let an opportunity slip, Mr Dershowitz, in the course of his so-called plot, manages to get over quite a bit of propaganda for himself and his clients. Mike Tyson - whom readers will recall was convicted of date rape and has recently been released from prison - he declares, through his mouthpiece, Abe, to be innocent. Even more disturbing, coming as it does from someone with a major financial interest in the matter, he also gets over several times that O J Simpson is guiltless.

The fact that this is only one of the many books - including one written by Simpson himself - to have been published on this infamous trial long before it has ended, doesn't make the morality any less questionable.

The Advocate's Devil will be a hit and so will the film they'll inevitably make of it starring, of course, a rumpled, intellectual, humorous lawyer.

A far better read, in fact a very good read, is one by another US lawyer, Richard North Patterson. The compelling thriller, **EYES OF A CHILD** (*Hutchinson*), is by no means a sequel to its predecessor, although we do meet again some of the characters who first appeared in Patterson's recent best-seller, *Degree of Guilt*. And as with that book, this takes off from page one.

It's San Francisco; a man is killed by an

unknown assailant and the crime unsuccessfully disguised as suicide. Was the dead man a loving husband and father to his estranged wife and little daughter? Or was he a devious and clever psychopath, without feeling, and prepared to use anybody and anything for his own gratification? At the time of his death he was involved in a custody battle with his wife over the child, who might have been sexually abused. The lives and reputations of several people are at risk and provide good reason for murder.

In the police investigation that follows, the chief suspect is a wealthy lawyer and colleague of the dead man's wife. It is his teenage son who has been accused of

molesting the child.

This is a most enjoyable thriller on many levels. Besides being an excellent *who-dun-it*, it also draws a couple of accurate, if uncomfortable, portraits of psychologically-damaged human beings and how they manage to manipulate and destroy those around them. It is these character studies which make the story more than just another thriller. ■

REVIEWS BY
MAUREEN BARNES

NORTH OF MONTANA

by April Smith
(*Hutchinson*)

April Smith is a Californian scriptwriter and producer who, amongst her many credits, wrote the intelligent policewoman series, *Cagney and Lacey*. *North of Montana* is her first thriller, and it works.

Los Angeles-based FBI agent, Ana Grey, instead of getting the promotion and transfer she deserves, is blocked because she's a female. And I thought it only happened here. Instead she finds herself investigating the source of supply of illegal drugs to an ageing but famous filmstar. Along the way she discovers that one of the suspects, a doctor, had once employed a cousin of hers; a cousin she had no idea existed until after the woman was violently killed. A fast-paced and exciting read, with plenty of subtle humour and a bit more substance to it than your average American cops and robbers scenario - particularly in the complex relationships between the irreverent heroine and her fellow agents.

MISS SMILLA'S FEELING FOR SNOW

by Peter Hoeg
(*Flamingo*)

If you haven't read *Miss Smilla*, which has been a runaway best-seller all over the world - including South Africa - it is worth doing so.

An exciting and complicated plot involving murder, greed and power; an original heroine - half Danish from her rich anaesthetist father, half Inuit - native northern Greenlander from her mother, and an unusual setting in Copenhagen and the icy wastes of Greenland, all add up to a worthwhile thriller.

But this is a multi-layered novel. Through the eyes of Smilla Jaspersen, you get a glimpse of a different, more primitive world; a world of space, and time, and eternity ... and aloneness. As I read Hoeg's affecting prose, I kept seeking company and warmth. Staving off the long night which lurks in the shadows, perhaps. Few current authors can equal Hoeg's atmospheric writing. It is easy to understand why he has been compared to Conrad.

Before turning to writing at the age of 31, Hoeg had a variety of jobs, but it is his spells as a sailor and mountaineer which he draws upon in this book.

His first novel was very well received in Denmark in 1988, and *Miss Smilla* marks his international debut. Not a comfortable book, but a worthwhile one.

Why

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NOT MUSIC

to my ears

Screeches have been written about the new English radio service by both moderate and rightwing listeners. I am only concerned with the views of the former who had pointed out that an international language is supposed to be intelligible, not only by people in the same village, group or tribe, but by a far wider number of people. This point of view has been attacked by people who, having missed the point, spout on about our rainbow nation; wonderful regional accents; how we don't want to emulate the horrid tones of the hateful colonialists.

Fine words and it seems I heard them all before from the Afrikaans nationalists as they justified their back-to-the-laager philosophy. Once again, with their radio emerging untouched by the New Order, they seem to have scored. The English service for years was (and still is, alas) marred by the appointment of so many Afrikaners attempting to read English intelligibly and never succeeding - or improving.

But enough of the language, let's get down to the policy which seems to have no rationale to it whatsoever. In fact the only discernable pattern that I can make out of it is "If it was popular - get rid of it". There may or may not be some truth in the rumour that a lot of the dismissals were as a result of people like Jack Mullen "settling old scores", but there are definitely traces of something nasty going on.

Let's take just one example which has elements of the sort of thing I mean: Mullen's fellow-countryman, and my personal bete-noire, the self-promoting Paddy O'Byrne, emerged almost unscathed from the pogrom - except he had to have a Black Person, one Vuyo Mbuli, as co-host. Don't feel too sorry for Paddy, however. It gives him someone to be superior to.

O'Byrne is a pensioner whose contract with the SABC has run out but who is employed on a non-contractual basis.

Another pensioner who until recently has been so employed is Ronald Charles who, for 18 years has hosted a wonderful expert classical music programme. For the past few years this has been broadcast at, and note this well, from 7 to 8 on a Sunday morning. During that time, the Cape Town based

Mr Charles has personally answered every one of the 7000 letters he has received.

Mr Charles, who is 75 years old, came to this country thirty years ago to head up the music department at a leading boys' school. He turned to broadcasting almost two decades ago.

He has a B.Mus from the University of Wales, is a fellow of Trinity College of Music in London and an Associate of the Royal College of Organists, making him the most qualified classical music broadcaster we had. Not only is he immensely knowledgeable about his subject, but he has actually played most of the works himself at some time in his life. But he was more than that. He was fun. He brought the music to life with personal anecdotes and reminiscence from the record sleeves.

And how was Charles fired after 18 years' service? Well, quite suddenly it seems. All he wanted was warning so that he could reply to listeners who had written in but not yet had their requests played, and to announce his "retirement" from the programme in a dignified way. This was denied him. Terry Logie, apparently Organiser of Music for Radio SA, told Charles that he was to go and that "someone else" would take over his programme.

Now who do you think that someone else was? Why Paddy O'Byrne, of course.

Quite apart from the insanity of replacing an expert broadcaster with an inept one, where were Mr O'Byrne's ethics when he was offered the job? It's not as if he wasn't given a programme every single afternoon. I expect he was just following orders.

And as for the people behind these, and other ridiculous changes - what can possibly excuse them? Nobody is saying, alas, that classical music has mass appeal. Nobody is saying it attracts the young. (Although overseas it is increasingly doing so).

But what possible harm was being done to the masses by a minority group rousing themselves at dawn on a Sunday to listen to an entertaining and enriching programme.

What they should have done was put Mr Mbuli on Ronald Charles's show - that might have been a worthwhile

cross-cultural encounter worth listening to. And Mr Mbuli would have been exposed to a kindly, dignified and memorably charming gentleman.

The dismissal of Ronald Charles has left us - every one - all the poorer. We want him back.

Cape town's largest and most successful charity show, The Night of 100 Stars, was once again a memorable event which, more importantly, raised over R300 000 for four worthy organisations.

The show co-conveyors, Adele Searll and Dierdre Winer, their committee, plus all the artists and supporting contributors who gave freely of their time and expertise are to be congratulated.

What is nice about a show like this, from an audience point of view, is the chance to see acts which you'd probably otherwise never go to see. My favourites were the incredible Elsie River Community Choir trained by Elaine Toerien - a group of singers which had even the youngest and swingiest in the audience enthralled; Jimmy Dlodlu and his jazz group, Heather Mac and The Soweto Strings - all of whom I probably wouldn't have got to see. What a pity SATV doesn't feature such talents more often. These artists, plus famous names I *did* know, made for a wonderful evening.

I did have one problem though. Just what is operatic star and teacher, Wendy Fine, up to? First of all, she seems to treat Cape Town's "singing dustman" James Bhemjee, who was one of the presenters, as a personal asset - which can't do him or his career much good and, from all accounts, hasn't.

Far worse, she permits another very young girl, the 14-year-old Nosipho Nkonqa, to perform material far too demanding and ambitious for both her age and experience. If this talented child gets to adulthood with her voice and morale unscathed, it will be a miracle.

Ms Fine can afford to take a chance, can't she? If Nosipho survives such training, Ms Fine will get the credit and if she doesn't - who's to know? In the meantime, as far as the general public is concerned, Ms Fine has another hit on her hands to trot out on big occasions. ■

SA FAILS SHER'S TITUS TEST

By Mano

"After God," said Alexander Dumas senior, "Shakespeare has created most." And only God and Shakespeare could get away, in these politically correct times, with the obscenities that appear in the works they are widely believed to have authored.

Take, for example, the Bible, that much waved about, much sworn on, much thumped best seller. It's chock-a-block full of incest (Lot's daughters), rape (the story of Dina), adultery (David and Bat Sheva), pillage, instructions to commit genocide (wipe out the seed of Amalek), bizarre capital punishments (Sisera with a stake through the temples), bloody animal sacrifices, homophobia - and whiffs of misogyny.

Hard on the heels of this impressive list of felonies against the new order come Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with betrayal, butchery, hatericide and regicide - not to mention the environmental naughtiness of axing Birnam Wood - and *Hamlet*, with betrayal, butchery, fratricide, suicide and madness.

Titus Andronicus, an earlier effort, has an even cruder mix: the standard betrayal, butchery and madness, plus adultery, racism, rape, dismemberment and cannibalism. Which is why South Africans watching it might well feel on home turf. The fact that Anthony Sher's entire production is spoken in South African accents should add to the comforting familiarity. Yet people are pretty much ignoring the play, leaving its big-name star puzzled.

"There is no smell of failure around this production," says Sher. I agree. The SABC are filming it, the UK run is already sold out (following a rave review in the British Sunday Times) and the play is then going to the Almagro Festival in Spain. But at the Market theatre *Titus* is playing to quarter-sized houses. Sher doesn't know what to attribute this to, but I have a few ideas. It's certainly not because *Titus* is a poor production. Sher, in the title role, does take a while to warm up, but perhaps that is part of his interpretation of a rather wooden general who becomes progressively more human as disasters rain down upon him. (Even Terreblanche

seemed more human after he fell off his horse and Jani revealed he had holes in his underpants) Aaron, the evil black-moor, and Tamora, the wanton Gaulish queen, are played competently by Sello Maaake kaNcube and Dorothy Ann Gould. The sons of Tamora (played by Oscar Peterson and Charlton George) are two *skelms* from the Cape Flats, mixed with something vaguely Coon Carnival. They fight with switchblades instead of rapiers. The accents of the characters slip and change, but who cares?

The contemporary props, costumes and pie are delicious. Roman legionnaires are dressed as SA *Weermag* with a hint of British gaiters. The victory chariot is a battered bakkie with a hard-on. Aaron, in between acts, plays a tenor sax from a

window high above the stage. And Titus's army of down and outs trundle their gen-

eral around in that most proletarian of vehicles, the humble shopping trolley. The clincher, of course, is the pie. Delicious-looking, of Falstaffian proportions, baked in one of those enamel basins people without running water use to wash dishes or clothes in. Its brown-crust pastry spills over the sides like the monstrous pudding in Woody Allen's *Sleeper*. For those politically correct enough to admit to not knowing the plot, this is the pie which contains the neatly baked sons of the queen, Tamora. Titus has killed them in revenge for the murder of his own sons, and now serves them up to the queen. I watched intently as Sher did the honours. The innards looked yummy, and some of the mince-meat filling spilt on the floor and table as it was handed to the queen. I gave a great deal of thought to this. Did they rebake the pie every day, or somehow fit the pieces back together again? So haunted was I by the question that I asked the Market theatre for the recipe. "You'll have to phone Gramadoelas," I was told. I phoned that fashionable restaurant and spoke to Edwyn, the manager.

"We bake it fresh every day. The crust is normal bread flour and the filling is made from a textured soya bean, which looks exactly like mince. It weighs around six to eight kilos."

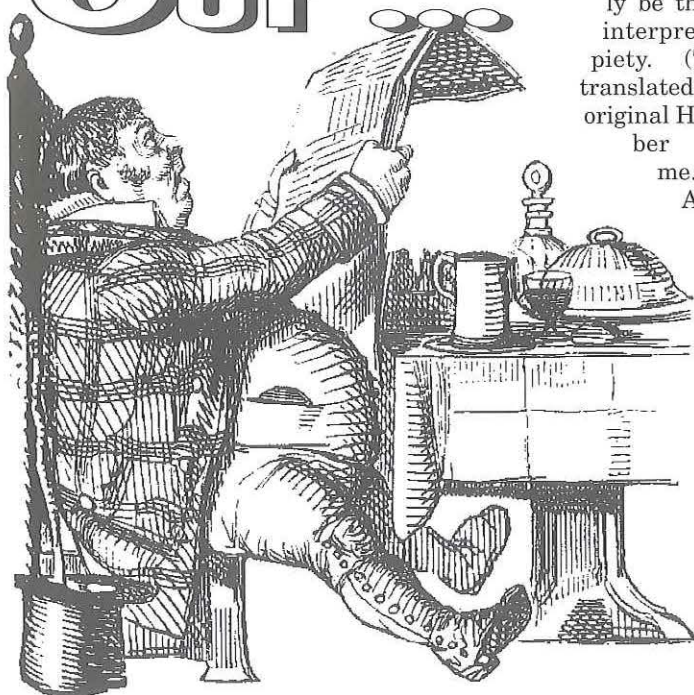
So what happens to all that pie? "Apparently someone's dog eats it."

Sometimes it is better to be ignorant. If the performance is not lacking, perhaps this production has failed precisely because of its heroic attempt to restore South Africans unto themselves. Constantly fed a diet of American sitcoms, soapies and icons (relieved occasionally by British or Australian interpolations), is it so surprising that our own voices sound thin and tinny in our ears; that we seek to disguise who we are in fake British or North American tones. And is it any wonder we treat those attempting to still the voice of our cultural inadequacy with the indifference and scorn only the self-loathing can muster? After all, South Africans don't speak with the authority bestowed by the unintelligible hip-hop lyrics and snapshots of suffering pumped around the world by the sewerwaves of CNN. Local music has to battle to get air time, home-grown literature is more disposable than Cuddlers nappies, and our theatre is regularly wiped off the pages of the Star Tonight in favour of whatever lowest common denominator is currently hitting the big screen. Only the SABC's Govan Reddy can be said to be fearlessly tackling the challenge - in his case by substituting incomprehensibility for inauthenticity.

Titus Andronicus is serious, intelligent stuff, touching, in Job-like fashion, on great questions about suffering and redemption. Yet it has been paraded at the Market as the rediscovered Missing Link, the artistic progenitor of "Natural Born Killers", spoken in the accents of the platteland, the Cape Flats *en Distrik Ses, hoor*. All in the expectation that this will pry South African audiences from watching their rugby and Santa Barbaras, or reading their *Hustlers*, and con them into going to hear some of the greatest words written in the West, presented in a way which emphasises their relevance to our own lives! Well, it won't work *jong*. Just cast your eye back on the Info scandal, the Masterbond debacle, forty years of Nationalist rule, Allan Boesak's clearance, the current epidemic of political correctness, even way back to the havoc caused by the Xhosa prophetess Nongquase, and you'll know that South Africans do like to be conned - but rarely into facing the truth about their situation or themselves.

The greatest freedom is the freedom to be and explore ourselves, and that will never be while our cultural life is defined by pop imports and slick showbiz managers. The broadcasters who play *Boyz 2 Men* but not Kiepie Moeketsi, and prefer Knots Landing to local film offerings, and the magazine editors who always opt for Lady Di and Jilly Cooper have a lot to answer for. ■

Pigging Out



at

Mea Culpa

Rosebank, Johannesburg
(011) 447-4543

Imagine eating in a rococo-baroque chapel, dressed for a black Mass. Putti buttresses prop the vaulted ceilings. A dominant painting of the Archangel Gabriel wields a dildoesque sword. Swags and rosettes. Wrought iron candelabra everywhere. Countless altars but no altar-boys. No choirboys either, but then there are several pretty waiters.

To be granted absolution by a waiter? Instead of three Hail Marys add 15% to the bill. *Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti* and the salad with the Carpaccio, Rugula et Parmigiano.

I look up from my pew at a *faux* marble table in the nave of Mea's and ponder the writing on the wall before me: Genesis 2v.23: "This at last now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh." What could this mean? An allusion to Geoffrey Dahmer? Perhaps I should become vegetarian. I nervously glance sideways - only to be confronted with the words of Isaiah 51v.1: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn." Now I

am really puzzled. One needs a brilliant and learned theologian to guide you along the walls of Mea Culpa. Where is Ray McCauley? He would surely be the best qualified to interpret pizza parlour piety. (The texts were translated in-house from the original Hebrew, a staff-member proudly informed me.)

All this spirituality leads me to reflect on the resurrection of night life in Johannesburg. Rebirth after death is, after all, a metaphysical concept. The life that's left the theatres and galleries is out on the streets and in the clubs, bars and restaurants. There are countless new places.

Rosebank buzzes, Yeoville, Melville, Sandton City and Square. There are even tables on Louis Botha Avenue and Corlett Drive and - for better or for worse - a "waterfront" in Randburg! Why this sudden flowering?

Consider once repressive societies in which the dominant State has been vanquished and look at the interregnum before Caesar reasserts himself. The State and Statists have packed away their jackboots, their banners have been furled and their trumpets stilled. Post 1870 France; Germany after defeat in 1918, saw Weimar's flourishing of art, culture and subculture (Hitler termed it decadence); Russia from 1917 until Lenin's death in 1924, saw an explosion of art and experimentation - *agitprop*, Sergei Eisenberg, Mayakovsky, workers' theatre, modernism, Kandinsky etc. (Stalin termed it decadence). Similarly, post-Franco Spain, or the Argentine, Hungary and the Czech Republic now. I reached for Mea Culpa's wine list and found it disappointingly boring. But the wafer list included offerings such as Elicoidali (Penne cut straight) with fresh asparagus, sundried tomato and marula kernel pesto (R18,50), a sacramental pizza with lamb, feta, aubergine, onion and mint (R26,80) and a pizza with chevre, sundried tomatoes and roasted garlic (R20,95). I enjoyed an unusual rugula and carpaccio salad with marula kernels and parmesan shavings for R15,50, and fet-

tucini with a spicy Italian sausage sauce at R21,50. Our orange juice was long fermented (in small oak barrels?), which we felt was taking the water to wine metaphor to extremes.

Using the Zagat Survey's format (points for food, decor and service - each out of a maximum of 30) Mea Culpa scores 15:19:10. The waiters are obviously chosen for their looks, not their professional skills. The service is consequently slow, very slow.



At Mea Culpa most of the congregation seemed more interested in hymns than in hers. (I must confess that all the flat stomachs destroyed my appetite. Fortunately the sight of Barry Ronge pontificating at a corner table made me feel a little better about my girth and restored my faith in food. At another was Linda Stafford - could she be Mother Superior, I wondered. Maybe, maybe not.)

Gauteng's openly heterosexual Minister of Safety and Security is the patron of GLOW (the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand), where not so long ago such a Ministry would have been organising purges against people so identified. Openly gay professionals are considered for high public office, rather than being blackmailed by apparatchiks. All these revolutionary manifestations - are they born of true originality and widely-held conviction, or are they mere imitation and superficial decor? Whatever, it's exciting to see a society gasping greedily for air and drawing huge breaths after being choked for so long.

The Puritans have been banished. Cromwell has gone. So have Terre-Blanche, Hartzenberg and *Die Vroue Federasie*. But, as history has shown us, what some joyfully experience as a free flowering, others will label decadent. The freer the flowering, the greater the danger of the Puritans being replenished. Puritans draw from what offends them; they need to be offended to thrive.

We may have a Constitution which is stronger but, as I contemplate dessert I wonder - will the Italian kisses and Cassata last longer? ■

- Jo Tory



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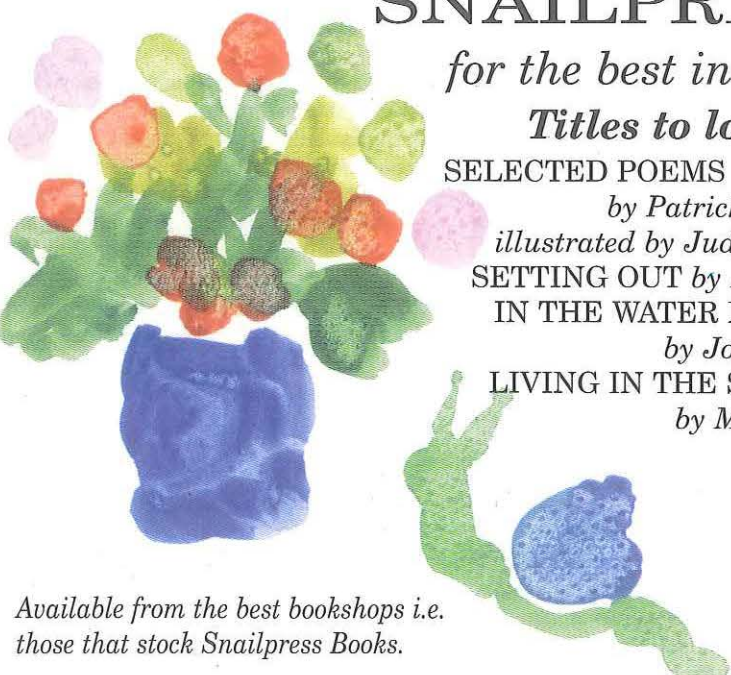
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