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noseweek

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Letters

Taken for a ride by Merc

I have noted with interest your reports on the problems with Mercedes-Benz balance shafts (noses171,173). I own a 2007 model C280 and my company, a 2007 C230; both had the same problem about two years ago. At the time, I tried without success to hold Mercedes liable. Not only did they refuse, they did not even bother to answer my letter. I then wrote to the MD of Mercedes-Benz SA accusing him of being unprofessional and having no concern for his customers. He, too, simply ignored my letter.

The Merc dealership charged me R32,000 for the repairs. I subsequently found that the same job could have been done by a Bosch service centre for about R2,500. I did not pursue the matter further as I thought taking on Mercedes with its huge financial resources would be a fruitless exercise.

Henry Tiedemann

Brakpan

Now it sounds like a very worthwhile exercise. – Ed.

■ Issues raised by "Hugh" in his letter (nose172) sound familiar, in the light of my experiences with the NMI-DSM Mercedes-Benz dealership in Pinetown. I owned a 2002 Merc C230 Coupe. In mid-2012 I experienced some acceleration disjuncture and had the vehicle towed to the dealership. After two days I was told the car had the same problem that Hugh described — and would cost R14,000 to repair.

I paid R650 for the diagnosis and removed the vehicle to a private mechanic. A few days later, he had fixed the problem by replacing the fuel pump with a second-hand unit – at a cost of just R2,650, inclusive.

It seems the dealership either employs non-mechanics to do diagnosis, or is running a money-making racket duping unsuspecting consumers. I will never buy a Mercedes-Benz again.

But I do intend subscribing to *Noseweek* since I have found it so informative.

Zezeto

New Germany, KwaZulu-Natal

Engen does what Total won't

I READ WITH INTEREST OF LYNDA LOGIE'S problems with Bonjour Total Service Station in Knysna and Total SA. You will find it hard to believe that we have experienced the same petrol-instead-of-diesel problem twice: first it happened to my wife, then to my daughter – both at the Cato Ridge Engen service station in Pietermaritzburg.

On both occasions the franchisee apologised and paid for the repairs to the cars, because their attendants should know better and be trained.

I also had the full support of Engen who told me their franchisees have insurance to cover these eventualities, and that their staff should be trained to tell the difference between petrol and diesel cars.

Doug Crowe Pietermaritzburg

Does it wash with Palmolive?

Following on from your article ("Toxic wash", nose173), pointing to the dangers of the routine use of antibacterial soap, I suggest you ask someone from Colgate-Palmolive SA to comment.



Protex soap, Colgate's biggest seller and number 1 soap in South Africa, has Triclosan as its feature ingredient.

Michael Hurly Philadelphia

See our forthcoming issue. – Ed.

Vodacom does it right

Nose121 reported on how things had gone wrong for a reader who'd taken up a special iPhone offer marketed by Vodacom – or rather, as it later transpired, by a company to which Vodacom had "outsourced" the marketing of its upgrade offers. We concluded by saying we would be treating the case as a litmus test to determine Vodacom's attitude to customer service: was it "We deliver what we promise", or "Take what you get or f-off"? It seems Vodacom has responded positively to the challenge. – Ed.

PLEASE ACCEPT MY GRATITUDE FOR publishing the report (nose171) on Vodacom's poor behaviour and treatment of me. Vodacom's various outsource companies continued to be unable to resolve the matter. In fact one such company employee, Shavorne from Mondo, insinuated that I was lying, as I could not have logged complaints as I had claimed – because I had a faulty phone.

But then Ms Gibralter Makhura, the executive client liaison officer in the Vodacom CEO's office, contacted me on 24 January. She had read your Noseweek article and enquired whether the matter had been resolved. As a result of her professional and calm approach to the problem, I am pleased to advise that on 6 March Vodacom provided me on with an iPhone 5c phone in exchange for the faulty iPhone 4, on the same terms and conditions as the original contract offer.

I need to add how very disappointed I am with the National Consumer Council (NCC) who are, by government appointment, mandated to deal with consumer complaints and protect the consumer. Since November last year, I have repeatedly written to the NCC, but have received no re-



Live and let Liv... Shange's dream won't work

sponse whatsoever. It appears the consumer needs to rely on competent and efficient publications like *Noseweek* to protect them.

Thank you *Noseweek* for coming to my assistance.

Stephanie Budlender La Lucia

Shange's dream won't work

Having lived in a communist country, I don't believe in Liv Shange's ideology (Profile, nose173). Perhaps unfortunately, it's a dream that does not work. It was the Chinese communists who warned Nelson Mandela against nationalisation. They knew more than Liv, who is just helping Malema — is that what she wants?!

Petr Vavruch Bergyliet

Progress on Bar complaints

I was appointed chair of the Professional Committee of the Johannesburg Bar Council in December 2013. One of the matters referred to me in the New Year was the issue of your editorial in January this year, in which it was complained that the Bar Council had failed to act on complaints of misconduct in relation to two of its members, advocates Wickens and Riley. I have investigated the matter and respond to your editorial (nose 172) and subsequent reminder (nose 173).

Mr Tobias laid a complaint against Wickens early in 2011. Wickens him-

self reported the matter, as well as the conduct of Riley, also early in 2011. Both matters were referred to a formal inquiry, with a *pro forma* prosecutor appointed and three senior advocates constituting the panel.

At the hearing in November 2011, the matters were separated. The Wickens inquiry proceeded and was finalised in June 2012. The panel initially advised that it would hold back on the ruling until the Riley matter was finalised, [but circumstances changed, and] a ruling was made and approved by the Bar Council in October 2012. It was to the effect that Wickens was not guilty of professional misconduct.

The complainant, Mr Tobias, was not advised of this outcome, due to the fact that the administrative secretary was still under the impression that the ruling was awaiting the outcome of the Riley matter. This is extremely regrettable, especially in the circumstances. Mr Tobias has now been formally advised of the outcome and that he may seek leave to appeal to the General Council of the Bar.

I also addressed a letter of apology to him [see page 6].

As for the Riley matter, he objected that he had not been given the opportunity of first having a complaint put to him for his response before any decision to convene a hearing. This objection was ultimately upheld and it was determined in August 2013 that the process in respect of Riley had to commence afresh. It has not been finalised.

The matter has taken so long be-

cause of this unfortunate procedural history. I trust you will appreciate that it is not appropriate for me to elaborate any further.

Fred Snyckers SCJohannesburg Bar Council

I HAVE NOW RECEIVED A COPY OF THE reply from the Johannesburg Bar Council which has been sent to you.

The facts set out in your article are, by their admission, substantially correct. How sad.

OD Hart

Pietermaritzburg

See editorial, page 6. – Ed.

Writing on Ukraine's wall

LOVELY TO SEE THAT UKRAINE'S DEPOSED leader Victor Yanukovich was able to spend his country's public money for his personal benefit on a grander scale and in a shorter time than our own cheating President Zuma.

That says something. He spent \$12 million (R131m) on decorating a dining hall and a "tea" room in his house. Then he spent more public money paying bribes totalling \$400,000, buying a statue of a wild boar for \$115,000 and spending \$1.1m on plants and \$800,000 (R4.2m) on curtains. (I do wonder if they were bullet-proof like Zuma's?)

When last heard, Yanukovich's country was in revolt and he was on the run. How good a runner is our president?

Ray Meylan Goodwood



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Barring the way

N 26 February City Press reported on a "ground-breaking" decision by the Johannesburg Bar Council (JBC) that, for the very first time, the media were to be granted access to a disciplinary inquiry involving one of its members: Advocate Menzi Simelane, the former DG of the Justice Department.

The panel appointed by the JBC to conduct the inquiry unanimously ruled that "the constitutional imperative of open justice is applicable to disciplinary inquiries of the Bar Council". The three-man panel – advocates Sias Reynecke, Danie Berger and Dali Mpofu – went on to explain that "the Johannesburg Society of Advocates is much more than an ordinary voluntary association. Its members perform an essential role in the administration of justice, interacting with members of the public and the judiciary in all the courts on a daily basis... the society and its members have a very public profile".

The panel also ruled that "it is certainly in the public interest that the manner in which the society disciplines its members is not shrouded in secrecy".

Arguing in favour of media access, the prosecutor appointed by the JBC, Mike Hellens SC, surprised everyone when he revealed that the JBC had decided (he did not say when it had done so) that its practice of holding disciplinary inquiries behind closed doors, especially after 1994, had "simply been wrong".

In reality these hearings have not only been closed to the press, they have been – and continue to be – closed to everyone, even the complainant. The complainant is not even told the names of the panellists or the prosecutor appointed to present his or her complaint.

In the same week as these worthy arguments were being aired and the panel was making it's hugely popular ruling, the JBC was just getting around to telling *Noseweek* reader Jaron Tobias that (unbeknown to him) more than a year earlier, its disciplinary panel had rejected the complaint he filed against two members of the Bar, advocates G D Wickens and Nigel Riley, in January 2011. See *noses* 153, 157, 161 & 172.

Not once had Tobias been contacted by the prosecutor for his opinion or clarification on any matter he had raised; nor informed of the hearing date. He was not told of the panel's decision and for more than a year was not advised that the JBC had formally approved the finding that Wickens was not guilty of professional misconduct.

Only when *Noseweek* started publishing monthly reminders did the JBC eventually address the matter – in a letter to *Noseweek*.

"I find it interesting that Mr Frank Snyckers SC (newly elected chairman of the JBC's Professional Committee) has chosen to address a letter to Noseweek and not to myself as the main complainant," Tobias told Noseweek. "In that letter Mr Snyckers states that both matters [involving Wickens and Riley], were referred to a formal [but secret] inquiry with a "pro-forma" prosecutor and a panel of three senior advocates. I want to know the names of the prosecutor and the three senior advocates, as I can only assume they are peers of the advocates I complained about.

"At a hearing in November 2011 the matters were separated. It now emerges from Adv Snyckers' letter to *Noseweek*, that the case against Riley has yet to be heard three years later, while the Wickens inquiry was finalised in June 2012 and the JBC endorsed the finding of 'not guilty' in October 2012."

Yet, throughout 2013, Tobias was receiving letters from the JBC advising him that the matters had not been finalised.

Snyckers told *Noseweek* he had written a letter of apology to Tobias. But two weeks later, Tobias had still not received it.

In March Tobias was still having to write to the JBC: "I have previously advised you of my intention to appeal the decision made by your committee. However, I feel that my position is prejudiced, as I have not been told the grounds for dismissing my complaint.

"I demonstrated how the advocates whose conduct I complained about saw themselves as being above the law. It now appears that the Bar Council see themselves as being above the law, too," he told *Noseweek*.

Readers are invited to revisit the facts of the case, set out in the original *Noseweek* story in *nose*153 (free online access), and judge for themselves why the JBC might still prefer not to practise what it preaches.

The Editor

Notes & Updates

SA legal collaboration with US challenged

HE WESTERN CAPE HIGH COURT IS set to examine the constitutionality of a collaboration between South African and US prosecutors in criminal cases spanning more than a decade.

The cases flowed from a series of criminal and civil proceedings against Arnold Bengis and his company, Hout Bay Fishing, which collapsed in the wake of the double-barrelled prosecution that began in 2001. The cases related to over-fishing and sanctions-busting and made world headlines when Bengis entered a plea and sentence agreement with the South African government.

Now Bengis is seeking compensation from the South African government, the ministers of Justice and Fisheries, as well as various officials – in the latest two applications. In the first, he is seeking to recover the legal costs he incurred defending the US case, totalling US\$11.35 million (about R120m). In the second, he is claiming \$22.5m (about R250m), the amount he was ordered by the US court to pay in restitution, based on evidence given by South African officials.

In his court papers, filed in February, Bengis refers to "unlawful and irregular" steps taken "in particular" by the prosecutors, advocates [Bruce] Morrison and [Adrian] Mopp. Both are named as respondents. In addition to financial compensation, he wants an order declaring that the respondents acted unlawfully, unconstitutionally and in bad faith in their dealings with the US government. The respondents have filed notice of their intention to defend the case.

In South Africa, in terms of a plea bargain, Bengis paid fines of R40m and certain of the company's assets were forfeited to the state.

A letter from the National Director of Public Prosecutions, Bengis says, led him to believe the agreement would bring finality to all criminal and related proceedings. However, the South Africans did not keep their side of the bargain and proceeded actively to assist and participate in his prosecution in the US – because, he argues, they believed they could secure a much higher restitution amount there.

In 2006, while imprisoned in the US (he served three-and-a-half years of a four-year term), the SA government asked Bengis to give evidence against other fishing companies in South Africa. When he refused, they upped their efforts to secure a R260m restitution order which they got in the USA in June 2013, contrary to the terms of the settlement reached in South Africa in 2001. ■

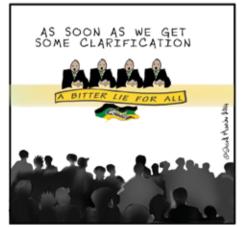












Booysen to sue Sunday Times for massive damages

Former Hawks chief has newspaper and senior members of NPA in his sights

HE FORMER HEAD OF THE HAWKS in KwaZulu-Natal, Major General Johan Booysen, and various suspended members of the SAPS Serious and Violent Crimes Unit based at Cato Manor, are preparing to sue the Sunday Times and various senior members of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for "massive" sums in damages, following a recent ruling in their favour by the KwaZulu-Natal High Court.

In December 2011, the *Sunday Times* published a front-page report, written by its investigations team, in which the newspaper claimed to have uncovered "evidence of an alleged 'hit squad' operating in KwaZulu-Natal under the ultimate command of the province's Hawks boss, Major General Johan Booysen."

Two months later, specially appointed police investigators had apparently still not succeeded in finding the "hit squad" evidence the *Sunday Times* so confidently claimed to have, but Minister of Police Nathi Mthethwa, nevertheless proceeded to announce the permanent closure of the Cato Manor unit "due to the stigma given to it by press reports".

Booysen and most of the members of the Cato Manor police unit were arrested shortly afterwards, in a manner designed to ensure maximum media exposure.

Critics (and *Noseweek*) had long ago noted that, while the minister lacked evidence to support the "hit squad" allegations, he did have other political reasons for wanting to close down Booysen and his Cato Manor unit. By doing so, he effectively also closed down the investigation and prosecution of various politically well-connected criminals and corrupt police officers, among them, Lieutenant-General Richard Mdluli, head of the Crime Intelligence Division, a well-known Zuma ally.

Booysen's hand was undoubtedly greatly strengthened when last month the racketeering and other charges brought against him relating to the *Sunday Times* "hit squad" allegations were set aside by the high court, which found that the decision by the acting head of the NPA, Nomgcobo Jiba (see box) to authorise the racketeering charges was "arbitrary and irrational" and found she had lied about having based her decision on sworn evidence. (See *nose*173 for details of the evidence she claimed to have relied upon.)

Shortly before *Noseweek* went to press, Booysen confirmed: "Without any question, I will be bringing a substantial damages claim against a certain newspaper as well as against certain prosecutors and policemen; so, I know, will many of my men. This was not journalism nor police work, this was part of a criminal conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice by committing blatant lies to print and by lying in court."

The Sunday Times investigators might just have shot themselves in the foot when, in response to the recent KwaZulu-Natal High Court judgment, they accused acting NPA boss Jiba of having "bungled" the case—allegedly by not disclosing "other" evidence and the contents of "key witness statements" which, the newspaper claimed, the NPA has in its possession.

The *Sunday Times* team then claimed that they have police memos and other evidence, including witness statements, to support their stories.

Booysen's almost gleeful response: "Now they will have to produce these in court. In fact, by claiming that they have police memos, the *Sunday Times* has increased the value of any damages claims that my men will bring.

"The reporters have, in effect, confirmed that the investigation was malicious and that information was leaked [by official sources] to the media in order to smear innocent men." Also see page 10.

lohan Booysen: n search of justice

Woman with a past

OMGCOBO JIBA WAS APPOINTED acting head of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in December 2011, the same month the Sunday Times launched their "death squad" exposé. Her appointment was good news for politically connected crooks. In February this year the KwaZulu-Natal High Court found that Jiba's decision to authorise murder and racketeering charges against the KZN Hawks chief, Major General Johan Booysen, was irrational and unlawful, and that Jiba had lied to the court in claiming her decision was based on sworn evidence.

Last year the Cato Manor policemen challenged the legality of warrants to search their homes. The warrants did not list what was to be searched for, nor specify the crimes being investigated, thus allowing investigators to "roam at large" and conduct a "general ransacking" of the officers' homes.

During the execution of these warrants, select members of the media, including the *Sunday Times*, were taken to the homes of the suspected policemen for photo opportunities as they were arrested. At the home of Neville Eva (who has since died) prosecutors and members of the Independent Police Investigating Directorate allegedly spent most of their time examining his wife's underwear.

Before this application could be argued in court, Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa conceded that the warrants were illegal and offered to pay the costs of the application.

Jiba graduated in law from the University of Transkei, obtained an Industrial Relations Diploma from Damelin College and has a Master's degree in Commercial Law. She worked as a prosecutor in the rural Eastern Cape until 1997 when she commenced attorney's articles at the [politically well-connected] firm Qunta Ntsebeza in Cape Town and qualified in 1998.

When Jiba was appointed acting NPA head, many questioned her suitability because of her track record: in 2008 she was suspended and charged with bringing the NPA into disrepute; committing fraud; and be-

having in an unprofessional and dishonest manner. She had allegedly assisted key allies of disgraced National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi secure an arrest warrant against Advocate Gerrie Nel (now prosecuting Oscar Pistorius).

At the time that Jiba signed the warrant for Nel's arrest, he was days away from arresting Selebi on corruption and other charges. Jiba authorised the warrant against Nel on the grounds that he had "interfered" in the prosecution and investigation of allegedly crooked prosecutor Cornwell Tshavhungwa. The court dismissed the charges agaist Nel when Jiba and her backers were unable to present any evidence of interference.

Nel's subsequent damages claim is believed to have been settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.

The investigation into Nel was conducted by Crime Intelligence boss Richard Mdluli – then Deputy Commissioner of Police in Gauteng. Inexplicably, Mdluli (while he was acting deputy police chief in Gauteng) used a Potchefstroom team to investigate and arrest Nel. Jiba used the same team to arrest Booysen and the Cato Manor policemen, and to assemble evidence for their prosecution.

In Jiba's disciplinary charge sheet, the NPA alleged she had acted in revenge for Nel's role in the fraud conviction of her lawyer husband, Booker Nhantsi, in the Mthatha High Court in 2005. Nhantsi had stolen R200,000 of clients' money. In 2010 Zuma expunged the criminal record of Jiba's husband – allowing him to practise law again.

In his memoir, My Second Initiation, former NPA boss Vusi Pikoli deals with Jiba's role in a chapter titled "Crooks protecting crooks". He says putting her in charge of the NPA was "astonishing" in the light of her involvement in the engineered arrest of Nel.

"If you look at how her husband was given a presidential pardon, it leaves you with the impression that people are rewarded for what they do for the powers-that-be, irrespective of their competence."

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Noseweek April 2014

Shortly before their "death squad" exposé, *Sunday Times* investigative journalists Stephan Hofstatter and Mzilikazi wa Afrika flew to Durban to confront the main target of their investigation, Major General Johan Booysen with a devastating piece of evidence: a disk loaded with gruesome photographs, bizarrely interspersed with a few shots of partying policemen. Booysen recorded the conversation.

After greeting the pair, he tells them he knows that their photographs came from

a police colonel [Madhoe, quoted by the Sunday Times as one of the sources of their story] who had earlier been arrested for corruption and attempted blackmail.

He is heard telling them that the disk does not only contain images of suspects shot by Cato Manor detectives; some of the images are of suspects who were shot by policemen from other units and that they happened to be included because they related to crime scenes which were being investigated by Cato Manor detectives.



Booysen mentions specifically that a gruesome image (below) of a number of men lying dead in the back of a bakkie was the result of a bloody gun battle between an armed robbery gang and the Durban South Dog Unit. The Sunday Times nevertheless ran the picture to illustrate their story accusing Booysen of heading a Cato Manor death squad, with the caption:

Unidentified bodies, allegedly killed by police 'hit squads' in January 2009. This was one of the police pictures circulating among top

cops in recent weeks, supposedly providing incriminating evidence of assassinations.

The photograph is date-stamped 30 January 2009.

Had the Sunday Times's award-winning team done a simple internet search on the date and the words "shootout" and "Durban" they would quickly have established that the photograph did not show the work of hit squads, nor was it in any way linked to Cato Manor. ▼



■ The famous front-page party picture with which the Sunday Times launched its series. Their headline reads: Shoot to kill... and have a beer with your mates afterwards. Members of the Cato Manor organised crime unit celebrate just hours after killing five robbery suspects on the N3 highway near Camperdown.

The party was in fact a combined bachelors and retirement celebration for Captain Eugene "WP" van Tonder, planned at least a month earlier. The blurred faces are, with one exception, those of civilian friends invited to the party. The party was meant to start at 5pm.

Nico Potgieter, a civilian in the picture whose face is blurred out, told *Noseweek* he arrived on time only to find that most of Van Tonder's guests had rushed out to arrest a suspected robbery gang en route to a planned robbery.

Said another guest:

"Myself and some others got there early. We lit the fire and waited, but it was only very much later that everyone arrived back. Some of the guys simply left as soon as they got back. It had been raining, people were tired and wet. The party was a bit of a disappointment."

Significantly, this incident too does not feature in the charges brought against any of the Cato Manor policemen.

Noseweek April 2014

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CASH

Illegal drugs: Eastern Cape health officials try to milk TB patients

By Chris Bateman

NLY INTERVENTION BY THE Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), prevented the government and top health officials in the Eastern Cape from rolling out an untested and unapproved "immune-boosting remedy" to all local TB hospitals. The rollout appears to have been a cynical, predatory scheme that would have raked in millions for a politically well-connected "natural health" products company.

The interdict, it seems, has safe-guarded thousands of unsuspecting TB sufferers from being used as human guinea pigs in a potentially dangerous drug trial. At least a dozen patients at primary health care clinics had already been illegally given the unregistered, unapproved drug after being reassured that it was an approved "pilot" scheme.

Early in March, inspectors from the Medicines Control Council (MCC) swooped on various provincial health offices and private premises in and around Port Elizabeth, effectively impounding a R1.4 million consignment of the bovine colostrum-based "Immutides Spray".

Immutides had been evaluated and turned down because of "genuine safety concerns" by two national MCC committees (one for veterinary products and the other for complementary medicines). The so-called "immune-booster" remedy has also been discredited as having "no therapeutic value" by the health NGO, Section 27.

But representatives of the importers and a district health clinician had punted the spray to the bewildered clinical chiefs of the Nelson Mandela Bay district's three TB hospitals, who were summoned to Port Elizabeth to be told about its purported immune-boosting properties, allegedly established from a trial on a small number of HIV-positive patients in Nigeria.

Noseweek sources said a Dr Francois Fourie, in charge of primary health clinics in the region, had appeared "to know more about the product than the two guys from the marketing company" and he had suggested to the TB hospital chiefs that they should use unspent money from their pharmacy budgets for large stocks of the unapproved "medication". One hospital was told it should buy enough to roll out to all patients for six months, while the other two (one of which is exclusively for multi-drug resistant TB patients), were encouraged to invest in a two-

year supply.

The attempted scam is the latest in a long litany involving top politicians and senior management in the province – with national government until now seemingly powerless to intervene effectively. For the third year in a row, none of the province's departments received a clean audit, with local Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) chairperson, Max Mhlati, declaring in March that "there are no consequences for non-compliance". He baldly told his legislature: "the budget is there, but the people involved in corruption are [also] here today to see where they're going to get a cut out of this budget".

The directors of Saulez Agencies CC, suppliers of the spray, include a former member of the provincial legislature and former ANC chief of the Nelson Mandela Bay region, Mike Xego.

The criminal investigation, in terms of the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act and the Public Service Act, is focused on an official directive sent to the three provincial TB hospitals in the region by Dr Lulekwa Mayekiso, a relatively junior physician with little administrative experience. Mayekiso was recently parachuted into the influential position of District Health Manager. She is the daughter of Dr Elizabeth-Mamisa Chabula-Nxi-



weni, chief operating officer for the entire Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (ie greater Port Elizabeth).

Mayekiso's predecessor, Dr Tommy Oliver, resigned over a series of senior management directives that were "inappropriate to his budget" and has since emigrated.

Once in the job, Mayekiso attached now-discredited documentation purporting to give official "approval" for the TB "immune booster" spray to a directive to all senior managers involved in caring for patients in the TB hospitals. The hospitals were ordered to dispense the spray to all patients for the duration of treatment, and issue them with prescriptions upon discharge.

The rollout directive, a copy of which is in *Noseweek's* possession, was addressed to the three TB hospital CEOs;

uate the spray's effect when added to the treatment regime of TB patients.

Mayekiso's directive asks for a final written report by the end of October, to be evaluated by the NMBHD's top management "for future use of the Immutides Spray". She asks her underlings: "please note" the remedy's use "will continue during the compiling and evaluation of the research report," and concludes: "it is with great excitement that I give this directive to investigate every means at our disposal to facilitate better outcomes for our TB patients... and may God bless our effort".

Noseweek's sources said doctors who questioned the rollout were told, if they wanted to work in the region, "they need to learn to accept directives".

Some years ago, Xego approached

Dr Siva Pillay who was then the provincial head of health, in an initial bid to get approval for an "Immutides" rollout. Pillay recalls: "I told him he had to go through the proper channels and obtain the right approvals before it was given to any patients... that international norms and standards must be followed".

Xego is understood to have then approached the MEC for Health, Sicelo Gqobana, (with whom Pillay had a feud over healthcare delivery and suspicious departmental practices).

Gqobana's view was apparently that "black business people are being frustrated". It was after this that Nomalanga Makwedini, the province's then Acting Deputy Director General for Clinical Management Services, issued a document, dated March 20, 2012,







the regional drug depot manager; the Nelson Mandela Bay Health District's (NMBHD) senior clinical manager; its deputy directors for TB Managementand Clinical Support Services; plus the District Pharmacist.

Just weeks before the order was to have taken effect on March 1, the TAC got wind of the scheme and sent an urgent letter to the provincial and national directors-general of health: doctors Thobile Mbengashe and Precious Matsotso. The officials most intimately involved in the scheme were soon scurrying for cover, while protesting that "nothing had actually happened" and denying that any patient had been put on the drug while on their watch.

Bewildered district TB chiefs had questioned the missive, which also ordered a six-month "research project," (again, effective from March 1) to evalThere's no evidence of clinical trials in reputable scientific journals

with the subject line: "Acknowledgement of approval – Immutides Spray". In it she "confirms" that "Saulez Agencies CC applied to the National Department of Health (NDoH) for approval to register and supply Immutides Spray as a complementary medicine."

She then says that, according to documents received from the NDoH (which were attached to the communiqué), "permission has been granted for Immutides Spray to be imported and sold as complementary medicine in accordance with Government Gazette Notice 23128".

This was despite two MCC committees and her own provincial Therapeutics Committee having rejected the remedy

Shown copies of the attached document emanating from his NDoH office which purports to give approval for the

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importation and sale of the spray (as a "complementary" medicine), Griffith Molewa, DG in the Inspectorate of Law Enforcement in the Pharmaceutical and Related Product Regulation Management Unit, said it did no such thing.

He said that Saulez Agencies had submitted an application in terms of legislation aimed at quantifying the types of complementary medicines on the South African market, plus the company had sought permission to the port authorities to release their shipment of Immutide.

"That doesn't give them the right to sell or distribute – it just saves them harbour storage costs and enables them to put it into private quarantine. The only body that can authorise distribution and sale is the Medicines Control Council. And that is only after you've provided data substantiated by

a clinical trial for which you must register with the MCC."

Molewa said the legislation cited in documents attached to Mayekiso's directive was in any event rendered obsolete by a law introduced in November last year. Called an MDR 20.8, the newly-required approval gives a timetable of when to register products. "The second (provincial) document you quote as giving acknowledgement of approval is simply wrong," he added.

Quackdown, an internet database run by the Section 27 NGO, lists Immutides as "implausible," labelling it an untested HIV treatment and claiming that, "disturbingly," a local distributor had introduced it to four orphanages in the Eastern Cape in 2012.

An internet search reveals that the spray is manufactured by Micro-Basics in the US and imported by Mark Kane-Berman, a director of Microbasics Africa and Nutribasics, leading local suppliers of animal-feed additives, based in Standerton. The TAC's letter of complaint says any documentation suggesting that Immutides Spray was found to be safe and effective by the MCC was "a gross misrepresentation of the facts".

An exhaustive TAC search on the National Institute of Health's PubMed database discovered no clinical trials conducted on human beings using bovine colostrum. Nor is there evidence of clinical trials published in reputable scientific journals supporting the use of this product in human beings with HIV or TB.

In its letter to the two health ministers, the TAC urges them to stop the project immediately to safeguard patients, to probe why the directive was

We didn't know, won't say and don't care

THE PIVOTAL PLAYERS IN THE IMMUTIDE SPRAY ROLLOUT RESPOND:

● Mike Xego, former ANC member of the Eastern Cape legislature and director of importer/distributor Saulez Agencies CC, spat expletives as he insisted that central and provincial government officials had assured him that all documentation and authorisations were in order for him to market Immutide Spray as an "immune-booster" for TB and HIV patients.

He vowed to sue the national government for "misleading" him after he imported "nearly R2 million-worth" of the spray. He had, he said, cancelled plans to destroy the (then, still impounded) consignment (because it had passed its expiry date), after "further research" by his Arizona suppliers revealed that its lifespan could be extended another 12 months.

"I'm a layman that does business. Right now I'm fucking stuck with stock that has just a 12-month lifespan. Who's to pay for it? I complied with everything they asked for, going from office to office; to Bhisho, to National – all responded positively. Must I be Gupta'd so easily? ... I don't want to talk about this shit anymore. I was

helping two white boys (his fellow directors, Guy Saulez and Gary Karison) who were going to be stuck on their own."

Xego said he left "the boring mediocrity" of the Eastern Cape legislature in 1999 to focus on business ventures, adding: "I'm not a parliamentarian – I'm a money-maker." As for those NDoH documents now in dispute: "Who cares? I had permission to procure. Their systems are not my systems. They're not my friends... I don't care about them... I've done nothing wrong. If people in the townships want this medicine, I'm going to give it to them."

● Dr Lulekwa Mayekiso grudgingly accepted responsibility for the controversial directive, but insisted that she had initially viewed it as "a proposal," or "internal instruction". Her district clinical manager, Dr Francois Fourie, had asked her to write it. "I don't have an office manager, so he did it for me…"

She said the first to contact her about Immutide was the company owner Guy Saulez, "in about November".

"He said he had a contract with the (Nelson Mandela) metro, supplying the clinics, but that it had been abruptly stopped."

"He said he'd issued the directive after several subsequent meetings with my team.

"My mistake was in not understanding the word 'directive' and all those issues meaning I'd overruled everybody. I told Dr Fourie it's not supposed to go out without me knowing. It was prematurely sent out."

Put to her that it appeared as a cynical, predatory money-making venture, she responded; "Yo!... no... In my district there's a lot of TB crisis... we have a lot of MDR patients and it's growing. I was just concerned about the patients. I didn't even think about the money."

She confirmed that senior officials from the National Department of Health's law enforcement office had recently visited her office to follow up the directive.

"I didn't feel any stress. It was a normal process... part of their duties." Mayekiso said she was not considering resigning. "If I regret anything, I regret having met with them (Saulez Agencies). If they didn't come, I wouldn't have written all these things."

● **Dr Francois Fourie** responded: "I'm not going to really discuss anything or give my opinion above hers (Mayekiso)... Even if I have a different

issued and whether Mayekiso was suited to her position. Requesting copies of all documents relating to the Eastern Cape Department of Health's purchase of Immutide, the TAC said the acquisition was "irrational and potentially in contravention of the Public Finance Management Act".

National DG of Health and former MCC chief, Precious Matsoso, told Noseweek that Mayekiso's directive was in contravention of the medicines and public service acts. "We are requesting records from individuals involved. They broke the law, I can tell you that upfront. It is clear some strange things have been happening". Her MCC team was gathering evidence and criminal charges would follow, she said.

The national health department document attached to Mayekiso's directive

opinion, I'm not going to voice it. I'm not going to change the integrity I have because somebody else changes theirs... No matter how badly I want to answer that question... to save my behind. I hope the senior people can answer the major questions and if they can't, they can instruct me to speak to you."

Noseweek put his response to Mayekiso, who said she'd "think about it".

● Nomalanga Makwedini, Acting Deputy Director of Eastern Cape Clinical Services at the time (now CEO of the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital), said Xego had been referred to her by Dr Thabo Sibeko, the Eastern Cape deputy director for strategic planning in health. Xego had documentation from the national health department which appeared to support his contention that the MCC had approved the Immutide Spray.

"It looked to me that what was being proposed would be good for the patient and I had no objection. The document was on an official NDoH letterhead and seemed authentic. I knew that Xego would still have to go via the required national tender process, so there was nothing untoward."

Health MEC Sicelo Goobana was unavailable for comment.

saying Immutide "may be imported and sold as Complementary Medicine in South Africa," was suspect and the national (law enforcement) official involved would be questioned, Matsoso said. "Inspectors don't issue authorisations – the product had already been rejected, so she had no authority whatsoever to issue that letter."

On the narrowly averted drug rollout and "pilot", she said: "As clinical people, we can't do that on human subjects without an ethics panel or MCC approval of the trial protocol. The MCC says it's an unregistered medicine. They also undermined the procurement process. We never called for tenders for that. How did they come about buying it? I say it was fraudulent."

Noseweek sources said provincial officials had "insisted" the remedy was MCC-registered. One clinician pressured during the attempted rollout commented: "The spray would have cost more per-patient-dosage than it costs monthly for the equivalent ARVs - they were targeting the most vulnerable patients lying in TB hospitals, the sickest of the sick..."

Xego has since threatened to sue the health department for "stringing him along", and leading him to believe he could distribute his company's product. To which Matsoso retorted: "He's welcome to go ahead and sue us. We have a duty and a responsibility to protect the public."

One Eastern Cape clinician told Noseweek off the record that using bovine colostrum without pasteurisation ran the risk of re-introducing bovine TB into the population via nosocomial (hospital) infections. Alternatively, pasteurising meant all antibodies contained in the milk-based product were rendered ineffective. "I'm not familiar with their manufacturing process but I do know that much," he said.

Veteran and trustworthy Noseweek sources in the Eastern Cape health department said that the probe would be "papering over the cracks" if it simply "scapegoated" a few individual officials in the national and provincial departments of health.

"This thing leads directly to Bhisho head office where the authority was initially falsified and manipulated senior heads must roll," one added.

See box for responses of those implicated in the scheme. \blacksquare





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Update

Fencing with the actual truth

Bruce ROPERTY DEVELOPER multi-billion-rand Winship's building firm, Grid Construction, habitually short-changes many of its sub-contractors and appears not to care if it drives them to bankruptcy – as exposed by Carte Blanche. In nose173 it was revealed that Winship's dubious business ethics fly in the face of the values he claims to promote as a trustee of pop evangelist Angus Buchan's Shalom Ministries, and as a former spokesman for Buchan.

It seems Buchan has been too busy with other matters to address the issue (see box). But, as everyone knows, the Lord works in mysterious ways: where his professed messenger has not found the time to go, the Master Builders' Association (MBA) has stepped in and is preparing to put Winship back on the straight and narrow.

Shortly after *Noseweek's* report appeared, one of Grid Construction's victims, Rod McDonald, contacted us to say he'd laid a formal complaint against Bruce Winship and Grid Construction with Master Builders, KwaZulu-Natal.

McDonald's company, Fence Craft, did some work for Winship in 2011 and 2012 and suffered the usual indignity of being paid short – and late. Fence Craft eventually went on site and removed some of the fencing that had not been paid for, upon which Winship threatened to lay charges of theft.

McDonald then registered his complaint with the MBA and they in turn approached Winship for comment. On 23 January Winship forwarded MBA a report from one of his employees, Craig Bruton, giving a summary of the account including amounts withheld for retention and damages, ostensibly leaving no outstanding payments due.

Bruton's report commenced with "After some investigation into the allegations by Fence Craft, I report back the following facts:" and he concluded: "It seems that Fence Craft's position is somewhat self-inflicted." Bruton com-

mented: "They appear to be very opinionated about the way they have been treated by Grid but have done nothing to help themselves out of their predicament. To suggest a mutually beneficial solution going forward Fence Craft should return and instal the stolen panels [the panels removed by Fence Craft after non-payment by Grid] and rectify their snags... the alternative suggestion is less amicable: Grid will then officially place them on terms (five days per Joint Building Contracts Committee). Failure to correct their errors within this period would permit Grid to rectify the situation at their expense. I believe the outstanding R121/2K will be depleted in this event." He attached photographs of the supposed shoddy, damaged work.

The MBA bundled this response off to Fence Craft, who responded swiftly. "The main photos supplied by Craig Bruton are not of our fencing. The fencing shown in the 1st and third photos with untreated welding etc was erected on an adjacent boundary by another contractor. The second photo is work done by Fence Craft as a separate contract directly with the client, which was paid in full. The damages claim is a complete fabrication. Despite repeated requests for Grid to provide us with proof of damages nothing was ever recorded on the interim certificates and Grid were unable to supply any evidence of damage. An email from Elphick Proome Architects (EPA.) instructing Grid to provide proof or pay was totally ignored.

On 10 March Master Builders advised Fence Craft that their mail had been forwarded to the MBA attorneys who had all their Grid Construction files. *Noseweek* has it on good authority that this is because of a decision to prosecute Grid. Being, well, nosey, we called Ross Stembridge of MBA.

"I'm afraid I can't divulge anything about that," he rather predictably replied. "If you can call back in about two weeks we should be able to tell you more."



about the misconduct of construction tycoon Bruce Winship, one of preacher Angus Buchan's biggest supporters, we received a call from another Buchan supporter, asking why we had "dragged" Buchan into it – by using a picture of the famous Mighty Men evangelist. "He has nothing to do with Winship's business affairs and I have every faith that, probably as we are speaking, Mr Buchan has Winship in his office for a serious talking-to."

Noseweek tried calling Buchan, without success. His PA, "Jilly", said her boss was very busy but if we called back in a week-or-so he might be able to fit us in. There had been no call-back as we went to press.

Meantime we did a bit of investigating to see why Buchan was so busy he could not take a call from *Noseweek*. Having *Faith like Potatoes* is fine, as long as you know who you're placing your faith in.

In 1980 Buchan founded Shalom Ministries with the aim of preaching throughout Africa. Over the next two decades he ran a home for orphaned and abandoned children on his farm and founded a Christian farm school for about 200 pupils.

The first of his Mighty Men gatherings in 2004 attracted 240 men and boys but by 2008 at least 60,000 men travelled from all over South Africa to attend. The last two such events, held on his farm in 2009 and 2010, were claimed to have drawn between 200,000 and 300,000 men. Since then he's delegated the con-

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The brotherhood of evangelic fervour

ferences to different groups who hold smaller gatherings throughout South Africa, and, for the past couple of years, in Australia. Britain and the US.

The Angus Buchan brand is now massive, with huge cash flows. This year's Mighty Men conference in March for the Joburg region charged R250 a person for the weekend, with meal vouchers adding R150 to the cost and T-shirts, the same again. Buchan has now farmed out the running of the Mighty Men events in South Africa.

In recent years he has co-written and published over a dozen books, acted (as himself) in two juiced-up autobiographical movies, established Mighty Men conferences in Australia, the US and the UK, all the while running his Aids orphanage and various education programmes. He's also come under scrutiny for his faith healing antics, branded publicity stunts.

Buchan claims to have laid hands on an apparently dead woman who had been struck by lightning, after which she rose and walked. And he tells of an occasion when, rather bizarrely, he was preaching to 5,000 Muslims. "Nothing was happening and the Holy Spirit says to me 'Stop preaching. They're not listening to you.' I looked down and **By Gavin Foster**

right in the front row there was a man sitting with two crutches. He had a stiff leg. I felt the Holy Spirit say 'Go down and pray for that man and that miracle will turn the people'."

Buchan says he put his Bible down and told the people what he intended doing. "I went down there and we had instant attention. From 5,000 people that were milling around and moving in and out, there was absolute silence. I anointed him in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And I said, 'Do you want Jesus to heal you?' And he said, 'Yes, please.'

"We prayed for him. I bent down – 5,000 people watching – and I took hold of his leg. I tried to bend his knee and nothing happened, it was solid. I felt the Holy Spirit say to me, 'Bend his leg' and I bent his leg like that, and something gave way inside, his leg came free, and he was moving his leg.

"He chucked his crutches and was running up and down and jumping and shouting for joy. After that, I didn't have to preach another word. I made the altar call and 5,000 people ran forward to give their life to Christ." You could lose your head for that in some parts of the world.

Angus Buchan's magnetism hasn't gone unnoticed in that most lucrative of markets for charismatic teachers, preachers, prophets and faith-healers: the US. A number of them have been circling Buchan hungrily since his Mighty Men conferences made international headlines a few years back.

Televangelist Rick Joyner has furiously punted Buchan on television. The militantly right-wing preacher told viewers that for more than a decade he had been asking God to send messengers specifically from Africa to America because they were "very important for our destiny". Buchan and he had both spoken at a conference in Pretoria and Buchan had afterwards accompanied him to his room and told him of his huge respect for America and how disappointed he was in the way it was maligned by the rest of the world. Buchan, he said, would soon be on his way to the US for the first of many visits.

Joyner, who described the ex-Rhodesian of Scottish descent as an Afrikaans South African, and punted his film, incorrectly calling it *Faith like "a potato"*, caused a ruckus in the US by calling for a military takeover and martial law as the only way to save the country from President Barack Obama.

One of Joyner's closest cronies is heavily-tattooed reformed alcoholic, drug addict and convicted child-sex offender-turned-evangelist Todd Bentley who, as a faith healer, has drawn much criticism for hitting, kicking and knocking down the people who come to him for help. In 2012 Bentley was barred from entering the UK lest he undermine the public good, so he came to Tongaat near Durban instead, where he put on his show for three weeks in April and May last year.

Interviewed by Joyner on God TV after this South African adventure, Bentley told how worshippers (including his new wife – the one he left his old one for in 2008) had been blessed by a shower of gold and diamonds descending upon them after his Tongaat revival.

"You could see the Cloud of Glory with open eyes and it rained gold. When I say it rained gold, Rick, I actually saw it – it almost looked like snow-flakes of gold coming down."

Wonder if anyone thought to film the miracles on their cellular phones? ■

New deal looms of car repair costs

South African motorists could soon benefit from significant savings on vehicle parts. By Gavin Foster

OSEWEEK READERS SHOULD BY now have more than an inkling of the remarkably cavalier attitude that motor manufacturers display towards the rights of South African car owners regarding after-sales service, spares prices, workshop repairs and factory recalls. Over the years manufacturers and importers have become increasingly militant in their efforts to force customers to pay dealers' hugely exploitative prices for services and parts that are often available much more cheaply from other sources.

Punishments, visited upon those with the temerity to try to save money by shopping elsewhere, have included cancellation of warranties. And horror stories abound of franchises refusing to work on cars that have had any repairs carried out, no matter how small or irrelevant, by "unauthorised" workshops. This, according to numerous accounts,

sometimes happens irrespective of whether there is still a paid-up service or maintenance plan applicable on the vehicle.

But the industry worldwide is now no longer satisfied with having its fangs lodged in the customers' jugulars for only the period of the warranty and service plan, usually between three and five years.

Les McMaster, chairman of the 2,300-strong Motor Industry Workshop Association (Miwa), a subsidiary of the Retail Motor Industry organisation (RMI), says that for more than a decade the manufacturers have subtly introduced computerised coding of components, and that coding is known only to them.

"This is happening more and more and you, as an aftermarket repairer, cannot replace or repair those parts without access to the coding and the very sophisticated electronic equipment necessary to use them," he says. "After the vehicles' warranties expire, only about 30% of owners will ever visit a dealership again for service or repairs. The manufacturers and importers want to retain that work for their own dealers' workshops for as long as they can and the aftermarket service sector runs the risk of being left out of the servicing structures purely because of the manufacturers' jealous and callous attitude towards them and their customers."

Most vehicle components are today sourced from specialist manufacturers and are usually available from independent outlets at a fraction of the price charged by franchise dealers for the exact same thing emanating from the same factory. Noseweek recently came across a 2002 Honda motorcycle fuel pump, for which the agents quoted R10,400. Because delivery time was 15-20 working days, in desperation the stranded biker went to Diesel-Electric in Pietermaritzburg with the sample unit and was elated to get the identical Bosch pump for R640, delivered the following day.

If the industry has its way, anybody in a similar position in a few years' time would find that the replacement pump could not be activated without the vehicle manufacturer's expensive digital "permission".

The Right to Repair (R2R) campaign has been growing in strength internationally for over a decade. Miwa has now thrown South Africa's hat into the ring by joining the Global Right to Repair Coalition. While R2R is in its infancy in this country, the auto manu-



GREATER CAPE TOWN 101.3 ATLANTIC SEABOARD 97.1 FISH HOEK/NOORD HOEK 107.9 HOUTBAY 94.7



facturers and importers would be foolish to ignore it in the hope it will go away.

In the US, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, the Association of Automakers (Global), the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association and the Coalition for Automotive Repair Equality announced in January their collective acceptance of a national agreement to ensure consumer choice in post-warranty auto repairs – decisively ending years of debate on R2R.

This came about after the Commonwealth of Massachusetts finalised legislation in November last year, allowing citizens access to "a competitive vehicle repair market" in which all of the information, tools and software necessary to work on modern vehicles must be made available to independent repairers at the same price as it costs franchise dealers. With Massachusetts falling, the auto manufacturers decided to negotiate the best deal they could nationally.

Legislation concerning the right to repair – already firmly entrenched in Canada – is well under way in Australia, Europe and the UK.

While the local industry isn't going to surrender without a fight, it would be unwise of car manufacturers to refuse to negotiate. They have some concerns about poor quality aftermarket components finding their way into quality products, but these issues are already being addressed in the US and other countries.

Warranties will be another area of concern for them if cars are serviced elsewhere, but this is also controllable with a little thought and effort.

"The right to repair says that a vehicle can be serviced by any reputable registered workshop using the right parts and trained staff. If you buy a new BMW and are happy taking it to the agents, that's fine. But then you get another customer who has his vehicles serviced by an independent workshop he's known and trusted for years but who cannot use it while the vehicle is under warranty," says McMaster. "He's tied to the agent for the next three to five years."

There is a flipside for the franchise dealers as well; at present the manufacturers often don't allow them to work on other brands of car on their premises. With R2R, they can attract customers with any other makes of car.

How will all of this affect maintenance and service plans? The solution to that is simple: if you don't want them, don't pay for them.

"By law, manufacturers are not allowed to add them in as standard and make you pay for them; they should be optional," says McMaster.

"Look at the Consumer Protection Act. It says that they cannot force you to have your car serviced by them as part of the deal but the industry just ignores that — they build it into the price. If the customer buys the car with finance over five years, it works out to a lot of money you're paying upfront."

There's sure to be a lot of huffing and puffing from the industry about R2R, but Miwa is set to have their first meeting with the manufacturers and importers shortly.



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Sybrand van der Spuy, accountant, developer and owner of Cape Point Vineyards, intimidates his unhappy neighbours with a barrage of defiance, threats and emotional blackmail

YBRAND VAN DER SPUY, "gentleman winemaker" is a man who likes to get his own way. You'll find him in Noordhoek, Cape Town, where he owns Cape Point Vineyards. He has also been involved in several developments - making a variety of enemies along the way - one reason being that he's been known to use the developers' favourite race trick that goes something like this: Stop opposing my commercial plans or I'll put sub-economic housing here; I'll tell the poor you're depriving them of jobs; and I'll arrange for them to protest outside vour property.

Van der Spuy is equally firm with officialdom. In 2012, after the city issued an order that he stop hosting certain events at his wine estate, he sent a defiant email to various city officials and Noordhoek residents: The letter featured a range of "weapons" in his arsenal of persuasives – defiance, threats and emotional blackmail.

"Be advised we will not comply with the attached notice as we do not believe our activities are unlawful." He threatened: "I have from time to time alerted you that we have suffered damages regarding your actions and intend to claim it jointly and severally from you."

Then, adding a smidgeon of emotional blackmail: "I have written to you previously detailing that some of the proceeds would go to continue to feed a couple of thousand poor children in the area. They probably currently go to bed hungry every night because of your disgusting actions."

In 2011 Van der Spuy began hosting events at his vineyard. It started small, with picnics and the like, but has grown into something huge. In addition to the picnics (open daily), there are at least four events a week, including markets, food fairs and even a burger evening.

Some of these events attract up to 3,000 people. There is now even talk of Kirstenbosch-style concerts, as many as 12 a year.

The distress and anger of property owners in the area comes out very clearly in the following emails and postings (given Van der Spuy's reputation for bullying, anonymity has been requested):

- "Once again on Thursday night (7 November 2013) we had cars streaming down the Cape Point Vineyards road after 22h15 ...we have now put American shutters on our bedroom windows and we are still hearing the cars come down. Last night again, after the burger evening (Friday, 8 November) the cars were once again streaming down after 21h30."
- "This market... has a profound and detrimental effect on the daily life of its neighbours. Noise levels produced by thousands of people partying at the vineyards, cars driving up and down not 100 metres from our house, motorbikes revving, drunken shouting and now potentially music from so called 'charity' concerts... The quiet residential and very rural area of Noordhoek is being destroyed by the greedy profit motive of one individual... who regularly bullies, litigates

- and manipulates people in the community."
- This one was from a neighbour, in response to Van der Spuy's offer to pay for double glazing: "Neither I, nor my family... wish to be trapped in our houses all day behind double-glazed windows. I wish to enjoy the entire outdoors and peace and quiet which I enjoyed on my smallholding for decades before you arrived... Why don't you just stop making loud noises?"

Not only is Van der Spuy's conduct anti-social, it's illegal too. Although he did initially apply for permits for these events, the applications were turned down because of objections from the locals. So he's just stopped applying. On top of that, Van der Spuy's 2012 land use rezoning/commercial rights application - which involved building a restaurant - has not yet been granted. The city's Spatial Planning, Environment and Land Use Management Committee (Spelum) still has to make that call and the process has been slowed down by the objections. Meantime Van der Spuy has simply gone ahead and put up a building that is much larger than the one in the official application. Without approved plans. Without a completion certificate. Which presumably means there's no insurance on the building.

To defend himself, Van der Spuy has produced a written opinion from Werksmans Attorneys which goes something like this: the land use rezoning application has been taking far too long; the issue in these cases is simply one of desirability; the fact that building has



Although he initially applied for permits, the applications were turned down. So he simply stopped applying

started [and in fact is completed] without approval of the building plans in no way affects the issue of desirability, especially as an Environmental Impact Assessment was done and environmental approval was granted. So all's fine!

Van der Spuy is brazen about it all. On 26 September he sent an email to the Spelum committee that will decide his application. Again he began with a show of defiance: "I wish to alert you beforehand that we have commenced the erection of buildings... to this end please find attached a legal opinion from Werksmans....at the meeting with the Speaker I therefore alerted them that I was going to proceed with activities regardless."

Name-dropping (this bit refers to conditions the city imposed on one of Van

der Spuy's prior developments – conditions he thought absurd and successfully appealed against): "At the time I wrote to now Premier Zille that my granddaughter of six had more common sense... no one can run a business in this manner."

Again he threw in a dose of emotional blackmail: "About 70 employees depend on the application... [another] application... caters for another 70 employees... I have taken the decision that I would rather explain my commencement of activities to a judge than let 150 people be unemployed... in RSA each employed person supports 10 people... thus 15,000 people would go to bed hungry if I curtailed my activities."

An environmental group, the Noordhoek Environmental Action Group

(Neag), has filed a request with the city under the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Paja), asking for written reasons for its failure to close down a particular function that it had been alerted to — a birthday party for the Cape Community Newspapers group — that took place on 23 October last year.

It has also asked the city to bring a civil action against Van der Spuy requesting a demolition order.

The city seems to be up for it; on 4 November Ossie Gonsalves of the planning and building department wrote to Neag: "A request for authority to apply for an interdict and demolition order was forwarded to the legal office in October. I've confirmed today that the legal office is currently processing this request, obtaining the relevant sig-



natures and authorisation needed to launch the interdict."

But Neag fears that Van der Spuy's political connections may save him. In an email to the city, a Neag representative said: "It has come to my attention that Felicity Purchase (Ward Councillor) actually attended the function and seems to support what is happening there, despite being aware of the transgressions.

"I sincerely hope that politics does not influence the stipulated due process – I suspect certain politicians are actively supporting SvdS to get around the law and due process and could possibly be attempting to influence the decision-making of some officials."

To add to the intrigue, there's clearly friction between Purchase, (who attended the newspaper function), and the DA councillor for the neighbouring ward, Simon Liell-Cock, who is on the Spelum committee.

When Liell-Cock heard of the planned party for the newspaper group, he emailed the company: "I understand that you are holding your 60th at the Noordhoek vineyards. The function will be illegal and will be closed down... Find another legal venue."

This elicited a furious response. First Werksmans, in true Master of the Universe-style: "You appear to have taken a particular interest in this matter although the basis for this interest is not apparent... you are not the councillor for the ward... your SMS casts doubt on your objectivity as a member of Spelum... we would strongly advise you to desist from addressing correspondence to any of Cape Point Vineyards' current or prospective clients."

That was on 22 October. The following day Van der Spuy weighed in: "You have now consistently demonstrated

that you have no objectivity when dealing with matters where I am involved... I trust that you will recuse yourself from any future Spelum meeting where any application where I am involved in is tabled... I give you seven days to confirm your recusal as requested."

Making the message absolutely clear, Van der Spuy sent another email to Liell-Cock two days later: "Perhaps you should take stock of where you are: you are not going to close us down. Only a judge can do it and it ain't going to happen before my approvals are in place. You now know it and I know it. The only thing you have achieved... is to provide me with a legal basis to attack you should the need arise."

And then, of course, some emotional blackmail: "You have played a major role in achieving that the Southern Peninsula will not have a hospital... Tonight when you lie in bed know that people are going to die because of you... *Quo vadis* Simon?" (This is seemingly a reference to the fact that Liell-Cock at one stage opposed – on traffic considerations – an application by Van der Spuy to build a private hospital).

Councillor Purchase responded to Noseweek's questions of Van der Spuy's alleged influence, and of her having attended an illegal event as follows: "I am unaware of political pressure to overlook any transgressions... As far as I am aware Mr Van der Spuy is not a DA funder... I attended a private function as a guest in my private capacity as an advertiser with a publication that I had been associated with for 47 years... In doing so I neither condoned nor condemned Mr Van der Spuy's actions. That is the job of the court. I merely went to honour and celebrate the publication's 60th birthday."

Mark Wiley, the DA constituency head for the area, said: "I am not aware of any donations by Mr Van der Spuy to the party. They, if any, do not go via me... no matter relating to Mr Van der Spuy has been discussed nor tabled at

The Slapp suit

Shortly before going to print, Van der Spuy employed his favour\ ed strong-arm tactics once again, this time effectively closing down the local ratepayers' association, the Noordhoek Conservancy, a body of which he is a member.

Seemingly vexed by the fact that the conservancy wanted to change its constitution so as to exclude people who have outstanding issues with the City of Cape Town, and to ban proxy votes, Van der Spuy secured an interim interdict from the High Court in Cape Town on 3 March, blocking the holding of a Special General Meeting.

A letter sent to the association by Van der Spuy's lawyers, STTB (Werksmans no longer in favour?), prior to the court application made it very clear that he would be playing hard-ball. It said: "Should our client be forced into adopting such course of action [going to court] our client will seek an appropriate cost order as against the Conservancy as well as any member of the committee who involves himself or herself in opposing the relief sought."

This is, of course, an example of what Americans call a Strategic Litigation against Public Participation (Slapp) suit, an action brought by a developer to intimidate, and dissuade anyone from opposing their plans.

Outraged Noordhoek residents are responding in the only way they can without being sued – avoiding Cape Point Vineyards, and boycotting the estate's wines.

any DA branch or constituency meeting under my oversight. I also have full faith in the local ward councillors in that they do their jobs within the law and apply their minds fully when making decisions."

The city declined to comment on this matter. Van der Spuy, on the other hand, did not take that easy way out. He told *Noseweek* that the gist of his response was very simple: the city's officials are useless, corrupt, or both; they take far too long to make decisions; he, as a businessman, cannot afford to wait for them to make their decisions, which are invariably wrong and liable to be overturned on appeal.

It's worth mentioning that Van der

The Bully

Why are neighbours terrified?

On 2 December Van der Spuy had a lengthy telephone discussion with one of the people *Noseweek* has quoted anonymously. He persuaded her to withdraw comments she had posted on a website. She confirmed she had agreed to do so in an email the next day. Not good enough!

Van der Spuy responded by saying her comments were defamatory, that he had suffered damages, and that he had "non-negotiable" conditions. These included undertaking "for the next five years not to comment in any media (in any form) about my activities". And to pay a development trust R2,000 a month for 12 months: "I believe every white person in this country has an obligation to assist PDIs." She had until close of business to accept, failing which she would be sued.

She responded by saying that the talks were over, "as your present communication arguably constitutes harassment".

His response: "My lawyers will be in touch with you."

Van der Spuy says those who oppose his grand plans are corrupt, stupid or mad

Spuy has a big issue with the fact that when it came to the original application for Cape Point Vineyards, various conditions were imposed. For example it could not be open to the public, and the workforce could consist of no more than a winemaker and two others (seven during harvest time). These conditions were overturned on appeal.

Van der Spuy then wrote to tell *Noseweek* of his previous dealings in the area, including the Serina Kaolin Mine at Chapman's Peak and the charitable trust he founded to help the children of the Masiphumelele and Ocean View townships.

But he was short on facts about the issue at hand.

"The buildings are in accordance with our applications... applications have been amended over time... we would still be gatherer hunters if we haven't changed over time... we have submitted plans to council."

The question about insurance was ducked. Van der Spuy insisted that what he was doing enjoyed widespread local support. He sent *Noseweek* six emails from locals supporting his activities. This one from Xanthe Williams is representative: "I unreservedly congratulate you on the initiative and thank you for being so generous in sharing your beautiful property with the public and in particular, those of us

who live in Noordhoek... I hope that this market goes from strength to strength."

As for those who have opposed his grand plans, Van der Spuy told us that they're all corrupt, stupid or mad. Some examples:

City officials: "I believe city officials over an extended period of time have subverted due process, deliberately lied about our activities in various submissions, perpetrated fraud in one instance. These matters will fully be dealt with in ensuing litigation and I therefore at this stage do not wish to further elaborate on it."

Councillor Simon Liell-Cock: "He is biased and generally does not know what he is talking about when he pronounces on our affairs at Spelum... He is a close friend to one of the objectors... and made it his business to interfere in our activities even though he is not our ward councillor."

Neag: "It is a lunatic fringe NGO... I have publicly called Glenn Ashton (one of the people behind the organisation) a compulsive liar and hypocrite (you are welcome to publish my comments as the truth can never be defamatory)... They are a bunch of jokers (actually Ashton previously depicted himself as a clown in the Neag website)."

Larry Hutchins (an opponent apparently): "I understand the city's law enforcement has been told to ignore his

complaints in future. He fights with everybody... he is fighting with his brother... he even complained that the phone of one of his neighbours rang too loudly... I have once told him he is not unhappy with what I do. He is unhappy with life."

Brian Lanton (another dissident apparently): "He conducted an illegal factory on his property for years."

Van der Spuy says: "I have unconditionally offered the bottom part of the property to the city for sub-economic housing. It is a disgrace that thousands of people are living below the waterline in Masiphumelele. I do not apologise for my offer."

Basically, he said, he was a jolly good bloke, "a responsible citizen who adds value to society"; a man who wants to "conserve the environment for future generations and to grow the economy for the benefit of all".

And do you add value to the DA, Mr Van der Spuy? "I have never made any donations to the DA."

Given that there's to be no political interference, we'll no doubt shortly be reporting that the city has applied for an interdict and a demolition order.

Noseweek has learnt that the city's Spelum committee will soon be considering an application by Van der Spuy for "occasional use" rights, which means five events a month, and that this will be fiercely contested by locals. ■

What the Aussies can learn from us

When an idealistic young South African human rights lawyer, fresh out of apartheid South Africa, arrives in the relatively tame Antipodes, what does she do with her talents? Andrea Durbach (defence attorney in the infamous Upington 25 trial in the mid-1980s) found that Down Under there's still much to do on the human rights front. By Sue Segar

HEN I COME BACK TO South Africa and see how race is discussed – with such a robust understanding and a thrashing out of all the issues – I realise that Australia has a great deal to learn from South Africa."

Durbach 56, grew up in Cape Town, graduated from UCT and first came to public attention as the defence attorney in the infamous "Upington 25" trial. (See box, "The night hope died".)

What she's found on her more recent visits – in between witnessing the full range of South African issues: desperate unemployment; inequality; escalating protests; and brutal crimes – "is that at least people are thrashing out the raw issues related to race".

By comparison, she says, Australia is a country in deep denial about its serious race issues.

"Its fixation at the moment is about keeping refugees out because of a fear that we will be massively overrun by all these people fleeing ghastly sites of conflict all around the world.

"A disproportionate focus for Australians at present is asylum-seekers and refugees who try to flee to the country on unsafe boats in hazardous conditions – and we are forcing them back to horrendous worlds or intern them on neighbouring islands in inhumane camps. Our claim is that we are saving

them from drowning at sea. But what the debate seems to miss constantly – and I think it is deliberate – is that these actions are about racism, something Australians are not very good at addressing.

"South Africa, in contrast, faces its raw issues of race head on."

For several years, Durbach has been the director of the Australian Human Rights Centre at the University of New South Wales, and recently received the prestigious Law Award from the Australian Human Rights Commission for her work promoting human rights in Australia through the practice of law.

Durbach, according to former colleagues and friends, could have become a judge or a dean of law or held any comparable top legal position if she had stayed in South Africa.

But, in the early 1990s, as a promising young human rights lawyer, she added to South Africa's emigration statistics when she packed her bags and left for Sydney.

The last straw, prompting her decision to leave her home country, was when Anton Lubowski, the defence advocate with whom she was working in the late 1980s on the Upington 25 case, was assassinated. His murder came shortly after the people they were representing in the trial had been given leave to appeal the death sentences imposed on them for the "crowd" murder of a policeman.

Exhausted and devastated, Durbach decided to leave South Africa for Sydney, where her brother had settled.

Shortly after arriving in Sydney in 1989, Durbach joined the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) where she set up the Homeless Persons' Legal Service and led the establishment of the Public Interest Law clearing house.

While at the PIAC she also pioneered work on promoting justice for members of Australia's "Stolen Generations", and ran a number of key human rights cases related to disability discrimination and sex discrimination. She moved to the University of New South Wales Law Faculty in 2004 and was also appointed Deputy Sex Discrimination Commissioner for the Australian Human Rights Commission from 2011 to 2012.

Durbach believes her acute sensitivity after growing up under apartheid and her experience in fighting that inequality, means she looks at the Australian refugee crisis through that lens. "It is not about turning back the boats because we are worried people will drown, as terrible as that is. It is about turning back the boats because we are worried about people from the Muslim and African worlds coming to our country.

"Australia puts out the rhetoric that it is a "fair go" country which is egalitarian and "welcoming of other". But, in fact, the country is very defensive, very white and has done very badly in relation to its indigenous people.

"Australia has never been able to deal comprehensively or effectively or justly with the unequal lives of its Indigenous people, so how on earth will it deal with refugees?

"We have never resolved that crisis, either politically or socially or economically. There is no integration – and so I think that we can't actually become a country that's part of a global community until we sort that out. It is holding us back."

She believes that, if Australia does not face its issues of race head-on, "we won't evolve as a nation".

"I really believe it is time for the country to start maturing towards having a serious debate on race."

Key to her understanding of this is a "wonderful" book by Australian David Tacey, a Jungian literary scholar, called *Edge of the Sacred*.

"He talks about Australia as a nation perched on the edge of something sacred and what is holding it back from its full evolution is this [lack of] understanding of other – be it women, black people..."

Durbach believes that Australia's fear of the "other" is a historical and geographical phenomenon. "We really are so far away from everywhere else and so we are a very defensive nation. People talk about the success of multi culturalism; about how fabulous it is, for instance, that now there's a Vietnamese restaurant in a white neighbourhood and we have food, music and culture from other countries...

"But actually its not about integrating at a deep spiritual level – which I have seen happening in South Africa.

"In South Africa there is an honesty and authenticity, even if it is actually quite racist. People are even quite authentic about their racism. They don't try and cover it up and pretend they are not.

"Maybe that brazen authenticity comes from living under extremes, as South Africans have had to do. In Australia, people have not been forced into corners to actually grapple with some very tough stuff; where it has really been a matter of survival.

"When I first arrived in Australia, it was like arriving in a human rights shopping mall. I felt as if I was in human rights nirvana. It was incredible.



There was a Human Rights Commission, a Sex Discrimination Act, a Race Discrimination Act and soon to be a Disability Discrimination Act.

"I was sending all this legislation back to friends in South Africa and saying, 'You have to replicate this!' I thought it was amazing because I had never experienced this, growing up here. The most I had experienced was looking at the Bill of Rights in America. But after a while, I realised that, at some level, it was almost academic. "It was very impressive that the legislation was there, but there was also this big disparity between what there was on the statute books and in real life – and how the courts were reticent to draw on international principles, or take on board international human rights law arguments. We remain slightly uncomfortable with it."

Australia still doesn't have a bill of rights. "This is a nation that has a history of progressive legislation, yet we have chosen to say no to a bill of rights...

"I know people say, well, Zimbabwe has a bill of rights... and it is not such a fabulous country. But for me it is that question of when do you take the leap into a mature democracy? I believe we Australians are an immature nation and we have not taken the big step into adulthood which would mean saying, 'Of course we need a bill of rights'."

Throughout all this, says Durbach, "South Africa has been ever-present for me – in all the work I have done in

The night hope died

The story of the Upington trial and Andrea Durbach's role in it, is dramatically told in a documentary film, *A Common Purpose*, which received the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Sydney Film Festival in 2011.

Her life changed irrevocably when in 1988 she received a call from human rights advocate, Anton Lubowski who was deeply involved in Swapo's liberation movement in then South West Africa. He had been asked to represent 25 men and women from the black township of Paballelo outside the conservative white town of Upington.

The 25 had been more-or-less randomly rounded up to stand trial for the crowd murder of a municipal policeman, Lucas Sethwala, in November 1985, after armed police confronted a crowd that had gathered to protest about rents and other grievances. Those arrested were held culpable under the "common purpose" doctrine because they were part of a mob. If convicted, the 25 – ranging from teenagers to an elderly couple – faced the death penalty.

Lubowski was familiar with Durbach's reputation and asked her to be briefing attorney. She was 29 and had never done a murder trial. The legal team Durbach joined – which had not represented the accused at the initial trial – was effectively tasked with convincing the Supreme Court not to impose death sentences.

Just mastering the thousands of pages of the trial record was a herculean task in the few weeks available, let alone travelling to Upington to get acquainted with all the accused. Some were charged solely because they had been identified as being at the meeting on the soccer field.

Durbach recalls flying to Upington on a Sunday night to start taking instructions from her clients and their families as soon as possible. She had asked the relatives to come to the hotel, only to discover it was a "blankes alleen" (whites only) establishment.

"I immediately realised how enormously challenging this was going to be; I felt their deep pain but I knew that, for their sakes, I had to be upbeat and confident".

Accused Number 15, Boy Japhta, recalls how he was boosted from a deep despondency by Durbach, who promised to do all she could to prevent capital punishment.

The judge gave the legal team nine months to establish extenuating circumstances that might prevent his passing the death sentence.

The outrageousness of the charges comes through strongly in the documentary, which revisits some of the accused years after they were acquitted.

One of the accused, Xoliswa Dube was pregnant when she was arrested – and gave birth to a daughter, named Innocentia, during the trial. Durbach recalls the baby "sitting like a doll" in court with relatives. "She would get so excited when her mom came up the stairs from the court holding cells below the court."

Also accused were Eveline de Bruyn and her husband Gideon Madlongwane, who happened to be at the meeting to discuss rental issues. An illiterate woman with bad arthritis, De Bruyn maintained her innocence to the last and was "raw with fury" about the charges and the fact that she was separated from her children.

That hearing continued for four months. Lubowski and Durbach, all the while, were being closely watched by security police and had their files tampered with – even in their hotel rooms.

Lubowski was still caught up in Namibia's liberation struggle and frequently made trips overseas to raise support for the cause.

Then came the day in May 1989 when 14 of the 25 who were convicted for murder were sentenced to death.

"The judge allowed each accused to address the court. They did so with such incredible humility. All spoke of their desire to live so that they could walk the streets in a free South Africa."

Durbach urgently set about drumming up international pressure on the South African government not to execute her clients. In September 1989, while on a trip to London for this cause, she received news that the chief justice had granted conditional leave to appeal 21 of the 25 convictions – including all those facing the gallows.

She returned to South Africa elated and could not wait to call Lubowski to discuss the news. But before she could do so, in the middle of her family's welcome-home celebration dinner, she received a call from the journalist John Carlin to say that Anton Lubowski had been shot dead in Namibia.

"My world seemed to end. I just want-

Australia. It informs all my thinking, the angles I bring to things, my teaching..."

So, is there nothing that Australia might have to offer South Africa by way of example? Maybe. More recently Durbach has been looking into violence against women and reparation and how societies need to start addressing what gives rise to cycles of violence.

"Most particularly I am looking at conflict settings. I've been consulting

to the Attorney General's department in Australia looking at sexual violence, harassment and bullying, and at reparations in that context; how to create systemic and cultural change in institutions like the army and police. And the results of our work have been transformative."

Overwhelmed by a pandemic of violence involving the police and against women and children, South Africans could well find inspiration in Andrea Durbach's latest work in Australia.



ed to rewind everything... I didn't want to know the details..."

Lubowski's killers have never been identified, although there are strong indications the apartheid government's so-called Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) was responsible.

Soon after his death, with 14 of her clients still on death row, a broken Durbach left for Australia. She had a brother living there and life in South Africa had just become too much.

The Upington 14 sat on death row for two years awaiting their appeal. Meanwhile Durbach worked as a lawyer in Sydney during the day and on the South African case at night.

On May 29, 1991, she returned to South Africa to attend the appeal. Twenty-one of the 25 murder convictions were overturned and all 14 death sentences commuted to prison terms. They were later released as political prisoners.



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IMBABWE HAS CONFISCATED THE platinum and copper interests of Hsieh Ping-sung without compensation after a fall-out with President Robert Mugabe and his family, Africa Confidential learned recently. Mugabe and Hsieh, a Taiwanese-born South African, are locked in a legal battle in Hong Kong over a flat which Mugabe claims was held for him in trust by Hsieh's company, Cross Global, but which Hsieh now says he owns.

Hsieh was also involved in a legal dispute in Harare with Grace Mugabe over the delivery of some lorries three years ago.

Hsieh's South African lawyer, Mannie Witz, confirmed that Hsieh had lost the mining licences because of the row with the Mugabes. The president is suing Hsieh, who is also known as Jack Hsieh, and Cross Global in Hong Kong over House Number Three at JC Castle, a luxury gated development on Shan Tong Road, named after film star Jackie Chan.

Mugabe spent about US\$5 million on the property in June 2008, which was registered in the name of Cross Global, according to Britain's Sunday Times in 2009. Mugabe's daughter Bona Mugabe used a flat in the complex when she was a student. Hsieh was the sole shareholder of Cross Global in 2010. In that year, he bought the property from Cross Global for the same price that Mugabe had paid in 2008, according to Land Registry records. Mugabe denied owning the

property in 2009, saying he was renting it for his daughter.

Africa Confidential reported in September 2011 that Hsieh had handled a number of transactions in Asia on behalf of the Mugabe family. Among others, these had included the purchase of their pied à terre, by then valued at \$7 million (R74m) in a Hong Kong retirement complex and a mansion where they stay on their frequent Asian visits. Their daughter Bona had lived there while studying in Hong Kong.

Hsieh had persuaded the Mugabes that by purchasing the property in his name they would avoid damaging publicity. But by 2011 he was rumoured to be refusing to transfer the property from his into Grace Mugabe's name, but his reasons for this were unclear.

The Harare government, acting for Mugabe, has now claimed in a Hong Kong court that Cross Global holds the property in trust. Harare is asking the court to rule that Zimbabwe has a "100% beneficial interest" in the property and to order Cross Global and Hsieh to hand it over, according to the South China Morning Post.

Cross Global acquired its platinum mining rights in a joint venture with the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation called Northridge Platinum, which was incorporated in 2008, according to a highly placed Zimbabwean official. Hsieh's company was responsible for funding mining operations, while the ZMDC contributed the ground, which had been confiscated



The report on these two pages is reproduced from UK-based *Africa Confidential* (www.africaconfidential.com), the authoritative fortnightly bulletin on Africa.

from Zimplats, a subsidiary of South Africa's Impala Platinum, in 2006.

The land was split into four: the Darwendale section at the northern tip of the Hartley Complex was given to RusChrome Mining – jointly owned by the Zimbabwean government and Russian businessman Alexander Chepik's Centre for Business Cooperation with Foreign Countries – in return for arranging a helicopter deal with the Moscow government. RusChrome has since sought to sell it.

China's Global Platinum Group, owned by arms manufacturer North Industries Corporation (Norinco), owns another part of the confiscated Zimplats land which it is trying to sell. (As previously reported, Zimbabwe acquired arms from Russia and China in exchange for mineral rights, which it now believes were undervalued.) Another Russian company has sold part of the third claim to South African company Amari and Cross Global used to control the fourth part through Northridge Platinum.

Northridge's mining rights covered 3,045 hectares near Selous, with 7 million ounces (198kg) of platinum. Three boreholes had been drilled but more drilling and confirmations were under way before the land was taken away from the company.

Hsieh also owned copper-mining claims through a company called Shengxin Mazoe Mining Company. This was also held jointly with the ZMDC. Witz said all Hsieh's mining interests had been confiscated but could not say who had taken them over. A senior ZMDC official said they had stopped handling the Northridge portfolio "some time back". Cross Global's mining interests may have been taken by Grace Mugabe, according to one source in Harare. "She's the one who had business partnerships with Hsieh," said the source. "She's now reportedly looking for a buyer for the mining rights. She has no interest in developing them."

Almost immediately after acquiring the mineral rights in 2008, Cross Global tried to sell its shareholding in Northridge to Blackcomb Minerals Incorporated, a Canadian explora-

tion company. In a statement released this year but signed on 16 December 2013, Blackcomb said that on 6 October 2009, it had entered into an agreement with Cross Global to acquire all of its rights and obligations in the platinum claims, subject to the ZMDC's consent.

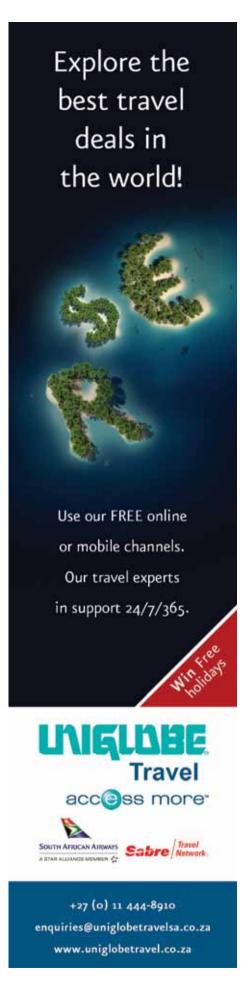
Blackcomb was to pay a maximum of \$12m for Cross Global's share of the rights and the purchase agreement would also need ZMDC's approval. But while conducting due diligence in late 2010, Blackcomb "learned that the joint venture agreement between Cross Global and ZMDC was in default", scuppering the whole deal with Blackcomb.

Owing to the way the Cross Global partnership with ZMDC was handled, according to Africa Confidential's source – the then Mining Minister, Obert Mpofu – there has been speculation that Hsieh was fronting for the Mugabes in the mining venture, too. Blackcomb also found that its prospects of a deal had gone at the same time as Hsieh is believed to have fallen out with the Mugabes.

Grace Mugabe was reported to have given Hsieh \$1m in late 2010 to purchase six trucks in South Africa for use in her Gushongo dairy business. When only three arrived early in the next year, the drivers were arrested and charged with fraud. An attempt to extradite Hsieh from South Africa was made but it failed. ■



"Look, children are just pathetic substitutes for people who can't have pets."



Lady Justice turns blind eye to her own eviction notice

Reclusive judge sits tight and ignores threatened legal action.

Piha was delighted when she was told she'd be getting a judge as a tenant in her Bloemfontein townhouse. But ever since Free State High Court Judge Shamin Ebrahim moved in just over a year ago, Piha has had one problem after another with the tenancy, to the point where she eventually decided she'd rather sell up and be done with it.

But she can't sell because Judge Ebrahim is refusing to vacate the premises. This is despite several formal notices of termination of lease (which, in any event, had reached its expiry date) and despite several attempted interventions by the Judge President of the Free State.

Piha, 47, inherited the three-bedroom unit in sought-after Waverley Gardens after her mother, Estelle Julius, died about two years ago.

Estate agents describe the complex as a place with mostly older occupants in the "well-established and leafy" suburb of Waverley, where "well-maintained gardens are the order of the day and the pride of the tenants".

Piha told *Noseweek* she had thought of selling the apartment she inherited after her mother's death "but I decided to rent it out for a year as I had a lot on my plate at the time". Her business, FIT (Fashion In Training) specialises in manufacturing gym wear and supplies a range of stores.

"I needed time to tie things up and I was also working like a dog in the business, so I handed the responsibility of renting it out to the Edric Trust letting agents in Bloemfontein."

When the agents contacted Piha and told her they were going to let it to a judge, she was relieved. "I didn't think twice," she told *Noseweek*. A 12-month lease expiring on January 31, 2014 was duly signed.

However, a few months after Judge Ebrahim moved in, Piha received a call from Edric Trust to say her tenant had not been paying her full electricity bills.

The judge apparently had a problem with the pro-rata electricity billing system – complicated by the bulk metres used in the complex – and had paid only a portion of the account, saying that, since she was a single woman who was away a lot, she believes she uses considerably less electricity than other tenants.

"We know there is a problem with the formula used in calculating such utilities in Bloemfontein, but the onus still rests upon the resident to pay. My first reaction was to tell the letting agents to just cut the electricity off, but they said that legally they were not allowed to do that. So I decided to leave it to them to do what I was paying them to do," Piha said.

Things took another bad turn when the body corporate started complaining that the garden was not being cared for, as stipulated in the lease.

"My mother was obsessed with her garden, which was beautifully kept. My aunt, who lives close by, was also upset to see the garden deteriorating by the day," said Piha.

The agents wrote several letters to Judge Ebrahim reminding her of her responsibilities and warning that she was in breach of the contract. She did not respond and answered none of their calls.

Piha later learnt that Judge Ebrahim had previously occupied another townhouse in the complex, where she had also failed to pay her electricity accounts in full.



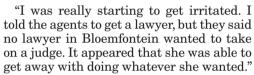
Noseweek April 2014

Garden of Earthly Dismay





Judge Shamin Ebrahim's neglected garden (left) survives only 'thanks to God and the summer rains'. A neighbour's lush garden (right) blooms courtesy of the garden service



Correspondence between the key players in the saga gives insight into the growing frustration with Judge Ebrahim as a tenant:

On September 16 last year, Pat Collie, chairwoman of the body corporate, wrote to Shane Dicks, director of Edric Trust's sectional title department, asking them to remind Judge Ebrahim that her lease obliged her to maintain the garden and water the plants at least once a week.

"What has survived the winter and no watering ever since she moved in, is dying. This situation is such a pain," Collie wrote.

By October, Piha was at the end of her tether and asked Edric Trust to send a registered letter to Judge Ebrahim's place of work as well as her home to inform her that Piha would not be renewing the lease and giving notice that the judge must vacate the townhouse on January 31. The manager of the leasing division wrote to Judge Ebrahim: "The property is to be sold. The townhouse, Waverley Gardens 11, shall be vacated by you, Judge Shamin Ebrahim, on the 31st January 2014 and the keys handed in at our offices on this day before 16h00. Edric Trust will contact you to arrange the date and time of inspection in advance..."

Judge Ebrahim ignored the letter. On November 14, Edric Trust sent her a registered letter to try to arrange for the inspection of the premises before November 30, 2013:

"... We further refer to Clause 25 of your lease agreement which states, 'the lessee undertakes to maintain the garden... The garden situation at 11 Waverley Gardens is

now reaching a critical stage. Please attend to the garden and leave it in the condition in which you received it, when you vacate the townhouse."

In another registered letter, sent on January 14, Edric Trust again called on Judge Ebrahim to confirm an inspection appointment and settle her outstanding account of more than R5,000. Both those letters were ignored too.

On January 31, Edric Trust wrote to Judge Ebrahim yet again reminding her to vacate the unit not later than 24h00 on that day "as per the vacating notice; reminder letters, as well as the inspection notice dated 29/01/2014".

"Should you not adhere to this notice the owner will be forced to apply for an eviction notice via the courts," the letting agent warned.

January 31 passed. The judge still had not budged. She paid the rent for February, despite the fact that she should have moved out by then and more recently, paid March's rent.

Meantime, Piha has appointed estate agents, Seeff, to market the unit – but they have not been allowed in to inspect the property.

In early February Piha briefed the Bloemfontein law firm Bezuidenhouts who sent Judge Ebrahim another written notice. When that came to nothing, the legal representative met with Acting Judge President Nathan Erasmus to brief him on the situation and to ask him to intervene to help settle the matter amicably. His attempts came to nothing.

According to the Superior Courts Act, no civil court proceedings may be instituted against any judge of a superior court except with the consent of the head of that court.

In his response to Bezuidenhouts, Acting





Judge Erasmus wrote: "I have considered the matter as set out in your letter and the plea from your client. It is clear that the situation leaves her no other choice than to institute action after the various attempts to remedy the situation. I herewith grant the necessary permission to institute action in my capacity as acting judge president. I trust you will find this in order."

Schalk van der Vyfer, a director at Edric Trust, confirmed that Judge Ebrahim has made only "proportional payments" towards her electricity account.

He conceded that "in Bloem, we are battling with a complicated electricity tariff system", mainly due to the bulk metres used in some complexes in the city.

"Lots of people in Bloemfontein have a problem with it because they feel it is unfair. In all fairness she does have a case... but there is nothing we can do about it. We have to pay the account or the electricity gets cut. It is not as "on condition you pay the deposit next week". Collie claimed Judge Ebrahim had said she would, but never did.

"When I went to speak to her, I said I was not prepared to allow her to make use of our garden services until she had paid the deposit for her electricity and brought her account up to date. She said she would do it 'first thing in the morning' but she did not."

Collie continued: "The garden is absolutely shocking. I don't think she has ever opened a tap to water the garden. What has survived is by the grace of God and the rain we've had."

Collie said people in the complex "have nothing to do" with Judge Ebrahim. "She is very much her own person. She drives in and locks herself in her townhouse. She ignores everybody in the complex. I think she's a desperately lonely person. She has probably got a brilliant mind. Maybe she is too clever. I have repeatedly left notes for her on important issues, which she ignores.

avoid embarrassment, please move out," said Piha.

Judge Ebrahim ignored a number of calls from *Noseweek* to hear her side of the story. Her clerk, Louise Cawood, refused to accept an email from *Noseweek* to put questions to the judge: "At this stage she has no comment".

• In October 2007, Judge Ebrahim featured in newspaper reports when she applied to the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) for a transfer from the Free State, saying that acrimonious advocates in the Free State Bar were making her life miserable. Sapa reported that the hostile advocates had turned a "once confident judge into a weeping, devastated woman".

She had complained that "they made it impossible for me to dispense justice, they were hostile and did not offer me any form of support. They were simply not ready to accept a female judge," she is reported to have told the JSC.

Judge Ebrahim had previously been

"Nobody will want to buy a flat with a squatter in it"

if she has not paid anything. But she is the only one (who is making only partial payments)."

Pat Collie told *Noseweek* that when Judge Ebrahim occupied another townhouse in the complex, which was then sold, the then-judge president had also had to order her to allow access to an electrician for a compliance certificate to be completed.

"When she moved in to the present townhouse, she was supposed to pay a R2,000 deposit for an electricity connection.

"She moved in and phoned the managing agents and said, 'where is my electricity and water... it is my constitutional right to have it...' and he said, 'you have not paid the full deposit (which) is now R2,000', but she allegedly ranted and raved and said she wanted electricity immediately."

Collie said the managing agent, "out of the goodness of his heart", had said that, since it was Friday afternoon and he knew she wouldn't be able to get to the bank, he would switch it on, The only way to gain access would be to break the doors down, as she will not answer the door and answers her telephone selectively. You cannot reason with this woman at all."

Increasingly desperate to sell the townhouse, Piha told *Noseweek*: "As I am funding a business venture on costly overdraft rates, I have approached various estate agents to market the property. However they have not been allowed access to take pictures of my townhouse and are reluctant to market it until the dispute is resolved.

"Nobody will want to buy it with a squatter in it. What happens if I needed that money desperately and wanted to sell urgently?" said Piha.

The most recent development is that Bezuidenhouts hand-delivered a letter to Judge Ebrahim stating they had been instructed to proceed with an application to evict her from the property.

"To avoid unpleasantness, we are giving her until the end of March to get out.

"We have effectively said to her, 'to

based in Johannesburg as an advocate.

She said advocates in the Free State had, on a number of occasions, refused to accept her decisions on court matters and had regularly shown a disrespectful attitude towards her during court proceedings, Sapa reported.

During the hearings, a JSC panellist and former colleague from the Transvaal Bar, Kgomotso Moroko, pointed out to her that she appeared to have changed from a confident person, five years previously in the Transvaal Bar, to an emotionally devastated and depressed person who seemed close to tears. At the time, Judge Ebrahim agreed and said life had been difficult in the Free State.

An earlier application (in April that year) by Judge Ebrahim for a transfer to KwaZulu-Natal, to be closer to her ailing parents, was turned down by the JSC. In that application, Judge Ebrahim conceded to the JSC that, after living in Bloemfontein for five years, she was struggling to fit in socially as an Indian Muslim.

Books

LEN ASHTON



Thrilling. The battles of Benny

HE AFRIKAANS WORD KAK IS EMPLOYED explosively by speakers of all 11 South African official languages. We are indebted to thriller writer Deon Meyer for this invaluable linguistic gobbet. And for much else beside in 7Days.

The richly informative glossary must have purist pedants of the past spinning like dentists' drills, what with so many okes (cf SA "guys") trying manfully to refrain from offending ladies with too-frequent cries of fok, fokken, fokkol (Afrikaans, Meyer notes helpfully).

But the lengthy and solemn acknowledgements list of expert sources bolstering this highly entertaining tale should provide some sense of order. After all, if the author has gone to the trouble of chatting up the criminal behaviour analyst of the SAPS Investigative Psychology Section, the directorate of Priority Crime Investigations, an assistant commissioner of SAPS, plus checking sundry walk-ons by gunsmiths and a shoal of crime writers, including Joseph D Serio, begetter of *Investigating the Russian Mafia*, he must be trying hard for authenticity. And he succeeds, by and large.

Those who have hesitated to sample Deon Meyer's hands-on familiarity with gritty police work, grotty villains and wry familiarity with South Africa's bruised and bewildered urban populace, are missing out. He's one of the few who convincingly bridge the chasms between various SA social and political enclaves, and he manages to cross the first world divide and impress foreign reviewers.

Meyer observes and records with the scepticism of a world-weary headmaster thoughtfully considering the umpteenth dog-ate-my-homework excuses of errant humanity. But, satisfyingly, he comes down hard on the evil ones.

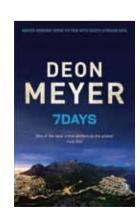
All of which flavours *7Days* with a characterful depiction of sin in wicked Cape Town and environs, as witnessed and attended by a long-suffering band of unloved cops, under social and political pressure. There's no question that Meyer, like author Margie Orford, sides with the Hawks and their ilk. Both writers have clearly spent time and thought

7DAYS by Deon Meyer (Hodder & Stoughton) on the plight of Mr Plod the Policemen in a troubled land. That sympathy informs the gritty film-noire drama of the book.

The endearing anti-hero, formerly booze-soaked, tenacious police captain Bennie Griessel, is having a second go at life among the ruins of his past. Cruelly, life promptly plays a little trick on him, as it tends to do at quite the wrong moment: Bennie's resurrection and romance are put on hold when he is landed with a mind-boggling murder case that demands intense concentration.

With the fiercely intelligent assistance of a stout Zulu female officer, who soothes her insecurities with secret supplies of chocolate bars, Bennie makes painfully slow advances in the search for the killer of a seductive young female lawyer.

The police officers are shown to be the nearest thing to a functional broad-based mixed social group in South Africa. They give each other a hard time, but cooperate professionally and are surprisingly tolerant of stressed colleagues' frailties. Perhaps the coppers could teach us all a lesson in joint survival.





TOM EATON

Fit for purpose. The quick and the deadish

Martin Welz was enthused. Just think of it, he said: thousands and thousands of elderly people running, jumping and hurling shot-puts around. I was intrigued. Was there some sort of viral outbreak that was causing this behaviour among our senior citizens? How was it spread? Did they have to bite each other on the face, or could it be transmitted simply by re-using teabags?

On the contrary, explained the editor, they do it for the love of sport, for the pleasure of competition, and for the betterment of their bodies and minds. Those who do it best compete at the biennial World Masters Athletics Championships, open to all athletes older than 35 and younger than Methuselah, and espousing the values that the Olympics long ago sold out to highest bidding oligarch. Some competitors are former track stars who have refused to go gentle into that good night and instead are raging against the dying of the floodlights. Others are simply people who have decided to turn their autumn years into an Indian summer and who have taken up athletics deep in their 60s and 70s only to discover that they are bloody good at it.

Flo Meiler, for example, holds 15 world records and dominates women's pole vault in the 75 to 79 age group, despite never having vaulted a pole in anger before she turned 60. You might not have heard of Canada's Olga Kotelko, but I can confirm that she is the most dominant athlete in the world in her age bracket (90 to 95). She turned 95 in March, so presumably just has one more year racing the 90-year-old striplings before she graduates to push human sporting endeavour further than it has ever been pushed before.

Indeed, few South Africans know that the most glamorous record of all

belongs to one of their own. Philip "Flying Phil" Rabinowitz, who passed away in 2008 at the age of 104, achieved an incredible double-hundred in 2004, becoming the fastest 100-year-old to run the 100 metres as he crossed the line in 30.86 seconds.

It seemed an interesting topic, but I found myself unsure of how to approach these late bloomers. On the one hand there seemed to be something humorous about 90-year-olds steaming around a track, but was this urge to smile an unkind one? Was it pathos for people turning back the clock, or just petty mockery, born of living in an ageist society which is obsessed with elite sports and disparages any sporting activity that isn't sponsored and young and shiny?

I certainly had no intention of mocking the Masters competitors. Even raising an amused eyebrow would have been hypocritical: I can't run a marathon at 37, let alone at 77. I'm not sure I could do much better than Philip Rabinowitz over 100 metres. And yet I also found I couldn't get excited about them. It was confusing. Here was a story about people asserting their life force over their mortality, a tale more uplifting than any fist-pumping hoorah nonsense in a Hollywood sports flick; but I found myself depressed by the whole idea.

Days passed. I read interviews with Masters athletes, spoke to acquaint-ances who knew some, hoping that some spark of joy would light up the inexplicable gloom. And then, almost two weeks past my deadline, Martin Welz phoned me again.

Welz has one of the smoothest voices you are likely to encounter. It is an incongruous voice for a veteran fighter against corruption and the abuse of power, for it is the voice of a villain: the debauched Grand Vizier plotting the assassination of the Sultan; the Sci-



ence Commissar outlining his master plan to put something appalling in the drinking water of the state's enemies; the Minister of Truth murmuring into into the ears of prospective Quislings. But on this day there was a steely edge to the voice, and I recognised it at once



as the sound editors make when the magazine needs to go to print and columnists are farting around with existential crises.

"Are you dead?" he asked. "Are you overseas?" His tone suggested that unless I had a great excuse, he could easily arrange for me to become both dead and overseas, perhaps in a box thrown off the back of a Chinese trawler. He knows people, does Martin...

For a moment I was tempted to tell him that the dog had eaten my homework; that an outbreak of Satanism had infected my laptop and that Fikile Mbalula had impounded it pending an official exorcism. But Welz has ways of making you talk, and I cracked, telling him that I had utterly failed to come to grips with his suggestion and promising

ning and the end, than 90-year-olds settling into the starting blocks of a sprint. I found that picture — of life force and mortality racing each other down a 100-metre strait — too awful to look at for long.

Perhaps it is the age in which I find myself, with all the grudging defeats that come with one's late 30s. I must now concede, for example, that I'm probably never going to play cricket for South Africa. Until very recently I could nurture that fantasy, aware that it was ludicrous and impossible but still tinging it with just enough reality to make it seem more real (for example, I would take only two wickets in my first Test – one shouldn't be greedy, even in fantasies). My delusion was also encouraged by the fact that I have always played

Young sports stars seduce us into believing that we all live forever

that I would produce something else.

It was a few minutes later, as I scrolled through my rolodex of column ideas, starting with the aardvarks of Aachen listening to Aaron Copeland, that I realised I was feeling a spark of something. Was it joy? A creative impulse? Interest?

No. I realised it was anxiety. Fear, even. The fear of the wrath of Martin Welz had resonated with something about the Masters athletes. I realised I had resisted writing about them because I feared them; because there are few more stark contrasts between life and death, hope and decay, the begin-

The most recent International Masters "Olympic" Games took place in November 2013 in Porte Allegre, Brazil. 4200 athletes from 90 countries participated, including 62 from South Africa. (16 of the 62 were in the 80-84 year-old class.) The SA team ended eighth on the medals list, with a total of 82 medals, 36 of them gold. No South African newspaper or TV station reported on the event.

cricket at a very low standard and thus haven't really noticed the onset of middle age: I was awful at 24, and I'm still awful, therefore, my logic insists, I'm still playing like a 24-year-old.

But these days the real is intruding on the fantastical. The pain in my shoulder when I bowl is undeniably there. The stereophonic crackling and popping noises in my knees can't be argued away with silly logic. Tim Noakes once told me that at 36 or 37 "the angels let go" and stop holding up the human body. I would add that sometimes the angels also stamp on your neck for no apparent reason. I have now reached the age when I can put my back out just by sleeping. I can hurt myself by lying absolutely still.

I think that is why I shied away from the Masters athletes, why I still do; because in their extraordinary performance I see the shortness of my own life, the fallibility of my own body. Young sports stars seduce us into believing that we all live forever. Old athletes gently remind us that we don't. And that is a thought that makes me want to run.

Letter from Umjindi

BHEKI **MASHILE**



Effing Offing. Kruger's revenge

'M SORRY DEAR NOSEY ONES IF YOU find what I'm about to say a bit insensitive but heck, after the devastating few days I've had with mother nature drowning us with rains that washed away some of the joy, pride and well-deserved ego boost I'd got from bringing a devastated farm on its way back to life, I could not avoid a chuckle at the death of an EFF supporter during a protest.

To be honest, I had a good laugh when on the 5th of March while driving through the rain from Nelspruit back to my little dorp of B'town, a news broadcaster said, "An EFF member died today during a protest in Pretoria after falling from Paul Kruger's statue on Church Square and sustaining head injuries".

Man! Oh man! I laughed so hard at the circumstances of this poor boy's demise that I cranked up the volume, lit a cigarette – something I religiously and most of the time successfully avoid doing in my bakkie. (When at Christmas time *Noseweek's* news editor Mark Thomas was my guest here – he's a great guest – but he carelessly lit up in my bakkie so I, as an accommodating host, joined him.)

Anyway, surely one can appreciate the irony in this EFF fella's end, falling off Paul Kruger's statue? All I could say to myself while cruising, puffing and rocking to tunes was, well, I guess Kruger got his own back — and not only for himself — but for all Afrikaners who have been insulted by

well, I guess Kruger got his own back

– and not only for himself – but for all
Afrikaners who have been insulted by
Julius Malema's EFF.

Simply put, the news story raised
a good laugh because I despise
the attitude of entitlement,
just as I totally despise the

attitude of those who say "its been so many years since apartheid, so let's just move on."

Both of these annoying mindsets seem to dominate in this country – and both

can go to blazes.

Anyway, I was driving from Nelspruit after picking up my bakkie. It had been sitting at what I call the Land Reform depot for three weeks.

Why? It had been confiscated from me by the department because they found out

that I did not yet have a driver's licence.

I was using a learner's licence, but as they said, "Bheki give us a break, this is a government asset and we gave you a chance to

sort out your licence. Hand the keys over please". Ouch! So, the lovely Hi-Lux was (temporar-

So, the lovely Hi-Lux was (temporarily) gone and I was once again walking, bollocks. But do I feel the obligation to explain? No way. I turn this into a joke for those who ask "Where's the bakkie?" I say – to cover my BEE ass – just bugger off.

Meantime I've got my driver's licence and my bakkie back, luckily just before the rain got out of hand. Outside of that, because of the rains the farm has been hell, to say the least.

My access road is gone, you cannot get through. I'm using another road which belongs to the guys next door. Thank God for Mandela, for begging the white men to work with us, otherwise I'd really be in kak.

As for the rains, what can you do? It's mother nature. Ok, I have bitched about the rains, and Malema's crew. It's been a tough couple of days, but what the heck should I complain about? After all, I own a farm, have a bakkie and a legit licence. At least I do not live in Alexandria where the rains have devastated the shacks by the river. As soon as I finish this, I'm back to the farm to try to feed the nation. Wish me luck. At times like these I

ask myself, why didn't you stay in Los Angeles and pursue rock-n-roll? Agh, the answer is too complicated. I love the RSA. I'm glad I'm here. Rains or no rains my farm will come right. ■



Last Word



Doing time. I shall be released

AY BACK THEN, IN 1460 TO be inexact, an Italian gent name of Andrea Mantegna produced a great big tempera/oil painting called View of a City, of such precise perspective as to cause people to do what cats do before a mirror, to raise their hackles and peep behind the surface to see what was going on there. It was a bit spooky, this new thing; it enabled a three-dimensional world to appear on a two-dimensional surface. If you could see something in the round you should be able to touch it in the round, not so? Lucky the church didn't nail him for sorcery. But such is the power of bigotry that by the late 1800s if you hadn't mastered the multiple lines of onepoint, two-point, nay even three-point perspective drawing and the whole formal crap that went with academic art, you wouldn't make it past your first year in any art school in Europe, its colonies, North America or Mother Russia. It took the heresy of the Cubists and Paul "Kgeenie'nvokomnie" Cezanne to break the stranglehold of perspective laws in art.

But lo! Give it a decade or two, or three, well actually four, and along come some serious scientists who dig about at the tiniest level of things in search of the nature of Nature, among them a rapscallion physicist Richard P. Feynman who doesn't believe things the prescribed way and says as follows: Study hard what interests you most in the most undisciplined, irreverent and original manner possible. He makes for us a famous set of diagrams, pictorial representations of the mathematical expressions governing the behaviour of sub-atomic particles. Many lines on paper, and lo! some of them dip in the wrong direction, which implies - dare we say it - negative time. Many momparas of the media fall gleefully upon these diagrams, where time is represented as a line, and declare if you can fold a line back on itself you can also fold time back on itself, like a sheet of paper, and then you can get a worm-



hole through the two, and just wait a bit while we build a hell of a clever spaceship to shoot through this hole and emerge in the past. They present us with a pic of it all: a two-dimensional diagram of a three-dimensional diagram of a four-dimensional universe. Reverse time-travel – the cat can exist backwards and study its own tochis.

Well, now. In the Pretoria Central Prison there was a library with 5,000 books, and if you got privileges for good behaviour you could use it. The Prisons Department didn't actually buy the books, hell no; any institution or person could sommer donate them to PCP, and a bandiet couldn't actually browse in the library, that's freedom, the librarian would mos bring two books a week to this bandiet's cell, to avoid the smuggling of tobacco, see? I mean one of my first two was on how to get a driver's licence in Pretoria in 1934, but the librarian was a dear old soul name of Oupa, 70-plus years, pushing his second indeterminate sentence, but sensitive, and he thought I might like something of a technological nature. As for himself, well, this library wasn't the sort of place where you could study quantum physics, naturally, but Oupa had a sharp intellect and he'd come across something by Feynman among a load from the Pretoria Girls' High School, and determined secretly to devise a wormhole in time and escape from this vokken tronk. All it needed was deep thought.

Of course every bandiet soon enough heard about Oupa's scheme, it became the year's best joke where there's precious little to laugh about. Oupa became more and more introspective and silent as he was mocked, then after much much time suddenly... just disappeared, completely vanished. Overnight. The news spread instantly: Oupa had mastered the Feynman diagrams.

As time flies, so it fled. Tempus fugit, another three years of it. My time was up. The Prisons Department never told you anything about their plans for your movement, I was scarce surprised they didn't just open the door and kick me out in the street, but of course I'd forgotten: I was under ten-vear house arrest when sentenced and that's what I was going back to, in Durbs. But it was weird travelling without leg irons and handcuffs in an ordinary car. At Harrismith they stopped for lunch at the prison, I was given a small boep loaf called a katkop and a bottle of cold coffee made of beans unknown to botany and told to wait in the atrium 'mongst the aloes in pots. Great day, real plants, suddenly appears Oupa, back from the whencetoforth, all smiles. Yirra, Oupa! 'kse, how'd you get here, man? No, says Oupa, they said I was too old for Central, I couldn't get up once I was lying on the floor so I should have a bed, but everybody would want one and it would cause discontent, and they couldn't sommer release me because I would go and print more banknotes, so they moved me here for an office job. But it's an uptoshit boep, all the ouens are short term and a man got no chinas. All my chinas are in Central.

Well what about a reverse wormhole? say I. Ag nee wat, says Oupa, that's all bullshit, I'm asking God now to take me back to Central. Maybe you will pray for me, hey? Well I haven't tried it since I was 14, say I, but I'll give it a crack.

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