

THE MYTH OF SMITH

DOUGLAS SCHORR



The Myth of Smith

By Douglas Schorr
& Milton Schorr

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This book is dedicated to Africa.

The lies have been blown away,

we don't need to follow the ways of the past. Now is the time to show the world we can take hold of our considerable resources and build a continent for all of the people.

My thanks to Ms Libby Meiring for her giant effort.
Lib typed the first draft and has been there correcting, retyping and correcting again.

Personal Message from Douglas Schorr

Thank you for purchasing my book! It's an honour for me to share my story with you.

If, when you've finished reading you have any thoughts you'd like to share, please get in touch.

There's nothing I want more than to make some sort of positive contribution to the world of my grandchildren. I believe that this book is a step towards that, and that talking to you about it is a good step also.

You can reach me on my blog at this link, and I will be sure to reply.

Thanks again,
Douglas Schorr.

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Introduction

I was born in May 1949 in the tiny town of Krugersdorp, South Africa, the second child to Gilbert and Alice Schorr. Dad was gone for the duration of WWII, plus some clearing sea-mines time in the Far East, and finally arrived back to Mom just in time to make me. I was one month old when Dad, annoyed with Daniel Malan's Nationalist Party, packed the family into a car bought cheap and all of us went north. Mom, Dad, older brother Brian and I became Rhodesians, settling in the Southern Matabeleland town of Gwanda. It wasn't that Dad was anti-apartheid; rather he was English speaking and didn't like the Afrikaans Nationalists' anti-English profile. Rhodesia was the opposite, of sorts… English was as good as a requirement.

I was comfortable on the ride up, ensconced in a cloth bed on a pumped inner car tube. I didn't know it then, but Southern Rhodesia, or simply Rhodesia as she was known to her people, would, within the next twenty years be engulfed in a bush war that would change her. Her course as a country would be altered and in many ways the course of the African continent too. She would experience upheavals that were at the same time unique to her and common to every country that has ever existed. I would be at the centre of these events. I would help shape them, in a small way, right up to the end of the war.

Lying on my inner tube, as my family rattled our way to our new home, I didn't know that this country, her people and her soul would become a part of me just as surely as my heart pumps blood. I wasn't aware that soon I would learn her history through pre-school, junior and high school, from my Mom and Dad and the talk around the towns we lived in. I didn't know that thirty years later, as Mr Mugabe was being sworn in as our new democratically elected president, truly heralding the end of the war, his right hand man, Dr

Ushe Wonkunze, would be advising me to leave the country while I had time.

'You're number 31 on my list,' he would say, hinting at something dark and dreadful if I didn't move on. I didn't know then, that almost all of our family, apart from little sister Bobby, would eventually leave our country, or that twenty years later Dad would return. Then, minus Mom who had succumbed to cancer, I would sit with him as he died and he would tell me of the life he'd led, one without regret, but also one that he'd come to realise had been lived in ignorance. He would tell me he was happy to once again be home.

As that small child I didn't know the cards life would deal me, and the choices I would make in the face of them.

Today, I do know that I am an ex-Rhodesian. I am a white man bred under the African sun. I am a white man who fought for Smith. I fought for a dream, my dream couched in his dream of a thousand years of white rule, a dream many, many of us Rhodesians shared. Today I am sitting down to write a book about that dream.

Those among us who have the most to remember of it, of that time, that war, that Rhodesia of the UDI era from 1965 to 1979, and perhaps the most to forget, us Rhodesians, we're commonly known as Rhodies. Our stereotype is one of a people who believe, or believed, in the superiority of whites over blacks, who have a tendency to indulge in alcohol, who have an inclination towards occasional violence. This is our stereotype, not our individual truth, but it fits. Add to that, though, a friendly people, generous, energetic, fit, outgoing, add all sorts of words as you remember them.

We're often called 'When We's', because (again it's a stereotype and again it rings true) we like to talk about the past, think about it, hark back to it. We like to add 'When We' to our conversations. 'When we were there, we did it our way', we like to say. We're people that like to look back over our

shoulders and see something shining brightly there, in the dimming past, something beautiful. Which it was. Our Rhodesia was beautiful. Strangely, though, besides that beauty, in all that looking back, we often don't see the shadows dancing, the darkness underneath it all.

In the period of our bush war, from '65 to '79, I was a soldier and a government servant. I gave my all during that time. I fought, and around me many of those I loved died. Today I am a Rhodie just like many other Rhodies, looking back over my shoulder, remembering. Today I can't shake the dead, the beauty and the horror. Today I can't shake the feeling that what happened then, those things we saw, those things we did, has a massive bearing on the present. Today, 30 years later with another short lifetime of experience behind me beyond those young man war years, I have sat down at my keyboard to try to understand.

Why can't I shake the past? I'm asking myself. Why did that war happen, that war that was my intimate, daily, young adult life? Why, above all, when I look at the world around me, do I see it happening again?

Part 1: The Lead Up
1800 (ish) - 1967

Pre-Rhodesia Made Simple

In 1949 Southern Rhodesia was a fledgling country, not yet 60 years old. She consisted of a piece of Africa roughly two fifths of the way up the continent, landlocked, some say the shape of a friendly tea pot. Bounded by the Protectorate of Bechuanaland's (modern day Botswana) semi desert in the west, by the Zambezi and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia of today) in the north, and with a piece of Mozambique separating Southern Rhodesia from Nyasaland (modern day Malawi), she was and is a beautiful slice of paradise. The Chimanimani mountain range, those peaks that rise dramatically out of the Chipinga lowlands to look over the tops of the forests of Mozambique that stretches all the way to the Indian Ocean. The Limpopo River, a wide, sometimes running, more often than not sparkling chain of linked pools, defines the southern boundary with South Africa.

The first whites to wander Rhodesia were the Catholic Portuguese. They arrived long before the Dutch Protestants down at the Cape of Good Hope and set up shop from their ships in Mozambique. They concentrated their efforts along the coast but a few came inland, into my Rhodesia, modern day Zimbabwe, exploring for gold and silver only to find they were too late. They discovered ancient mine works but these were exhausted. They found the remains of a massive, elaborate stone city near modern day Msvingo (Fort Victoria) and assumed the mines and these ruins were connected. They called the area the Kingdom of Monomatapa.

At that time only a smattering of Bantu tribes lived there, the largest among them collectively known to us whites as the Shona. These were an easy-going people; it's said, spread out across the more hospitable climate of the middle and northern parts of the country in a network of sub and cousin-tribes, each with their own chief and no over-lording king to rule them, but

connected by spirits. They maintained a pastoral lifestyle, raising livestock while growing crops of small grains. Outside of their sometime contact with the Portuguese explorers and missionaries, they occasionally met with slave trading Muslims from the north; these were passing through with their human cargo to trade to the Portuguese.

Away from the maddening crowd, in the depths of the gouged out Zambezi valley, living in scattered family groups far from all others, lived the shy and ancient Batonga people. A tiny sub-group they were so isolated that they had evolved on a completely individual line, growing strange toes to aid with tree climbing[1].

It was in the late 1830's, my history books tell me, that the fearsome Matabele arrived on the run. Their self-styled King, Mzilikazi, had broken away from the Great Zulu Shaka down in South Africa. Pillaging and appropriating scattered groups[2] in their path the Matabele ran west from Shaka into the then Northern Transvaal, where they bumped into the Boers moving up from the Cape, causing them to change direction and cross the Limpopo into Rhodesia[3]. They finally stopped short on the edges of Shona land. 15 or 20 years later, by around the mid 1800's, when the first non-Portuguese whites came calling, the Matabele had established a regimented, centrally commanded kingdom in the southern and western third of my country. By this time they were of mixed blood. Only a small, royal and elite, still pure and identified by their family name, Khumalo, remained of the Zulu from down south. Compared to the hunter-gatherers and pastoral Shona the Matabele were both highly organized and warlike, but beyond that they were cattle herders and, I was later to experience, caring and loyal.

The first whites found Bulawayo (loosely meaning 'place of killing') to be a thriving, organised and complicated city. Here mud huts were made from poles cut from the surrounding countryside. These were set into the ground in

a circle then plastered with a mud mix to make a sealed wall, and on top, bound to another pole frame, were set bundles of thick ‘thatching’ grass making a waterproof roof. Inside a mix of mud and cattle dung made a hard floor and in the centre there was a fire over which the woman of that hut cooked, and around which everyone of that hut slept. There was no chimney, the smoke simply drifted up, left to gently invade the thatch (no mosquitoes in there). In the King’s Residence, the royal *Kraal*, there were hundreds of these huts.

There was of course no running water. This was brought from outside in earthenware pots and calabashes balanced on the heads of women and girls. There were no toilets. Everyone went out into the bush to relieve themselves. There was no rubbish collection but this was not a problem as there was little or no waste. The smell, I can tell you, would have been one of unwashed, African, sun-hot bodies. Dogs, cattle, smoke and flies everywhere. Although their society was far from primitive – their infrastructure was sophisticated and they kept domesticated animals and some crops - still they were 500 or so years behind the mechanical development enjoyed in Europe.

There were many similarities between the Shona and the Matabele. For both, livestock were incredibly important, the ultimate trading piece, the family’s walking privileged customer bank account, their ticket to self-determination, good marriage and wealth.[4] Both tribes and villages lived in the *kraal* system. Here their cattle were kept secure in an enclosure made of stout wooden poles, all the folk dependent or having a share of that kraal living together, allowing the word for ‘enclosure’ to become the word for ‘village’. Here any adult could and would discipline any growing kiddie; guiding, chiding, showing, telling and keeping a watching eye. Between kids of the kraal there was trust and support. What to the western mind would be an uncle would just as easily be a father here. He who a westerner would

term a cousin, a villager would embrace as a brother. Older kids, even just slightly older, while terrified for themselves at some catastrophe, were fearless in their protection of younger kraal members, be it strange animal or strange human.

Both tribes made use of land rotation; moving livestock on to new grass while leaving the old to recover. The Shona, a little differently, extended this policy to their crop-growing (which the Matabele were not accustomed to doing), leaving a land previously harvested to recover after every so many years.

For all, the bush was important and conserved. The common diet revolved around what was to be found in the surrounding country, with wild veg (*isi-tshebu),* roots and berries supplementing the few domesticated crops. Meat was eaten by all sparingly and even when available at one meal a day only.

There was little need for tooth brushes here … there were no sugars to compromise good strong teeth. Bodies were healthy and fit and, except for a wraparound warming animal skin in the evening and morning the wonderful climate meant there was no need for clothes either.

It was around the early 1800s that the *new* whites started appearing. By the time of *Lobengula* (or *Lo Bengula*)[5] (the Matabele King)'s succession (1870/75) more hunter-explorers were arriving; those that did not have the Portuguese's knowledge of the interior or agree with their assessment of the absence of gold. They came from England, Europe, America, even some Afrikaners from South Africa. They initially arrived from the south, a bit later, seeing a short cut to get into the north, via Portuguese settlements in Mozambique, and at this stage were never harmed. David Livingston was among them for a while. Moss Cohen was there, some say a friend to Lobengula, the man who tried to warn him of white treachery later. The *Meneers* Renders were said to have settled near Great Zimbabwe but, mostly

the wanderers were speculators, in and out of the country while hunting and prospecting.

As a young boy growing up in Rhodesia the next portion of history was extremely important, we were told, because it was in the late 1880s that Cecil Rhodes, our country's namesake, and his team made an appearance. So many names my teacher (Mrs Moustache we called her on account of the caterpillar she always had writhing on her upper lip) gave us to remember. She was stern about it. We were in the thick class and, one way to drive us forward was to teach us about the men who had the courage to cross into the darkness and open the land, ready for civilisation. We learned the names Dr Leander Starr Jameson, Thompson[6], Helm, Alfred Biet, Maguire, Rudd, Wilson, Selous, Moffat and Livingston and of course the Queen of the British Empire and indeed of all Europe; Queen Victoria. She was the key. She authorised, through her Governor and Commissioners, etc., Cecil John Rhodes to seek a way to Cairo, to spread Christianity, raising the Union Jack as he went and particularly to get hold of Mashonaland which was thought of as 'valuable'. Teacher had a picture of him stuck on the board running the length of the back of our classroom which I found embarrassing because it showed up his crotch. I could never quite believe that that dumpy and ill-looking man achieved so much. We learned how he had the courage to have the great *Indaba* (summit meeting) with Lobengula at which he encouraged him to sign a treaty to allow the British to enter and civilise the country, which he did. We heard how the pioneers then entered the country to make the land into Rhodesia, the Pioneer Column finally raising the British flag in Salisbury in 1890. Teacher explained what a perilous undertaking it was because the Matabele were a savage, war-orientated people who had invented an awesome stabbing spear, one that they would hide behind their shields until the last moment.[7]

By around that time, 1880, most of Africa had been carved up by the European powers but the central and south interior remained. The Portuguese already had the lands to the west and east of the Rhodesias, the Belgians directly north and the Germans South West Africa (Namibia) plus the chunk to the northeast; modern day Tanzania.

About six years later, by the time Rhodes announced in London that the shares in his British South Africa Company had risen 15 fold, Lobengula had killed himself. Although reduced to a West supplied morphine addict for his gout, he was still able to see that by then his people had been ravaged, scattered and bonded into servitude. He understood then that with the signing of Rhodes' document, in practice, in the eyes of the Christian West, the naked warrior Matabele had effectively handed over all the country, including the Shona portion. Stories of white devilry – the discriminate cruelty of the British down south meted out even on other whites, had reached the ears of the Matabele long before. Now they were running scared. They knew they had been tricked and, sensibly, they acquiesced. Maybe their day would come.

By 1891 there was a stretched column of tough, fortune seeking, white pioneers dotted along the route from the South African border, through Bulawayo, up to the growing town of Salisbury (Harare today). The Zeederberg Coach line[8] was quick into action, initially by-passing Bulawayo, as was the passenger, goods and mail line from Pretoria to Salisbury.

Separate, but all around that central line the native blacks, the *kaffirs* as they were then called - at that time a word simply meaning 'non-believer', and, 'a bit of an idiot' - were scattered - a huge number of tribes, sub-tribes and their extensions. When it was revealed that gold was not as plentiful as was hoped, the Pioneers turned to the blacks and grabbed their cattle as

compensation for time wasted. Certainly, at that time all was fair game … the Shona hadn't cried too much when the Matabele had taken theirs, it was the simple rule of the victor and the vanquished. Soon this idea was built upon. To get the Pioneers to stay Rhodes and the company started offering farms for free. Large, beautiful and fruitful lands, for anyone chosen by Cecil. To his brother he gave a huge chunk of what was to become my home district, Esigodini – beauty in the valley - Essexvale. In this way the white population of Rhodesia began to take root. Over days, months and years Pioneer evolved into Settlers.

Immediately labour was needed. Natives were called on, the vast tribes and their cousins and sub-cousins began to be regulated and shaped as slowly the labour market grew. To manage the tribes, this growing labour force and this friction born of change, the Department of Native Affairs was set up, the organisation that I was to enter some 70 years later. At this early stage the department was tough and focused on one thing only; the building and advancement of a new white country. Down in Bulawayo the Chief Native Commissioner of Matabeleland, Mr Heyman, was said to have been a very efficient fellow. Under his watch, beyond the cattle 'appropriation' stories[9], all sorts of atrocities were 'allowed' and levied, as was to become the norm. Superiority, control and order were paramount. Soon a few Matabele were armed against the Shona and a few Shona were armed against the Matabele. With their muskets, Mr Heyman and others expected, they would keep themselves and their kin busy. A few local men who conceded to be loyal to the new Administrators and the Company police were popped into uniform, trained to obey and armed. They were promoted to engage with people of royal blood on behalf of the new Kings of the land. In time these would become the Native Commissioners' Messengers, a function that was, in a different format, to become integral to the functioning of Internal Affairs and

the security of the entire country.

While it was an honour for Rhodes to refer to the country as Rhodesia, and while life had settled as the Settlers settled, of course not all were pleased with the outcome. Come 1896 black tempers had reached boiling point. Without mincing words they had been treated like –err—blacks, their land, cattle and society had been taken under the banner of civilising. When they saw Rhodes had pulled a good number of the Company's men and others to join in the Jameson Raid on the Rand[10], they rose to throw off the white shackles in what became known as the *First Chimurenga*[11]. There was nothing coordinated about the uprising at all… it simply started and spread. The blacks had already been reduced to a disjointed bunch and the Shona and Matabele had no affinity for one another. Various spirit mediums played roles in sustaining and engendering localised groups into the revolt, playing roles just as any religious leader calling the blessing of the Father down in times of war. Like all good advisers the mediums had their ears to the ground and the people were at their wits end. For the whites, six years of perceived 'harmony' came crashing down. It was clear to all that white assumptions about the blacks' level of contentment at having their butts kicked were far off the mark.

Initially the depleted Pioneers were as surprised as the blacks were that the movement could rise up and spread so fast and so quickly. Even Bulawayo came under siege. Not for long, however, as soon enough organised, armed and trained Relief Columns arrived to retaliate. By numbers few whites were killed, but as a percentage of the population the white deaths were heavy. There were said to be a good number of nasty deaths too.

'She had a *knob-kerrie* (Matabele/Southern African Club) pushed up her insides,' I heard on the playground of Hillside Junior School. Later that day we did a picture of poor Major Wilson[12] fighting off the black hordes. We

had no idea that he'd chased them all the way to Lupane shouting, 'put up your dukes, you cowards!'

The results of the rebellion were profound, and long lasting. For the black population their lame go at recovering some pride had resulted in painful failure. Here, for the first time, the word *kaffir* took on a new meaning. From simply 'non-believer' and 'a bit of an idiot' it now lost its neutrality, instead now including the idea that a *kaffir* also is a person who hides from the truth, who is lazy, stupid, at times bloodthirsty and certainly in need of control. From the destruction of the rebellion - watched with bewilderment by the Heathens from the granite hills and brazenly executed by the handful of Christians with their wider war experience, packed food, horses and guns — the country as it would grow to be, during my time there and beyond, began to emerge.

For myself, from my experience, from my long thinking on this topic for all of my adult life, it seems to me that at that point, post the first *Chimurenga*, when war and betrayal were fresh in the minds of the whites, when to them the kaffirs had revealed themselves fully, and where, from the natives point of view they had been comprehensively smashed, two countries inside one began to emerge. The first was white, the second was black. To take liberty with modern PC thinking, but to be perfectly in the norm of that time stretching to mine, let us say that 'Rhodieland' and 'Kaffircountry' were born.

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On into the new century, and for the next 50 years Southern Rhodesian life settled along distinct lines of colour and geography. The Chimurenga had shown the Bantu that they were well behind on the civilisation curve. They saw that they couldn't hope to take on the war experienced and powerful whites and so had no option but to settle. This they did, hoping that over time

patient co-operation would lead to progress with learning. They resolved to catch up, and in the way of the tribe, to being good children, learning the ways of their new fathers and mothers.

Conversely, as pioneers and victors - now Settlers - the whites were the new, official bosses of the land. They began to govern and divide the country, creating the initial provinces of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, later splitting them further with Mashonaland dividing into three, Matabeleland into two, and adding the Midlands, Manicaland and Victoria. Within each of these further divisions were made, and in each of these districts land was divided up and appropriated.

Land for whites was set aside, for farming and for living, and land for blacks, regardless of whether they already lived there or not. Traditional tribal lines and territories were split, foreign blacks were moved in and settled, altering the old hierarchies, their new home named the ‘Tribal Trust Lands’, TTLs in common speak. Certainly the lands given over to them were inferior to those given to the whites, but not, as some would think, the poorest in the country as a whole. As each region was divided separately there were TTL areas of relatively leafy, lush bush. The regions given the blacks of the midlands, for example, while being the poorest parts of the region were far more fruitful than the white allocated ranches of the arid Matabeleland South. One might think this was generosity on the white man’s part, but in practice it was practical. Labour was needed, no sense in sending them all far, far away.

Officially it was decreed that these TTL areas were free to natives and common under the tribal stewardship of a Chief according to their customs. Officially the TTLs were in turn stewarded (and custom amended) by the Government’s Department of Native Affairs (later renamed Ministry of Internal Affairs), my department to be. Each district was headed by a Rhodie District Commissioner (DC) and his partner, the Member-in-Charge (MiC) of

the British South Africa Police. These men were all-powerful, wise and fair (relative to the brains, powers and conditions in place). They were the new King (Inkosi) to the Matabele and Chief (Mambo) to the Shona, the link between the tribes (split as they were into sub units) and government. Legally the DC was the government's representative, adorned with all the powers of a Justice of the Peace and a magistrate. A special Government Notice was required to confirm him in his position, in practice he was the government.

By around 1920, the time my father and mother were born, the black population of Southern Rhodesia had swelled to roughly 700 000, with the whites at around 32 000[13]. Most blacks had successfully been moved to the TTL's, the rest soon to follow but for a tiny portion able to own a bit of land in the minute African Purchase Areas spread around the country. The world then was still a rural one. Even the bigger centres of Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali and Gwelo were still minute, rooted in trees and grass with wild animals in the street. Still, towns were growing, industry was emerging, and as needed, more and more blacks were called on to join the labour force. This meant white owned spots in white towns were duly designated for black settlements. Here blacks servicing white homes lived; weeding the garden, grooming the horse or washing the horseless carriage, digging the road drains, hauling the bricks and removing the night soil from the back lane. At the fledgling mines and farms similar setups emerged, camps and quarters created to house their various labour needs, all labour coming from the TTLs. The two country state was defining itself, solidifying as needs changed and populations moved, still with a rigid line between white and black. Soon this was to become the national vision, with 98% of the population living out in the deep bush of the TTLs.

Race relations, despite both colours having gone off to serve in the Great War, were to the point and heavily one sided.[14] Simply, blacks at the time

were viewed as vermin, interchangeable and far more numerous than needed. If an employer (white man, farmer, road maker or town developer, etc) had enough, by whim alone, of the kaffirs in his work force, or if the ‘promised’ wage bill was looking a tad heavy he would simply beat his blacks blue, withhold rations or be generally very prickly until they ran away.

Every time there was a downturn in economic activity this view was accentuated. A mentor and good friend some 50 years my senior once explained to me, when I was grown, that during the Great Recession he was a labourer laying the strip road from Bulawayo to Fig Tree. It was a major sign of the times that he was working while his kaffirs had naught to do. A walking book of early Settler stories, my friend also vouched for what many know but choose not to talk about; often blacks provided after church entertainment on a Sunday as game for a shooting party.

Of course, these attitudes were indicative of the time and cannot really be judged from the present. Rhodie attitude, and indeed black attitude, was grounded in how things were done down in white and black South Africa, across the sea in the US, and was even a simple copying of the rigid class system embraced in Europe. Many of the new Rhodies of the ‘20s, those new ‘white Africans’, were Europeans, some fresh off the boat with direct experience of the hardships of being at the bottom of the pile. Men who before had laboured under others now found themselves in the driving seat. They were brand new masters, each with the power to build a new ideology in a new kingdom. Of course, while judging from the present is fraught, at best, so too is thinking that the past is gone, that all is done and dusted. The past echoes, events leave an imprint, history creates the present.

In 1928 Father O’Hea, a dedicated missionary of the develop-the-people sort, was campaigning for funds for a new hospital in his TTL. Famously, he requested funds from Cecil Rodwell, a man fresh from fighting the Boers

(from the officer's deck chair) and at the time the Southern Rhodesian Governor. In reply Rodwell asked, 'why do you worry about a hospital? After all, there are too many natives in the country already.' Standing attentively beside the Father was a young Robert Mugabe.

And then, something amazing happened. Things began to change. By the early 30's settler numbers had mushroomed to around 50,000. The ratio of whites per blacks was growing. That meant more blacks were being hired meaning that, to a limited extent, white and black were mixing more and more. They were merging. Learning was not formal or organised between them except to the specific task of the moment. Albeit heavily paternalistic, a bond of understanding and growth began to form between the pre-war grown and matured Settler-Rhodie and the native. They knew of the contribution made by the blacks in the Great War and in the country generally, during the depression included. These older whities of Rhodesia knew the black hadn't seen the radio (or whatever) before and so didn't expect him to know how to switch it on … they taught him which gun for which animal. They taught him that there was oil for the car, oil for lighting and different oil (oh yes) for cooking steak, eggs, chips and tomato. Some of these home-spun teachers of the 40s were the same guys who had found sport terrorising the blacks on a Sunday in the 20s. Time had brought maturity, familiarity had softened attitudes and a slow-grown understanding had changed them.

Slowly the black education system was expanding. By the '40s, while the two countries had even further solidified geographically, on a personal scale, things had really begun to shift. Words had begun to change. *Kaffir* had all but faded from general talk, becoming first *savages*, then *natives*, and finally *Africans*. Names changed, too. By the time my Dad was on the scene Beauty and Precious, Big-boy and Smart had become Mary and Magdalene, Elijah and Moses. The gap of understanding was closing.

From my own experience, I cannot remember even one person of that pre WWII era who in any way detested, loathed or abhorred the Africans they had been ‘brought up with’. They did disparage certain actions, activities and situations – a right giggle over the Tokoloshe[15] is an example, outbursts of frustration over cattle dying in drought times another – but, without any hate and a lot of understanding. In these people, this attitude and these fledgling relations, an alternate Rhodesia was growing; one where some form of integration was simply a matter of time. The white was moulding the bush, learning of the bush, and the black was coming out of it, absorbing those things the bush was not. The more the African saw and experienced, the more he began to recognise a game plan outside of the traditional life in the making, even without the skills of reading and writing. And then World War Two hit, and Communism.

War’s Building Blocks

When WWII broke out my Dad found himself in an ‘exempt’ job … an electrician on a mine making gold … and somehow decided this suited only Hitler. He punched his boss, the reasons still unclear, was fired and promptly volunteered for the navy. He chose to go when my Mom was seven months with my older brother Brian, and by the middle of 1942 was training in Cape Town. In those days the sea was a lot further inland than it is now, with my Dad’s trainer anchored roughly where the statue of Maria van Riebeeck stands today. Soon he was off - to the North Sea and the German Sea, where the estimated life span in the icy water was three minutes, and from there the England run, the mouth of the Mediterranean and finally all points east of Malaya on a Mine Sweeper.

Along with Dad many of the African colonies sent troops to help their colonial masters, black and white alike. As a ratio of men responding to the King’s call Rhodesia was said to have supplied the most, and of course we also sent a lot of blacks. In terms of actual numbers statistics are hard to come by - the African colonies tend to be lumped together. However, certainly in my time, the two decades between the 60’s and 80’s, to spot a dignified ramrod straight black male in the crowd was to spot an ex-defence member of the British Empire serviceman. These men were fairly common.

The movements of the war caused great change in Central Africa. Imperial Japan's conquests in the Far East created a shortage of raw materials such as rubber and various minerals. U-boats patrolling the Atlantic Ocean reduced the amount of raw materials being transported to Europe, thus stimulating African production further. Rubber plantations and other raw material enterprises mushroomed in the steamy climates around the equator, all over Central Africa new towns began to bloom while those existing

doubled in size.

Down in Southern Rhodesia change was happening too, but slower and far less war inspired though we did have some RAF training. Throughout the 30s, as farms consolidated, as Settlers who'd received their farms for little or nothing began to examine their true desire to be in the bush, so whites began moving to the evolving sophistication of the built up areas. Coach and water stops were becoming villages, villages were becoming towns and towns themselves were soon very mod and up-to-date. As the war crowds drew in in Europe, and as Settlers volunteered and dashed off to fight, so some fleeing the war theatre arrived. They were mainly 'city-folk', adding to the dynamics of building collar and tie professionals out of rough open neck shirts and knee-high socks with sandals. Accountants and lawyers began to appear, estate agents and used car certifiers, all with their marketing fliers and snappy adverts. All the while Southern Rhodesia's men were going off to serve, the Zeederbergs, Bawdens, Wilsons and McLeods among them, and foreigners were trickling in to take their place.

Four years later, at the end of hostilities, those same men began trooping home. Of Southern Rhodesia's white men that had left to serve around 800 of them did not return.[16] In terms of the social landscape of the country this was a devastating figure. If we accept the broad number of a touch over 60,000 Settlers in the country in 1940, it's reasonable to say that only one fifth of that population were active, working Rhodie men. Therefore, say there were around 12 000 fully fit men, about half [17] actually left the country to fight and only some 5,200 returned. Of those who returned a number finished their lives incapacitated, the new settlers taking their places. Suddenly the drivers of the economy, the seat of political say-so, were metamorphosing, being replaced with a different, *totally* new mindset.

Change was happening everywhere. By the time my Dad returned to

South Africa, to Krugersdorp, he found a society turned on its head. The Afrikaans National Party had come to power, bringing with them a jobs-for-Afrikaners affirmative action policy. True to form Dad didn't like it, didn't want it, and looked north. My uncle had put forward a synopsis that the Rhodesias needed skilled English speaking whites, that there was a place with space for individuals to flourish, and so Dad made the journey. In the same vein men and their families from all over Europe; the pretty much devastated United Kingdom, the Mediterranean, began arriving in Salisbury, Bulawayo and the outlying towns. English speakers were preferred perhaps even to stricter ratios than applied by Australia. Where Rhodesia had near enough 70,000 whites in 1941, Dad was in the company of 125,000 by 1950. All were focused on one goal: to achieve for themselves and their families a better life. They came with a preconceived idea of a personal dream to be fulfilled, a dream that had nothing to do with the reality of Africa. It was a second settler wave, an immigrant wave, but this one bypassing the rural route of the first and instead going straight to already established cities and towns. So, come 1950 there were between 15,000 and 20,000 *new white adult males* in the country. These new whites did not know the black man. There was nothing of the born and raised Rhodie about them. WWII losses, in terms of 'Africa experienced' white men, and in terms of the relations and understanding between the country's black and white citizens, between Rhodieland and Kaffircountry, were, therefore, extremely serious.

At the same time unprecedented changes were sweeping the globe. The Cold War had begun. A sharp global divide between West and East, Capitalism and Communism had emerged along with a race for a full realisation of each. Massive industrial advances were taking place all over, stimulated by the industry of war, and economies on both sides of the Atlantic were beginning to boom. Everywhere standards of living were

rising, none more so than in America where business and the business of marketing were taking on an increasingly powerful role.

NATO had been established and was expanding, feeding the capitalism/communism divide. The Korean War started an enterprise further feeding economies as well as anti-communist frenzy. McCarthyism[18], the result and new driver of that frenzy emerged, a trend that soon spread to America's European allies. Concurrently, in the American south, blacks began challenging their white suppressors. Malcolm X and Martin Luther King entered the world stage. The Atlantic Charter, a document first signed between United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in February of 1941, was resurrected. On paper the charter was anchored by lofty goals, amongst them no territorial gains were to be taken by either the United States or Britain in respect of the colonies and any gains (or lack thereof) were to be according to the will of the people concerned, seemingly a safeguard for the advancement of global democracy. Buried within the Charter's vision, though, was a point that would prove crucial to the shaping of something else. Point four asked for trade barriers between the colonies and the rest of the world to be lowered. Crucially, the United States were insisting that Africa enter the global economy on equal terms giving her access to the world, and the world access to her. As much as democracy was being called for, so was the right for the free market to span countries, and continents. Unwilling but broken Britain began slowly to make changes according to their demands. Soon African trade unions began to develop, the urbanisation process aiding their growth, stimulating increased literacy and the growing consumption of newspapers. African leaders were emerging. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, all beginning campaigns for the independence of their homelands. In 1951

Libya achieved independence from Italy. Africa was changing, ideas of freedom and black consciousness seeping through her, sometimes slowly, often white hot, all lumped together with the idea of Communism, the arch foe of the Christianised West.

Meanwhile, the people of Southern Rhodesia, both black and white, got on with building their isolated country. They were aware of these monumental worldwide changes, but dimly so. To them, to us, certainly the talk was that communism was on the rise, certainly it was a new global foe, a threat to individual and societal growth, but as yet there was nothing truly arresting to distract from the business of making the new country hum. The nonsense was happening 'over there' and would certainly not be allowed 'here'. Here was a Rhodie place, separate and blooming.

Rhodie schools were being built and upgraded and had to been seen to be believed. Most had a boarding school[19] for the outlying farm kids and the grounds were extensive. The staff – because the conditions were good, and because they were held in high esteem by the parents - were the best with the wider public proudly supportive. In Bell Curve terms, Rhodie results had a fat tail skew on the pass side. There was the full share of below par students, sure, but the average tended about a good Cambridge/COP Certificate and later, 'O' level.

Road, rail and flight networks were installed and they were tops. Telephone, water, sewage and electricity reticulation began to develop, to a standard far ahead of the rest of Africa and much of the world (outside of the developed West). Government and Mining Town health care was introduced – soon the best in Africa outside of South Africa - and was matched by a growing specialist sector. It was also affordable. After an accident I spent the family holiday time in hospital getting my teeth fixed in Jo'burg Central, courtesy of Dad's conditions of service.

The economy began to hum. With the combination of a massive influx of imported skills, and guaranteed, plentiful, submissive and strong labour, the built up centres began to bloom like never-ending spring flowers. Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali, Gwelo, Ft Vic, the list of Rhodie heaven developments seemed endless, a single, connected builders' yard.

But, while Rhodieland was happy, the black population of Kaffircountry, those in theTTL's, were not. Here too changes were taking place. By 1950 the African population had, without supplementary feeding, doubled to two million (not a difficult feat, we were a family of four and my sister was on the way.) 90% of these were to be found crammed into the TTLs, areas that had not been enlarged since originally allocated back in the 30s.

Initially the TTLs had begun to produce crops far in excess of what natives had reasonably expected to harvest in the past - in the first 15 or so years of the TTL's existence a food surplus was regularly achieved. However, by 1950, with the devastating growth rate that overall surplus was easily obliterated, and then some[20]. The creation of the TTL's, the essential penning of its inhabitants, played a huge role in the population growth rate. Tribal traditions that had previously been the norm were being eroded, replaced by systems that were alien, incomplete as a social-society cycle and ultimately damaging. For example, pre-1900, before the full-scale arrival of the white man, under the regiment system for tribe defence and food and fuel collection, young native men were on a sort of call-up, constantly tasked with tribal duties while only selected older men settled into married, reproductive life. These older, less virile, 'stood down' or 'off duty' men may have had five or more wives while a man who was never relieved of duty might very naturally die a bachelor. With the general white-man induced stand down, with the restriction of movement within the TTLs and the spectre of forced removals a very possible reality, the young men began to stand up and claim

wives from as early as 1920. Young men who in the past would have been working were now unemployed and becoming fathers themselves.

While the records showed child mortality rates were high, and they were indeed creeping *higher*, in fact more kids were being born than ever before and in number, more were growing up. Their curtailed lifestyle meant women could manage with more children at one go - when on the move a mother couldn't cope with more than one child needing total care - and because of the horrible mortality rates they were having more children still. With the forced breakdown of the complete tribal family each was seeing they needed their own kids to provide for their old age. In addition, where in the past kids born deformed or sick weren't left to live but were given back to the ancestors etc. - that wasn't happening now. If it did and they were 'caught' they were in big trouble.

As towns and all the things associated were growing, so were the black residences attached, becoming townships. In Rhodieland factories, on the farms and down the mines, blacks were employed. This meant young men were called from the TTL's to learn the particular skills required for their jobs, skills ranging from un-unskilled and stopping, largely and officially, with unskilled[21], supported by a Rhodie brand of Bantu[22] education that prepared them only for just such a role.

Taken together; forced removals, curtailed movement, population growth, limited education and migrant labour style employment of the black population contributed to the degradation of their entire social order. The *kraal*, the extended family system where all did exactly as they were told, performing and sharing as if according to an auto-manual passed down the line of elders, was being split up, replaced with nothing promising growth. When fathers returned from the work places of Salisbury, Bulawayo and others they had roughly the same skills they left with, but spoke of amazing

things, reading, writing, the phenomenon of the radio, railways and rugby. Children would hear of houses so big a whole kraal could fit inside a space deemed sufficient for one white child only. Those that did not have jobs[23], roughly 70%, looked on, listened in and became frustrated. The Africans that had, after the rebellion of 1896, put their faith and trust in the hands of the whites as their new, extended fathers and mothers were being let down. Apart from the tiny few Rhodie's that were actively engaged in teaching and guiding the African, it was a fact that the black man simply could no longer achieve success in his traditional sphere, and neither could he in the white world. The two countries within one, the black world and the white world were now more sharply defined than ever, and were beginning to work against each other. A slow and still unconscious resentment was building. Slowly, as the two worlds collided, at each builder's yard, in each workshop, in every retail outlet and in every single home, each time with both sides having unrealistic expectations of the other, the word *kaffir* began to creep back into use. Soon relations between the two were perfectly primed for conflict, and the catalyst wasn't long in coming.

The Mau Mau uprising began in Kenya. In 1952 the first murders of Europeans there were reported and years of sensation and horrific hype had begun. Southern Rhodesia's press pounced, sending a steady stream of info flowing down. Rhodies saw that up north blacks were rebelling, killing their whites as well as their own. The British declared a state of emergency[24] and got busy with halting the stampede with incredible ferocity. News continued to pour in. Voodoo was rife, blood oaths and terrible massacres, witchcraft and devilry. Rhodies talked in their front rooms, in hushed voices so that the children wouldn't hear of the black nightmare in Kenya and the Congo, the rising of Black Nationalism and further afield the goings on in Russia and mad-Mao China. Ghastly atrocities from 'further up Africa' were

repeated over and over, and trumpeted faithfully in the press. Genteel Playboy was banned, the bloody novel ‘Uhuru’ (1962) promoted. The word from Kenya was so terribly distorted it horrified all.

At the same time, on the 1 August 1953, my Dad, along with almost two thirds of the eligible Rhodie population, voted for the formation of the Central African Federation with a figure of 25,000 for to 15,000 against[25]. The idea behind this was the coming together of the separate territories of Northern Rhodesia (current day Zambia), Nyasaland (current day Malawi), and Southern Rhodesia. Officially the idea was seen as a stepping stone toward a fully independent, majority (black-ruled) super state but unofficially, realistically, business was paramount. Here was an opportunity to incorporate Northern Rhodesia’s rich copper belt and Nyasaland’s plentiful labour with the eager business brains and management control of Salisbury.

Each country would retain its own government while a super-imposed Federal Government would take care of common, super-structure issues. In this way, it was said, the welfare of all three Central African units would be advanced including the added advantage of allowing Britain to step back into an advisory and sometimes lender role, where it suited. Soon copper belt cash and cheaper-than-cheap labour began to feature in Rhodieland budgets and planning.

But news from up north continued to arrive. In 1953 six year old Michael Ruck along with his father and mother were hacked to death in their beds creating pictures that travelled the world of blood trailing next to a teddy bear tossed aside. The west looked on in horror. Rhodies looked at their own blacks and wondered. What they didn’t know was that as far back as 1948 the authorities had known that

a) A small grouping of Kenyan blacks had had enough of the bad treatment endured over the past 60 odd years and were talking revenge, and,

b) That a more significant group were seeking advancement as equals. In 1951 Trade Unionist Kenyatta was asked by the British what the people wanted. He presented a list to the two governments, only to be totally ignored.

As for me, I was five years old that year. We had moved to Bulawayo by then, the big, southern capital of Rhodesia, and on my first day of kindergarten I rode my bike to school. My Mom followed in the family car and then went on to work, Dad having left much earlier. On my second day and for the next three days our gardener ran behind me, keeping an eye, and by Friday I was terrifying motorists on my own.

Dad was a hard-working man. His job as an electrician took him into the deep bush when supervising the cutting of new lines, sometimes into the TTL's and sometimes into the townships, after which he'd put in two hours of study at home. As one of the Immigrant wave of '49 he became far better versed in his knowledge of the *kaffir* population than most other Rhodies he knew, most of whom never set a foot out of town. He was an anomaly, a 49er respected as 'nig-nog knowledgeable'. That said, I remember one rainy, thunderous night, as Mom cringed and fretted in the front seat and we three younger kiddies (my brother was 17 and away from home by now) watched from the back, Dad charged a black fellow ever backwards. The young buck had caused him to slow, so messing Dad's chance to jump the red traffic light. When Dad had stuck his head out and scolded the 'boy' he had given Dad a very bad sign. Dad educated the man without any fear of the gathering black crowd, interrupted in their buying of a chip-roll-to-share from the Greek corner shop, their something-to-do treat on a Sunday night off. We were tired, scared (my sister was), driving back after a day out working on our 100 acre 'farm'. Soon the police arrived, agreed, and hurled the young man into the back of the Landie, hitting his knee with a crunch against the

steel of the Landie's back runner that reverberated through me, sealing the memory. A loud-hailer command from the young Rhodie copper dispersed the gathering crowd, dissolving them into the drizzle. Back then there were many bachelor-boy 'boys' about. They were seen as trouble makers, the 'loafers and hooligans'. Thought was swinging to providing more married accommodation units to stabilize the black population. For any old Settler, at that time, the bustle of the streets and the march of business, the distant treatment of the blacks was completely, totally alien.

By 1955 relations between the different members of the Federation were severely strained. All partners except Southern Rhodesia, including political England, had become increasingly unhappy at the fact of white control. At the local level blacks in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were making political ground. More black representation in the Federation government was wanted, something that Sir Roy Welensky[26] at federal level saw was necessary, but knew would be difficult. Todd (and colleague Whitehead) of our Southern Rhodesian government knew too that some things white had to be compromised, but the groundswell under all three did not want to give even an inch. Rhodies felt they were in charge, they should be in charge, and would stay in charge.

Tension mounted. In 1956 a plan for a black uprising in Nyasaland was discovered, ostensibly drafted by the Nyasaland National Congress. A state of emergency was declared and white federal troops were sent in. Black political leaders were arrested and jailed. More riots erupted and more federal troops were sent in - almost all white men from Southern Rhodesia – and quelled the disturbance. Deaths were reported. Black political parties were banned. Tensions continued to rise in the Federation, and to echo down to us.

Around that time Mom took me for my first day at Hillside Junior. During the break I had a to-do with another long slab like me. I was about to show

him that my dad was indeed stronger than his dad when he pulled a knife as big as a sword from somewhere in his pants. I had learnt enough at kindergarten to let go with a leap and, thank a god, the bell went. Rules are law at 7 years old.[27]

After lunch break I learnt that having made Rhodesia, Rhodes was in heaven and we had to work hard for our 'houses' up there too. Thompson was also up there, as was Helm, Rudd and whoever the blue one was.[28]

We learned that the Matabele had been very bad people during the rebellion. We studied that the slave trade was a very bad thing that was done on blacks by blacks, many from Tanzania, and that the British opposed it, especially Wilberforce and the great Missionary Livingston who saved many kaffirs by converting them. For my slave trade illustration I drew a picture all in black to show the captives hidden away in the ship's hold.

Saturday morning our maid would warn the bus driver and I would go the distance into the city to the cowboy and cartoon double feature with two swap-comics intervals. A couple of hours later, filled with a week's war stories, I would present myself at the bus stop, get lifted and be dropped on the road outside our home. The driver used to wait until I was in the yard before he would pull away … embarrassing man! I was already nine!

Every Sunday my white-only education was supplemented with tales of Jesus[29] and God slaying unbelievers; Daniel standing up to the savage lions, Mathew, Mark, Luke and John and other boys giving up their jobs and families to wander about after our Lord, and then Samson taking all of his Lord's enemies with one powerful suicide.

In 1958 the premier of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Garfield Todd, was ousted. In a series of reforms he had asked for, and got, the civil service began to open more positions to blacks (an opening gesture only as clerk was still the highest a black man could go), the official title for black males to be changed

from 'AM' (African Male) to ‘Mr’, and diners in dining rooms were allowed, at least officially, to be multiracial. Todd went further, wishing to make black education a priority and doubling the amount of black primary schools during his tenure. Finally, and most controversially, he suggested the repeal of legislation preventing sexual relations between black and white. For the Rhodie population that was quite enough and Sir Garfield was replaced by Sir Edgar Whitehead, a man who, at least initially, was far more in tune with the desires of his constituents. Whacking the newspaper with the back of his hand Dad looked up and proclaimed, “good riddance! *Kaffir-boetie!’*[30] We were all seated tight about the table Dad had made, all cosy in the kitchen busy with our porridge, as the day turned to night.

‘Uuwa-more pol-litch Master Dou-glass?’ asked the maid.

There were now 175 000 whites in the country and just under four million blacks, their population growing at around 4.5% per year. In Rhodieland, at the bottom of every garden a black (or three, depending) lived in a rent-free *kaya*. He had no need to walk to work, water and one electric light was laid on, sugar was available (although with 110% Rhodie grumbling), and standard was a ration of ‘boys meat’, a ‘one-week-one packet’ of maize meal with a pinch of salt. Left-overs from the Rhodie table were often allocated … my Mom used to set a plate of food for the staff on Sundays … and blacks were, mostly, welcome to play their music in the evenings. We’d sit out there, watching the huge red sunset, drinking tea (Dad with his pick-me-up), listening to the sound of flutes wafting through the vegetable gardens. (I was to hear that same tune again 40 years later, when watching the Lion King at Tyger Valley cinema, Cape Town.) On our once every four year holidays, down south or across to Beira, the boy and the girl could take time off, so long as someone was there to tend the home, feed the dogs, cats, chickens and rabbits, tend to the extensive garden, and if Master’s brother arrived

unexpectedly, serve a meal and lay on a clean bed.

In Rhodie schools, both junior and senior, big blacks of old time warrior class kept the place clean. In the hostels they did the laundry, made the food, and knew who was good and bad, who were the uglies and the bullies and the thieves, and who among the whitie boys was not handling a bout of depression. They were the most fervent supporters of the 1st XV rugby and 1st XI cricket teams, and when they had holidays they went home and told their children of the big-white-school where the 6'5" boy and his farmer son friends ate so much.

Suddenly - I guess I was going on for 12 -riots were reported in Rhodieland townships. Premier Whitehead, in discussion with Welensky at federal level, sent the police in. In their front rooms, in the drill halls and down at the pubs Rhodies discussed these new developments. The niggers were a little peeved, they decided, the government and the police had the situation well in hand.

But political pressure continued to mount, both nationally and at federation level. Welensky continued to field accusations of a pro-white agenda from within the federation, abroad and even from a tiny minority within Rhodieland itself. British PM Harold Macmillan visited in 1960, intent on a closer look and listen to African gripes, even then ruminating on his winds of change speech for later that year. Township riots increased, Joshua Nkomo, ex-labour union man, driven and conscious of the need for jobs and a rising black economy to ease the pressure building in the TTLs began to petition the UN from within Kaffircountry. Inexorably Welensky's position grew more precarious, as did Whitehead's. Senior Rhodieland politicians did not want to lose the Federation but a growing number of back-benchers, the public, the voters and the incoming immigrants, were not on board.

Later that year Whitehead's Minister of Labour, Abe Abrahamson – a

Bulawayo man, Dad had met him - stunned the country. He announced that an African with a wife and two kids could not possibly get by on less than £14 a month. There was uproar. How were Rhodie employers meant to afford it? At that time domestics and farm workers mostly received around £3, the ladies usually getting more as they worked inside, while senior blacks supervising other blacks in the industrial sector may have just squeezed the £14 mark.

The front rooms of Rhodie homes, down at the pubs and the drill halls were abuzz. It was said that the whites had built industry and made the farms, they were the drivers of the economy - each working Rhodie creating work for at least seven blacks, farmers employing whole crowds of them on and off, therefore the big discrepancy between black and white pay was fully justified.

'And what about the perks they get?' asked the Rhodies, my Dad included.

'What about the free TTL plots each black family got, and the free grazing rights?' Surely that was a second income? Was that factored in, went the talk in the front room, at the pub and on the tennis court. That by then industry's every day running and maintenance activities were increasingly in black hands, with whites relaxing as their boys got better and more capable at the job, and that the TTL's were emaciated and struggling to sustain an exploding population, was ignored. At that time, only 5% of black labour, the most senior among them, was earning a liveable wage. Right then an employer had his native's certificate number and if anything went wrong, anything at all, that number would take the DC or the police to the African's front door - even if it were in the upper reaches of the Zambezi Valley.

By then I was very keen on football and athletics, running with my gang in the bush in our free time. One Saturday *arvy* I and my Lieutenant went to

war with the gang from the up market Hillside Hills suburb. We ambushed them with our katties firing marula pips and they responded with pellet guns! I didn't even wait to shout 'unfair.' Two of that gang ended up in Special Branch[31] – sneaky! Later that night, or another just like it, clear and starry but freezing cold, I remember standing at the back step. Dad, stripped off his leather jacket, the warmth of the kitchen at his back, handed the gardener, barefoot and in the standard khaki top and shorts, young enough that but for a few crinkles the poor bugger didn't even have hair on his chest, £3 - his wages for the month.

By the dawn of the '60's the world was in turmoil. Hostilities in Vietnam were intensifying, the flower power movement and mass protest across the US were taking shape and in Africa colonial states were throwing off the yoke, one by one. Chad, Benin, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Togo, Zaire, Somalia, Congo, Gabon and Cameroon achieved independence that year. Everywhere blacks were taking over, everywhere whites were running.

Sharpeville happened down in South Africa. Apparently, talk said, it had made big page news overseas, but down with us it was slotted neatly into the 'township troubles' category of the local paper with a 'that's the way to do it' comment tucked in. Not that I knew about it. For us 1st year juniors in high school we were too busy with stories of pigs' penises being cut from the animal and heated over a fire before being used as a rape weapon, 'up north'.

That same year, 1960, a young TTL teacher named Robert Mugabe, on a visit back home, agreed to say a few words to a crowd gathered in the hope of presenting their grievances to Premier Whitehead. He said his speech, by all accounts going extremely well for a first time speaker of this kind, and left. He heard later that Whitehead refused to allow the gathering to present their petition and that soon after our police came punching in.

This event, most say, was the start of his political career. Sometime after, not too long I think, on a crisp morning a white man was discovered dead in his car off the main highway outside Salisbury, close to a TTL ‘business centre’. Stuffed in his mouth was all of his love-making equipment. The front rooms went crazy. Only blacks could do that sort of violence. No white’s ever stopped to wonder why.

In 1961 a new constitution was enacted in which an A and B voters roll was tabled allowing any man, regardless of skin colour, to vote on the running of the country but pinning his eligibility on financial and educational criteria. The result was that the vast majority of Rhodieland was found on the A role, where single votes counted for much more than one from the B. Those registered on the B roll were men and women with far lower financial and educational achievements; the elite of Kaffircountry residents - although mainly based in Rhodieland townships - including lawyers, doctors, accountants, and even a dentist. Black Nationalist movements throughout the federation derided the decision, and so did a significant number of Rhodies, left and right. Black nationalists didn’t like the inherent disadvantage still extended to black men and women, Rhodies didn’t like the inherent advantage, the possibility of blacks achieving official responsibility.

A groundswell of right wing sentiment began to fire. It said that there was no way that black involvement in the running of the show would be allowed. The white finger pointed deep into the heart of Africa. It insisted that the *Zots*[32] up north would botch the Rhodie miracle carved out of the African bush just as had happened elsewhere, and it asked, rhetorically, what did they know of high finance, of government? It pointed out that the American Negro had been under tutelage for hundreds of years and hadn’t yet grasped the basics of being white. It nodded in the direction of a resurrected Teddy Roosevelt, agreeing firmly with Teddy’s ‘talk softly but carry a big stick’

slogan.[33] In fact Rhodies chuckled at that, talking political crackdown in the townships, in the front room.

We moved from Bulawayo to Umtali Town, Dad having got a promotion. The greater Umtali region offered an incredible mix of middle veld scrub. In the drier parts there were grasslands in the flats and between the outcrops groves of flamboyant Msasa covering the bigger kopjes climbing higher into areas of pristine, almost tropical forest. Each environment had its own birds and animals … amazing. If you were a Tarzan type you could lose yourself in the place and never want for anything. This type of bush backed straight onto our house, close to the eastern border of the country. We knew less people there, the rural pace was calmer, quieter, but still Rhodie uncles and aunts gathered in our front room, and my Dad and Mom gathered in theirs. Talk was of the blacks in the township and the blacks of Northern Rhodesia, that damn Dr Banda, that ignorant Kaunda causing all the chaos up north and for our troubles, the lazy, fat Joshua Nkomo.

In 1962 general elections were held, with it the opportunity for Rhodieland's Rhodies to get themselves heard. In the run-up to voting day the Rhodesian Front party was formed, headed (nominally) by Winston Field. This was an amalgamated, concerted attempt to create powerful opposition to Whitehead's liberal United Federal Party. There Welensky, standing with the UFP, was shouted down as a Jew, as a man who would ditch the white for his black charges, and Whitehead was seen as desperately courting black favour within the federation and locally. The results were startling. While the UFP maintained its majority in the rural areas, chiefly amongst the tiny fraction of the B, non-white roll that registered and were prepared to vote, the RF dominated in the towns, taking the entire election with a combined percentage of 54.9% against the UFP's 43.7%[34]. Rhodieland had spoken. There would be no more toeing the line to a black population that didn't

appreciate how lucky it was, nor to overseas liberals who thought all blacks were nice, well washed, educated people. The country was abuzz with excitement. Rhodieland was reclaiming its independence, Rhodie identity was being re-affirmed. Rhodesia's growing self-belief was becoming real.

And then, on 31 December 1963, the Federation was officially dissolved. Welensky, Whitehead, Todd and team had done their damndest but they could not get Rhodies to begin to see the need for moving towards integration and more importantly, black economic participation. Northern Rhodesia's copper mines were gone; the super cheap labour of Nyasaland was gone. Southern Rhodesia, for the first time, was on her own.

'Well, bugger them,' said the Rhodie on the street and in the drill hall and down at the club, 'we won't be at their beck and bloody call, anymore'.

Pension and unemployment schemes envisaged and promoted by the UFP government, aimed at providing relief to black citizens, were discarded. There were little to no new black farming inputs and precious little investment into farming, education, finance and management. Black unemployment rose. At that time, for every Black employed - 600,000 plus a few in Rhodieland - there was a black unemployed in Kaffircountry.[35] Add to this figure the fact that half the employed blacks were foreign, coming from as far as the Congo and Kenya but predominantly Malawi followed by Mozambique, meaning that for every one TTL 'boy' or 'girl' employed, two were waiting for a job, any job, or any additional means of support. There were now five million people in the TTL's. Human pressure was increasing exponentially. Residents were scratching in the dust, still waiting for news from Rhodieland, hoping, and at the same time listening carefully to the new word coming in from up north, from down south, and slowly from within Southern Rhodesia's towns themselves. This was the word from Nkomo and Sithole and a few new kids on the block. 'Perhaps,' they were asking, 'we

should try another way? ‘

News from Pretoria hit. The Mandela Rivonia Trial had begun. Blacks in South Africa had taken on the most hardcore, the toughest, most inflexible white government of them all.[36] In South Africa there were fully fledged terrorists now, committed to replacing the white government with a black, communist one backed by the Reds of Russia *and* with the Yellow Peril in the background. Rhodies pulled still closer together.

Our blacks took on an even more suspicious hue. Talk in the gathering places became more animated and more poisoned. Any black with any kind of economic idea was either assumed to be a communist or to have had the thought physically put there by one. Blacks began to be seen as communists, communists as blacks. Us Rhodien school kids knew, just as certainly as we knew that sex was yuk and against the Lord, that communism was bad and all the local blacks who were not employed at the school and at home and at Dad’s workplace were behind it.

Late in that year Japan held a trade show in Umtali. I was excited, the whole thing sounded like something straight out of my comic books, but Dad and the others who had fought in South East Asia in WWII refused to go. I went anyway and had a grand time of it until I nearly got bitten by a cobra. I was rooting around the back of the exhibit halls for empties, hoping to get enough to exchange for a full coke, when I came upon the sunning snake.

‘I told you so’, said Dad at dinner time that night obviously miffed that I’d gone, and quietly pleased his distrust of the Japs had proved correct. Later, in a quiet, rare moment, Dad explained that he didn’t want to go to the show as a protest because he had seen how the Japs treated the people they conquered. That seemed fair enough to me, but I didn’t understand why the next day he fired the girl for having a VD. I liked her and thought she worked hard. And she had a stunning figure. Sshh…

Gooks

A 'Gook' is a terrorist, or as they're called today, freedom fighters (but only in wars past. Modern wars have many terrorists and Gooks). Rhodesian Gooks could be divided into two main groups, each as evil as the other, and are described below.

ZANLA - Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

These guys were the ones under Bob Mugabe, mostly of the Shona tribe, with thick links with Mozambique and the treachery happening there. This bunch was fighting both Rhodesia's forces and, ZIPRA, the other terrs mentioned below. They had it as their plan to occupy the ground, overtake the administration in rural areas, and then mount a final, conventional campaign against Smith's men. They liked to concentrate on the politicisation of the rural areas using force, persuasion, ties of kinship and collaboration with spirit mediums (typical). Their favourite tactic was the planting of Soviet anti-tank land mines, their way of trying to disrupt the Rhodie economy. These did a lot of damage until Rhodies learned to use sandbags, steel deflector plates and fill their tyres with water instead of air, a good way to cushion the blast and put out any fires. Getting hit by a mine was a big, life-ending deal until V-shaped blast hulls in the front put a stop to that.

ZIPRA - Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

These were the Matabele Gooks under Josh Nkomo and they liked to operate out of Zambia as opposed to Mozambique. These chaps thought political strategy and negotiation would go further than armed force. These guys were mixing heavily with the communists.

They took advice from Soviet instructors in popular revolution and coup strategy. There may have been about 1,400 Soviets, 700 East German and

500 Cuban instructors deployed in the bush, preaching communist doctrine. They had some armoured vehicles and a number of small aeroplanes in Zambia. It is said that these guys, cunningly, were waiting for ZANLA to bring the whities to their knees and only then would they attack.

Either of these groups would be shot by any Rhodie forces, on sight.

A Rhodie in the Making

It's 1964 and I'm 15 years old. It's 6am. I'm done with my ¾ mile run and exercises and I'm rushing from the caravan to get into the toilet before Dad … he takes an age. He hammers on the door but I'm done anyway and I dart out of there to the bathroom. Back in the caravan I dress in my Umtali Boys High uniform, khaki (the senior boys wear a white shirt), then amble through to hit breakfast. I wolf my porridge and toast watching Dad who's finishing his. Mom's serving and eating on the run, Bobby and my youngest sister Ann rush in and out, brushes in hand, pulling on jerseys, finishing their homework, chatting and eating too.

'Mom, sandwiches,' I say, then, 'Gloria, sandwiches,' to the maid, whoever gets them first, then I'm out the door just after Dad who's roared off in the work landie. Mom leaves soon after me in the family car, dropping Ann at Chancellor Junior School then going into her secretary job at the Wattle Company and Bobby walks over to Girl's High.

Meanwhile I'm on my bike and I'm free. I could take the bus but this is much, much better. I'm independent, this way I can fly. I breeze through Rhodieland on a perfect Rhodie morning. Our suburb with its small three bedroom, one-toilet-plus-bath houses, kaffir kayas in the garden, up the hill passed Jerry's house (his dad is the Provincial Commissioner of police), and then the richer suburbs start to roll by. Soon I'm in the recent-older parts of our City of Umtali. Palatial bungalows are spread out around work of art gardens with a kaffir kaya for four and five at the bottom of each. I pass our classy golf and tennis club – where I'd been ball boy for a moment when World Champ Rod Laver and his group toured. Double story houses slide past as I slip through the fresh air, strong legs pedalling.

I'm about to hit the long, straight hill to Boys' High when I get a

puncture. Damn. I don't want to be late today, today is a big day. PM[37] Smith is going to give us a talk in the hall, it's starting soon. I start pushing the bike, getting up that hill as fast as I can. I'm thinking that it was earlier in the year that we'd heard of the drama up in government. PM Winston Field, the head of the RF, had been talking with the blacks.

'Does he just want to hand the country over?' Dad and his friends had said. Then he was gone and Smith took the lead.

'What better man?' everyone had said. 'He's a successful farmer, wealthy, a success at business. Who better?'

'He is the best man,' I think, so correct and proper, a proper Rhodie I am as I sweat the hill.

Too late to get to the park-area I hide my bike among the dozen motor bikes of out-of-town and wealthy seniors. For my 1000 white boy's school (mostly, white classified anyway) usually it's a day of sport, talking girls and a few of the boring facts we need for geography, the dates plus who for history, maths, the literature quotes we need to pass our exams, then back to girls, and the 'troubles'. The 'nig-nogs,' we like to chuckle, the 'shovel noses' and 'wood-heads', they're getting theirs, we like to say, the police have a handle on it, they're sorting it out. But not today.

I'm hurrying. He might have already started. I sneak into the thick shock of firs on the open side of the hall. The huge 6th form repeat guy, the biggest, oldest man in the school is already in the best view spot. I'll stand next to him. I do. I can see Headmaster Connie's shoes. He's introducing our great leader and then I can see his shoes, too, as he takes the centre spot behind the lectern.

'It's great to be a Rhodie,' he's saying. 'We Rhodesians,' he's saying, 'are going to continue to carve this magnificent wilderness of Africa into something Christian, civilised, wonderful.'

His words are giving me goose bumps, my schoolboy's cig trailing smoke from my cupped hand. I can see it, I can see the dream.

'We'd best all pull our collective finger and make sure we do everything required,' he's saying, and we're all listening, big eyes in our heads. He's the one that took the political stage and told everyone - local and foreign - what needed to be said about the blacks, that they're inept, misguided and needing hand holding for a long time yet. He's the one that had the guts to do what needed to be done, the balls to tell the Federation to get stuffed. He's saying what we know. We are the ones, the whites who can and will transform Africa. We are going to Christianise it, Civilise it, Develop it. We are going to do everything we need to but we won't have Apartheid, because that doesn't work, and we wouldn't have majority rule because that will never work. He's telling us about the long term plan to, err … oh yeah … Christianise, Civilise, Develop, brand Rhodesia into our Africans, as time goes on.

'If the British Empire wants to fall,' I hear him saying, 'we whities, we who made Central Africa need have no part … we'll go alone.'

We lift the roof. Led by Headmaster Connie we cheer, a roaring ovation, 1000 of us at full cry together.

Suddenly I've got something else to think about. The massive chap next to me, the one with a six o'clock shadow at eight in the morning, flicks his smoke into the damp needles, turns and grabs me by the collar.

'You take my place in the first team,' he growls, eyes an inch from mine, 'you're dead meat … get it?'

My legs are jelly, my heart jack hammers in my throat. Last Thursday I'd been pulled from junior team to practice with the 1st and 2nd XV rugby squads. There's a chance I'm to be promoted whether I like it or not. I'm a huge kid, big and strong enough but I'm only 15, he's 20. What is this

monster going to do? He pushes his face closer, his eyes look like they're going to pop from their sockets, he's about to speak, when Smith comes hurrying past. We're quiet, watching him striding, his secretary, the mystery man, Mr Clarke[38], talking in his ear. I brace for the attack but behold, coming shouldering through the firs is the star, the captain elect of the rugby team. This is the hairiest, strongest man I have ever met. My attacker lets go, standing back immediately. Our captain, our heroic captain rips my cig from my hand, crushes it then turns to the big guy.

'Touch him again, come talk to me,' he says.

My tormentor slinks off, my captain nods and slips away. The bell rings, PM Smith is gone. My trembling is subsiding. There's a long day of sports and girls and geography to get through.

In Rhodieland Saturday mornings were special. In Umtali, a place so small all of us could fit into one of Salisbury's suburbs, it all happened 'down town' on High Street, a spot that was up on a ridge, a place perceptibly cooler with Msasa trees, leafy shrubs and grass lining the centre of town. Being seen shopping and parading yourself was an outing for us young adults. The better off Rhodie scholars among us would meet up to be seen with Mum at Meikles or Haddons, having a shake and a cream scone, being served by a black resplendent in white uniform with the standard maroon Fez. There was only really the one high school for boys so presentation was important. The day scholar girls would all be in their best and most fashionable while the hostel boarders were in their 'going out' gear … boater, green skirts, white tops, waists pulled in and boobies out. For those of us whose pocket money didn't run to shakes we sauntered up and down Main Road pavement, under the purple Jacaranda and red Flamboyant trees and along our Town Central Memorial Park, finally heading for the only black on our street. 'A*nywann iiii--- scream,*' he'd be shouting, long and loud - *'anybody want ice*

crrreeeammm' as he pushed his cart along.

While parading before the girls in town was trauma for hormone ablaze me, adventures in the bush were fun. By 15 I knew a lot about it. Myself and around 10 Rhodie boys my age had taken to going out in hitch-hike size groups of two or four to the white farms and the nearby TTLs. There we were camping, looking for birds, birds' eggs, honey and stones. Once Rog and I spent time with a Museum Researcher and hunted a special ant-bear. Often we splashed about in the slow river that was later to be part of the Mugabe diamond fields. Many a holiday myself and a few wandered north up into the fringe of the Highlands, west as far as Bromley on the Salisbury side, east into the Vumba and over into Moz, but most often all points south of Umtali, mainly down around Birchenough Bridge country. Once I walked alone from Umvuma to Mashaba the back way.

There, sliding by at a much slower pace than my bike gave me, I saw the traditional home of the most demure, harmless, very backward and dirty nig-nog. Suddenly the kayas at the bottom of all of our gardens with their running water, electric light and toilet looked palatial, like the houses in the rich suburbs. The blacks called out greetings as I passed by their dry, thorn 'fenced' enclosures, their mud 'n grass huts.

'Hello young sir.'

'Humpfh-boy,' I replied, in a nice enough way.

I saw schools as I passed. Tiny, neat, but merely a roof over walls with holes for windows, all of it built on a hardened mud patch. I could see a blackboard painted on to the wall in every classroom, obviously full of pride but, wow, primitive. Sitting on the floor, sharing a slate and reciting the teacher's words, I would discover later, wasn't rare, while common was four to a desk for one and a pass-on text book.

There was no waste anywhere, not so much as a bent nail in the dirt. The

blacks just like Dad, shared intolerance for waste. To him, a depression survivor in the cold of the Transvaal Rand, a piece of wire the length of a nail was cherished. For me, I didn't know anything about it. ZANU PF was banned in August 1964, the year the armed struggle was launched. I didn't know anything about it. I had it all; I strolled on, pulling a Kapitan from the box without losing the tobacco. They didn't cost much more than Star and, frankly, Star was made from shit for the kaffir market, good only for those months when my allowance ran out.

1965 arrived and with it the whole country knew that independence was on the cards. Talk all around was fizzing about it.

'If the Brits don't want us,' went the words, 'then we don't want them neither.'

There were other signs that things were changing.

The trickle of Rhodies leaving the country had started. There were a variety of reasons. For some, like my brother, leaving had already been planned, the wide world beckoned. For others, my big form six tormentor among them, making sure that neither they nor their younger siblings hung around after school was a priority. It was obvious that storm clouds were brewing but most of us didn't mind. We were preparing to do our duty, to stem the tide of communism. 'Two-four-six-eight,' we'd shout, 'who do we a-pre-she-ate? *Smithy*!' and then we would scurry about fetching our boaters. I never threw mine. Bugger that, Dad would have been livid.

'Expensive and totally impracticable,' he'd say.

UDI happened later that year:[39] I'm sitting in our living room, a 16 year old schoolboy trying to study for the first of my O level mock exams when, cutting through my background music the announcement comes over the radio,

'Turn on your TV'. I scramble to catch the usual bugle blowing, drum

roll and solemn ‘we interrupt the program for a special broadcast to the Nation of Rhodesia by our Honourable Prime Minister …’ before Ian Douglas Smith is ushered onto the screen.

‘Now I would like to say a few words to you…’ says our Smithy, watching me intently, ‘… today, now that the final stalemate in negotiations has become evident, the end of the road has been reached…’

I listen to every word, and then begin whooping for joy. UDI has been declared! We are free of the British, free to go it alone!

I shout for the maid, no answer, so I press myself against the burglar bars and yell out of the lounge window at our 20 year old garden boy.

‘We’ve dumped the British!’

Busy gathering the leaves from the wild fig whose roots Dad said were the cause of the crack to the corner of the house, he pauses, then gives me a steady look. I’m expecting him to step closer to peep in at the TV. I know him, every Saturday morning I have to help him for three hours. Instead he sets the rake against the garden brickwork and walks away, silently, all the way up the road and finally out of sight. I’m astounded. Everyone’s been saying it’s time we went on alone; what is it with the boy? I leave my notes where they lie and peddle over to the new kid on our block. Their maid’s shocked to see me, irritatingly trying to stop me from going around to the back.

‘The young Master is busy, the Master is busy!’

I ignore her and charge round the corner, and stop abruptly. There’s Andre, his pants around his ankles and a squawking chicken in his hands, bum toward him.

‘Sorry sir!’ she cries as I peddle away, shouting my disgust.

‘UDI has been declared,’ I’m thinking. ‘We were free from Britain, we’re our own country!’

But it didn’t feel much different. Life went on. As a school we still went up and down to Salisbury for sports and studied under the British syllabus. Myself and different buddies still carried on with our nature study forays, hitchhiking deep down into the Manicaland TTLs quite undisturbed. On one trip I ended up having a coke in Bikita district, a place I was later to spend some traumatic, war-filled years (which we’ll talk about).

When we went east, more in the direction of Chipinga, we often passed by the spot where Mr Oberholzer was murdered by the Crocodile Gang the year before. He had been stopped by a roadblock, now I know set up by a man named William Ndangana who, along with Victor Mlambo, James Dhlamini and Master Tresha, killed him, leaving his family unmolested. This event has been noted as the opening of the terrorist war. I wasn’t too aware of it other than that opinion was divided about whether the kaffirs were robbers or terrorists. The fact that they didn’t harm the rest of the family made it a tough call. Some said they didn’t because they were disturbed, others they didn’t because they were robbers, others they didn’t because they only needed the death of the white man. Either way, we knew Mr Oberholzer was a good, hard-working white man, and the caught killers would be hanged. Besides that I’d become involved in a new project, bee keeping, so I wasn’t too fussed about the whole thing anyway.

In 1966 friend Rog chucked school and got a job in Forestry. This was the ticket. He was given a huge house deep in the Melsetter forests, all to himself. I went up for a week one holiday. We’d work during the day then, short of cash, alternate our nights by playing cards three nights and having a *jol*[40] the next. Our *jol*-night was to go over the mountain into Mozambique, no passport required. On Rog’s BSA 250cc we’d roar round the corner, gunning for the border post with the boom standing straight up, the Portuguese officials usually giving us a little cheer as we churned through

and away. One evening they had the boom down. We came out of the corner at full speed, both our eyes popping as Rog dropped the bike and we slid under, me on my bum. How the Porks[41] laughed.

'You take us for granted,' they said as they helped us up.

In the tiny restaurant just beside the Post we'd eat peri-peri chicken and prawn, washed back with a very-good-enough-thank-you wine and finished with a sweet smelling cheroot - no matter that the harsh smoke clamped the throat. About us in the little bar 'n counter food place we'd see Portuguese with plenty of coloured folk, black couples, mixed couples, men sitting alone, talking and drinking. All mixing, laughing, serious, licking at their spicy fingers as they looked for a cloth. We marvelled at their open system. For them, it seemed, white (well, creamy white … they weren't British) was pretty much right but thereafter you rose to your grade and chose your style. Blacks with quality were welcome. Contribute and you were in society. Female and with good body; they were in you. Their system made us wonder, but not too much.

I'd see more of it on family holidays. By now, instead of taking the long trek down to Durban every four years Dad had taken to carting us to nearby Beira once every two years. Usually half of Umtali and a good bit of Salisbury would be along also, giving me a good spread of buddies to go adventuring with. We'd sneak away from our parents, the beach, and head into the city proper. There we pretended to be big boys, seeing the lights through a beer with the obligatory serving of bread squares and diced spicy meat and gravy, caught up in the exotic, mixed atmosphere. All the colours, the dark women… One time I nearly had first time sex with a Salisbury girl who was looking for first time sex. It went like this:

'Let's go over there, behind the wreck. I don't think there's anyone there.' But there was.

‘How bout there?’ pointing to what seemed a deserted stretch of beach, mind buzzing at what might just take place, at the secrets I was about to uncover, but the spot was occupied and my pal’s room in the motel was filled with him, naked, sleeping off a party. She smiles up at me.

‘Over there,’ she said, her angel’s hand gesturing to a bundle of bungalows with likely looking, dark corners. But the place was dirty.

Finally I took the initiative:

‘Do you want an ice-cream?’ So we do, eating in silence. She must have told her pals because I got called ‘loser’ a lot afterwards. I thought I was good about the ice cream.

While we Rhodies marvelled and liked, taken away by the holiday atmosphere and the freedom of everyone, everywhere, of all colours, we were a bit disgusted too. Ultimately it just wasn’t right and it was just a holiday. Soon we’d be back in our Rhodie towns. Segregated, rigid and British-standard-orderly.

It was at that time that I had an experience that although was just a drop in the ocean of being a teenager, would shape my Rhodiehood forever. It was the seed for this book and my life. What happened was this:

After a visit to friend Gav in Chipinga I was hitchhiking late one night, only a mile from that slow river and the recently discovered diamond fields. [42] I was wet, white, missing a shoe, shrouded in a sleeping bag and in the middle of darkest Africa. Finally my tired thumb willed a brave man to stop. The car was a smart one, the man inside obviously well off. I liked the look of his setup, I liked the warmth of the heater seeping the cold from me.

We started chatting and it turned out he was the District Commissioner of Chipinga. We prattled about the troubles and the sports scores but mostly about the bush and he began telling me about Intaf and the DC system, something I knew nothing about.

‘For instance,’ he said, ‘something we’d do is provide a dam. We’ll build it and leave it, but they won’t look after it. The boys will let their cattle trample over the earth walls, the spillways will silt up and eventually it’ll overflow over the top. Finally it will collapse.’

I nodded, that sounded like what an unsupervised black would end up doing.

‘What do you think we should do?’ he asked, driving, his face just a vague image in the dark as we sped.

‘I’m not sure,’ I said, thinking more about the car, thinking that I’d enjoy one of these.

‘What would you do if I gave you this car, now,’ he asked.

I wasn’t sure.

‘Do you know much about cars? Let’s say suddenly, right now, the engine stalls. We pull off to the side of the road. We’re stuck here. We open the bonnet and look inside and it’s an engine we’ve never seen before, a totally different kind. Neither you nor I can tell what’s wrong. Let’s say also that no one we ask knows how to fix this car. No car passing can help us. Everyone’s puzzled by this car. It makes no sense. No one we know has the parts, the knowledge or the faintest idea of who to ask to find out how to fix it. No one knows what to do with this car. What do we do with it?’

I’m scratching my head.

‘What do you do if you’ve been given a dam, and you’ve never seen one before? And no one you know has either. What do you do when it breaks?’

‘Giving alone isn’t enough,’ he said. ‘Just giving isn’t appreciated. This is where we’re making a mistake. We need to get involved. We need to not only supply a dam but make sure that what it is is understood, and understand first why the people would or wouldn’t want the dam in the first place.’

‘Why wouldn’t they want a dam?’

‘Would you want a fancy new bicycle that was three times as fast as your own one, but as soon as it broke you had no idea how to fix it and no one to teach you, no tools that fit, when you could just keep using your own one?’

‘At Intaf,’ he said, ‘we’re trying to get the tribesman involved as citizens. We need to work together to slowly build this country up. We need to develop the bush and develop the people in it.’

The night whizzed by, dark place after dark place. I was affected. This man was speaking with an attitude I hadn’t heard before but somehow it made sense, it resonated inside. For me, then, our blacks were simply loyal and deferring. For me, I had simply been born into white privilege according to God’s will. Blacks were part of the furniture. At some point, growing up, I had realised they were people, just inferior. As a boy I’d toddle into their kaffir-kaya cooking area and share some sadza.[43] I’d hear them talking in their strange language as little people in the fairy books do. My friends and I would snigger at their attempts at writing, unconsciously deciding that their paltry living conditions had something to do with them kow-towing to Dad and Mom. I also knew that there were points in us that were the same, points of laughter and empathy. I had a compassion for them but it didn’t amount to much. That night, sitting in that warm car with my Africa speeding by in the dark DC Chipinga painted a picture of building in my mind. Using words like ‘partnership’, ‘working together,’ I began to feel differently, if not to think differently. On some level, inside everything else, I knew I agreed with what he said. I was excited by it. I wanted to build, I wanted to be a part of it all. I loved the bush. And I wanted to be in charge, to afford a car like that.

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By the late 60’s us Rhodie teenagers were well aware that UDI meant war. There had been exchanges between our army and police with ‘nationalist

elements', even before UDI. Now the tempo took a step up. There were 'contacts', few, well-spaced and happening in isolated areas of the Zambezi Valley, below Kariba Dam and above and below Victoria Falls. Our army certainly had the upper hand but not all was under control. The Gooks then weren't total dummies. They were the first committed bunch, the show bunch, perhaps. They were less, they were trained and presumably they had a measure of camaraderie for they didn't leave it to the other guy and bolt. As many write-ups tell they all too often had our forces pinned down before we took the upper hand, only to discover that 'the terrorists had made good their escape. The large boulders had provided them with protection from the guns and bombs'.

To us war was natural. We would line the street during the annual World War Remembrance Parade, cheering as our marching whities stomped by with their shining black boots beneath starched and pressed colonial style uniforms, the black troops smart too and playing march music. We'd all have a cry at the Cenotaph for Queen Victoria's dead English and later have a monumental piss-up at the Drill Hall (the large house opposite the 1st circle as you went into the city), me and the rest of the younger guys caging drinks from the volunteer soldiers, finally ending with a good crowd lying face down under the huge tree in the garden. We knew our time would come to be trained in the art of putting-down the zots. We weren't afraid of it. Killing and stuff was the natural progression of things. Dad had done war; both Grandpas had ended up in South Africa defending Britain's right. Even Great Granddad, but he was in some German army while my other Great Granddad played 'eff the Brits' in Belfast.

As the certainty of our war mounted we got in ahead. Umtali High built a Chapel on the hill to be ready to name our future white dead in honour of the Lord Jesus, and in defence of the RF government.

My school leaving friends and I, clustered on either side of 1970, were the single biggest crop of home grown whities in our history. We were prepared to do our duty to our god and our country. We were the backbone, the muscle, the limbs, the all to carry ID Smith ID[44] and the RF elite and Rhodesia through. We would make or break the whitie miracle in Africa. We were spoilt kids in big bodies, we were Rhodies.

In the near future Umtali Boys, the caretakers of the mountains and the border, so our song refrained, would provide the Rhodie Security Forces with a lot of officer lads. Among us – to my knowledge –was the first Rhodie to be killed 'in action'. I'm told he was sitting on a petrol drum when a stray, friendly, misfired bullet made it go ka-BOOM!

As for me, I had never shaken my chat with the DC in the car that night and had decided to join Intaf. I had decided I was going to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest DC there had ever been. I was going to build the bush and build this county. On my last day of school my Housemaster called me into his science classroom.

'You're making a mistake,' he said, on my decision to stay and join Intaf. 'Leave', he told me, 'go to university and if you still feel inclined, come back.'

This was the first attempt at a political discussion I had had with any teacher. I hadn't the foggiest notion of what he was saying. Rhodesia was white, full of opportunity. I was going off to help to build my country. War was but an exciting blot on an already exciting landscape. I was on the cusp of national service. Soon I would learn to kill, choose a job, drive, drink, vote without sanction and my dream of making love (once my acne cleared) was marching ever closer. Man oh man, I had it all.

INTAF

Here follows an essential description of what Internal Affairs was all about, or, at least, this was the view of a District Officer (DO) in Umtali who outlined the whole thing to me, moments before my interview to join.

Internal Affairs (Intaf – radio code 'lighthouse') is the senior government Ministry. It is meant to maintain native control and promote change. Not anymore - we used to be the Big Daddy. Rhodesia is split into roughly 50 districts, each headed by a District Commissioner (DC). The country is split into 8 provinces, each headed by a Provincial Commissioner (PC). PC's have a Public Service Board (PSB) ranking of Brigadier. They report to Head Office in Salisbury. Heading us up is the Secretary for Internal Affairs at 'senior' General rank. He is supported by two deputies, one for Administration (current affairs), one for Development (future). Within basic guidelines and mentorship by the PCs the DCs are quite independent.

You start as a junior Cadet, then Cadet with more money, Senior Cadet, District Officer, Senior DO, and once you've passed all your exams and sat your minimum time, Assistant DC. To move to DC you have to be recommended. You also have to pass a PSB interview. If not you could end your days as an ADC.

Our partner is the District Police[45] headed in the district by either a Chief Inspector or Inspector. They have at least one Section Officer (SO) in support and hopefully a handful of Patrol Officers – the opening rank for white policemen. After that there are Constables headed by a sergeant (black). There is also a junior rank for whites who joined up under 18 years old.

Are you with me so far?

The District Police keep a handle on all things pertaining to criminal and

statutory law and internal security. Our relationship is not choreographed. We both dance to different steps with no money in the juke box.

Also, Animal Health provides inspectors who watch for tick borne disease, mainly. The Health Department, when they're around, do similar. Before any new lands are planted they have to be inspected through the Lands Inspectorate or our agricultural staff. Major roads are not our responsibility; this belongs to the Roads Department.

Basically, we do everything white municipalities do but for blacks and with much less money. We work within the tribal structure, we negotiate. We are always negotiating. We do licensing, anything from birth to firearm. We handle fence line disputes between farmer and peasant. We are the electoral authority; we are the Justice of the Peace with powers of detention without trial. We are responsible for everything that happens in the TTLs, birth to burial.

Make sense?

My First Job

Us Schorrs, all of us except Brian who'd gone off to learn oil and gas overseas by then, were living in the centre of Rhodesia, in dying Umvuma, in 1967. Mom was in the nearby provincial capital of Gwelo hospital with 'ladies problems, son', meaning Dad took the call from the PC's office one morning in December, instructing me to report for the first day of my working life to the local DC. Dad said, 'good. *I* started work at 14.'

The District Officer, a Frenchman, hadn't settled me long in a corner to watch how work happened when a call came through instructing me to report to Essexvale, way down in Matabeleland South, ASAP! I hurried home. Dad helped to pack me up, subbing my school trunk for a duffle-bag and adding a dang silver box loaded with pots, pans, eating things and other stuff he said may come in use sometime. We rushed off. He wanted to leave me at Uncle Steyn's butchery beside the garage but I was the hitch expert and urged him on to finally drop me and my load at about the corner post marking the start of Central Estates Ranch. Dad said the ranch was the size of Belgium and all of it owned by one English businessman. I watched the massive, shiny skinned cattle as I waited and wasn't bored.

I knew how to appear abandoned and soon scored a lift for the short hop to Gwelo. I phoned Mom from a 'tickey-box' … she was so proud she wouldn't hear of me visiting. Then I struggled to catch a lift. A car would slow, see the pile about me and speed off. I finally made Bulawayo by night fall and Essexvale Hotel a few hours after. There the attendant at the BP Station helped me carry my trunk and the silver box across to the hotel.[46] That night I slept as well as I could, my mind buzzing, on the eve of a ten year long adventure that would see me change from boy to man.

On day one of that adventure I reported to Nigel, the Senior District

Officer, and my education began. He welcomed me by showing me off to the African staff. They all laughed, and kept laughing, Nigel, I suddenly realised, was telling jokes about me in Ndebele. I smiled and tried to look non sheepish. This was new. I'd never felt embarrassed in front of blacks. I was immediately shunted to the Pass Office, my job there to watch, copy, question and then do alone (with the help of an interpreter). All aspects of birth and death registrations, the issuing of the all-important pass documents[47], compiling and adjustment of the tax cum population registers, social welfare and the rest were suddenly my responsibility.

Our team was small. There was DC Trevor at the top, Nigel underneath him and one-month-out-of-high-school me. I looked about me in wonderment, slowly piecing things together. DC Trevor was a rare creature. I had a vague idea that his time was split between town and country, security, development and problem resolution. Nigel wasn't much better. He had the dynamics of the lives of 100,000 Africans to deal with. I wasn't security cleared yet; my colleagues were busy, meaning I spent a lot of time trying to divine my arse from my elbow, rolling up my sleeves and, once given a break from the pass office, tackling what mostly amounted to dam bursts. When stuck, my tutors were the DC's secretary … she had 20 years of 'inner-office' experience tucked inside her head, and Senior Clerk Z. Dube, a large man and a jovial gentleman with never a bad word and 30 years loyal and confidential service. He'd patiently lead me through the job while taking time to discuss 'the things' with me; life as a black, what mattered in the TTL and what didn't, spirits and dissidents. His talk had an effect, everything had an effect. I began to realise that with only sport, a smattering of learning and the daily routine of a white school kid I knew most of nothing. Although I had done all that hiking time in the TTLs and I had seen things, Dube's teaching began to open my eyes. The difference between Umtali *town* and my new

situation of Rhodieland *rural* was stark … chalk to cheese in every sense.

I attacked each day, ploughing into a world of new experience. I got to seeing African people with new eyes. Where my old haunts were white only, here black heads nodded yes sir, no sir, and politely stepped out of my way while a white colleague's greeting was one in say fifty. I got to 'know' the blacks, the 'boys' of the town, outside of work –the 'boy' at the post office, the butcher, the pub and the tennis court, confident enough to share words more than orders. For the first time in my life I was talking to adults and being answered by them and some were women and some were black. Everywhere I saw Rhodieland sophistication and Kaffircountry simple desperation. I saw that opulence was the word for us Rhodies when compared to their real poverty. But, hey, this was the way, the path that had been laid by our Lord. The blacks were behind, that was a certain fact. They had 200 hundred years of finesse to catch up on.

Sitting in the outbuilding that served as the Senior Clerk's office, when nobody else (white) was about, I became comfortable enough to ask Dube things like,

'the politicians are on about insurgents …'

He would fluster at that one, taking his time to light and stamp at his pipe before slowly, carefully, unrolling ideas on people needing self-determination and respect.

Senior District Officer (SDO) Patrick (he took over from Nigel), who was a recently arrived Irishman, was less inclined to caution. 'If the term's de-propagandised,' he'd explain, talking from the jumble of his own office, 'is taken out of political marketing; we should be calling these revolting blacks *rebels*. Alternatively,' he'd continue, as he swung back on the rear legs of his chair while carefully plonking a foot on his laden desk, 'because they've been *out* of the country and are coming *back*, they could be referred to as

marginalised returning residents'. I blinked at that, having no clue but happy to be listening. 'Insurgents imply invaders,' he'd intone, 'how can they be invading if this is where they live? We don't need a pass to go in, but a black needs one to be *anywhere* in this country. However, when all is said and done, we are in charge and we will be calling the shots. *We* should be setting the development line.'

The Postmaster was Scots, proud of it, and of a different opinion. For him and his dog any black who didn't follow the rules had better learn how, fast and sharp. Any black who did follow could be part of the games he played. The boss and the boys, the Postmaster and his customers, we youngsters of the police and DC were all in on them either as victim or mischief maker. Snakes in post boxes, telephone calls from Salisbury, having the baboons to dinner in the hotel, taking over the hotel… There were some wild times.

Within all this, all this learning, all these adults and their new opinions I was just happy to be there, to be a Rhodie. At 19, very unofficially (and happy-pissed), I was already authorising Pete the Policeman to write out a 'late-night-licence' on the back of a cigarette box that allowed the pub to stay on open (sort of). It was all white and that's right.

'You've got to be firm,' said Tony 1, the co-op manager. 'It's the only way. If a black's not happy, he's out.'

'They're growing children and they'll be grown soon,' said the Tony 2, the doctor.

'They're human and we need to recognise that,' said Tony 3, the DC's African Development man in the field, talking of the blacks there.

'They don't cause me any problems,' said Simon, the tree-trunk armed mechanic who owned the BP.

'Ration them daily, give them pocket money once a week,' added Pete the Policeman and, 'another accident. Can I borrow you and your car?'

By then I'd bought myself an old VW Beatle. The police were desperately short.

Soon enough I had the opportunity to go out on patrol. We would go whizzing through the abundance of the white commercial farms with the fat cattle, tall grasses and growing fields, rattle over the cattle-grid and into the TTL. It was as though the fence had been placed exactly along the mark of plenty on one side and of nothing on the other. The TTL was bare, the cattle thin and the fields both scattered and sparse. No matter, this was Africa with its little huts, dusty people, funny schools, rutted roads and around every corner a new revelation turning what I'd learned the day before on its head, and deepening it. Our Corporal, a position who at every station in every part of Intaf in every part of the country is the District Officer's right-hand man, was a direct descendent of King Lobengula. He was our 'travel' guide, language interpreter, custom and culture watchman, but to the locals … wow. Stopping at the first kraal on my very first patrol I was shocked to silence to see all the locals; women, children and men, dropping to their knees. 'Son of the king!' they yelled out as soon as he stepped out of the landie. It took me a while to get used to it.

SDO Nigel was a delight. He had so many stories: Policemen and Intaf patrolling on bicycles, being stranded between rivers, our own DC Trevor's narrow escape when a lion was shot off of the top of him, and he knew so much of the Matabele people. My instruction was by watching and, when appropriate, doing any hands-on work while being talked through it. As we drove through the splendour of the boundless, well treed, granite hills of the Matopo, each with its own fertile valley floor, he would point to a cave and speculate about the ceremonies it had seen over the centuries.

'Close your eyes,' he commanded on our first trip out, 'and dream of rolling grasslands –patches of it taller than you-- filled with wild animals of

every sort trampling through, insects and bees hurrying after the flowers of the Acacia, Wild Fig and Paper trees.' I did, then opened them to intermixed, higgle-piggle ploughed fields, sparse grass in-between and thin, long-horned cattle with busy goats rooting for food.

He charmed us all with his rhyme that took in every click of the Ndebele language. He was the son of a 1940s DC and was himself a rare linguist.

Travelling with him, listening to his stories, observing his way with the blacks, his deep understanding and knowledge that itself was only a generation deep, the history, purpose and reality of Intaf began to reveal itself to me. I saw that in Rhodesia, particularly out in the bush of *Kaffir*country, the only relief for the newly divided and 'paddocked' tribes came through the developments initiated by the District Commissioner system.

Nigel tutored me. During the course of our work he revealed how, since the start of white government in our country the all-powerful, wise and fair (at least in theory) District Commissioner had become the new King in the lives of the black population. He pointed out that the focus of the early Settler DCs had been squarely set on advancing Rhodieland interests only, hence the casual brutality, the forced removals, the crowded TTLs. Over time, he explained - through example and discussion during long drives, at bush rest camps in the evening, gas lamps hissing and casting their soft glow as we sat late, talking, and through work itself - how things began to change, how that focus began to shift. Through him and all the others I worked with I learned that it was in the 50s that the career civil service began to see the need for a different relationship between Rhodieland and Kaffircountry. Looking back now I understand that, while by no means liberal, those men and their ideas were certainly 'left' of Todd and his successor Whitehead. These practical, on the ground civil servants of my time wished to facilitate the change in the African. His education and training had taken great strides by shaping a new

way of working together, building perhaps something between the style of the Portuguese and our own rigid conservatism. They saw that Rhodesia had to be more of a partnership than a Rhodie growth sector with a labour pool attached. They knew that economic integration, not right away but within sight, was absolutely necessary.

'In the 50's,' Nigel would say, 'we were "doing development." In the late 50's it was "do what the DC thinks, but do it together." Today it's all for one, and one for all.' He'd smile, and then add, 'well, sort of.'

By then tribes-folk were encouraged to come up with their own ideas for development with a lot of help from us. We had agents, Dube type men in the communities, suggesting the ideas Intaf thought appropriate, attempting to grow those ideas organically within the communities. Once taken root the idea, be it a clinic, addition of a classroom to a school or, say, the building of a weir, would be presented to Intaf from the community, via the traditional leader network. Intaf would then look at these in consultation and, if all were in agreement, government would come in with 50% of the cash (cash from the return of black monies paid in, sure) plus the experts as required. Of course that money didn't run to expert experts but the white Agricultural Officers (practical men with degrees or with high level Agricultural College diplomas, or both) and hands-on white field workers ran and advised on the show. At the same time, outside of that process, the DC retained responsibility for everything in the basics of major roads (for security needs), water (truly a basic), new cropping and land opening (to ensure against erosion) and animal health; the cleanliness of our animals being vital to the Rhodieland agricultural industry. For this the blacks contributed via the 'male head tax[48]' and in the case of animal health directly through dipping fees. The DC retained the rights to allow white business in for say trading or the harvesting of timber or the granting of a mining concession.

‘We’re giving them the chance to participate,’ Nigel would say, ‘or at least move towards that. We’re looking for ways to allow everyone to participate. To grow.’

In practice this was a long way off but in some places, areas of Mashonaland, I was told, areas which had enjoyed greater exposure to the ways of the western world, and which had more abundant water, were leaping ahead. Acceptance was occurring, and spreading. More facilitators, tutors and educators wanted to be involved, suddenly turning mere idea, dreams, into practical concepts.

To me the work was deeply fulfilling and totally absorbing. None of what I was learning challenged my Rhodiehood, all I saw were extensions of it, a means to strengthen what we had, to build. Everything seemed to fit. All was so natural, so rustic and right as I scanned the panoramic spread of villages of little mud and thatch huts dotted between the magnificence of the hundreds of granite hills and valleys of Matopo. I understood why Rhodes was buried there. The man who brought civilisation to this amazing place, who started all of it, if I had the choice I’d want to lie here too, and drink every sunrise. It was only well after the war, a war I came through without a physical scratch, that I realised the gods didn’t allow dead people to peep out of their box. As I sat on the verandah, listening to the chatter of the Rhodies who ran the country I was very special, god was watching and had a fate in store for me.

I worked hard at my exams, so hard that I had three promotions in less than 18 months. Soon I was able to buy my own horse and spend more in the hotel pub than Senior Clerk Z. Dube earned in a month.

As our work life was long and hard going, so our afterhours were wild. We country Rhodies would hit the pub or the club in the evenings (every evening that I wasn’t at my books or out on patrol) after doing something

physical. We ran cross country a lot, rode the horses, trained for athletics, went out to dams to swim, boat, duck hunt, hunt bigger game on the ‘owner overseas’ farms (at night by torch) or play at the club. At some stage we’d arrive at the bar counter and the boy from the kitchen would be ready to do the steak and chips and the townie Rhodies were there too, come out to rough it at our parties and pub nights. They marvelled at our macho-ness and lack of polish, that missing the latest movie didn’t fuss us. We played it up accordingly.

‘Was that horse drinking beer?’

‘Was that a horse?’

‘Are those baboons? Eating dinner? In the hotel?!’

Alcohol played tricks, it took life to an edge.

Essexvale had the main highway to South Africa dissecting the district and it added work to the local police. Twice over a weekend I was asked to assist with fatal car accidents. Once, my police pal Pete’s car was used to ferry a dead white guy to Bulawayo. We set him in the passenger side and off Pete went, going well until the turn some 30 miles later. As he veered right (into Grey Street) to head for the main Police Station the door flew open and his charge (no seat belts then) fell out.

The Post Master poached a kudu one night. He was careful to do it a long way from home. He and the post office line technician loaded the animal into the back of the *bakkie*[49] only for the huge animal to leap out in the middle of Bulawayo city at three in the morning. They re-whacked the animal with a hammer.

Of course we didn’t forget that there was a war on, at least a war in the making. The signs were there, small facts that didn’t escape us, things that we in Intaf saw far sooner than any Rhodieland resident would have. Even I, oversized puppy of the group, began to prick up my ears.

Gaps in the black tax registers were appearing. On collection drives we'd call out the lists, shouting "Ndlovu", "Khumalo", to the massed crowd, and more and more would remain unanswered. On questioning, '*umfazi, abafana bakobangapi*? ' … 'where are your boys, woman?' the reply was very telling.

'*Ngazi Nkosinkulu*' … 'I don't know honourable sir'.

Bare feet were on the move, it was obvious. I didn't know then, I knew nothing then, but now it's clear that they left angry. They left on the wing of a prayer, not knowing where they were going, except that it was north, not knowing how they would be treated or even who would lead them. All parties were banned at that point meaning blacks had no way of expressing any depth of political grievance. The Chiefs and their traditional network was equipped to hear and resolve social problems but politics were officially off the agenda, instead those resentments were piling up underground, behind our backs.

War talk began to seep into the office. Not because there were any shots fired, necessarily, but because guys we knew, older guys from our respective schools were seen training up in the hills. They looked grand in their camouflage uniforms, so soldiery in their tents, so rugged with their five day beard growth with somebody on guard at all times.

The papers were buzzing. We read how our Smith had correctly told the Brits where to get off. Atrocities from 'up north', now the focus on the Belgian Congo, came flooding down to us in picture and by word of mouth of white refugees. We said they could stay, join with us. We could see what the rabid blacks wanted, we easily extrapolated that parcel of violence and brutality into the universal black dream and by Jove, sir, it wasn't for ladies. No matter, though, because more contacts were reported, big kills were crowed over; in 1967 a Game Ranger checking animal movements instead spotted the tracks of 110 terrorists who had infiltrated into a game area in

Northern Mashonaland. An attack was mounted; a primary terrorist base camp and many of the gang were killed. Up in the Victoria Falls area the army also had a significant success against Zapu. I remember sitting wide eyed, ears flapping after a badminton evening in our Essexvale club-pub, listening to the story of the army 'taking-out', memory not so good here, 49 terrorists following an astute observation of 'something amiss' by a policeman. Our whitie mean and lean black-meat mincing machine looking as though it was going to roll right over the black nationalists, the RF's perfectly framed white, Christian, to-hell-with-the-commies-and-to-hell-with-giving-without-earning message scoring top marks as we sat watching, our white, Rhodie hearts wide open. I couldn't know, being 19 and happy to drink anything and everything my senior heroes told me to, that Smith was the greatest of them all. We scorned bodies like the Catholic Commission. Anyone else who yapped we shouted them down before they could give a name. It didn't occur to me and to us that Smith and the Cabinet were speaking *for* the Black Nationalists, and even if it did, I at least felt it was right for them to do so. Because it was like this: If your black worker gave lip, you fired him or her.

If Smith said 'this nonsense or that nonsense' was taking root, it had to be. 'A lot of nonsense was taking root in our university,' he said.

All darkies, other than those I knew directly, were backward, incapable and heathen. They were potential communists and potential threats to Rhodiehood. They were not to be trusted. We were the appointed bosses. Those few who wanted out of the system would have to meet and agree with us or they would go down. The truth of the RF's message was in the colour of my beer, the scream of my little VW, the new smell of the Cobra polish on the office floor each morning. It was in the commitment of the black staff towards me, their daily salutes and Senior Clerk Dube's deep looks as he

took me through the first steps of learning Ndebele.

'*Salibonan inkosana*', he would say, 'good morning small king.' 'U-pilanjani?' would come after, 'how are you?'

'*Ngivukele baba*[50], *wenage*?' I would reply, 'I have woken father, and how are you?'

It was clear we Rhodies were in control. We were aiding and guiding the Heathen from his world into something closer to our 1st world.

I remember marvelling politely when Dube told me he had passed his Standard 6 back in the 1930s, having studied in one of the very first Ndebele schools permitted and built in the Matopo TTL. It didn't click that he was my Dad's age, that my Dad had a Standard 6 from an English school in the Afrikaans heartland, that they both smoked a pipe, both hitched their pants up under their ribs and were of a very similar size, that they both gave me the same odd look when I asked something a little different. I didn't click at all. It was just so black and white.

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I was 20 when my army call-up papers came through. To say I was excited would be the right thing but in fact it was a mixed bag. There was a scary hole ahead, a long disruption to my life but above all something that a whitie had to do as clearly as putting one foot in front of the other. National service was my next step toward Rhodiehood, the next ritual to mark me as a Rhodie man. It was new beginnings for many of my mates in the police force too. They were angling for more excitement.

'CID?' I asked when they told me where they were headed.

'Criminal Investigation Department, idiot,' was the reply. 'We get to go in plain clothes, undercover. From there we can apply for the real thing … Special Branch.'

From my seat among my junior police buddies in late 1969 the word was

out that SB was coming into being as a truly distinct and separate police division … covert. As I packed my bag for the army the selection of ‘best’ applicants was underway. The name SB alone added to their reputation.

‘When are you going in?’ our girl friends, family, everyone, would ask. Now I had an answer.

‘Next month.’

‘You’d better not be late,’ said DC Trevor on my last day in the office, a rare word from the man up, up there. ‘If you are, I won’t hear the end of it.’

The Plan

At the dawn of 1969 the Rhodesian Front Party had one thing on its mind; the hope that the USA would step in and offer support, getting Rhodesia recognised internationally, and stopping the brewing bush war before any real military action had to happen. While the RF inner circle waited for this to come to pass, certain actions were taken.

The Rhodie Minister of Education, another Mr Smith, released a report on what it would take to offer a basic level of education to all in the country (all meaning white and black). He divined that expenditure per black head would only go up marginally while the white system would simply be devastated.

He tabled solutions.

He suggested that black parents would pay a little more, the fledgling council system would take on more responsibility by improving the teachers, and black education would be cut back from eight to seven years. As black school leavers would (probably) be seeking employment in the widest fields of agriculture, he added, the final two years schooling would be orientated in that direction. That whites should pay more was not suggested.

Of course the ZAPU Education committee hit the roof. They saw an extension of the Bantu Education position of South Africa. The Minister replied that only 25% of black primary kids went on to Secondary Schools, anyway.

Meanwhile, the 2% of the Rhodesian budget being spent on African education was but a fraction of the money going to Rhodie defence. While the RF waited for the USA to intervene they set about increasing the smack-power of the army and air force. The Rhodesia African Rifles were expanded, increasing the army at the cannon fodder levels and adding jobs and

hopefully ‘loyalists’. They also expanded the compulsory national service for young white males.

That the Rhodesians were outnumbered 25 to one, and committed Rhodies by even more, was not concerning to anyone. That the enemy were nothing–to-lose people, a very worried people filling the countryside surrounding the cities and towns of white, settler Rhodesia, did not concern anyone. That civilian casualties were imminent, on both sides, as the guns of Rhodieland and the hearts of Kaffircountry moved toward each other did not worry anyone at all. That the Rhodie army was still a largely untested force - despite its professionalism, the quality of its teachers and its equipment (by Central African standards) -- did not worry any Rhodie. That the armed forces had simply been handed the civilian authority’s baton, a baton rightly held by Intaf and the Police Force, and told to carry on without any cognisance of the delicate and changing economic position was not noticed. That the army had one hell of a lot to learn in the guerrilla warfare arena was not a concern.

By the end of 1969 the unknown future loomed and Rhodieland was not worried, because the RF had a plan. But then the Americans closed their consulate door, re-labelling it a "U.S. Contacts Office,"[51] *and in so doing withdrawing all support.*

There was silence.

And then the bravado crept back in.

Businesses changed their names and stayed. No more Peter Stuyvesant, Pall Mall instead. A man’s whisky was made from the waters of our own rivers and if it was labelled Gin by mistake …

‘So what?’ Rhodies cheered.

If the Black Nationalists didn’t climb down, the RF Cabinet said (without saying), the army would and could provide a military solution.

Army Boy

I arrived at the Bulawayo training barracks full of the idea that this war of independence was going to be a whole barrel load of fun. To my young eyes not that much had changed since my brother did his call-up back in 1963. There he could have been, but wasn't, called on to do duty in the townships. We were to be sent out into the bush. To that date, by all accounts, the few engagements already experienced had been a doddle against a few disgruntled, communist-minded blacks. For me army life started with lounging and joking in the hangars, recalling past meetings while waiting for someone new to shout at us. First up, those who needed a haircut got it.

From the almost 200 of us that had arrived to do their nine months, volunteers to undergo advanced leadership training were called for. I was called. I raised my hand, it seemed the right thing to do, and after two days of practical testing I was among about 40 selected. By the time we headed, under our own steam, to the School of Infantry in Gwelo there were 32 of us left, the rest having dropped out due to fitness, health and other reasons. At Gwelo we jumped right in. We learned how to shoot and salute on the march, how to polish your shoes, iron your clothes and wash your eating utensils - all the things the maid did in the house without training and much the same as all the things we had done for us at school cadets. We learned how to march and bark.

Lieutenant Graham, ex of Sandhurst, was our Course Officer and he handled all the class room and theory work. He was assisted by sergeants specialising in drill and team work, weaponry and explosives, tactics and fitness, all of them combining to make men of us.

The first and longest section of our tactical learning was on conventional warfare. We were taught to advance on an enemy army in a defensive

position and to position ourselves to defend against an advancing army. We were taught to dig trenches, anywhere, at any time.

'Right here,' sergeant would bark, pointing to a rocky strip of ground, and then, three hours later when it was good and dark and the clock said nine, 'oops,' he'd say, 'how silly of me. I meant right *there*. Get moving.' And so we'd dig, our training team relaxing in the staff setup camp within hearing distance of us.

We learned to endure, to fill time. We learned the dynamics of positioning, arcs of fire, identification, map reading, radio protocol and codes, basic first aid and morphine use … a bunch of stuff. After dealing with the conventional we moved on, now being introduced to the opposite.

'Unconventional Warfare', a phrase we'd been hearing over and over, was and is the very modern practice of the enemy buggers *not* marching down the road in big groups or behind tanks and certainly *not* standing still in one spot when you tried to shoot them. Instead this guerrilla enemy, these terrorists and communist insurgents, we were told, would be firing from anywhere and at any point and would certainly not bother to stand still when we tried to return fire. In the classroom and out in the field our instructors covered the theory of operating in small groups - sections of four, five, or six men, patrolling techniques and tactics when under fire, or moving into fire within these sections. We studied how to skirmish forward and buddy-buddy in support when under fire or engaging simultaneously with the enemy. We learned how to get into a kill position without being seen and how to safely eat, sleep and go to the toilet. IA (Immediate Action) Drills were drilled into us. Their aim was to get us to react without thinking, something easily achieved. For example, if a section came under fire while in a truck travelling on a quality road the IA would be for the men on point to fire and for the driver to floor it. If the section came under fire while on a walking

patrol, a single command, ‘right!’, would be barked, immediately sending men to ground on the right at dirt level, ready to attack or defend.

We learned of army tradition. For the RLI (Rhodesia Light Infantry) radio code wasn’t necessary; you simply had to be RLI to understand what the hell was being said. RLI lingo started with ‘Gook’ (communist terrorist, CT), first introduced by American volunteers, and continued through to ‘floppy’, inspired by the way terrs convulsed as they died, a phenomenon I would see for myself later.

We spent weeks in the farmlands around Gwelo taking in ideas like ‘situation’ and ‘ground appreciation’. These meant studying the lie of the land - trees, gullies - in terms of where we could go and where ‘they’ may be. We learned to assess the best attack routes, where to lie in a short term ambush and the best defence positions. Being able to accurately report where you where was important … you didn’t want to call in a strike by the bombers on a CT position if you could only say, ‘watch out for me I am next to the tree’. On one map exercise we did use a tree - a bloody great tree on top of a hill - as our primary marker only to get thoroughly off track even though we had the damn thing in the ‘right’ place all the time. It was only when we were exhausted and stopped to consider what was wrong that we realised the tree was an experimental disguised antenna mounted on the back of a truck.

From the gentle farmlands we graduated to field exercises in the ‘Valley’ … one of the harshest, most amazing, most traitorous and beautiful places on earth. Here we learned to include the local population in our planning, either to make use of the ground cover provided by villages and settlements or to go around them completely. It was pretty much accepted, even then, that ordinary blacks would get whacked along with bad blacks in the crossfire. We trainees were all white, our trainers were all white and we would group

around our white officer listening, discussing and reviewing the panorama of blacks, black homes, blacks lands and black animals spread up there, down there and right here in front of us.

‘Don’t be seen from the village,’ our instructor would say, ‘they’ll raise the alarm. Use the gully there (pointing) to get up to the fringe and then use the huts for cover for the final assault.’

That the villagers were our own nig-nogs didn’t factor. It’s strange - although we didn’t notice it at the time - company RF media had told us that the natives were with us but our training said they were part of the problem. The only blacks we had involved in our training were the cooks, cleaners, our personal batmen (2 or 3 guys shared a boy to wash and clean our clothes and rooms and now we were past basics, shine boots and iron, etc) the barman in our respective mess (trainee officer and sergeant) and the gardeners for, yes, the garden.

We whites even made the ‘Assault Course’ … that horrible ‘exercise routine’ place … in that every Intake had to ‘add a piece’.

The more time I spent in the infantry the more the general attitude of ‘we’re in charge and everybody else better get into line’ seeped into me. Toward the end of training we heard of a mortar action that had taken place ‘somewhere’ in the Zambezi Valley. The tale told was that the enemy were spotted neatly grouped, wonderfully positioned for a classical mortar parade and that the mortar platoon happened to be there. Having blown the area to bits our Rhodie Infantry wandered among the dying and faking and shot the lot, it was that easy. A police pal of mine said Special Branch hit the roof at the lack of live brains to pick, as if information mattered not at all. A Course Officer at the School laughed at that.

‘Those SB buggers should loosen the hell up,’ he guffawed, stamping his boots in the sand, ‘everything’s under control.’

As for me, I thought I was simply adding the stay-alive skills of the army to my Intaf outlook. In so far as being an Army man entirely, I hated the pomp and dressing up of parading but I loved the get up and go mess about in the bush.

Our training ended with a nine day ultimate survival jaunt in the valley. The fittest and most sports mad man among us dropped to exhaustion and had to be evacuated. After four months we were as combat ready as our training would take us. Eight of us passed out as full officers and nine as non-commissioned. Our record wasn't to stand long. Already the Regular Army was in need of support, so while three of us were appointed to lead National Service Infantry platoons … the same guys we had left back in Bulawayo Barracks … two were posted to Regular Army Infantry units and three were seconded to Regular Army service units.

I was presented with a smart Commissioning Scroll, 2nd Lieutenant Dougie, signed by our new President. For my confirmation to the rank of District Officer I got an internal personal file-note from Intaf Head Office with 'well done' scribbled in the margin in the hand of my Provincial Commissioner. I was certainly proud. In a replay of my last day at school the Commandant of the School of Infantry spent 20 minutes talking to me about a switch to the army. My Intaf service would not count at all, he told me, and to cross over I would have to take a new 'officer number' - putting me junior to the current regular officers' course. We discussed it and in the end he agreed a move would send me backwards as I already drew higher pay and was on a civil service grade above a 2nd Lieutenant.

'I'll be there anyway, sir,' I said, 'Intaf is a partner in this.'

Colonel Barnard mused a while, his penetrating brown eyes locked deep into mine. 'Hmnnn,' he replied, 'I suppose so.'

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Along with my two brother officers, each with our fresh epaulets showing off one ‘pip’ against our well washed shirts, we travelled back from Gwelo to Bulawayo. We were to take our first tour as an Army Officer. I was 21 years and one day old.

On arrival I literally bumped into the legendary Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) Korb. Flustered I snapped to attention crying, ‘sorry sir!’ while saluting with all I had.

‘Oh, but my goodness my dear man,’ he replied, ‘it is I who should be calling you sir, sir.’ I hurried off burning red, a maize cob size flea in my ear.

Soon I was introduced to my platoon of 34 fully grown men all fresh from their own training. I had lawyers, accountants, a stock-broker, a farm manager with a BSc, an older-ladies’-escort[52] (scout’s honour), a god-is-great engineer, some established businessmen, an even bigger than me and, thankfully, the nicest half man half boy giant[53] anyone could ever meet, plus a couple of government servants and a few extra farmers. All these men grew up in Rhodieland, none were speculators, and all saw a full life ahead though it was 50/50 whether it was to be spent in Rhodesia or not. Many of them hadn’t volunteered for Officer training for that very reason; they didn’t see themselves hanging about in the country too long. All of us were extremely fit. If the Bulawayo barracks had said walk the 400 kms to your base camp up in the Zambezi Valley it actually wouldn’t have been a problem. Luckily we didn’t have to.

In the cool of the evening we trucked out in old ‘RLs’ (a multi-purpose truck) and a beaten Landie. Our destination was Wankie and the serious base the army had there. We would man the place for the balance of our nine months, every now and then selecting platoons to go out into a separate base in a new ‘Valley’. This is where the real fun was and the place where the real

memories started.

There we had a very smart brick under tin set of buildings. A barrack for the men, showers, a spot for the sergeant, a whole separate room and toilet for very-important-man-in-charge-me, a ‘map and orders office’, storeroom and a large kitchen and dining area. We had water, we had generator driven lights. The whole place was surrounded by a high, solid earth wall that we, or rather the men (I was too important for that), patrolled all day and night. We were in the Wankie TTL, just south of Victoria Falls, a few steps away from where the plateau dropped suddenly to the real valley, the gorge dug out by the mighty, the beautiful, the uncompromising Zambezi River.

The heat was the killer, the determining factor. It was hot, hot, hot. All day, all night. Hot. It was your turn, my turn, he guards, I guard, swap about, over and over. A practicing Chartered Accountant would get told to ‘mind the truck’ by my 21 year old civil servant temporary sergeant while the rest of the educated would wander around the bush. Every day six of us whities would wander around a half mile by seven mile rectangle chunk of Zambezi Valley scrub, ‘covering’ it, making sure it was free of terrs. Our vision was sometimes 300 yards, sometimes three. It was walk, and walk.

‘Single file,’ I’d order, and we’d change to single file.

‘Open order,’ and we’d change.

‘Extended line,’ when the scrub opened up and there was room to move. Every day we saw nothing out of order and often no people at all. Mostly, we felt the odds on seeing the enemy were better at the casinos up the gravel road in Victoria Falls.

What exactly we were doing there? I soon discovered this was a bit of a niggle for many of the men. Sitting in the shade out of the mid-day 40 degree heat, considering the Bridge hand dealt to me, conversation would often turn to politics.

‘Is it fair’, one of my group of learned soldiers would ask, ‘to call them terrorists?’ Deep thinking would occur. I pricked up my ears. Of course the men didn’t follow the argument raised in some overseas circles that we Rhodies were the illegal ones. They had to wonder, though, whether the black fellows were. Our RF cabinet was packed with lawyers. Ian Smith talked only of de facto and our courts never said differently. People were still getting married and divorced; signing contracts, so, surely we Rhodies were in the clear?

‘But, if we aren’t giving them basic rights, aren’t they in the clear?’

‘Are the terrorists terrorists?’

All of us knew that our tearing up of the Queen’s picture meant that in dealing with the militant B-Nationalists we couldn’t rely on the British Army for help. 70 years or so before, the English part of South Africa had the British army move in, en mass, to whack the Boers. More recently in Malaya and East Africa the Brit army had become involved too. Because of UDI we couldn’t do that. To add, I learned, the countries giving succour to the B-Nationalist rebel trainees were not being scolded, implying, as we sat meditating under the giant thorn trees that they - Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, Russia and China – must be, surely, within international law?

‘Vorster’, said one of the two *regte*[54]Afrikaans chaps in my platoon, ‘warned the RF not to declare UDI.’

‘You think that’s news?’ said the other one. ‘My Dad said Verwoerd, yes, himself, said he would prefer a stable *swart*, a stable black government in Salisbury to a weak whitie one.’

‘The thinking part of the Republic of South Africa,’ chimed the accountant, drily while watching the spread of cards between us, ‘already knows they’re in the *dwang*, the shit, in so far as maintaining the successive

White Christian-right Nationalist governments at the tip of Black Africa.'

We listened. I listened, only half understanding the man.

'Hidden from popular belief,' he continued, 'is the fact that South Africa is experiencing a real, pure-Afrikaans brain drain. Where are these guys going, the ones leaving South Africa, these ones that don't support Apartheid? Texas, Canada, Australia and the rest.'

We digested that.

'Why leave Rhodesia to go to RSA, then?' said another, placing his cards on the table. 'Better to go direct to Canada.'

I kept my eyes on my cards. This was just too much. We hadn't yet experienced that much trouble that we couldn't handle it. I (and the RF) was of the firm opinion that our problem was a 'fractional dissident one' and I had no reason what-so-ever to disbelieve Ian Smith. Sure some outside of our mainstream were half forecasting a nastiness that would be life changing. For me, well, I had chosen Intaf as a career.

And so we plodded on. Between discussions and disagreements we maintained the routine, the patrols, the guarding, the few weeks turning to months in our minds. Soon we were back to Wankie base, and then we were picked to be sent all the way back to Gwelo School to act as the 'Demonstration Platoon'. And then it ended. Three packs of six weeks were gone. I was seasoned, now fully a member of Rhodie society, fully a Rhodie, all boxes ticked. For the next three years I was to do six week stints in the 'Valley' three times a year.

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Returning to civvie life was an amazing experience. One day I was surrounded by 30 in-the-prime-of-life really switched on, fit and eager to do things Rhodies, and the next I was back in 95% black-staffed Intaf. She was worse off. Where we had always competed with the police and army for

white recruits, we were now Miss Cinderella. Not only was the fun and challenge seen to be with them, but they both had their colleges. You didn't have to be an Infantry officer … how about engineering or signals? And the police were expanding that exclusive and elusive Special Branch. My livewire friends were moving on from CID. Now in the police, the officers worked with black subordinates. They had a measure of the familiarity we had with our black colleagues but, as I had witnessed as a Terrie, the whites were with whites and never a shared moment with black soldiers, members of government, etc.

'Isitupawena!' a whitie would belt out, and depending on the tone meaning either, 'show pass, boy', or, 'where's your pass, fuck-face?'

Blacks by law and out of common sense carried their *isitupa* at all times. This document showed which of the 50 or so districts he should be in (a boy from Lupane lazing about in Belingwe needed explanation) and it showed his employment record.

'Last worked two years ago at Lever Bros eh … lazy fukka … what you do here?' a whitie would say, giving the black a quick belt. Whities had empathy for their black 'work mates' but naught for the 70% unemployed he came across in the TTL. In the bush, in uniform, with a rifle to the shoulder, the whitie of the work-place didn't recognise the TTL nig-nog as being the same or even of the same. He was a different animal.

Instead of returning to my post in Essexvale I was sent the small extra hop to the tiny Matabeleland South village of Filabusi. I was only there to 'fill a gap', tasked to stay three weeks - I ended up being there five - because the DC was entirely on his own, but the experience would stay with me for good. I was now (on paper, not in experience) a District Officer (DO) for I had the exams passed but no Intaf experience bar my Essexvale cadet days. I had leapt through the senior cadet barrier without touching the bar.

The district police were not that much better off. Hard on my heels, arriving straight from Salisbury Police College as a Patrol Officer (P/O), came a ‘mature’ Englishman in a new Mercedes Diesel sedan … a present for passing from Daddy back in the UK … and in the boot he had his suitcase packed with the appropriate sports and evening wear for the English county circuit. He didn’t last too long.

At FilabusiI launched myself straight into the business of taking up what the sick SDO had in his basket and was immediately out on the road in the TTLs. The corporal and I clicked immediately, mainly because he understood me – his English was good! One evening as I prepared to finish for the day he asked if I would like to debrief the agent.

‘Pardon?’

I was about to discover what was essentially the driving force of Intaf then, the skeleton of the relationship between Rhodieland and the TTL’s, from spine to tiny finger bones; Ground Coverage.

In Rhodesia, from the beginning of whitie Bulawayo, the Native Commissioners had begun developing their ears, their network of informers. The regular and systematic collection of information, I learned, was the most basic form of maintaining a state of well-being and was simply a formalisation of gossip, knowledge of gossip. Intaf would collect gossip as it travelled up, from children to parents to community leader and so on, discarding the harmless and outright speculation and sorting the facts. Once the information had been analysed and ordered into absolute, probable and possible, action followed even if it was a decision to file the information … for now. Patience, letting the fly come to the spider, is the way of intelligence gathering. And so it was with us.

By the 1960s, in both the towns and rural districts, DC’s and MiCs of stations each had their web of informers, people who for one reason or

another were prepared (or had been prepared) to pass on information about the activities of their neighbours and relatives. The reasons why folk do this are as varied as the number of stars flashing their messages each night. The web was as wide as the DC put effort into building it.

Every DC began the process by slowly building trust between him and one, then all, of his old style messengers - the District Assistants of my day. Back then those messengers, well and noticeably dressed in khakis and broad sun hat with its distinctive red band of delegated authority began to gather information. While on regular foot or bicycle patrols they started to go beyond superficial looking and listening, instead now actively, painstakingly, fleshing out networks among relatives, wider family and friends. At the same time the DC (and MiC) would be probing other areas for information to spill out of … a disgruntled farm boss boy or a criminal who hadn't quite been caught yet, in return earning their keep, or freedom, with information.

The networks grew so quickly and so naturally that many DCs seemed to be quite clairvoyant, always knowing what was on and about to go. By the time I was confronted with the 'agent', the process was incredibly refined and effective. The central method by then was twofold: to focus down on folk whose behaviour didn't agree with the norms we whities had set, and to seek new informers. The 'watched' needn't have been black either. Whites (male and female) who were too 'black friendly' were on the list too, although mostly time was put into anti-white establishment blacks that were known.

Records were dispatched to Salisbury where trained clerks collated district by district, province by province, looking for trends, overlaps, movement, etcetera. From there the Intaf National Security Officer liaised with what would turn out to be the early, small, SB team. Assessments therefore always moved upwards until finally, in theory, hitting the powerful chief-in-charge's desk, in this case Mr. Ken Flower's. He, no doubt, as the

head of SB (and later the virtual director of our war effort), had drinks and pancakes with his old colleagues in British intelligence and most likely from there (or even directly) those documents would wing their way to the most powerful spy in the world at the time, the CIA's Mr. Helms.

Wow! As a Cadet in Essexvale I was a school boy stretching my first set of khaki work clothes. I wasn't security cleared and I certainly didn't appreciate that when, late at night, the DC and the SDO were at their desks talking quietly to a black fellow, they were up to espionage! Nor was there a peep of acknowledgement of this work being done by DCs and MiCs during my army days … it was always SB this and SB that and SB could go boil their heads. So, when I was asked if I would like to '*debrief the agent'*, I had to catch on quick and become of the controlling elite in a very real way. Apart from the practicalities of asking the right questions, what I found was a system falling apart. In the old days, pre-Smith, when DCs were trusted, when they stayed long enough to know a district as well as a batman knows his master, only the speed of the busses plying the dirt roads delayed their knowledge of what was happening. Into the sixties, though, and communication was breaking down. Staff shortages were growing, DCs of neighbouring districts were conferring less frequently and SB, a new kind of organisation in a new kind of age, was replacing the system grown over a hundred years. Things were starting to go wrong. Contacts were being compromised, relationships upset. And, of course, as the secret war intensified there was less time for finesse.

It was roughly a week later that a further avalanche of information was to come pouring into my mind. The DC, our youngest ever I must add, had called a district conference of Tribal Elders to discuss matters around the proposed setting up of councils, a huge and difficult development to graft onto the already existing, already white interfered with, tribal structure.

It was a big meeting. We sat facing each other in an elongated circle radiating out from the DC and I, all gathered together in the brand new community hall built in the government sector with African Development Fund (ADF) money. Members ranged from the most venerated of elders, the chief himself, down to the young men just entering the sphere of government. This wasn't the old style sit-under-a-tree in the dust at the DCs' feet, no, here the DC, I and the Chiefs had tables to rest our elbows on and the rest had chairs. The DC was in jacket and tie and I in a pair of longs. Chief Khumalo was in a suit, the other chief in his Government Issue red smock-thing with his chain of office hanging about his neck.

'Chief Khumalo, gentlemen, this idea of a council won't take any of your traditional powers away. Indeed the reverse will be in the pipe line. Gradually I will hand over to you the responsibility and the right to develop the district the way you see fit …'

As we progressed into the afternoon the questions became more specific.

'Just who is going to decide who can vote?' asked the younger elders as Khumalo, the other chief, and the headmen listened. 'And, more important, Honourable DC, how are we to determine who can be allowed to be put forward to be elected as a councillor? Elections aren't exactly the way kingships are grown.'

Then they got into questioning the role of council secretaries, young educated boys to run the books, cash, and *advise* councillors.

'Boys giving advice, sir!?' As Khumalo leant forward they expressed the opinion that the DC was premature in believing they wished to be ruled by anybody, never mind having city trained black boys - boys who hadn't been pronounced men yet[55]- being brought in to dissolve their traditional powers. Instead of patiently explaining that the secretaries would be number

crunchers, letter writers, I promptly displayed too much ‘army attitude’ and had a clash with the district’s senior Royal men, one being a grandson of King Lobengula. I was to learn later that Khumalo wasn’t Zapu or Zanu but he was full of a spirit for Freedom for a separate Matabeleland[56]. I stood up and told him to wind his neck in for there was only one authority and that was the DC.

That night the DC and his beautiful Spanish wife invited me over for dinner. They were both excellent cooks, no sign of a cook-boy or cook-book anywhere. It was wine for them, a beer for rough me in my best *veldskoens* and informal, easy conversation as I helped with dicing the veg in the kitchen. Meal ready and complete with fancy china we sat down in the dining room, and slowly the purpose of the dinner invite was revealed.

‘The Black Nationalists seem to a little short staffed at the moment,’ said his wife, watching me with sparkling, amber eyes.

‘Har-har,’ I laughed along. It was common knowledge that Good-Old-Smithy had the leading zots locked up. ‘They’re taking a pounding. With no whites telling them what to do I can’t see things going very far.’

‘I’m not sure it’s that simple,’ she said.

‘I hear they’ve quite a network set up,’ he added.

‘Network?’ I asked.

With a straight face my DC began outlining a situation I hadn’t been aware of.

‘They’ve action men,’ he said, ‘who’ve left the country already and are organising, carrying information from the camps back into the country, getting the information to those locked up, and taking it back again. Their network is working, it’s growing.’

I fiddled with my food.

‘Their talk is selective – to the point- and secretive. Our whitie talk is

bombastic, loudly available to any listener. What do you think we're achieving? What do you think they're achieving?'

I wasn't sure what to say.

'Even now the RF are holding whole Black Nationalist teams in detention, pretty much together in open prison-villages. What do you think they're doing?'

I didn't know.

'They're discussing, defining strategy and getting organised. They're receiving messages.'

'Aid is coming in too,' she added. 'Churches and sympathetic groups throughout the world are slowly getting involved, putting their weight behind them. Not us.'

'What is our self-praise achieving?' he said, 'our bragging?'

'*We're* putting fear into our servants and employees, the masses. *They're* motivating them.'

I was totally out of my depth, but they weren't being unkind.

'What do you think is the real issue behind your argument with the Chief today?'

'I don't know,' I said, not daring to chance an answer.

'He's passing you - and especially the government through me - a message,' said my DC, this young man wise beyond his years. 'He's telling you, he's warning you, that they're not too far behind in getting things moving, that it's time to involve them in senior management and that delays are going to cause unnecessary suffering.'

I reminded myself that he had had the advantage of being the Secretary for Internal Affairs' personal secretary before taking on Filabusi. It didn't help. Instead I was even more in awe of sitting at dinner with him. I looked down and stabbed a fork into my food.

‘You,’ he said, with a smile, ‘have aggravated things by telling the Chief and his Headmen to watch their mouths. They’re simply not just nig-nogs anymore. They’ve got more on their minds than sticking their heads in a pot of kaffir-beer.’

‘Have you read any of Tekere?’ she jumped in. ‘Have you actually heard what anyone (here she rattled off a list) other than the main stream black politicians have had to say?’

‘No,’ was my reply. I hadn’t even heard the name Tekere or any of the others and I was already a senior soldier.

‘You should,’ she said, still not being unkind. ‘You’ll find that things aren’t as simple as we all seem to believe.’

Talk turned to other things for a while but my mind was churning. I was looking at these two, wondering about them, wondering where their allegiances lay, what exactly they were getting at. I decided he must have picked up this depth of information from sitting in on the high level politician and civil service meetings that we’d all heard about.

‘The question is,’ continued the DC, ‘can we talk through and avoid the coming escalation or …’

‘… They’re still terrorists if they take up arms against us,’ I growled.

They both considered that.

‘*Dissidents,* definitely,’ said my DC carefully, then added, ‘and yes, the cancer will spread.’

I thought about it as I stumbled through a game of chess. The facts were that my experience to date as an administrator, as a politically aware person charged with making a country for all, could be recorded on a pin head. Sure I understood what he was saying about it being the time to do a number of things simultaneously; to let go, draw in, involve, and teach change, but my Smith model and my army processing told me, ‘on our terms’. Plonked on

top of that I knew that Communism was a means for the uncivilised and the unchristian to take all for nothing and consume it. The Americans had a heavy presence in the Congo area but so did the Chinese. They were talking to Kaunda and East Africa and so it was up to us to stop them coming any further south. To my local yokel whitie mind I was still looking to the fringe of trees yonder and wondering if the black up there was doing good, chopping at the sand like that, putting a pip in and covering it up to achieve a meal in four months, or was he pretending until I was past and he could take up his weapon? Confusing? Damn right.

Add to that, by now a couple of my buddies were Section Officers in the CID/Special Branch cross over unit which meant simply they could be in a township one minute, the bush the next and back watching a night club the day after.

As soon as I got back from dinner I gave one a call. 'Wal[57], you know a fukka called Tekere?'

'Huh?'

'In detention, Wha-Wha[58] or somewhere …'

'Hey Wal,' he replied, 'I'm a lowly S/O, not a superintendent. I know shit … but yeah, Sithole's there … the usual…'

'Things can't be that bad, then,' I decided after clicking off. The men at the top were obviously treating things pretty casually.

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The weeks and months flew by. Suddenly I was back in the army, back in the same old uniform I had packed away in my kitbag, back in barking and routine and discipline and no middle ground anywhere. I was now with the Bulawayo Battalion falling under the command of the old Army Reserve Officers, collectively termed the Territorials (Terries or TF). In my time a company - 3 or 4 platoons - was 'called-up' on each occasion and we did a

six week tour. We were day-to-day very independent of the regular army, our top command mostly comprised of volunteers, usually older codgers who'd chosen the army instead of the Bowls club or Lions for their leisure. They had all the March and Ceremony under their belts but little experience and not a wink of understanding of 'unconventional' war - they just didn't appreciate that these modern buggers didn't play by the rules.

The tone of the tour was set in the first briefing with my Commanding Officer. I stood amazed, gazing at a 1:250,000 map spread against the wall of the briefing room, the type of map good for classrooms but totally inappropriate for army briefings - I may as well have been huddled around a schoolboy's globe, while in front of the map stood the major - his stump of a right arm arcing lazy circles over a quarter of the country.

'Whatever you do, Lieutenant,' he was saying, '*don't* cross this bridge.' I peered at one of ten bridges he might be referring to, marked by a spider's web of waterways amongst a tight pack of hills.

'The Special Forces chaps are doing live training right next to you,' he continued, giving me a significant wink at the mere thought of those guys, 'and we don't want you to have an accident.'

The evening before we left for the Valley was, co-incidentally, a 'Dining-Out Night'. Gathered together with the top brass I expected stuffy handshakes and old time stories. Instead everyone got thoroughly pissed over a grand meal before a stripper arrived and really got the old timers singing and the young guys trying. Fantastic woman. If you ever want to see 100 army officers herded together, give her a call. That night I told our visiting late night speaker Brigadier Hickman to 'fuck (hic) off,' and he, thankfully, told a Captain to put me to bed.

Out in the field the weirdness continued. We were in roughly the same area as my first Wankie tour just further along - tending east - the Zambezi

Valley facing the upper reaches of Kariba dam. There we were surrounded by the timeless Jessie Bush - miles and miles of patches of growing dead twigs, reaching out and stabbing, dried out but alive. Between the jessiebush were kopjes that you wished you could walk around but maps didn't lie. To walk around brought only another kopje and tangle guarding the next. The only way was up and over – exhausting in the heat. There weren't even any great numbers of locals to watch. When we came across a store selling coke we bought one and then spent half an hour cursing the hot bubbles coursing up the back of our throats, foaming in our mouths and exploding out through our noses. These excursions were never boring, merely painful right where it hurt most … in the butt. We wondered, not being scientists of nature, what we were doing there? Only afterwards was it funny when elephants chased us, when snakes and the rest surprised us. Shade was precious, water the most precious of all. We learnt that maps needed correcting and updating. One day I spurned an animal piss, shit and mud-filled watering hole. When we finally reached the next 'as marked on the map' it was dry. I had a big, big predicament: Two sections of men and no idea what the status of the next 'as-marked' water hole would be. I elected to go back to certainty. When - finally - we lay sated and bloated with the mud of the first hole, a goat-herd boy materialised. Putting aside his fear he pointed out, only 100 yards away, hidden in the depths of a thorn bush branch arrangement that cleverly kept animals away, lay a water hole. From then on I always kept an inch in the bottom of the bottle and I filled up no matter what the water smelt like.

During one of my very early call-ups, our food stocks reduced to the day's dry pack, the radio buzzed and without further compliments I, manning the bush camp with four others, was told the platoon rations were arriving by air-drop. Minutes later we heard a Dakota, then he was overhead, then out of the door dropped a load. Before the Dak was out of sight the load crashed -

CRASH! - to the ground half a mile away. In a smashed thorn bush covered in grass and sand and cow shit we found half an ox. A month's ration for 30 men sure, but there were only five of us in camp and the temperature was 45°. That time we were not only positioned near a main gravel road but in a 'built up' area … there were kraals all about us, so I shared with them what we weren't able to eat. In that same camp, just days later, an 'academic colonel' arrived. We watched him appear out of the heat haze from Army School in Pretoria. He stayed, made notes, told us nothing and then left. He hadn't gone long when a VIP, our very own Army Commander, General Coster, arrived for an unannounced visit. My huge mechanic, the half man half boy of my first tour now an honorary corporal because of the number of volunteer call-ups he had done, refused to allow him past our make-shift boom.

'Password!' he sort of asked, mainly commanded, from his great height.

'Now look here my man …' said the VIP's aide, opening his Landie door to remonstrate. 'This is your army commander, General …'

'Me *your man*, sir?' snapped my 6'6" corporal. He put a bead directly on the captain's head.

'He's doing his job Captain,' said Gen Coster, 'and doing it well.' The general apologised and promised to return.

Every meal time was an adventure as we never had the cooking equipment needed.

We'd chase elephant for a turn at a water pan only to be chased away ourselves by an indignant matriarch thundering out of the thicket to see what was going on. The fun to be had out in the bush in our vehicles was second to none.

The last time I was billeted at the super comfortable Wankie TTL base camp I was informed that, only a few miles from me and closer to Victoria

Falls and its attractions, there was a ‘deputation’ of Afrikaans South African traffic cops in residence in what my Company Major would only call, *tent city*. The joke was that their poor English meant they couldn’t help out in Salisbury during Saturday shopping jams so some bright spark had sent them to patrol the border instead, no English required.

In the very early hours one morning my camp was instantly awake with the sound of AK 47 gunfire. The South Africans didn’t respond to my radio calls. I couldn’t get radio coms with anyone; even Brady Barracks in Bulawayo were closed. As dawn broke I took two sections over to them. Half a mile off I debussed and entered their camp from the rear, climbing over the waist high circular wall of protective sandbags. The camp was empty bar a very drunk black (a local chap) bat-man/interpreter, the Afrikaans cook and his helper. Every tent was shredded low down, the two foot mark and lower, but no blood, no bodies. The silence was eerie. Unusual for such good shooting from the Gooks, until we pieced together that they had casually set themselves up leaning on the sand bags, blasted off for a minute and then ran. But where were the bodies? Then it dawned. The SAP camp beds were the old, standard, government hospital issue that stood three feet plus off the ground. While the Gooks had been firing the traffic cops had been sleeping, and all bullets had passed harmlessly underneath. No doubt the Gooks had been expecting our one foot off the ground, Rhodesian camp cot setup.

But that didn’t explain the evacuation.

‘After the firing we all got up,’ related their cook, ‘and everyone went to look for the Land Rover.’

More confusion.

‘Yesterday evening,’ continued the man, ‘the Captain took the Land Rover for a drive. He’d stopped for a walk but then couldn’t find the vehicle again, so he walked back. This morning everyone went to look for it.’

They did find the landie after an extended search.[59]

It was only a week or so after my last call-up tour that a group went on a foot patrol all the way down to the river where they all stripped off and had a swim. The Gooks, I was informed, shot them with their own rifles. This was the way, these were the times, those days in the heat.

And then, again, as suddenly as it had begun, it was over. Out of my 1st platoon I saw only four men again; the big guy I saw often, one stayed on in Harare but is now in Australia, and the other two I met in Cape Town many, many years later. By 1980, and including me, most of the 34 men had left the country forever. Of my graduating brother officers I believe that within two years everyone had left bar the two who had joined the Regulars. John was killed along with General Shaw in a chopper accident. The second, aka the 'mystery major' went on to become our most decorated[60].

Those that left were soon replaced. They poured out of school into National Service and still more were replaced by newbie Rhodies. For the average Rhodie on the street, once he had completed his initial National Service Training (9 months was soon extended), he would be doing six weeks in, six weeks out, every six weeks. Every tour would be different and slowly casualties started to rise.

Six Million

In 1971, not for a moment, did Rhodesian society realise the extent of the civil war that was to follow. Ordinary Rhodies knew more of what was happening with Dennis Law at Manchester United and with their two Brians … Davison for cricket and Murphy for rugby. They knew more of playing ball themselves. They knew more of stamp collecting. Everyone was getting in on this, saving First Day Covers, the national reasoning being that the whole world would be begging for those first edition, slice of the time memorabilia's in the future, once Rhodies had showed everyone and made good on the dream.

But the security teams knew. SB knew about the growing numbers of trainees outside, of messages getting out, the think tanks operating in the camps, the slow moulding of two budding rag-tag armies into a massive force whose size and ability to persevere would be more than Rhodies could ever hope to match. They knew of the not inconsiderable support the black nationalists were getting from the scorned giants, Russia and China, and that they enjoyed slightly more than tit-bits from liberal groups and churches worldwide.

Rhodie security forces knew and Black Nationalist forces knew that the approaching six million in the Kaffircountry TTLs and the further one million moving back and forward were now the pool for both.

Rhodie and B-Nationalist knew that the competition was on, but both had very different ideas about how to play the game.

Plumtree

Plumtree, a tiny blip on Rhodesia's western border with Botswana, was an odd little town with an attitude all the way to the right. To get to it I crammed myself into my new-to-me 800cc Mazda truck and took off down the main road from Bulawayo to Botswana. The road was on par with any of the biggest highways in the country, circa 1940, and was one of the few that hadn't seen an upgrade. While driving I could pick out spots my Settler mentor and friend Cook Zee had woven a tale around. By then I was weighing in at 275lbs, well up from my army fighting fit weight of 230, amazing how the extra muscle piles on once the exercising stops. I was now closing in on my 22nd birthday.

Finally the 9' tar mat widened as I passed the sign "Plumtree" and the railway joined parallel just yards away. The town appeared, startling to find it huddled right on the road, and the road on the rail, suddenly coming up out of the dry hot bush. I soon discovered that the road/rail cut the residential area of the town in two. On one side was the government housing - the far side of the railway line - where the DC's Office, the Police Station and the Country Club were to be found. There, with mainly civil servants staffing the place it was tending toward middle age with no real idea or reason to believe that there was potentially a war on. Every afternoon at five sharp I would notice the huddle of support staff - the clerks and accountants and assistants - trooping out to disappear into their houses, reappearing the next morning at seven thirty for eight.

On the near side the smaller, still private housing was to be found, among them a few shops, an office or two, the butcher and Plumtree Hotel. The place was both the last and first stop in the country from Botswana, and therefore its main sleep-over customers were salesmen.

Days were quiet. Mid-week and Saturdays a few golfers could be seen on the Club's sand links, which was about the only time any of us saw the teachers from the famous Plumtree School[61] that lay on the edge of town. The principal I'd look up from time to time as he'd been my athletics coach and deputy head back at Umtali. He helped when I started a rugby team … we managed to get enough guys together for one game against a Francistown pick-up side.

In Plumtree us Rhodies played hard but only after an even harder day's work. I was the most senior of all the youngsters and so my hard day would often include a high physical content whereas my colleagues were behind desks or counters. After the support staff had left I would sometimes interrupt my immediate boss' assault on his in-tray. ADC Koos' wife Maggie would normally follow with tea for her man.

'Our partial illegitimacy in the eyes of the world,' Koos would say, sweet Maggie staring adoringly into his eyes, 'is exactly why South Africa cannot be openly involved.'

I'd listen, huddled in his tiny office, half buzzed after 8 hours out in the field.

'They would love,' he'd continue, 'to come up here and whack (his massive hand would slap the air) a few blacks in the privacy of some bush in the name of our struggle, but, see, they *can't*.'

'Why not?'

'Their qualified franchise (Koos was continuing his legal studies as he really wanted to be a lawyer, hence the words I had to go look up) means they are skating on ice as thin as the stuff Smith has us on,' he'd reply, drawing from one of the often two smokes he had lit at the same time. 'They are already feeling the pinch and to fall into an international legal trap would irreparably damage their economy. Coming and not coming to help is all

about money.'

'Understand,' he'd say, 'the Portuguese are finding Africa very expensive. How will Pretoria see our buggering about if they also have a free Mozambique and Angola to keep them occupied?'

'When you say "free",' Maggie would ask, chewing her lip, 'do you mean if the whites have gone?'

Koos would give a meaningful stare at that, pulling hard on a cigarette.

'Just why are we providing health care and educating these nig-nogs?' someone would ask down at the hotel, a question zinging out between the thwack of darts in the board. Various opinions would go flying, between and during the games, between beers, and over the running orders of chips.

'So and so's son's deserted, disappeared overseas … you hear about that?'

I hadn't. A man told me the retired general's name but I've forgotten it.

SO (Section Officer) Pete got back from his first holiday out of Africa, having spent some time in London.

'I had a beer with so and so's garden-boy,' he said, 'it was a joke a minute.'

We'd all chuckle.

'Smith's son's in London, I hear,' another would add. Quiet. No one wanted to go there.

'You hear about Judy Todd?'

We'd all heard about Judy Todd. For information on her no one needed a newspaper or radio chat show.

'She's Garfield's daughter, and she's going around with blacks.'

'She's over the border.'

'She's one of them. She's being trained and everything.'

'The missionaries are wiping the bloody blacks' bums … those kaffirs are

hiding behind the church.'

'Don't trust a black with a Bible … ask him to drop it before checking about for guns and then check those around, too - carefully.'

Laughter. This was the talk of all our simple pub nights and big get togethers, the dart knock out, the Saturday braai. Our talk had a strange logic to it. Thoughts of Rhodies leaving were tolerated, noted, and understood even. Thoughts of blacks leaving were the same, blacks staying and fighting for the opposition, too, also tolerated, also understood, frankly debated. However, let one person, a Rhodie, someone like Judy actually support the blacks and we went nuts. It was here the party would break up, fights would start and someone would go storming off home, never mind the darts cooked chicken prize lost. This was the flipside to this banter, the undercurrent that we were all aware of and that was growing as the war was growing, becoming daily more real and therefore daily better ignored. We didn't know what to do; we didn't know how to stem the tide, and how it would all end. All we knew to do was stick together. And if one person broke that right, well, the illusion of safety was shattered for all of us.

At the office we were short staffed. We were so short staffed that at the ripe age of 22 I was for a short time the unofficial DC of the most important Botswana-Rhodesia border district.

'We're managing,' was the common response when asked how our department was coping. The police were no better off. P/O John was left so long on a one white, ten black police officer station miles from the nearest rock that he went temporary bananas. I was his only regular visitor at once or twice a month. One day I brought him in for a bachelor party at the club. He wouldn't leave my side and when we finally coaxed him into a game of darts he picked up his FN and put three slugs through the bull. End of party, beginning of terrorist attack false alarm.

The problems didn't end there.

I called the development manager of the Irrigation Scheme Number two one day, telling him I was bringing a couple of lads down on Saturday for a braai. I knew he was depressed and was trying to cheer him up.

'I'll be away,' he said.

'Where you going?' I asked, wondering where he could go to get out of there.

A few days later I was called. I entered his living room to find he'd blasted his head off with a shotgun. He was kind enough to do it on his still plastic unwrapped lounge suite, no doubt wanting to save us the clean-up.

I was rattled. We'd known he was depressed, isolated, and then, wham. Tension manifested in other ways.

On the other Irrigation Scheme there was a black labour compliment of over 1000 with an elderly, sickly husband and wife team in charge. One day we were out there paying the monthly wages when the trainee AO (Agricultural Officer) told the snaking line of workers the tablet he was handing out was for birth control. The blacks went bananas. It was an English joke that would have worked well in a Bulawayo pub but it had me and the AO doing rescue duty of a suddenly very small and frightened Rhodie. We then repaired to the Chief's Kraal … the news of white man's trickery was there already … for a long session of explanation and assurance with the Chief.

'I will pass the word about malaria,' was the old man's resigned comment. 'The real issue, though, is that you people think you can do whatever you like. How is it,' he asked, after a sigh and a think, 'that you believe an irrigation scheme is going to resolve the problems and hardship thrust upon my people? You,' he said to AO Beaumont direct, 'are our teacher. When do we see you?'

The event that most shook me, that most slapped me into the knowledge that something was not right, was the incident at Maitengwe Pan. Part of my responsibilities in Plumtree was the Maitengwe Pan Irrigation Scheme. It was home to an amazing collection of varied ducks that would stop off on their way north and back, as well as serving as a trial community development parcel. One Thursday evening I was barred entry by an army road block.

'Beetle off old chap' said a Corporal to me, 'the party will be over Sunday and we'll be gone Monday … come back then.'

Resisting the urge to rearrange his world with my Lieutenant's hands I trooped off for the two hours travel back to town. Clearly something big was going on. A few phone calls revealed that neither my DC nor our PC in Bulawayo or our local police knew anything of the massive airlift of party paraphernalia and the multitude of men in the army cordon that had arrived.

'It's the retirement party of some RF or government, someone very senior,' came the final, whispered titbit. I shrugged it off and went on with the thousand other things that needed to be done. On Monday I and the old timer AO North, Mr Mac, went up to have a look-see. We met one of his Agricultural Advisers on the way up.

'I've heard they have all left my Sirs,' he said. 'The aeroplanes left yesterday and many, many trucks with soldiers this morning early. They have gone the back routes.'

'A show of dust through the TTLs,' snarled Mac. 'From here it's possible to drive a good bit of the way back to Salisbury the back way … think of the talk a convoy of army will make.'

The pan is incredibly beautiful. At that time of year I knew it would be full of thousands of duck, always a wild cacophony and amazing to experience. We drove in, and there was silence. The AO and I gaped. Stared. Said nothing. We couldn't. In the pan were hundreds of ducks floating

lifeless in the shallow waters, hundreds lying burning in the sun on the stretched pan walls, on the roads, dozens hanging dead-eyed in and on the surrounding Mopani scrub. All had been machine gunned. We could not comprehend it. We tried to work it out, neither of us saying a word. The ducks would have leapt from the water in fright, flown about and with nowhere else to land would have had to return to face the barrage. I didn't hear a quack. We stood and then left as quietly as we'd arrived. There was simply absolutely nothing we could say.

I went back to the kaffir store on the main road and phoned the DC. I knew it was serious. There was a sombre silence … the blacks barely acknowledged Corporal before withdrawing their faces, as though I was the whitie who'd done what they would never even consider doing.

'You youngsters are destroying a good thing,' I heard Settler class Rhodie Mac say to me.

'It wasn't me!' I wanted to shout, or my generation. We wouldn't do that to ducks, or any animals for that matter.

Later, in the quiet of our Intaf-Government Mess I thought about things. I had been told if I ever mentioned duck again I would be fired and never get a job. On the other side, as exhausted as I ended up daily from work, it was a good hard day and we had fun in the community, fun in the pub, fun at the mess. I thought about my life, my options, and the world. I looked at my surroundings, particularly at the bubbles in my beer, the fruit of our superior life style. There were no 'wants'. I had all I needed. I decided.

'Man-o-man, life is goooooooo-Di!' I thought. With all the RF poise-and-noise it felt that we were there to stay, that for 1000 years things would only get better. I stalked off, ready to carry on, simply too naïve to comprehend the meaning of what I'd experienced. There were so many feathered corpses that I had failed to see that the rot was with our own Smithy and the

Rhodesian Front, it was with our guiding philosophy, not with individuals.

Following that tune I mentioned to DC Peter that we were fortunate we were up against ignorant niggers who couldn't tell whether it was a train or god's light lighting their sabotage efforts. He had some sort of eye trouble and so his office was dimly lit but, on my remark he took me from dim-dumb to enlightened.

'It is true that most still revere their long dead ancestors and listen to the word of the traditional spirits, but…'and spoken between the names of the common Nationalists he now revealed the names of those I didn't yet know.

'Joshua Nkomo[62] was born in Plumtree,' he told me. 'He is the son of a Christian minister. The 'fat cat' that he seems now has worked hard for his fellows. He started public life as the union man for railway workers and handled the whole pre and post Federation break-up talks with the Brits, the UN and Whitehead. It was he who finally told Winston Field he wasn't giving enough of anything.'[63]

'The Christian leadership of our Black Nationalists,' he continued, 'number the capitalist Reverend Sithole, of course Robert Gabriel Mugabe, Edgar Tekere (Ha, I knew this one), Dr Herbert Ushewonkunze, Herbert Chitepo, Dumiso Dabengwa, James Chikurema and many others[64]. All these man have degrees. Do you have a degree?'

He knew I didn't. In those days that was really something. Few had the opportunity. I didn't have the money to go to Varsity. I had decided to get my government 'degree'.

'Think,' said DC Peter 'of Plumtree, what an unemployed black kid your age, your brute size and with a university entrance education is thinking as he walks past the whitie houses alongside the white-only Club. The number of black kids going into school,' he continued, 'getting a dream of being a train driver or a doctor put into their hearts is a concern to every career civil

servant who works in the bush because he knows the position is only getting worse. We know their dream will be shattered, replaced only with shards.

Without detracting from the black teachers who served gallantly under government or quasi government,' he said, 'the quality education for blacks is only coming from the schools run or supported by the different missionary groups.

What are we doing?' he asked, finally.

I didn't know. Soon after, my exams results were through. I was given a promotion. With the better pay and the excitement of moving on I stopped thinking, for a while at least.

As I packed for the tiny station of Lupane big news filtered down. We heard that from then on the police were to be allowed in *as full partners* in the war. One of DC Peter's three cadets was called up. A fragile lad, he promptly committed suicide rather than go for training in the Police Morris Depot. ADC Koos, who spent so much time building up the lad, died soon after from a heart attack. Now only ADC Pat and two white cadets, a bunch of white lady clerks and Mr Johns were left. Province immediately sent down an 'experienced man' to help run the Tax Office. His 300 lbs on a 5'6" frame of experience related to retail in the UK, a someone who had emigrated to 'help Smith fight the black communist hordes'. He was so large he needed to be driven everywhere and didn't last long. But I was excited, I'd been given a promotion, I was on my way up.

'We'll manage,' said DC Peter reassuringly, happy for me to be moving on while Plumtree was running on 1/8 steam and prayer.

Before my new post I had a call-up to do. On a rare night off in Wankie Town I met up with one of the few girls I knew from Umtali Girls' High. Hilary, a brilliant wildlife artist, announced she was going to tour Northern Mozambique, war or no war. I told her she was crazy enough wandering

about our North Western area when Moz was worse, chock full of what we hadn’t experienced yet … land mines. I was told that was what she did … she went and she hit one just a couple of years later. Why? I think we were all nuts.

Sex

In1972, the year Rhodesia's troubles spilled over into full-scale, undiluted civil war, there was another matter on the mind of the Smith Cabinet, those Larder-Burke types, those keepers of the purity of Whitie Christian Nationalism. Young Rhodesian men, those juniors in the police climbing the ranks, those young who opted for service in the secret plain clothes divisions in the major Rhodesian cities of Salisbury and Bulawayo, were spending their nights on the very important assignment of ensuring good Rhodesian men were not picking up choc-boxes.

In both these cities, nightly, young Rhodie police officers were leaping out of trees, pouncing from behind dustbins, swooping down in unmarked cars to give Rhodie men a truly frightening, re-whitening, experience.

Whether the chocolate was light or dark, whether European slim or African bountiful, even if sophisticated, perfumed and well-washed, their business could not be condoned. Rhodesia could not have a two-fingers-to-you revolt against the British Crown - and the world - while Rhodesians, even a few, were jigging the very blacks one had said were incapable of government.

'If you want to bring a little colour into your life, do it at home. There is the kaffir-khaya at the bottom of every suburban garden.'

- Junior Rhodie

SB agent, 1972

Lupane

Lupane District is in North Matabeleland Province, about half way between Bulawayo and the famous Victoria Falls. It was there that I got married. Lib and I had been hanging out since I'd started work in Essexvale. She'd been attending Bulawayo Teachers' College fulltime, meaning we got to live our letters only over holidays when she would come and visit me - mentored strictly by a town family, usually someone from the office. We did our honeymoon in Lorenço Marques and so became one of the first Rhodies to appreciate that indeed the Portuguese were pulling out of Africa. There was an air of frantic desperation there, so frantic my holiday allocation of a few South African Rands magically transformed into large piles of Escudo. She spent them well. I reported to SB on my return. Their reaction was 'been there, heard that, making plans'.

Sometimes she accompanied me on trips to the far north of Lupane - making her one of only a handful of white women who'd seen its unique beauty[65]. We would travel in a little group, a tiny group! Myself, my dogs, Lib, my (60 plus old-school DC's messenger and interpreter) Corporal (by then titled 'District Assistant') Mahlangu as well as my FN rifle and a duck gun.

About half of Lupane, all of the north and the east, was treacherous sand-veldt, amazing stuff and the defining element of the region. You looked at it and it moved, you stepped forward and it immediately gave way. An exhausting walk but if your landie hit a road rut it held you so tight in the tracks laid before you didn't need to steer. Sometimes, in other spots, if it was *just too* wet all four wheels would sink and we've have to pile out and dig. One day it took us - Lib, Corporal and myself - nine hours to do one mile. We were in the depth of the hardwood forest where not a single African family

had dared set up their home. A spirit of “unknown intentions” was said to live thereabouts, his form at the time a black-mane lion. It was the only time I saw fear in my old colleague’s face. Lib’s face matched his when the old lion roar echoed through those strange, forlorn trees. Whatever the trip, and although we took packed food, we made a point of stopping at the very few stores that had cold cokes. It was important to show face and support local business. Lupane was so ‘back-of-beyond’ that it was there, on the shelf of a TTL *spaza*[66] shop, that I found a box of Rose’s Lime-juice, a whole seven years after sanctions began.

I revelled in my new, senior role, and put in chunks of extra time. Over and above my office duties - which now included court - DC Lewis handed me direct responsibility for the southern Purchase Area and the far north. While I was careering out and about from the extreme south of the district to the Binga boundary so were all of my ‘outdoor’ colleagues; boss DC Lewis, the rescue-all-snakes mad 6’ 6” Health guy, the panic-at-snakes Agricultural Officers Geoff and Bill, the ex-DC from Kenya who was now supplementing his pension by checking soil conservation works, Education Officer John and all three of the African Development Supervisory staff. John of Animal Health would go out for five days at a time week after week, alone except for his black assistant who also carried John’s 3-o-3 rifle (his despised issue FN he left lying in the back of his Toyota bush wagon), did his cooking, sorted his bed and made ‘stand-up, stand-up’ coffee in the morning. John was one of a handful of younger white men I knew who could speak Ndebele like an Ndebele. He was also an amazing shottist. He could take off a duck’s head at 10 miles (or was it that he could take the head off a duck flying at 10mph?) [67] The police were headed by MiC Chief Inspector Pat. I was a very fortunate man-child SDO to have the friendship of Pat. He was particularly supportive when the DC was away. On one occasion the PC instructed that

the big lift[68] was coming. Pat spent the whole weekend with me updating and prioritising the B-Nationalists of the district 'I' felt should be arrested first.

'Calm, be calm,' said Pat, 'we've done this secret stuff before you know.' The order didn't come.

There was simply no chance of getting anywhere in secret. Our meetings out were regular and planned and given the road conditions our choice of access into deep TTL couldn't vary. Often I'd pass a bus on the road out of Lupane, choc a bloc with half the TTL stuffed inside it, only to have it ahead of me again after I'd made my first stop. This meant the whole community knew we were coming. They knew our vehicles, even the staff we'd be bringing along. We were bright whites trundling along in loud vehicles, straight through bush filled with, well, the enemy. Things were informal yet regular. For special meetings I wore khaki, for ordinary days I wore khaki, and I always made sure I had a tracksuit for the cold mornings - lest we stayed out.

A part of my job and the overall functioning of the region were cattle sales, an economic biggy. They happened about five times a year and were a study in relations between Rhodieland and Kaffircountry. The whole enterprise began with the Cold Storage Commission (CSC), from whom a buyer was sent who represented the needs of the government farms. The black TTL farmer knew that the CSC man would probably buy all the stock that he could muster, and so would make sure he was present at the sale days, animals in tow. He was at a distinct disadvantage from the start. While all of us; we of the Lupane government, other interested white farmers and speculators, the auctioneer and the CSC man himself would arrive sparrow early on the day - having simply churned through the sandy roads that morning, the black farmer was at the halfway stage of a two day, one night

race. He had to walk a hell of a long way, there only being two sale yards in the whole of the huge, elongated district, in the process losing a good bit of weight on his animal. Further obstacles awaited him.

Intaf (in conjunction with the CSC and the meat producers' board) would set the minimum floor price depending on the weight, sex, age and status of the animal. The idea was that bidding would start at the minimum and be driven up from there, ensuring the TTL farmer good prices. This rarely happened. In reality, if the CSC man wanted the animal, the speculators and farmers would hold off. They knew they couldn't out bid the agent – he was Mr Money-bags, and so only if he passed did the rest get a look in.

It was a dull affair, not the auction fervour seen in the films! The floor price was announced, a few nods and grunts followed and it was over.[69] Things were not dull for the seller, though, traumatic instead! Sometimes, like when stock was short, the buyers played the game and bid up, which would make the black guy feel better about selling his 'family bank account', but mostly back-scratching relationships already in place kept the price low. At least if the white-buyers ring were good at appearing generous and with the DC's men in attendance, including the AO, the seller might have felt he was getting the best he would be able to achieve. The TTL man had the right of refusal but that was pretty much useless. He'd walked a long way and to trudge his animal home again, cashless, was unthinkable.

When the day's sales were completed all of us whities - government, quasi government and speculator - would zoom off to the rest camp at the second sale point. If the sale was particularly well attended it became a race because there were only five rooms, the CSC man automatically had one while as host we had to offer the rest first. These camps were of the bare basics … brick and concrete under tin, normally three to five rooms with a common verandah, shared shower/loo and a place for one's black batman to

cook over an open fire. And here was another disadvantage to the TTL farmer.

Mostly the camps belonged to the ADF (African Development Fund), a fund financed by levies on resources taken out of the TTLs. The process was that for each animal sold (amongst other recourses such as lumber, for which Lupane was world famous … those parquet floors) a levy was raised that was separate from the sale price and paid into the ADF fund. Naturally, white buyers would calculate the levy into what they were prepared to pay, meaning the black farmer ultimately took the hit. It was automatic and controlled by the auctioneer for which he was paid a generous fee by the ADF for his dull performance. The money collected was reconciled in Intaf head office by staff paid by the ADF, and once a year the DCs put in bids to develop the district. Among the development costs, paid for by the ADF, was the maintenance of the rest camps. Therefore, while the black farmer was toddling off home with his shillings in his pocket, we were resting a night at his expense!

Of course there were 'off-grid' sales too. The TTLs were awash with sheep and goats that white farmers and speculators were more than happy to pick up at a discounted, unofficial price.

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As a young cadet in Essexvale I was introduced to the phenomenon of pay runs. In Lupane it was another eye-opener, a two day affair of travel and pay, travel and pay - exhausting. All the black labourers[70] employed by the Government and ADF in the district lived for their once a month pay-day and for their money which, contrary to most stories from ex-Rhodies, went 95% to home, 3% to pay back-taxes with perhaps 2% to beer. To our ex-chief of Zambian Royal Show Society District Accountant our staff shortage was his excuse to get out of the office. He loved the cycle; he would calculate

each ‘boy’s’ pay, place an order with the Post Office, wait while it was passed on to the Provincial Head Office in Bulawayo, endorsed and the money sent out on the first convenient kaffir bus. Then he would ceremoniously pack his short-wheel base Landie. He, resplendent in safari suit, scarf and laced boots, his Man-Friday and a District Assistant would set out on their adventure.

I had the pleasure of seeing him operate once. I was out late, behind time and so forced to camp. As best he could Corporal drew out the old blanket I kept in the Landie for my dogs and laid it beside the Accountant’s tent, erected beforehand by the man’s Man-Friday, as well as a rigged shower room and a camp table with a silver service for one. From the gang stores Corporal found a 25 gallon drum for my seat which he shuffled up to the table. On the table he plonked mine and my dogs’ tin plate, bent fork and pocket knife opposite the silver setting. I marvelled at the scene lit by a gently hissing paraffin lamp, set below the magnificence of Rhodesia’s night. On Man-Friday’s bell ‘Sir’ emerged, robed in his dressing gown, insect swot to hand and sat, waiting nobly, while the wine was opened and the dinner served. There was indeed enough for two and once we had both regained control of the giggles we had a great dinner. Sometime during I looked over from our spectacle to the other, the far-far side of the camp. There the labourers were squatting in their rags, watching us intently, their pot of *sadza* to share between them temporarily ignored, their stillness broken only by the thin, home-rolled cigarette passing automatically from one gnarled hand to the next. TV not needed, I thought, and 100 miles from the nearest electricity anyway.

All the while Intaf’s struggles were deepening. In the field, for men who would be directly involved with the Africans of the TTLs, DCs were having to turn to recruit staff that no one else wanted; white escapees or loners from

city life, incompetent farmers looking for pocket money, men who would join but soon leave when they found the drive and smarts needed for the job were far more than they were capable of. When we had a good man he was loaded with work. Mechanic/handyman/building teacher Jerry fell asleep at the wheel of his sports car and met an iron wood tree head on. Head Office Audit raised a query when we ordered a second replacement anvil for our workshop within the space of one month. Our black spanner boy, the job title of an Intaf trained mechanic, had managed to break with successive blows two successive anvils. When the new one arrived we assembled it in the workshop and watched to see if he could make it a hat-trick.

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Deputy Secretary 'Van' was one of the oldest of the most senior civil servants in the country. He was born a Settler Rhodie about 1910 and would have been brought up on the history of the rebellion. When it was announced Van was visiting the district went into panic. DC Lewis was on his way on transfer but before he left he was explicit:

'He's the toughest of the toughest,' he said. 'He'll murder you if he sees waste or poor maintenance,' and continued to say that because incoming DC Art wouldn't be on station I would be the great man's host. The talk was it was his pre-retirement tour as his and Smith's 'line' didn't run parallel. Some things I was advised to do, like sweeping the sand roads (yes we did, before and after summer) and painting immovable objects white. I didn't. He arrived, he didn't snap, but questioned, listened and we had a great time. Old Corporal Mahlangu and I took him over the roads less travelled, at one stage having to take the doors off the Landie to let the high river waters run through rather than drag us down stream. For me it was embracing and illuminating. Back in the saddle shortly after an abandoned lunch[71] we passed an old black gentlemen, old enough to have taken part in the first

Chimurenga, shuffling along the path we were using for a road, deep in the bush.

‘When I was your rank,’ said Van, ‘back in the ‘30s, I would have run the bugger over. Now,’ he continued, ‘we would be wise to recognise just how much they have caught up. We need to include, not exclude, him and his kids.’

It Begins

In December of 1972, as was expected, the war proper started. The first entries of the new wave of Gooks came through National Land up in Mashonaland North East and attacked a farm. We heard about these developments pretty much through the national news and our PC simultaneously. For years now us in Intaf/District Police had been seeing the disappearance of men from the countryside and had being waiting for them to re-emerge as trained fighters. We knew Kariba Dam was easily watched and that the B-Nationalists had already come unstuck in the 1960s trying to push big numbers through the harsh Matabeleland end of the Zambezi Valley. Even though their arrival was expected by all, they still caught us unawares. We thought they would announce their presence like a terrorist should by firing bullets and, well, terrorising people everywhere. And we rather expected, having surrounded them, to be able to say, 'we see you naughty boys, now surrender or else'. Instead they came quietly, set themselves up and probably began a little evangelising without any force being applied. Only once they were well settled did they mount the attack.

'This is a warning to us,' said DC Lewis, addressing all of us from his office in a rare, all-together morning meeting. 'With them taking a softly-softly approach like this we're going to see that our Civil Defence simply isn't ready … anywhere.'

Not more than a few weeks later I held an emergency meeting down at the Lupane (Officers' only) Club with the entire village. I had to report that we had discovered, after the event that a group of terrorists of unknown number had casually walked through the white housing area of the town the night before. Fear was written on faces. Of the 21 in the village over half were women and kids and of men four were into or close to their 60s. Outside of

the police only three of us had army training. I had held the meeting at the white club to keep matters confidential but soon the news had spread. Within a day Father V from Fatima phoned to urge me to make sure we all ‘practiced safety’. A day after the farmers started phoning, asking what Intaf was doing about Civil Defence. We prided ourselves on our Ground Coverage but certainly on this occasion we hadn’t a clue. We investigated and, with our African staff decided the Gooks had come through without making contact, or at least only with very select locals. What was clear was our Ground Coverage Intelligence had been compromised.

‘That,’ said DC Lewis, ‘means we are already on the back foot.’

What could we do? An old Umtali friend arrived with a RAR[72] [73]Company. They stayed a couple of weeks. For a week or so after we co-ordinated trips out to the bush to give each other support but slowly, soon, we were announcing ‘I’m off, see you Wednesday for a game of tennis,’ and we were back to normal.

More news was to follow. In Lupane talk filtered in from both Bulawayo in the south and Wankie in the north that a grand, new operating structure called Combined Operations had been formed. We tuned in our radios, phoned our PC and pumped the police for info. We were told Com Ops would synchronise the efforts of the army and the new aggressive part of the police with the airforce in support all under one command with our very own Intaf there to listen in. Brigadier Barnard, he who had spent time trying to recruit me in 1970, was, we were told, to lead the whole bang-shoot day-to-day with Walls in overall command.

Arising out of Com Ops would be ‘Area Joint Operations Command (JOC)’, set up on an ‘as the need is seen’ basis. Where Com-Ops were to co-ordinate the entire country’s efforts an area JOC would do just that area. A main JOC would be led by an army Brigadier, a provincial/area JOC a

colonel and a mini JOC would be run by a senior policeman, preferably of colonel equivalent and roughly dependent on circumstances and men available. Gosh, but it sounded modern and lofty and right. Just the sort of plan we hard-living, big-playing pioneering Rhodies would conjure out of the very bush. That Com-Ops was born out of dire necessity to co-ordinate our meagre resources, a plucky guts manoeuvre, rather than a winner's plan just didn't register.

While all this was happening the Pearce Commission[74] had been doing its thing. We all knew about it, were all aware of it, but 'watched' activities from a distance as they never came anywhere near where we were working. Our perception was that Smith and the English were hoping for some good noises, good enough to bring in a few black puppets on a no strings attached basis, but all doubted that anything would come of it.

'A loser, waste of money and a shit-stirring exercise,' said one of my SB mates, with which I couldn't help but agree. Soon our musings were realised. Not that long after the Commission departed we saw riots in Shabani and immediately afterwards the obligatory police action. My information was that a hell of a lot more than one person was killed in the put-down.

'The police reserve went kaffir[75],' said my SB reserve buddy, a mine employee. 'They went more kaffir than the Manson family. '

Soon further news arrived to feed the chatter mill. Ex PM Todd, we heard, had been confined to his ranch while his daughter Judy, the shocking, shocking Judy Todd, was locked up.

The Three Legged Pot

Instructions arrived that I was to take my Series I Landie on a four day up (one day for briefing, the rest for getting lost), three weeks in Mashonaland and three day back down trip. The idea had come from the Provincial Commissioner Matabeleland North's office, the goal being for me to get some first-hand experience of the new Protected Villages (PVs) that had just been completed.

PVs? It was a head scratcher for us … what were they? AO Geoff and I were working on the old chief Gumede up in the northern part … his people were 'recent arrivals'[76] who had been removed from, among other locations, my home of Essexvale[77] I think. There the land and climate was several flights of stairs better than the Lupane sandveldt. We had reached the stage where his people were considering our proposal to consolidate their scattered kraals into more of the style of European rural villages. We assumed, therefore, that the new PVs were of a similar exercise, except forced.

'They're to protect the TTL tribes-people from the invading insurgents,' said the messenger down from Harare, 'this first lot will show the world that the blacks have asked us for protection and we've provided it.'

'You need to go up there, observe these show pieces,' said the PC, 'then bring what you find out back in order to start the process down here.'

So off I went, Aleck and Thomas, two big-like-me black dudes - a community adviser and an agricultural extension adviser - packed into the Landie alongside and in the short-wheel-base 'tray' behind. Both were young men (but older than me by 10 years) and both were already at the top of their promotion tree. A Rhodie Agricultural Officer, still climbing the much wider salary scales, was meant to accompany me as the technical expert but, alas,

he was in the army playing foot patrol.

‘Look on the bright side,’ said my new DC Art Verbeek, with a chuckle as I was preparing to set off, ‘if we have to slap the blacks of Matabeleland into protected villages, at least it’ll be blacks herding blacks. We haven’t the white men to do the job!’ He whistled part of ‘Where have all the flowers gone’ as we beetled off, first to Bulawayo and then up the long Bulawayo-Salisbury highway. The road was eerily quiet. There were a few commercial vehicles, a few private cars and bakkies but a foreign registration was rare. The overwhelming majority of traffic was military. To pass the long, long time it took to get there we played first-to-spot-a-foreign-number-plate-wins-a-coke. And we chatted. From previously not having strung more than a dozen words together, myself, Aleck and Thomas now covered everything; politics to religion to treating wives and kids correctly. For those few days alone we bonded as well as a master and his servants could … they were careful not to offend and I laughed a lot.

Arriving at the Mashonaland Central town of Concession (few Matabeleland towns matched its size) we met District Officer Alex at the DC’s office. The DC was away[78].

‘Who are you?’ he asked after the initial hellos and after he’d called his Sergeant to take Aleck and Thomas away.

I explained our PV mission, adding that I was to see all war related activities, things like what the farmers in his area were up to. ‘I’ll scribble it all down in this note book and take the knowledge home with me.’

‘Where’s that?’ he questioned.

I patted my breast pocket, poked at the protruding pencil.

‘No, I meant Lupane. Where’s Lupane?’ After I drew an air map he nodded then gave a philosophical shrug. ‘I’m sure JOC will be letting me know about you some time soon. Meanwhile let’s give you a little look

around.’

He showed me the defences being put in by Rhodie farmers and what the town-dwellers were doing all round the perimeter of their houses and businesses. Security gates were being dug in, coiled barbed wire was being thrown at every place an intruder could enter, powerful lights were being installed to illuminate beyond the walls and the wire while leaving the house or office in darkness. Dogs were being bought and handlers employed, women were being taught to shoot … things seemed serious.

Afterward he and his wife took me to the country sports club where I met a few of the local whities. Over drinks I learned that one of them had already been killed, shot while on reserve duty, and that the emotions in their little community were deep and incredibly mixed. He was a member of the tennis section, an erstwhile partner of Mrs Alex.

‘Don’t sit there,’ barked a voice. I withdrew.

‘That was his stool,’ Alex said, referring to their friend’s favourite seat at the bar, ‘tough luck for him and more to come, I’m sure.’

‘What’s his wife going to do now?’ another fellow blurted out. There was anger all around.

‘That the politics has deteriorated to this,’ said one man, ‘I can’t quite believe it. What the hell is the RF playing at?’

‘They’re trying their bloody luck,’ said another, ‘those kaffirs are going to come unstuck. We made this country.’

And there was determination.

‘We’ll weather this one. If they want a fight, they’re going to get it.’

I drank my drink, taking it all in.

‘I know you’re here for only a short time, to see how we’re doing things,’ said a particularly amped up individual. ‘I’m needed in the committee meeting so … hang around. Okay? We can have a good talk later.’

The next day DO Alex happily put us on the road to the TTL. It was very different to Matabeleland; rolling hills in place of the flat stretches punctured by kopjes, the rolls themselves covered by thick, still, green grass. The little landie purred along as the well gravelled road wound through the hills, small bridges crossing streams with water in them, all so unlike our taxing, rough straight up and down, turn and straight again tracks. The first, and as it turned out the only sign of life we saw moving about was a mixed group of police. This band of uniform police, seconded junior SB and National Service types were headed by a *woman* with a single, sparkling new Intaf cadet trotting on behind. We found them occupying an old Intaf rest camp, the place recently 'securitised' with a ring or two of barbed wire all round it.

'Just what do you think you're doing?' she demanded as soon as we'd stopped, running a shocked eye over our mine *un*-proofed and *un*-protected Land Rover and the one and only FN rifle between us. 'Alex said what?!'

Before I could answer she was on the radio to the mini-JOC.

'They're swanning about as if they're on a tour of the bloody UK,' I heard her saying, her beautiful, professional eye resting on me, 'any orders?'

I just stared. Initially I'd been shocked that a woman was in charge, now the sight of their brand new powerful radio drove me over the edge. It seemed they really did do things differently up north.

'Tell them to get over here, A-SAP!' came the mini-JOC's reply.

'You heard them,' echoed the lady.

I got back in our vehicle, ready to make tracks when the radio squawked again.

The lady listened, nodded, came over.

'We're just around the corner from a PV,' she said. 'The Guard Force commander hasn't pitched for duty, yet. The JOC says you may as well pop in there for an evening or two.'

‘Guard Force?’ I asked.

‘Yes,’ she replied, ‘Guard Force.’

‘I’m sorry,’ I said, ‘I’ve never heard of Guard Force. We’ve just driven up here from Lupane.’

Things started to clear for her and she thawed, a little. She explained that Guard Force was formed because Intaf was not coping with the new duty hoisted upon them of making sure the people stayed put inside the wire. What had happened was Intaf had been given loads of money to get the PVs constructed and the people moved in, but, now that the job was done they needed another plan to take care of running and maintenance. GF, then, had been hastily formed with Rhodie led management, the top brass being mostly senior, retread retired army officers and the bottom rungs mainly black manpower.

‘Is it working?’ I asked.

‘Well,’ she replied, ‘you’ll see for yourself shortly. Long term, if you ask me, it’s definitely a ball of S-H-1-T.’

I was stunned. That wasn’t what Geoff and I were aiming at in Lupane north; we saw consolidation as leading to better management of the meagre grazing lands, co-operation on the maize fields … Her steely voice cut my thoughts.

‘You’ll find the PV’s are *essentially* controlled by the black guards,’ she continued, ‘the whites involved aren’t … the best … even when they’re there.’ I nodded, unsure of what to make of her candour, when suddenly she rounded on me. ‘How are you men running this war, anyway?’ she demanded, angry eyes flashing, ‘like a bloody bar fight?’

That was enough to wake me up and get me playing Rhodie. I told her I’d go along and see for myself, make sure those blacks were up to the task and get everything bloody well sorted out. Using all my smarts we waited till

early evening, nicely after ambush time, then took off and, quite intelligently I thought, took an off-road short cut. The short cut got us stuck. We got going, venturing further from the main road, and then broke down. Realising we had no idea where the hell we were in relation to the PV that was ‘just around the corner’ we ended up spending the night in mud and drizzle. By the time we got the landie going and made it out of there and on to the road we’d been ‘missing’ from everyone’s radar for roughly 20 hours. Luckily I didn’t have to face her again. I did take the opportunity, as we sat in the cold drizzle, to show my boys how an FN worked.

As our landie’s four-cylinders putt-putted up over a hill our first real life PV filled the windscreen and everything else besides. Yea gods! It rose up, completely covering the next hill, from bottom to top and clearly over the shoulder and down the other side - a sprawling mass of uniformly laid out little huts. Since I was 13 years old and for my companions, all their lives, we were used to scattered villages appearing every now and then, to be passed through either in a moment, or stopped at and explored, or seen on the skyline faraway, or riding a ridge and looking down on tiny circles of thatch in the valleys and plains. Here our perspectives were rocked.

As we arrived unsmiling guards came forward, saw white and opened a huge pole and barbed wire gate. Passing through we saw it was the only break in an endless tangle of double and double again perimeter fencing and barbed wire.

The guards’ reception was cold. This was not a contended bunch. Was it money?[79] Was it that they were guarding their own people, or had they simply had enough of the whole dreary experience? Whatever it was they did not want to be friends.

We drove slowly up the long, winding hill and things got worse. Usually my large frame and white skin got me all sorts of salutes from older folk and

grins and nods from the younger and cries of ‘swzeets!’ from the toddlers, but here there was nothing. Not a friendly anything, just inmates sullenly moving around attending to chores. Hundreds upon hundreds, it seemed, of stark, freshly mudded pole and grass huts lined on either side, spider-webbing out from the main road on the otherwise denuded hillside. Despair was tangible in the air. As we trundled a new realisation dawned. On either side we were seeing old mothers and young children, women and old men, but no youngsters. There were no young, adult males at all and few teenage girls.

‘The boys have pinned their hearts and minds on other sleeves,’ noted Aleck.

‘I wouldn’t want to be here,’ said Thomas. ‘Not on your life.’

‘There’s a school up there, see?’ said I, trying to be bright.

‘Where do they crap?’ asked Aleck.

‘What would they crap?’ muttered Thomas.

On arrival up at The Keep - the office and accommodation of the white superiors – we were warmly, enthusiastically, greeted by an elderly African Sergeant Major who was definitely Mr Supremo. From the look of his well-starched uniform it was clear he’d been a graduate of conventional warfare training and, by jingo, he demonstrated it too with his crashing boots and snappy salute. He was totally competent and authoritative with the monstrous village running to his clicked fingers.

I was confused. This was all topsy-about. Our lady officer had been right. Here, right in front of me, was a retread civil servant black running a show that traditionally should have been under the show piece counsel of a tribal chief or headman - with a DO instructing.

‘Just relax, just relax,’ he kept insisting, a few moments later, after I’d fed him a flurry of tight questions. What? Who did he think he was? I was the whitie commander, the man with the sky-high rank. He’d better wind his

neck in, I thought. But he was right …

‘We are running everything very well here,’ he was saying, ‘there is no need to worry. And thank you for coming. Would you like some tea?’ I nodded I would and while I took a seat, waiting for the cook to appear, he continued. ‘While we have some time, sir. The girls for tonight ...’ He paused. I looked uncomprehendingly into his olive brown face. ‘Would you like to choose,’ he continued, ‘or should I just send them? Sir?’

There I went again, blowing my top and quizzing the man from a dizzy height.

‘It’s quite customary,’ was his calm reply, ‘all the PV commanders are doing it.’

Yea gods, what was on the go! Married, devout Catholic Aleck was spitting mad but bachelor Thomas didn’t mind … and he would have taken his offered princess had his friend not been so upset.

That night I sat outside the Keep under the full star night and mused. Nothing felt right. The mood that had accompanied our entrance remained. These people weren’t behaving like people. No clatter, no chatter, not a smile on offer. Inside these fences the place felt crippled, on its way to dying. Hadn’t this, something similar, happened somewhere else and been condemned? In the Transvaal?

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We left two days later. As I exited the Keep with the batman behind carrying my bag Sergeant Major snapped to attention. Standing to the side were five lovely village maidens staring at their bare feet.

‘Sir!’ he barked as he saluted again. ‘A not so ordinary request, sir!’

He wanted to know whether we’d deliver the women to my next stop, the police information collection centre.

‘They are needed for detailed questioning,’ he added, and explained that

they had almost been caught red handed taking food out of the PV.

‘It will be good for you,’ he added.

‘Why?’

‘They’ll keep you safe. Put them in the back and on the bonnet. They will warn of any mines and know of any ambushes around the corner.’

The land mine issue decided us; just as *nobody* had told us about Gooks wandering about freely looking for food so *nobody* had told us about land mines. We loaded the girls on. En route Thomas and Aleck decided the ‘arrest’ must be a power play thing.

‘There is so little food,’ said one of them, ‘that if the women had taken it, it shows they are prepared to take food out of their own mouths to feed the nationalists.’

We could see those thoughts were accurate. We suddenly started seeing a lot of things (the absence of busses) that would clear any land mines and that the fields all around were denuded and bare. The government would have to have food brought in.

‘Listen,’ I said, watching the girls sitting on the bonnet giggling with every bump, ‘we don’t know the full story and I’m sure Com-Ops wouldn’t have created a big headache for nothing.’

The Information Collection Centre was another sight to behold. Coasting downhill we rounded a turn to see, stretched immediately below us in a most indefensible position, a view out of my school history book. Laid out in lines were Boer War like white canvas Bell tents looking ever so pretty on the green grass with a picturesque river running beside them. As I drew the landie to a halt it wasn’t a British Army Red Coat but a lanky whitie who strode over with a few plump blacks ambling behind. All were in PT kit, the whitie brandishing a pistol.

‘Get them outa here,’ roared the whitie, the medal on his PT vest heaving

up and down as he bellowed. One of the black guys (he was the Senior Sergeant) roared equally loudly and our passengers took off, crying as they went, all giggle and excited chatter of the last half hour gone. The whitie was an Inspector.

‘Well, it looks like you’ve got everything in order here,’ I commented while shaking hands. He hooted at that.

‘We’re not in charge of anything,’ he replied, ‘our function here is to get information on the CT gangs operating in the area, and we’ll do it.’

He was all bustle.

‘I’ve a bunch of paper work to be typed up,’ he said, leading us in and transferring us to his Senior Sergeant at the same time, then he was seated at his typewriter, two pointing fingers stabbing out what he needed. The Senior Sergeant took us through the camp.

‘Here are your girls, sir,’ he pointed.

Our ladies were in a line, naked with their hands bound behind their backs. Each had a PT dressed policeman beside them and a galvanised tin bath or big bucket before them. As we watched the policemen began talking, the girls screeching and then, taking them by the nape of the neck the policemen plunged them into the water, holding as they struggled, releasing just enough for a frantic breath, then back down to struggle some more. Some interrogators, perhaps seeing me walking up the line, used their free hand to grab at their girl’s vagina, causing her to kick and fight. I couldn’t help but think of a time when I helped hold down a stallion while my friend did a home-castration job.

Myself, Aleck and Thomas were shell-shocked. In our brief journey from the PV these girls had shown they were normal, chatty women, suddenly they were animals. As far as I could determine 90% of the inmates were women. According to Senior Sergeant “mistakes” did happen, particularly with the

belligerent.

That night Aleck nearly got himself shot leaving his tent in the early hours for a pee. He'd missed seeing the duty constable and hit the make-shift alarm in his half-sleep, causing confusion and shouting throughout.

'It's those Matabeleland boys!'

The inspector was happy for us to move on the next day. 'Do take care, you hear?' he shouted as we putt-putted off.

We were only a good few minutes down the road when an elderly black waved to us from a track to the side. We stopped alongside. Seeing me he was most apologetic, assuring Thomas that he hadn't waved the Mambo (me) down. I assured him back that it was my choice to stop. He was happy for the lift and asked to be dropped at the clinic turn off. Clinic? What clinic? Everyone from day one had explained that nothing lived outside of the PVs. Indeed, a clinic for whom? By way of confirmation we'd not seen a living, walking thing bar him. No animals, only the rotting, broken homes of mud 'n thatch 'n torn down brick under tin buildings, the stifling, silent almost bush less bush.

'It has been cleared,' he confirmed. 'The DC came with many trucks and took everyone away.'

Thomas and Aleck asked about the cattle.

'The CSC man took them.'

'What about all the tobacco and grain?'

'What you see is what is left.'

A black mood settled on all of us, mirroring the bush around.

'It's temporary,' I thought. 'A step in the process of putting this war behind us.' But I could hear other thoughts too. The Police had told us they were nowhere near controlling the area. They'd said some of the terrorists were so fit they could attack in the evening and be 20 and more kilometres

away by morning, so fit that initially the police had thought there were two different gangs involved. We turned off the main gravel road, following our passenger's directions to the clinic.

We found a nurse there, a surreal miracle in itself, waiting for patients in a little, simple, two roomed white washed council type brick-under-tin construction. There was an outside pit-latrine. She was very flustered at seeing us and most insistent that we be on our way.

'They could come at any moment,' she said. 'You should go.'

So we three hopped it. She said she would see to the old man, and then she would leave too.

We arrived at the mini-JOC, where our original instructions via our lady commander had originated, just as it was turning dark. Once again we were greeted by a menacing entrance but this time high tech … bright white searchlights blinding us, heavy factory made gates and proper, snappy policemen demanding.

'Who are you?'

'Are you totally mad travelling in this?'

'Why aren't you in convoy?'

A senior man (white) had to be called before we were allowed through. Once in the car-park, though, a batman was expecting me and off I was whisked to the officers' quarters, a very empty and elaborate building of passages. Nothing mini at all – it bespoke big spending, while Tom and Aleck were taken to the servant's quarters.

'What are you doing here?' questioned a Provincial Commissioner (Intaf), and a Superintendent (Police). I told them my original instructions from the PC Mat-North as relayed by DC Art back in Lupane. They hadn't heard of me. We looked over their wall map (right sized) and together we traced my travels.

‘We’ve lost the plot,’ muttered one of them, all of us drenched in the white, fluorescent light, the map and it’s lines glowing.

They told me about what I had already seen and then a lot more. *Cordon Sanitaires* were being put up on the Mozambican border, but the Gooks were breaching the lines way too easily and now outside experts were being called in, masses and masses of expense.

‘The clinic’s about here,’ I said, pointing to the junction where we’d turned off.

The PC and Super shot quick glances at each other.

‘Where?’

‘What?’

‘There, a clinic.’

I was assured with some earnest talking that there was no clinic. They explained that when the PVs were first put in the surrounding countryside was cleared, cleared absolutely. Therefore there was no clinic, nor could I have picked up the black dude.

‘Are you sure?’ demanded the Super.

First thing next morning a two-landie squad of African police were sent out to check. There had indeed been a clinic, it was reported, but it was there no longer. No sign of one nurse or of one hitch-hiker.

‘We’re on our own here,’ explained the Super when I asked about back-up staff. ‘If we have any major sightings the only blokes we can call on are Fireforce.’

‘But what has replaced it?’ I had really been asking. ‘Where are the teachers? The leaders?’

The PC’s reply was ominous. ‘Buzz off back to Lupane,’ he said, ‘you’re more in the way than a help. We’ve got great things to turn around. There’s no time to be watching you and you aren’t here long enough to be useful.’

We'd come alone and so we would leave the same way. The PC described a short cut to the main road back to Salisbury. As we threw our things in the back of the Landie we saw the squad return from a second patrol out. As they jostled by I saw, lying stiff on the back, our hitch-hiker, his face revealed from under a tarpaulin jolted aside, dead.

The three day ride home was quiet. What to say? What to think? What to say?

We over-nighted in Salsibury, at the recommended government hotel, the one that provided for blacks. I signed the requisition and Thomas and Aleck stayed out the back somewhere.

The following day, stopping off in Bulawayo I reported to my PC, a Major in WWII, thirty years before. He listened to my report, cancelled my appearance at the DC's meeting at which I was to talk on the success of the PV system - the why, how and where to duplicate - and instead had me back in the Landie driving him over to Greys Inn for a drink. In the very functional men's bar with its extra-long, dark counter and impossibly heavy bar stools (they wouldn't topple even if you did), amidst beer flumes, sweat and fart, flies and spiralling cigarette smoke we came to some conclusions. More with grunts and nods than full sentences we decided that the army that I had seen nothing of was after those same black boys that we may as well have, that we could have, just as easily, shot in the TTLs before someone had to herd them into the PVs. We agreed that today the place was a prison controlled partly by us, partly by Africans who didn't like it and partly (the greater part) by the inmate's freedom fighter family members. We concluded, too, that just as the protected village wasn't a protected village, so the information collection centre was not a collection centre.

'He's getting old information. He takes an age to type it up, for heaven's sake, before it gets delivered, where …?'

‘The JOC …’

‘… Consisting of a retired, asleep general, a Police super and a PC with a great cook. Oh, and two sections of police you said...’

Rather, we decided, these PV places were anything we wanted them to be. With the right photos and the right write-up they probably did look good to both the conservative and liberal overseas … who knew? And, those tents were tents. If anyone so chose the police camp could be gone in a twinkle. I had to wonder, sitting there with the old Major and PC, were they ever there at all?

I arrived back in Lupane to settle in to a way of life that was quickly changing. Staff shortages were becoming more and more worrisome. Lupane’s Rhodie population was down to 14 adults of whom only seven (including the Police) were active in the field in the entire district. Of that seven, four (two x Intaf and two x Police) were experienced and only three could speak (some) Ndebele. Even the little service the blacks of the TTL had been getting was falling apart. Getting a borehole fixed was an exercise in itself.

Despite this we did have some successes. In the ‘practical advice arena’, up in the far North of Lupane, Agricultural Officer Geoff and I had the huge break-through. The ancient Chief and his authority agreed to our consolidation plan … a far cry from the PVs. Soon after that Chief Mabigwa[80], a pro-independence-from-whites but pragmatic, paramount chief of an area that extended far beyond the white drawn Lupane boundary, allowed Geoff to convince one of his Kraal Head’s to experiment on crop production improvement. Amazing results were forthcoming in one season. To top it he agreed to the development of a giant irrigation scheme on the Shangani river.

‘In so far as people signing up to be plot holders,’ he told me over a pot of

tea one day, ‘I will make no order either way.’ A cute, unchallenging way of saying, ‘good idea but I don’t openly support government you know’.

He was an astute fellow. The stocky, tough old man was always making me wonder whether he was treading the neutral line[81]. Either way, between the two chiefs the potential was there to initiate real change in people’s lives. The potential was there to take the little strip of semi-desert-scrub land, still bound in by tsetse fly, and turn it into something useful. The potential was everywhere. It was Bill, our gangly Lancashire AO, who had held us spell-bound one pub evening[82] with the land use changes wrought in Israel in the same way. But the growing war was stifling, eating up everything except our salaries and promotion opportunities. The self-governing, fledgling in every sense, councils were falling apart. The community development partnership initiatives had collapsed in all but theory - money and staff constraints were strangling them.

In Lupane the pragmatic DC Lewis, and then Art Verbeek after him, had looked everywhere for money and warned that people’s wishes of a future couldn’t just be dissolved by passing over the blame to the newly established councils. But he, like his colleagues, was ignored. Failures were actively promoted with sayings like, ‘the stupid black buggers, how’d they expect that to work?’ and ‘it was your clerk who took the money not the white man’ as if it was only the nig-nog fellows who nicked out of the petty cash or hoped to get away with an inferior mix of cement. Every one conveniently forgot that we in government itself were going through a brand new learning phase. Never mind the multiple issues of educating, funding and staffing that Intaf was experiencing. The Ministry of Local Government were setting up similar bodies in the white rural areas and were experiencing their own problems; self-centred whities seeking to use the Local Council for the benefit of a close circle that normally amounted to a few friends or Mom and Dad.

The African TTL (and few Purchase Area) councils couldn't run on fresh air and without an injection of 'a something' that draws in economic activity to kick-start the planted embryo, we of the districts knew failure was guaranteed. As relationships soured over war-activities that guarantee grew even stronger and yet I still had a (one in seven years) visit from a newbie Brit employed as a specialist 'Council Development Officer'. He arrived in the district in his suit never having heard of an ambush, landmine or mud-patch and told us how councils function. He lectured me and a bunch of tribes-folk in broad 'Brit-lish'. They thought the Queen was there in spirit. He handed out little booklets describing how 'To Run a Meeting' - but he had no funds in his pockets.

'Look to your people for money,' he said, blowing not his cover - because he was back to Bulawayo that night- but mine. The Tribal Elders still called me 'Inkosi' but they sat stony silent when I finished my point by point power of voice and hand waving presentation - no matter what issue I was putting across.

My new and settling in DC, Art Verbeek, asked I direct yet another new unit, Psy-Ops, to our southern portion. This was a safe and quiet area near the national Bulawayo-Victoria Falls highway and not far from St Pauls Mission Station and Hospital. An area so quiet I tended to ignore it, going instead to where people had bigger issues.

'Psy-Ops? Who the hell are they?' I wondered as I set off. I soon discovered that our Ministry of Information had started 'Psy-ops', or Psychological Operations as a means to re-win the hearts and minds of the ignorant and unfamiliar bush kaffirs *inside* the country. Their method was a bit of a surprise. Intaf was to escort two white officers and their team on a tour of our TTLs. Each night they were to set up and do a show designed to encourage their audience to stay faithful to the Rhodie cause at locations to

be suggested by Intaf. In my case it was a one-off ‘test-in-Lupane’ run by a white National Serviceman seconded, I gathered, to the Ministry of Information. Soon I was annoyed. As one of two white Intaf admin staff in the whole district I had better things to do. It was true that most of these blacks, in the depths of the district, were still somewhat ignorant and unfamiliar of western ‘things’ but not here beside a huge Mission Station. What the Psy-Ops chaps didn’t seem to know (and they should have) was that nine out of every 10 groups they did their show for had amongst them a good mix of very experienced people. Say an ex-miner from South Africa, an ex-clerk from a major industrial concern, an ex-theatre nursing sister, an ex-typewriter mechanic … all who could laughingly explain that the white man’s magic helium balloons, sparklers and generator driven music system were certainly not magic or miracles. They could also debate the pros and cons of the political message put over by the Ministry’s eloquent speakers. My Corporal spent a good deal of the evening shaking his head, wondering how we could think so little of the people. For their coerced attendance the crowd got some food and beer.

Back at the office Art wanted to know more about my evenings out with Psy-Ops. I told him of the cheap tricks and the simple-minded preaching I had seen.

Art shook his head. ‘You’ve got to think of the potjie[83] pot,’ he said.

‘Pardon?’ I replied.

‘The potjie pot,’ he repeated. ‘Think about it. What the washing machine is to a European woman[84] so the potjie pot is to the African mother in the TTL. For a black woman, the buying of a pot is a big decision. Have a look around the general dealers when you stop off. You’ll see their stock holding is 80% of the 7” size, almost nothing smaller or larger.’

I agreed to that.

‘It’s made of iron,’ he continued. ‘It retains heat for a long time. Its three legs make sure that it won’t fall over just as the precious food comes to the boil. Mother knows it’s okay if she happens to be busy with something else, and she always is.’

An understatement … in the African community she had to ensure the kraal was in good order and that included outside activities like fetching water and attending to a veg patch if the climate allowed, if not, searching for wild vegetable.

‘*We* made that pot,’ Art said, ‘this revolutionary pot. Rhodie industry made it. 50, 25 or even 10 years ago most blacks knew nothing about our western world but now they have skills. Among them we have teachers, builders of bridges, modern houses and complicated dip tanks. We have supervisors of clerical and accounting staff, skilled and unskilled labour. We have illiterates who have taught themselves their own procedures to run business outlets like general dealers, simple repair shops, home bakeries. We’ve given them these skills but now, every day this war continues there is less food in the TTL.’

‘Think of the cooking fire in every kraal home you’ve seen,’ he continued, ‘it’s there, right in the middle, the centre of the family and the community, and today wisps of despair are rising from it. It’s not only the ever lessening food to be shared, but right now, what is happening outside in the dark, even in the shadows of the deep gullies in the daylight?

‘We brought the pot into the community, this pot that is representative of life here in the TTL. We built it and gave it to them as a promise of better things to come. It is still there, building up pressure, and it’s going to blow. These people are being traumatised. There is no *mpupu*[85] in the pot, it is becoming a cauldron, bubbling and boiling only air.’

‘How,’ he asked me, ‘can we expect these people to remain true to our

cause when these are the conditions that they live in, that are *normal* today? How?'

How indeed. By January 1974 Intaf's capability was only held together by government sticky tape (when available), the career staff careering around in what was becoming an exhausting nightmare. The old Rhodie regulars, in whom I and my even younger colleagues counted ourselves as members, couldn't cope. Very few whities who could hold their head up were voluntarily joining us. We were not allowed to promote Blacks.[86]

We were floundering, involuntarily out of control as we officers tried to do at least a bit of everything within the growing needs of the army. Our career officers were subject to call up without any replacement. Our one experienced Cadet in Lupane, Rod, who regularly raided my larder, was shared with the army. We would lose a middle ranking Intaf officer or, even more disruptive, a senior officer, men who often found themselves plodding about in a TTL as an ordinary army rifleman. In his stead we'd be left with the trainee; in Lupane the man we had left behind in the office was straight out of England with no military training, no Africa training, at all. This guy would regale us with stories of cold winters, log fires and chestnuts. Outside, seen through the window in the 40° heat, the previously engaged 'Messengers of the DC' were standing, desperately in need of guidance on how to be a good and proper armed guard. These had been powerful servants in the time of controlling the peace, all the way back from the first uprising to the present, ever since the start of Native Affairs, carrying the word of the DC to the settlements, and returning their response. Now they were being increasingly brushed aside, ignored and laughed at. In the deep bush they weren't trusted any more, not once the army had passed by and the 'rebels' had had the chance of a chat. In the office of their father, the DC, the black tribes-people saw and in the field it was reinforced –they were now being

managed by incompetents. While we simply managed. Managed to get to the meetings, managed to schedule exploratory look-see visits and managed to collect tax. Managing to administrate a little, develop a bit, but foretelling hope we were not. We were running fast nowhere. We were being forced into making decisions of certainty based on a momentary reason when what we really needed and wanted was to accept that development is a process requiring time, accept complexity and the argument of participation to get things done. The primary role of Intaf was to plan a district and to let it evolve along with its people. But now long term planning had flown out of the window and even planning and coordination for the next month wasn't possible. What was missing was sitting with the community and asking, as a prelude to doing. How is the school? Do we need another? What of water? Can we extend the one-book library? Is the Headmaster with the community?

We had been reduced to administration only, a state halfway between stupidity and intelligence. The immensely powerful and respected Chief Mabikwa (or Mabigwa) privately knew our ability to create hope was beyond us. He laughed at me having so much power so young. As for the whities, the Rhodies, he once sat me down and over tea he told me, 'You've lost the plot'.

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It was at the end of my Lupane sojourn when a Company of territorial soldiers from Bulawayo arrived to answer our call. For their ease of deployment, they said, they parked just off the main highway to the Victoria Falls, not going the mile and a bit into Lupane government village. The Company was five strong in all, 125 were missing. Where were they? I was amazed. For the first time in world military history, it seemed, every member of an infantry company had his own vehicle.

They set about setting things up as if they actually had a company.

'The terrorists will never know the difference,' was the chuckled refrain,

‘we’ll have the tents up and drive about like busy bees.’

The Intaf African Sergeant silently pointed to the crowd of youngsters who had congregated on the other side of the narrow matt-tar road.

‘They’re on our side aren’t they?’ squeaked the major, unpacking.

The cook interrupted. ‘Coffee’s up, biscuits out,’ he said, with a tap on the big silver-shiny urn.

Silent and wide eyed, curious yet embarrassed to the point of trying to hide their nakedness, the kids watched. They had never seen such a great shiny pot pouring out coffee. That alone was news to pass on to all and sundry. These were normal deep-bush black kids … bony, equipped already with hide-hard feet, full of infection-green snot, swollen-jointed, dirty with the daily dust and all sharing clothing rags. Politely, bravely, they waved at the new Rhodie arrivals to the district.

PATU

It wasn't only Intaf who were losing experienced administrators to the TF army, who in turn were losing men to the big wide world (Perth mainly), but district police stations were losing patrol officers to the Police Anti-Terrorist Unit (PATU). This civilian volunteer division, a cost saving brain child, had grown fast. The rising kill rate indicated that there was plenty of fun to be had. Insurance agents, mechanics, executives, butchers and even the odd mining official were drawn from older, perhaps not that fit or skilled but patient and mature Rhodies who had previously been excluded from national call-up responsibilities. The focus was on those who would give up their time to serve willingly. Their availability and length of service per adventure was also more flexible. To add to it, police officers up to Inspector rank had to do PATU stints to give the volunteers some sort of backing cum legality.[87]

The stories that came to surround PATU were great for national esprit de corp. They were good, Rhodie society seldom had to worry about them but, as much as their antics raised spirits in the pub, in practice they were a self-defeating exercise. Apart from pulling Rhodie men out of the economy the loss of serving police officers to PATU was immense. Every time a white policeman's township beat was missed the black perception of the Rhodie internal war machine took a dive. It was as if, very few noted, the politicians had decided that the perception of success among whities was more important than the actual success level achieved.

Shabani, the Beginning

It happens sometimes that an incredible shift from the disappearing evening sun, shimmering on the blue above the clouds, produces a magic of soft, orange light. It's a light that envelopes, a light and a feeling unique to Rhodesia.[88] Shabani was like that on the evening we arrived, gliding in, feeling special in our Citroen. DC Art had recognised that Lib and I needed a change.

'Being a young couple,' he'd said, 'you'd better take some sort of town station soonish, before your wife forgets what an evening out on the town or doing some shopping actually is.' Shabani offered all of that.

The town was for all practical purposes owned by Shabani and Mashaba Mines. Mine management ran the mine, its extensive residential area and its African labour townships while the municipality saw to the non-mining part of the town. The place lay on a central road crossing (it still does) - a true, albeit small, central hub of the lower, dryer midlands countryside. From the east the Highway from Fort Victoria entered then exited on its way to Bulawayo in the west. An equal quality two lane tar road to Gwelo ran northwards and heading south to the Lowveldt was a broad dirt and gravel road. The town dominated the entire area with about 30% of all of the district's population collected in it. A stranger parachuting in from outside of the country would find himself landed in a vibrant little (big for Rhodesia) self-contained place. Having questioned a few folk he would be plumb damn certain all the talk of the war in Rhodesia he'd read was humbug. Indeed, such a circle of happy-happy chappies were we that we often wondered if the mine was getting different 'news' coming down from Salisbury, news that said the war was wrapped up. Here the biggest source of stress was getting extra petrol coupons to make that fun trip to Bulawayo, Gwelo, Fort Victoria

or into the surrounding countryside for a day's fishing, a braai on one of the private farms or out at a company (Anglo & De Beers, Rio Tinto) owned ranch. My favourite pastime there was washing up after a spectacular pig-out, happily admiring my Rhodie grin in the gold taps. We had one of Africa's top golf courses, a country club and everything that goes with it, a rugby stadium for the whities and a football-cum athletics field for all. The mine was booming, therefore the town, therefore the farmers. White unemployment was zero and come Wednesday afternoon - early close - and Saturdays and Sundays the sports and leisure facilities were full.

In our office DC John had plenty to do looking after all 'white affairs' and the secret side of information collection and, through our dedicated African Development Fund man Des, saw to all new works too. We had no agricultural 'capacity'; any advisers we had would literally just be left to do their own thing. But we did have Maggi. Senior Community Adviser Maggi was the star of the town and country show. About 50 years of age when I arrived he'd been with Intaf since he was a teenager. Over the years he'd built himself up to run the community development advisers[89] for both the north and south TTLs, meaning he knew what was going on under every partially exposed leaf. As he had grown into the 280 pound, gloriously fat and black as night, close cut peppercorn headed man he'd become, he'd been opening general dealer stores all throughout the TTLs. For each store he took a new wife to run it. By the time I met him he had 15 stores – for 14 wives and one for his eldest daughter. He reported to DC John for the quality of his informed opinion and knowledge of what was happening, as well as to keep us abreast of the progress of his Community Adviser team. He took time to listen to you, did Maggi, and having listened he considered his reply and always had a number of roots to his answer – making them wonderfully complex. For instance, when I asked him about the confusion that I observed

in the Senator Chief's TTL over the establishment of a council he took time to build his reply.

'You must know who is involved,' he would begin, 'who is for the idea and who is against, who is undecided. Furthermore, you must know what it is they are concerned about.' He would outline all of it, patiently steering me through. Finally, he would summarise: 'If you want to force the issue, the route is through schooling and the club network. Also, your troops to lead the assault on the Senator are the women.'

His answers would always lead me to framing more questions until finally I felt I had actually been on site with him. Was he unusual in his forthrightness? No. This was not a rare attribute among Intaf staff (or indeed other Africans I dealt with who felt they were secure in their positions), but what did make Maggi unusual was he knew the whole district so incredibly well. Of course it worked too that he was the most well-known of all - admired, respected, voted for - as well as despised and denigrated.

His staff worked closely with me on developing the councils (where they had been accepted by the tribal elders), the young farmer's initiative, the women's clubs and self-help groups … all out station activities directly involving people that took time. It was time I didn't have so I ended up like visiting royalty. The mini shows run by the African ladies proved that they were worthy equals of cooks, seamstresses, artists from anywhere, even with their primitive facilities. (When you've mastered pot baked cake, have a go at doing one in a clay oven, in the ground!) I would say, 'and for the most improved effort the prize goes to Magdalene, Magdalene the daughter of Moyo of the Council,' and I would wave and smile. Pathetic, hey, but I was poverty aware and I did have an inkling of the work and heart they had put in. And I was lucky for even with the tense security situation both Lib and Jean, the wife of a New Zealander heading up a major new works for the Mine,

agreed to come along as long as we weren't too far off the beaten track.

A Scandinavian group were sponsoring the work I and the Young Farmers' Officer, the man with a glass-eye Tom (once a month from Gwelo), were doing with the young adults. In a few short months we had made incredible progress. Starting with a rabbit farm we had moved onto a small fish farm in an adjacent area, and even planned to expand into ducks. There were also two new councils trying really hard to get up and running, using faith as collateral as there was no extra money. Off the highway the roads were bad and we in Intaf were pleading for security upgrades. The community, though, didn't plead - they just got on with doing essential repairs themselves. They were particularly successful at getting more community schools going, the same schools the RF took credit for in their published statistics.

One of the council chairmen, Gideon, was a businessman like Maggi. Roughly 40 with a couple of stores and a grinding mill he certainly earned and had far more experience than I did but still asked for my advice on running the council. On the day he heard DC John was being transferred he was glum.

'Us black businessmen are stuck here forever,' he said. 'You, sir, can do business wherever…' I kept quiet. 'In fact, sir, you can just get up, take your passport and go to another country.'

He was right. His pass stated he was a resident of Shabani District and that was it. More than that he knew that if he did give too much lip or neglect a 'sir' here and a 'sir' there I could lock him up at my pleasure.

I started my own 'visit Rhodesia' campaign. In my spare time I wrote to every major tourist group. Having plenty of empty office space we set up a mailing room stocked with dozens of beautiful brochures extolling the reasons to come and visit our magnificent country. With the support of the

Mine Manager's wife I reached out to the Rhodie ladies of the town through the various women's clubs. They came in their own time, wrote a note to a relative or friend overseas, parcelled up their selection of pamphlets and toddled off to the Post Office at their own expense. Many hundreds of personalised 'come and support us' packs were mailed.

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One day DC John crashed into my office behind the court house.

'Early beer, come,' was an adequate summons. He was abuzz with what sounded like excellent news. Complete or incomplete, right or wrong this is what filtered down to the two of us from war hot Mashonaland:

It seemed the remnants of the two civil powers, Police and Intaf, had urgently drummed the table before the Rhodesian Front cabinet and their Combined Operations Command. They had managed to impart and achieve some understanding of the core problem - being the total loss of black faith in the system–and gained a little ground, in time at least, to look at solutions. It was DC Kashula, we heard, a younger man, who stuck his neck out and proposed something very old, not so old and quite new with a twist. He suggested a radical shift from the idea of defence and containment as embodied in the PVs. Called the Green Areas Proposal the idea was that the current practice of containment was crippling communities and that as an antidote we should be looking at expanding the economy, a move in exactly the opposite direction. The idea was to refocus on the previously started community development initiatives and really make them fly. He suggested the cancelling of elective position in the community. Instead the DCs would without delay move into selected, security sensitive areas and get involved in all activities, particularly economic. In this way a whole area would be put into Intensive Care instead of into uncaring and destructive Protected Villages. The proposal meant feeding and fertilising the land rather than

abandoning it. It meant building on the good points such as the great level of agricultural output in the Concession area (for example) and it meant slowly eliminating the bad, be it ravaging erosion or the raving fanatical. All the specialist government departments; administration, education, health, agriculture and water affairs, and their ground working staff would and should be there – not just checking up on but rolling up their sleeves and doing it together, then moving on to the next opportunity.

What about, he was saying, pouring our money into uplifting these people that we are turning into our enemies, instead of cutting them off from the world, from their families and from their homes?

I considered a TTL 'Business Centre' with a monthly turnover of Rh$200. At worst it would be as simple as us coming along and depositing 10 DC's Messengers with the instruction to 'stay', paying them out their ration allowance for the month or, better, paying them week by week. Suddenly there would be a relatively huge cash influx into the area. Growth would stimulate growth; one area would fold out into the next. The activity alone would attract the CTs that the Selous Scouts would be sitting waiting for in Observation Posts (OPs[90]) right at that very moment. To the war effort, we realised, the idea of creating Green Areas was nothing radical bar the re-deployment of some of our suddenly found manpower and some of the enormous amounts of extra money that was floating about Mashonaland. It was a last chance to dislodge the Freedom Fighters, to win not only the hearts and minds but also the next general election as, certainly, the next one was not going to be with a qualified roll.

The idea galvanised me. It was all I felt was needed to start doing what we of the districts should have been doing, and it made my conversation with John for weeks.

'Intensive Care Areas are what the people, or the DC's really, were asking

for from Todd and Whitehead back in my junior days,' said DC John. 'Can't they see it every day in the intelligence reports? As it is now … the economy, the support between white and black groups, has to be expanded. I'm telling you as I've told Salisbury, the average black boy out there and here in the township is a wanna-be Freedom Fighter because he has zilch to look forward to.'

I didn't remind John that he was always saying that it was too late for the B-Nationalist leadership to turn and accept a position of some sort of partnership with us whities. His pet cry to me was, 'whatever we do, we've done it too late.'

Right then the costs for both the PVs and mine fields were escalating madly. The first mined efforts (at almost Rh$30,000 per km!) were breached too easily and word was that a delegation went on a paid trip to Israel to learn from the masters. My experience with Council Chairman Gideon in the Shabani north TTL was that we *could* use the council as our vehicle and we *could* then immediately get involved in areas they had already expressed interest in such as schooling, youth job development and trading. They had already said they wanted us and we were the eager, but very broke bride.

'Give us a few kilometres of fence money and I could make a difference that Israel would be proud of' was what I told Lib that night.

Coupled with the requests I was getting daily from progressive African folk in the Shabani district, the whole Green idea seemed plain common sense … more than that; it was much cheaper and of immediate benefit. The way I saw it, whatever was done under the Intensive Care idea, even non-cash outlay things like upping basic education or show and tell healthier home practises, something positive and lasting would be left to be built upon. Practice said there would be no excuse not to go way further into road repairs, re-storing dip-tanks and building clinics and schools because 80% of

the ingredients were lying paralysed right there in the TTLs . The teachers, nurses, builders, supervisors and cheap labour were there. Standing on the sand and all around tractors and trucks were either idle or carting men to kill their friends. Gee, I had to reflect, the proposal would be a big job but very possible. It would be far more effective, constructive and much easier than what we were doing at the moment … chasing your tail is tiring. Never dropping your guard as you wait on the expected (not possible but expected) attack is stressful and draining. The blacks had been reduced to nearly nothing; it would be impossible for us to not make substantial improvement. The lid of the three-legged pot, I mused, would be lifted and pressure immediately released. The place would be transformed not overnight but over the weekend. Not by 'I love NY' standards, or even Salisbury's combination of 1st and 3rd, but still. The three-legged pot would get filled. Completed Green Areas, I mused, would be remembered in the manner of a fable that would be told, never-ending, forever.

We waited, and waited, and we heard nothing. Slowly our excitement fizzled and the normal routine took over. The in basket was cleared, audit reports marked urgent were replied to, incorrect medicine at dip tank number three was corrected and the washed away bridge was temporarily repaired. Work was stopped to answer the Judge's queries about your use of English in the transcript of the last divorce case, time was spent ensuring the alteration of the gun permit for a farmer met his and the licensing authority's demands … the list went on. And news of the war continued. We heard also that far from being desperate Kaunda wasn't going to re-open the Zambian border (after Smith told him to). John heard from home (UK) that the terrorists were being invited to state their case at international symposiums,[91] that the white led demonstrations outside Rhodesia House continued unabated. We were only two years into the war. It was 1974.

On some evenings I would take myself for a get-fit jog up in the hills. Up there, looking down on the town I was still able to witness the extraordinary Shabani sunset, but now with an added dimension, a foreboding. If I were a terrorist, I thought, looking down at the cluster of houses and streets, of men and women making their way home oblivious to the endless firing points that could be mounted in the cover of bush and shale all around them, it would be so easy to put the fear of the devil into this place. Shabani had no army. Indeed, the Shabani lads called up went off, served elsewhere and generally came back fitter for the experience. Our police were town police. Less than fully staffed the Chief Inspector and his Inspector managed to keep watch over the town and the white rural commercial area, but not much more. SB had a group of black operatives with no direct white SB officer supervision and PATU, well, the Shabani PATU mostly was more name than anything else. Its members were the older, social types exempt from call-up, happy to volunteer their time as long as it meant staying within the mine. At the office we sometimes had a cadet but that was worse than useless because the poor fellow had to be inducted, and no sooner done was he gone, transferred off somewhere else. I watched darkness settle, and felt it settling in my heart. I turned away and cautiously (slippery stuff, shale), quietly, made my way down and back home.

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Time continued to pass with no news, with no change in direction, with the war intensifying and our recourses dwindling. Our initial enthusiasm, built on individual energy and needing a boost from an outside source at some point to keep going, began to wane. While Shabani was still okay news of TTLs in the (war) hotter areas breaking down was coming through to us. Cattle and small stock were dying (some security force assisted), crop land was idle (seeds were ‘missing’ and there was nobody to plant anyway),

boreholes were left unrepaired [92] and the old diseases were mounting a challenge again. Rabies was once again statistically measurable, had anyone the time to make a record. One sun-up I shot a rabid dog with my FN. It was the best shot I ever made. We were in the open, no tree to climb or the speed to do it, and he a tiny target charging at me, bobbing and weaving with one thought only. It was a sign of the times. I often had my staff sit and talk to mothers about child eye care. Poor eye care told me kraal maintenance in the area in general, and washing water in particular, was being neglected in favour of finding the means, including drinking water, to simply cope with carrying on living. This was telling. Black Moms are good with kids. It seemed it was the mothers themselves who were in a state of despair.

We had to be careful how we spoke, for casual chatting produced information and disinformation. Too lively, and the mother and child's life could be put under suspicion with the CTs in the area; too quiet and the same. Therefore my voice boomed loudly, and in the open.

Soon I went up to Gwelo for a meeting. DC John was on the move to Head Office and my new boss hadn't arrived, therefore I had to play DC for a day. I sat next to the new DCs for Gokwe and Chilimanzi. The subject of the death of the Green Areas idea came up.

'What did you expect?' said DC Gokwe. 'PVs have been government strategy from the day they saw we had lost the hearts and minds game. It's certainly not like they asked us to lock them up.'

I wanted to say that I heard that the view was the plan had worked in Malaysia … Walls had served there … but I couldn't get my word in. These guys knew each other, I was the interloper.

'It's the fines that turned the tide,' said DC Chilimanzi. 'There was no need for the PVs before that.'

To me, the uninitiated Matabeleland boy, this was all new news.

‘Before the PVs were started,’ explained DC Chilimanzi, seeing my confusion, ‘PCs were given the power of ‘collective fines’. It authorised a JOC to fine an entire community, be it a single family village or a Kraal Head’s villages, guilty of generally-assisting-the-enemy. If it was found to be true … what is true?’ he snorted, ‘a fine would be imposed on the whole prescribed group.’

‘Anything from food to stock confiscated to money,’ added Gokwe, ‘even the animals of those on our side were taken. You couldn’t pick and choose.’

‘Sometimes an entire community would be moved to a different area to live among folk with a different dialect, different people.’

They shook their heads.

‘We’ve thrashed them, we’ve trashed them, but it hasn’t stopped them,’ said Gokwe.

We waited for the meeting to start.

Back in Shabani our Police Chief Inspector, without warning, popped into the office to bid us goodbye.

‘I’m off to Natal,’ he said, ‘I’m going to head up security on a chicken farm down there.’

‘How could he keep his head up?’ I asked the room after he left, angry, scowling.

‘Easy,’ replied Mrs Des, our accountant, ‘he has a wife and two baby daughters. You’re the one with your head in the sand. But don’t worry. Des and I are staying. Our family’s grown and gone.’

Despondent, I phoned my Mom at home in Essexvale only for her to tell me that our family doctor had been, as always, at the club on Friday night.

‘Yes,’ I prompted irritated at the drawn out story…

‘…and on Saturday morning his surgery was locked and his house empty’.

I decided to phone DC Gokwe to follow up on our chat at the meeting. I'd been thinking he could be a good friend in the future, but didn't get very far.

'I've resigned,' he said, 'in fact I did straight after the meeting.'

'Why?' I asked.

'They're set to walk all over us and we've nothing to offer. Just scratch my name from the seniority list. It means you're closer to promotion.'

I replaced the receiver. 33 years of life expunged as he headed off to be an electronic equipment salesman in smog-filled, concrete Boksburg – my Dad's home town.

I sat back in John's chair and reflected that I had come from the difficulties of tiny Lupane into one of Rhodesia's bigger towns and the fact was that Intaf and the police - rural wise - were far worse off. Instead of being able to put more into growing the country, we were cutting back to levels that I had not imagined possible. One man and his dog weren't meant to mow a meadow. It was truly the case that in the field I had my two dogs as additional support … my man-Corporal and the two dogs, that's all. We couldn't compete with the mine and related industries for white staff. Thank the Lord for Des, Maggi, Sergeant Major, his dedicated men and the African clerks –the Shabani Z Dubes of our Pass-Office that were out the back where nobody saw them.

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In the month of July 1974 elections were held and although about 25% of the remaining Rhodies voted for the Rhodesia Party, including, as measured by checking pure rural seats a large contingent of farmers, the seats, the MP numbers, stayed with Smith. We celebrated. What we didn't notice was that by then there were less to vote against him, that those that were not for the RF were leaving, and had left.

Wrong Way Up

As Rhodesia broke through into the year of 1975, a year when the Watergate scandal broke, when OPEC again raised the price of crude oil, when the Magic Mountain attraction opened at Disney World, when Margaret Thatcher became the official leader of the conservative party and the first female leader of a political party in Britain, when the Vietnam War ended as Communist forces took Saigon, the Suez Canal reopened for the first time since the six day war, when a Soviet and American spacecraft docked for the first time in orbit and NASA's Viking 1 planetary 1 probe to Mars was launched (the first of its kind), when US President Gerald Ford survived a second assassination attempt, Spain abandoned Western Sahara, the name "Micro-soft" was used by Bill Gates for the first time, when Iron Maiden was formed by Steve Harris and the total population of the world hit 4,068,109,000, Rhodesia was upside down but she didn't know it.

Business was changing. Rhodesian[93] international tycoon Tiny Roland, realising that the country's economic machine grew or died on white purchasing power, had switched his interest to the other side, courting the best and most influential of the still underground black opposition as well as the black leadership already in place further north. He began to shout out about oil companies, mainly Shell and BP, drawing attention to their continued breaking of sanction law by supplying oil to the country. All Rhodies knew that without oil Rhodesia would have been finished in a matter of hours yet even with the British Navy's 'Beira Blockade' the crude came through to the refinery Rhodesia had built. Rhodesia's banks, or more accurately, their overseas controllers, already hamstrung by UDI and its pesky sanction implications, began pulling in their traces. For the first time in a long time Rhodies and Rhodie business were being seen as a very poor

banking risk.

'Tiny Rowland is a prick,' most Rhodies would have agreed.

Politics was changing, or at least the thoughts behind it. Throughout the country, in certain sectors anyway, a severe Pearce Commission hangover was still being experienced. Up at the top, Smith and his men (or, the Men and Smith) should have seen from the commission's findings and more so by the reality of the new situation on the ground (as reported by the police and Intaf) that the opposition was no longer interested in their piece-meal terms. The B-Nationalist rejection, led on by a lightweight Bishop Muzorewa, had confirmed that they were indeed happy to fight on. Indeed, instead of fighting they were happy to wait as momentum continued to swing their way. Some of the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) were unhappy with delayed equality, significant as they made up the core of Rhodesia's army.

Ground swell thought was shifting. Africans all through government were talking. The events over the last few years, leading up to the B-Nationalists release had opened the eyes of a range of blacks – senior Chiefs, government staff, businessmen and women of township and TTL down to my mother-in-law's cheeky garden boy -- to government change being a real possibility. White loyalties were splitting, being examined in the light of the evolving scene. While they treaded eggshells the already wide awake lower order and still resident Black Nationalists were reading to their prospective converts from that same script. Their message easily bypassed the government employed Africans and those with secure jobs in the private sector - those who had their maize meal and a square of meat, living quarters and pocket money to send home to the wife. Rather it went out to the millions of discontented souls living in township fringes and to those still waiting, still watching in the TTL's. Rhodies, though, those in the towns and the very, very few Rhodies left in the hinterlands either didn't appreciate the meaning

behind the commission's findings, or with full censorship in place didn't know or didn't care.

'Fookin kaffir se donner,' a Rhodie would say.

In 1975 the Portuguese ran. Overnight they deserted Africa and dumped the cause. The actual figures don't matter much. Africa lost about 2/3 of the white population of Africa outside of RSA! Approximately 350,000 in Angola and 250,000 in Mozambique disappeared. Southern white governments were quick to repair the damage (err, on paper) via the media. Rhodies were soon educated that it had nothing to do with the Portuguese actually in Africa and all to do with the liberal turn in Lisbon itself, a new policy of colony devastation which just so happened to run hand-in-hand with the fact that Portugal was broke. Rhodies were told that in fact the real problem was an attitude issue, something for Europe to deal with, that those Portuguese were a shower of useless individuals who had consorted far too closely with the majority blacks and with the as bad as, and as inferior Chinese and Indians and that they were too scared to stand up other than in bed. Those who could stand against Marxist Communism were welcomed into the Rhodie world (a move mirrored before with the white refugees from the Congo) because Rhodesia knew she would be needing favours.

In 1975 it came to be known - hastily denied and deeply hidden till all was quiet - that the World Council of Churches (WCC) was funding the terrs.

'How can this be?' every Rhodie wanted to know. It seemed, went the gossip, that the WCC were now providing more even than the communist powers of Russia and China. Even further, the story went, this united vipers nest of churches were actively campaigning, turning other countries of the civilized world, other white countries, against Rhodesia .The Rhodie response was filled with good old Rhodie guts.

'The WCC obviously aren't real Christians,' said housewives and

mothers and men down at the pub. 'We're actually fighting on the ground. We know what it's really like.'

'Just how many blacks do you see in church, eh?'

'It's up to us and not some bladdy overseas based group who don't know nothing.'

And all the while the government built more and forced more people into the PV's. Mashonaland spent huge amounts of money and devoted massive chunks of available manpower to the project.

The propaganda war was forging ahead. Nonsense about Mao's Red Book was being broadcast, lies about the success of the amnesty deal and the widely circulated horror stories about what a trainee could expect in the Nationalist camps – all so easily disproved and soon known to everyone but Rhodies. Ridiculous newsletters sent to whites in the UK, Zambia and the rest from bogus companies easily traced back. The RF was treating the world as if they had the intelligence of subscribers to the average 'Dear Jane' advisory services of a gossip rag. The booklet, "Anatomy of Terror" went around the world as if to prove that the people wanted to be jailed in PVs to escape those consequences.

The war was intensifying, its full scope known only to those in politics and government at the very highest level. Well broadcast and lapped up news continued to report that Rhodesia's armed forces were laying waste to any and all targets they could get their hands on.

'The RLI's tactics and training contributed to repeated successes in its counter-insurgency operations. The advantage this gave them,' says United States Army Lieutenant-Colonel Dave Grossman, 'added up to nothing less than total tactical superiority.'

'The RLI earned for itself an enviable reputation as one of the world's foremost anti-terrorist forces,' said Alexandre Binda.

‘[they were] The Killing Machine’, wrote Major Charles D. Melson, chief historian of the United States Marine Corps. The contrary view points, the ones that said we were fighting garden boys and that, as we couldn’t handle all 100% of the garden boys we had to lose, were never seen.

While these sentiments swirled through Rhodesia in 1975 the rural ground coverage information was breaking down, grinding to a halt, meaning Rhodesia’s forces were being blinded, now running on doubt as violence replaced reward for incentive. That Intaf reported daily that more of the 25 blacks of Kaffircountry to one Rhodie of Rhodieland were considering switching from the white-right, one sided coin to the holistic vision of equality offered by the B-Nationalists was not known and thus not believed. That Rhodesia’s force was small, reducing and regular, aided by trained but unfocused and also reducing Rhodie civilian force on call-up competing against a growing and enthusiastic opposition who were nurturing already ready home support was not seen. Instead Rhodies felt they could go on alone. The press told them they could, that they were needed, to carry on, to fight the fight that no one else would.

National service length was increased. Rhodies complained, fashionably, and that’s as far as any complaint went. National service was macho and right and certainly still safe, still as safe as driving all the way to Cape Town.

‘How many days have you got left?’ was a rallying call shouted with pride. It wasn’t known that it would be on subsequent call-ups, when your fitness was suspect, your pals had gone and the guy next to you was of unknown quality that the risk would become real.

In Rhodesia in 1975 the ancient Rhodies, the men who were born in the country 70 years before, who had known the African and had seen the suburbs of Salisbury and Bulawayo as part of the plains and kopjes of old Rhodesian bush sat quiet on their stools, watching. They were powerless;

they knew their vision of co-operation wouldn't go down with the Rhodie-macho-man. The new Rhodies had enjoyed their stories of building the strip roads in 1920 and of the hanging tree but, now, so many years on in 1975 the story telling had turned. Now the youngsters said to them:

'We have an international airport'

'We 200,000 whites are a giant of Africa, we're progressing big time'

'Perhaps overseas governments don't like us, but just look at the support we have of the ordinary person in the street. Don't you be believing the World Council of Churches … they represent nobody.'

'Down in the Transvaal people were taking turns rolling a barrel of donated pennies up to us.'

Yes 'Sarie Marie' was being sung in a put-on Afrikaans accent everywhere, but, the hoots of laughter that resounded around Rhodie self-motivational talks were sprinkled through with whispers of 'I have a friend who has these secret thoughts about taking the Chicken Run and heading for South Africa, the UK or Australia'.

And, in 1975, all the while, the Rhodesian government held fast to their hope that patriotic Rhodies would remain patriotic to the Rhodesian Front and not, please to the Almighty, abuse the very patriotic Exchange Control rules which would send the Rh$ plummeting. Their hope was not unrealistic. Patriotism was holding, out of confidence. Because the remaining Rhodies saw oil being pumped into their cars, banks open at eight, Durban Beach Front specials advertised and white South Africans on the border. They saw that South West Africa was under control, the Chinks in Zambia were idiots and Mozambique shouldn't and wouldn't present a problem. Growing fat on these thoughts, continuously fed on this rich diet of terror and inconsequential victories, the Rhodie population were now, more than ever,

living in a pre-fabricated dream. In Rhodieland the future was bright. In 1975, as a nation within a nation, she was attempting to cross the mighty Zambezi River on a log raft, put together with elastic bands. In 1975, although she didn't know it, Rhodesia had entered the hell that is civil war, and would soon begin to feel the heat. In 1975, certainly, absolutely, Rhodesia's world was upside down, but she paid little attention.

Shabani, the Middle

By August of 1975 when we, Intaf, entered the Trust Lands we were seen as gutless and not to be followed anymore. As the basics of infrastructure fell apart we were seen as uncaring. Our army had created a bad reputation for itself amongst the population and so the power of the opposition's message was spreading. With every new insult, with every missed meal, more were crossing over. Not only were we losing information on the 'baddies', our informants were floundering too. Loyal government servants, community advisers, agricultural advisers, health staff, council employees and their families and servants in other fields. Generally they were people who had followed their grandfathers and fathers into our service. Community leaders, irrigation pipe boys, building gang supervisors, wood cutters, dip tank attendants, common thieves, un-booked criminals. So, so many, all were getting assassinated or turned, our previous allies being replaced as informants or double agents, twisting the fabric of the bush systems even further. Who to trust? Who not to trust?

Things began to unravel further. Far from boldly marching out in to the TTLs Sergeant Major Sam reported that he was posting guards around the DC's camp. Yea gods!

For the first time in the history of Shabani town the DC's men were concerned about their safety. Rather than people coming in to pay their respects and to pass word to the DC about what was happening, the camp was being watched and word passed to the activists.

Sam was an organiser, the leader of our DA force and a personal adviser to the DC. One day he came into my office. Where he was usually given to smiling and encouraging me, now he stood in troubled thought, looking over my shoulder. On a shelf there were Sotheby standard carved soap stone

figurines he had helped me choose from the artist-carver down at the river. There was a mother leading a child, a man busy kneading clay, a bent old chap with a worn twisted face holding a basket, scatter planting, and a lady who was on her knees, her hands high, tears flooding her face, her breasts bared and pooling in the folds of her skirt.

'Sir!' he blurted out, banging his foot, his way of beginning his salute. 'Why are we letting them carry on? They're organising meetings in the open, calling on people to join Nkomo and Mugabe.'

I didn't have the answer. I didn't even know Mugabe was a front runner. DC John had been waiting for the expected order from Smith and Company up in Salisbury for the arrest of the thousands who had been 'tracked' through the system and who knew they had been tracked. But it had never happened. Instead those who should have been arrested laughed at us and became more mobile and more active in their recruitment.

'I don't know,' I repeated. I took his question to my new DC, Harold.

'The tide's turning,' was his reply. 'Our network's shrinking, theirs is growing. Salisbury is constantly asking for updates, from all the districts. If it's not the police coming in here asking if we know anything new, then it's me asking them to compare notes, because Salisbury's asking, but they're not giving us anything.'

'Our reputation's falling apart,' he continued. 'We're not seen as the leaders anymore. We can't compete with the crap the other guys are talking. They're offering the Africans hope, we've got nothing. No manpower. No schemes. No assistance. Nothing.'

It was true. We could hear the insufferable liberation-talking black fellows talking, talking and talking. We could hear them but not stop them. They were at liberty to talk the biggest load of nonsense, making promises that could never be fulfilled, secure in the knowledge we were seriously

fucking-up anyway … what could be worse? I could feel, even though I was a traveller in the region, that even as our capabilities were crumbling away our blacks were swinging from a state of wanting to be on the fringe of our Rhodie driven whitie-lands and manufacturing economy to an attitude of apathy, and confusion.

On that same day our community adviser, the last one still operational, was ushered in by Sam. He reported that every single youth project had been destroyed during the night by youngsters outside of the young farmers group. Their chant was that 40,000 people couldn't be bought by a rabbit farm.

'Now who's right?' asked Harold. 'As much as you felt good about the project and yourself, exactly what were you hoping to achieve in the bigger picture?'

Immediately afterward the community adviser 'went to ground'. He wasn't sharp and bushy tailed about his job any longer and I didn't blame him. He - they - had no support whatsoever from the office as they worked alone and slept alone out there among the growing numbers of rebellious folk. Only Maggi still travelled the district.

And so we soldiered on (ha-ha). Sometimes I wondered whether I was awake as I blustered about my 12 hours an average day job, stepping on egg shells as I went trying to do no harm, trying to do something, no everything. Was I asleep thinking I was awake and that everyone else, even my friends at the police pub, were asleep? Finally, I could take no more. I went back to Harold, wanting answers.

'I know you want to be more involved,' he said, 'but there's nothing to be done here in Shabani. My hands are tied. We have nothing to go on the offensive with and I have nothing to spend to create. I'm putting you in for a transfer. Perhaps you'll be able to do more somewhere else.' He sat a moment, thinking, and then spoke further. In my words this is how he came

across:

‘We have foolishly entered a war we will never be judged winners of and therefore can never win. Having gone into that war we have not only cast aside the reality of local politics and economics but Smith continues to ignore and so destroy our intelligence capability. In a war you need to isolate the 5th Column in your midst … we haven’t[94]. In fact we have allowed it to grow. Whichever way I consider it, we have insulted our friends, opened the gate to our enemies, shot our ox and snapped the axle, so off we go cart-wheeling.’

He smiled at me.

‘Complicated isn’t it?’

We both sat in silence.

‘Actually it’s not,’ he suddenly said, ‘we need a settlement.’

I went for another run in the hills and another sit looking out over that strange little town. I thought of PVs and the Green Areas Proposal.

If the money was there now for all this destruction, I thought, it could presumably have been found five years earlier. Then the men were available - my white platoon of 1970 up on the Wankie border, a wonderful mix of highly qualified guys and practical hands-on types alternatively sitting on their jacks and patrolling uselessly up and down the valley’s thicket could have been just the ticket to help bring on ‘behind the times’ developing communities struggling with finance. They would have been free mentors, educators, guides … I thought of the black auxiliaries we were taking on everywhere, why not use them for the guards cum whistle blowers that would be needed to patrol the fringes, my same Wankie Platoon men could be used to train them while Intaf and District Police moulded them into community counsellors and feedback agents. Heavens, I thought, the mere allocation of these men on a permanent basis into the area would immediately have created cash flow, cash movement, jobs. I thought of a Missionary Father who’d

remarked to me during a game of matches in the pub, just recently.

'The PV system signals the end of Rhodesia,' he'd said. 'With it, long term, you've simply thrown in the towel. You've put us all in darkness.'

To many others the PV system worked because it freed up trained soldiers to get out after incoming Freedom Fighters. In reality they meant that time and time again the PVs would have to be revisited for control, they would cost more and more money and they would produce no return … not for anyone. I was beginning to see, for the first time, even after service and witnessing death, even having seen the PVs and heard Art Verbeek's sense talked late into the night that this war was bigger than us, that we were in deep, deep trouble. I asked Harold to do something.

He called me in. 'Wankie desperately needs a man with an army background …'

Home ground!

'Yes!' I cried. Gee, I thought, if we did fight the good fight we may come out of it with a credible settlement, something with which to achieve the Rhodie dream of Rhodesia that I had still in no way abandoned. At that point the nasty side of the Mashonaland campaign was coming across in our Top Secret stuff as a hands-down win for our side. The stories of atrocities committed by the incoming terrorist from that area, and from the eastern borders of Chipinga and Melsetter were still just stories to us in Shabani. They happened elsewhere. I was to go and meet them.

As the hit by Scott-Heron shouted …

"You will not be able to plug in, turn on and cop out.
You will not be able to skip out for beer during commercials,
Because the revolution will not be televised. . .
The revolution will be live."

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I left for Wankie. Harold resigned and left for New Zealand the same year. All of us left the idea of the Green Areas Proposal behind.

Rhodies Aren’t Rhodies Underneath

Lib and I made quick time and were soon in Bulawayo. A coke and a doughnut later we were on the Vic Falls Highway gliding into the heart of Matabeleland North Province, an aging Citroen DS20 now our only vehicle. The ’57 landie was gone.

‘If you hit a landmine in that piece of tin and aluminium it will disintegrate,’ my police mate had advised me, prompting the sale.

An hour and 20 later Lib woke in time to see the ‘Lupane’ sign flash past. ‘We’ve come full circle,’ she mumbled.

‘Heading for turbulence,’ was more my line of thought. If Mashonaland was teetering I was expecting fireworks along the Wankie/Zambia border. It was common knowledge Joshua Nkomo’s men were poised on the other side.

‘The Missionaries are saying it is all over,’ DC John had said when phoning to wish me well before we left. ‘Rome replayed,’ he’d said, ‘the Barbarian hordes descending?’

We arrived mid-morning on a Saturday. The DO’s residence wasn’t hard to find. It was still posted with the old Settler ‘DO’s Residence’ tag, which perfectly illustrated its age and style. Lib and I pulled in under the ancient purple creeper ‘car port’, gasping at the sight of a truly magnificent garden set amongst granite outcrops and a children’s park size lawn spread out before us. The view stretched for, I don’t know, hundreds of miles. I felt really proud. Our positioning underscored the importance of the DC’s role in early Rhodesian society. To have been judged worthy to occupy a home like this … it was truly a step up.

Stepping into the house, however, all our pretentions were blown away.

Cutting the romance was a cold greeting. Not a cup of tea or even an Intaf messenger to turn on the water. Later, after all the unpacking we took a drive around the town to pep ourselves up. As the evening drew in we had dinner at the Baobab but didn't risk going too far - the last thing we needed was to be lost on our first day in the metropolis. Compared to Shabani Wankie Town was more spread out and certainly felt far bigger. After dinner we were startled to realise we'd done a full half hour of window shopping, including parking and walking to the windows. To cap the day off we had dessert at a delightful little tearoom, truly a cosmopolitan experience!

Sunday began with an invite from the DC to join the family for lunch. Disconcerting is an understatement; they'd eaten already and watched as we ate. Quickly done, he took time and pride to show me his garage where he was re-building a South African made 6 cylinder car.

'If I'm missing, late or you need me, this is where I'll be,' he said, chuckling, a spanner in hand. Meanwhile Mrs DC was showing Lib her new curtains … from RSA. Everything from South Africa.

I hit the office next morning as directed, arriving for my briefing an hour before office opening. The DC wasn't there. The building was an imposing double storey housing all of Intaf, our Agricultural staff plus offices for field staff, the Magistrate's court and their offices, too. Everything was in the most modern, spacious yet compact arrangement. Of course the basement was used for the Pass Office. Big but dingy and from there our clerks handled 99% of the daily business of a DC's office.

I wandered about. Nobody seemed interested in who I was or why I was there.

'The DC? Playing with his car I expect, excuse me.'

Finally Sylvia came to my rescue.

'Hi, you must be our new ADC,' she rattled, shaking hands while

balancing a pile of files, ‘must rush … I’m late! See you later!’

The DC arrived an hour and a half later. Dragging with him an air of busyness he bid me ‘follow’ and sat me down in his huge office. He was far away, sitting at a huge polished desk decked with a picture of the family and his car. Between us a full size Rhodesian flag hung from a pole against the dark panelling lined wall, a visitor’s coffee table at my knee. From there, his white shirt and grey hair shining against the dark panels behind him, jiggling with his pen at lip height, over and over, he began his briefing.

‘We’re the link between government and the Wankie Coal Mine,’ he said. ‘We must not forget our responsibility to the Victoria Falls tourist accommodating community. It requires the diplomacy I learnt in my years as the Intaf representative in the Labour Office in Pretoria.

‘I will handle all “white affairs” except white marriages,’ he continued, leaving them and non-white administration including all ADF accounts to me, meaning I was desk bound except for liaising with the Agricultural Officer. ‘You’ll have the services of a recruited lady to help you,’ he continued, ‘and the two cadets are mine. Err… they will report to me.’

‘I thought I was going to be in the field,’ I said, taken aback, ‘PC Midlands told me that would be my main role. I was hoping to get involved with rejuvenating ground coverage. I also thought military training for staff would be a good idea, at least to the standard of our men being able to protect themselves.’

‘I run this office, not a Provincial Commissioner from the Midlands,’ he replied.[95] That was true enough. I held back. ‘I will be attending the JOC meetings,’ he added. ‘If there’s anything you need to know I will pass it on.’

It seemed the meeting was over. I rose to leave.

‘We are the civil authority,’ he said, stopping my stride midway to the door. I turned. ‘Let’s leave the war at the JOC and get on with

administration.' His pen went down to his fancy blotter, his eyes back to his in basket. I walked out.

Sylvia was the 'recruited lady'; she handled my introductions. She took me round to all the staff while giving me an overview of Wankie. Where the DC failed she came out trumps. She knew I was coming because her husband, Don, was the area police Chief Superintendent.

I met Dave, the Agricultural Officer, last.

'He's a Yorkshire man,' she said. 'He's got a BSC and was farming, now he's staying on with Intaf while he builds up some capital to go off to Australia.' We were walking across the quad to his office, a planning room built for at least four AOs. 'His fiancé was killed in an ambush out at their farm. He's very keen to be active.'

Inside were all our Rhodesian Government Printer's standard maps, expanded detailed maps and drawings and plans that had been worked on over the years by a staff long gone. Dave was busy at one of the desks in the far corner. He stood as I came in, and stared.

'Dave,' snapped Sylvia. 'Doug, has not been sent here to write birth certificates.'

She gave him a meaningful stare.

Dave paused, and then offered his hand.

Here began a new briefing. Where the DC had detailed how I was to cross T's and dot I's, what I could sign and what only he would sign, the AO now orientated me to the district. On the maps he pointed out all the major points I needed to know; roads, settlements, scenes of past action, current bad-black spots, where who stayed and why he was important and what I could expect in terms of a welcome. He passed over a lot of detail, still it took time. When I wanted to get into the absolutes of the staff I would be working with and their abilities, he baulked.

‘Talk to them yourself,’ he suggested, not liking the idea of behind back chat.

Suddenly the door crashed open and in bounced a booming police inspector.

‘Yow, Doug!’ Said the new man. ‘You met City Boy, now meet me!’ A mischievous smile linked this man’s ears. I wasn’t following.

‘This’s Rod,’ said Dave, ‘City Boy is the prick you work for.’

‘How was Mr Co-operative?’ asked Rod, putting out his hand, ‘put you on clerk duties?’

From my new buddies Rod, Dave and Sylvia, I discovered that the Wankie town Police were structured under a traditional (for want of a better word) Superintendent who was responsible for all civilian matters in the Wankie District, a huge area covering Wankie Town, Victoria Falls and the many tourist spots such as the Deka Mouth fishing motel as well as, I think, the siding stops along the main railway line linking Bulawayo with the Victoria Falls border post. The Superintendent and his men were in every way a peace-time force and their job was to run Wankie that way.

Chief Superintend Don had overall command but his particular brief was to oversee all ‘war’ matters and as such he chaired the mini-JOC for the extended Wankie area (all of Wankie, into lower Binga, including Lupane, the National Gwaai Forest area and at times overlapped into parts of Tjolotjo). His aide-de-camp was the bouncy ball Inspector Rod. Don and Rod were pretty much on duty all the time. Working alongside Don was SB Superintendent Ian. The full extent of his brief I never knew. He had an intimate knowledge of and in both Zambia and Botswana. My SB pals had worked Botswana under his direction … he knew me. To the town folk he was a businessman. Now they saw him, now they didn’t. He ran SB Wankie through a SB Chief Inspector - who I had known casually on the meet, forget,

then meet-sometime-again, typical of the transfer circuit of government employment.

By the end of the whirlwind of a day I was shaken, a little dazed. Rod was still loud.

‘City Boy’s excused himself from JOC tonight and Chief Don’s instructed I bring you. Let’s go, we’re late.’

At the JOC I made the acquaintance of our pilot, the man responsible for the one helicopter and/or reconnaissance plane we had when we had it. Inside the hot tent-office I listened in with growing apprehension. I heard that Nkomo’s men massed on the Zambian side weren’t exactly sitting idle … SB knew gangs were being pushed across the Zambezi River. I heard that Don no longer had troops at his disposal apart from the drafted PATU units and even they were drying up.

‘If you don’t have contacts, you lose your firepower,’ was said in the meeting.

‘We aren’t registering many contacts or even sightings because our information is coming in after the event,’ said the SB Chief Inspector. ‘It’s stale. We’re only building history here.’

‘Ground coverage … I doubt City Boy even says good morning to the staff never mind debriefs them.’

The meeting revealed that Wankie had had a dedicated police S/O (Lance ex of my Lupane days) orientating PATU units but he’d been transferred because he had no PATU to orientate. Where Wankie Army Camp had been my National Service HQ five years previously it was now barely functioning, under caretaker like management, with very few active troops about. National Servicemen weren’t coming that way anymore. They were needed elsewhere, particularly in the new sector, the South Eastern border. The TTL camps I had occupied when of the Bulawayo Independent Company were now gone,

as in still there, but closed, or, err, open to the goats. Occasionally an Independent unit would be operating in the area but, as had happened in Lupane, never at any strength. Even the South African police that I had nursed as a young Lieutenant had evaporated.

'Why the change?' I asked the SB Inspector, cornering him off from the rest.

'The district profile's changed,' he replied, 'and you guys haven't helped a peep. Intaf's virtually withdrawn from the district. You're not spending a bean on any projects and Wankie Mine has long ago met its manpower requirements. New work has to come from the private sector, but 'private' amounts to Vic Falls and, with the war on, where are the visitors? Even the government rest camps are empty. On that first stretch along the main route linking the National Highway to Wankie Town we have an unofficial labour exchange waiting room. They have nothing, not even a blade of grass to suck on. How many days do you think they'll wait for a job before disappearing across the river?

Military action induced migration is under way. Now, if we talk this thing called grateful, these black kids haven't witnessed any whitie-goodness. This batch who certainly have nothing to be grateful for, who saw how their heroes, their own daddies, kowtowed on the pavements and hid whenever a policeman passed, are on the streets of our townships, if, that is, they haven't gone for training. Be sure that, wherever they are, they're not sitting back with their feet up.

We are into the worst drought the area has had in years. Things are so bad even the game from the Wankie Reserve is smashing through the fences into the Gwaai Forest and into the southern TTL where there is at least some grass and trees. The Valley region is devastated – you won't recognise it. Crops have withered, stock is dying; the people up there have no reserves. They're

starving and they're between us and the blue sea offered by the Gooks. The Gooks are there, in spirit anyway, all the time. We are stronger but we merely pass through. People are flooding into town. The municipal township's fringe, totally informal, lacking every basic necessary, is expanding way beyond control and right now we can do nothing about it. We have one officer watching developments … me.'

That night I got home late, way late. Lib was asleep long ago in the big house.

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We went to work. I asked City Boy (CB) if I could take over DO Ian's cadet, a young guy keen to get involved.[96] The answer was

'No.'

I asked if we could train the District Assistants in self-defence army training …

'No.'

I suggested it might be an idea to relieve the situation in the Pass Office and for myself to start talking to our 100s of TTL customers, many of them who would be serving as eyes for the other side.

'No.'

Finally we had to accept that Intaf's support for the war effort in the huge Wankie District was literally limited to me, AO Dave and his trained tracker-scout Charles. The three of us decided we would go as far as we could.

The order came down from the PC to City Boy, to me that initial estimates as to where our very own border PVs would be placed were to be made. We three musketeers had many a day out in the harsh drought raved north and north eastern area gathering the required info. We wandered past and through the scattered kraals, business centres and isolated tourist spots on the mighty river. They had never been threatened and as far as we could

ascertain they never had any Gook ‘clientele’ visits, not even into their Black compounds. The same applied to the TTL residents; while the CTs had to be passing through they didn’t appear to be disturbing anyone on that border. The very idea of setting PVs, then, was nonsensical, a look good feather-in-the-cap and money spend-feel-good exercise. Three times we patrolled up above the Falls (outside of the TTL) and twice we took the opportunity to zip across on to the sand-banks of the Zambian side to collect croc eggs for the local fledgling Croc Farm. That was how easy the Upper Zambezi was to bridge. That was the size of the police problem.

At night Dave, Charles and I did our unofficial foot patrols - not regular and not often enough, our strength and tiredness set the beat. Off the clock in the southern block of TTLs with clearance in the form of a nod and a wink from the SB Inspector, Rod generally in the picture, we went out on long soirées. We covered the southern area - way down towards Lupane and across towards the isolated Kamativi Tin Mine because Dave and Charles knew it particularly well. We were fit and strong and we covered a lot of ground. We always went with specific targets in mind - checking on activity around grinding mills, the better stocked general dealer stores and scouting the locality of kraals Dave and Charles knew to be actively sympathetic to the opposition cause. In the dark Charles would take us along his known routes. When he ran we ran on behind trusting his feet and trusting we could handle a’ bump-into-them.’ One night we’d nearly reached home-to-bed time when the mother of all storms hit … an unforgettable experience, the rain lashing our faces and the wind driving us to mis-step, lightning flash-bulbing the world to white, back to black leaving stars floating in our minds and then the clap of thunder at our heads. That night we learned that if you want to get into an attack position the best time is when the weather is foul. With the storm raging and paths running away in new rivers, kraals were shut tight

and, could anyone hear it, not a sound came from the sleeping villagers.

On another night we suddenly stepped out of the thick trees to see a bull elephant standing in a moonlit, cleared field. He had come in from the Game Reserve. A great opportunity for a legal pair of prize tusks, and a mountain of even more valuable hide. No risk, easy shot if we took him with two bullets to the lung. Well no risk from the ele but from a Gook point of view, stupid big time.

'What you think?' whispered Dave, peering down the sights. I raised my rifle. Bang-bang! The world erupted. Giants emerged from all sides of the clearing trumpeting and crashing out of the trees in blind panic. Somehow they missed us huddled in the open as they careered westwards in the direction of the Reserve. We left the ele where he was and retired to the shop we had been stalking. The next morning we went to recover the booty. His tusks had been chopped into splinters. The axe man explained to Charles that the Gooks had given him the option of chopping the tusks or getting shot himself.

'Eff you white man,' the Gooks were saying.

The day after, on my way to Bulawayo, solo, I took a notion to give the local, virulent anti-Smith Chief a good talking to.[97] At the turnoff to his kraal I was surprised to see an army patrol playing road blocks. I chuckled, wondering if they were hoping to nab some terrs taking a scenic drive in from Zambia, when I saw that the leader of the handful of Terrie soldiers was my old Major[98], he of the single arm, and with him was Jack, someone I'd known since I was in nappies in Gwanda.

'Take him along with you,' said the Major after I'd told him of my plans and knowing I had to return that way anyway. Jack hopped into the Citroen and we got going.

On arrival we found a silent and very empty village, not even a dog

barked. As Jack stood guard I kicked in a few doors and made a noise, searching for some sign of life. Nothing, apart from the Chief's many cattle kraaled against a granite kopje. I was both bemused and disappointed, Jack keen to go. I dropped him off and sped on to Bulawayo for my briefing.

It was while there, or perhaps on another trip close to it, that I'd set the table for a game of snooker in Grey Street Police Station when my SB host was called urgently. He was off duty, had no backup bar the single SB Detective Constable who'd called him and needed to go, now. I grabbed my rifle. After a helter-skelter drive into the fringe settlement adjacent to the 'White City' Township we careered on foot, hoofing through the 'developed' part of the place – passing tin shacks and pecking chickens, snotty kids watching wide-eyed as we rushed, dodging potholes the size of tractor tyres. We hit the shebeen, and were too late. I watched backs as SB and his two African detectives (we'd grabbed a driver) did the question dance, to and fro with the owner until he cut them short, happy to have played a good game.

'Ah Inspector,' he tuned, wringing his hands and smiling a fixed price smile, 'Freedom Fighter Dumiso left minutes before you arrived.'

'What did eF-eF Dumiso say?'

'He said to tell you Inspector that he left minutes before you arrived, sir.'

We trooped back. They knew we wouldn't, couldn't return for many a day. They knew the townships were totally out of Rhodie control.

A week later Sylvia said SB wanted me to pop in.

'What are you playing at?' asked the Inspector just as soon as I entered.

'Huh?'

'You're driving around in a Citroen with one single army man in support.' I was trying to catch up. 'While you were kicking doors at the Chief's place a full platoon of Zapu were watching from the kopje.'

'Sheit, man!' he said, 'they let you drive off. You owe me a beer and

somebody a prayer.'

Another day, this time with a DA accompanying me on my way back from the Falls I visited the Spanish Catholic Mission Station. The place wasn't far off the road but it was a terrible steep and curvy affair that couldn't be taken too fast, giving the mission a very commanding position of the highway from the kopje top. The Father's greeting was enthusiastic, totally overboard, and he insisted we stay for lunch. Over possibly the worst boiled chicken ever (Father assured us he'd already eaten) we stared at each other. On the return journey, our mind still set to maximum caution, our hearts nearly flew away when a black head popped out of the bush, not a foot from the window.

'He is my brother,' said the DA after we'd both recovered. 'He says the Gooks are all about the mission.'

Over all this time our little three man team never had any contacts but slowly SB began to give positive feedback.

"A *security force* presence had been noted," we heard, to huge satisfaction. At the same time, though, we constantly heard stories of near misses, of Gooks waiting for who only could have been us, even if they didn't know it, and us having taken a different path, or passed them in the dark, giving all a feeling that on one hand, percentages were narrowing and on the other, without regular patrolling they were walking in past us.

Exhilarating as it was it was also tiring doing night and day work. Tempers would fray when I, sweaty, dehydrated and dusty in my khakis and boots and still holding my rifle would stand before City Boy. He'd stretch and smooth his light grey pin stripe trousers, adjust his tie, flick at his cuffs then take up his pen.

'That's all,' he'd say, after rebutting any action orientated requests I may have had, and instead pushing the same old, useless bureaucracy back at me.

While he kept his head in the sand and we careered around the bush and Lib and I saw each other almost not at all, SB, Don and Rod of the JOC were even busier. Ambushes began to surface on the national highway, sudden bursts of inaccurate gunfire from the bush, too high, too low or off completely so that fatalities were avoided, but the shock was there. In desperation at not having the manpower to run even random sweeps, Inspector Rod's response was to have a car rigged out which at the press of a button would fire a dozen or so fixed FNs. He started to drive his machine up and down the road to Victoria Falls but, to my knowledge, none had a go at him. No doubt they knew it was him coming … they had ground coverage too.

We were all too far behind, we knew it, but kept getting fresh bits of news hammering home just how far, really, we were from any sort of control. Co-incidence would have it that the only time I went swimming in the Wankie Mine Pool I bumped into two Signals' Captains. One was my school senior. He told me, in layman's terms, that a huge chunk of that huge chunk of Rhodesia North West was being 'protected' by two captains running a network of self-repeating radios giving the impression to all listeners that the area was being actively patrolled.

'I don't know anything and I'm part of the JOC,' I remonstrated.

'The JOC knows, the DC doesn't,' was the reply. 'It's best he doesn't.'

Again it was the DC, again City Boy.

After seeking advice from my police mentors I requested a meeting with the PC. We met halfway in Lupane where the DC there gave us the use of my old office. I made my case about a DC who had no interest.

I made my case of the need to 'gear up', for Intaf to get involved by training a batch of DAs to at least guard, protect and escort up to standard. PC Trevor listened to my list of trainers, arms and equipment and vehicles

needed. After my bitch I wandered about the village and was shocked by what I saw. At the JOC I'd heard of Lupane's poor health but this was too much. The DC now had in support only a young DO and a now-and-again Cadet. AO Bill and the Saunders' had left. Army trained Geoff was away. On the police side there were issues, too. The Member-in-Charge had to permanently supply an officer for PATU duties … not in Lupane but for service elsewhere. There was no longer an Education Officer, Health Officer or Post Office Tech and the Animal Health Inspector sat at home, duties suspended. Never mind running the district, how, I wondered, were they to protect themselves?

'We'll handle it,' was the official response from the PC on what to do about City Boy. 'You do your job.'

Suddenly things changed. I heard Chibuku wanted me. The country's biggest African beer manufacturer could pay more for my life. Lib would be able to choose between Bulawayo and Salisbury, I would have regular hours, I'd be able to see my wife. Man, I laughed. I was an ADC! My motivation wasn't money. I'd be safer there because the brewery was stacked with some of the finest ex-cops I had known, but not satisfied. As that furore died down the phone call I'd really been waiting for came.

'Come through to Salisbury,' I was told, 'the Public Service Board would like to interview you on your suitability for promotion to DC.'

This was big! To get to see this powerful and important bunch I had to have been put forward by the Secretary for Internal Affairs. If the Board was satisfied I would be recommended to the President and our Ian Smith. Success would mean joining a team of about 60 DCs of which I'd be the second youngest ever. I wanted this. From the time I'd leapt from the cold, dark night into DC Chipinga's warm car I'd wanted it. My life's goal was within grasp and coming a lot sooner than I'd ever dreamed possible. I

wondered whether I'd have the wherewithal, the maturity and experience that I knew a DC needed. In our current situation it was easily answered. Certainly I'd do a far better job than City Boy. Comforting enough.

I arrived for the interview in my wedding suit, a tie biting at my neck, shoes polished, hair plastered down and sweating with the thought of facing that panel. I needn't have worried. I wasn't tortured or put on a philosophical spot. My record spoke for me and I must believe a number of more senior colleagues past and present had to have submitted pro-reports. I'm sure, above it all, though, there was the matter of the war helping to create vacancies quicker than normal, a situation the Board would be awfully silly to add to. Let out early I had more time on my hands than I knew what to do with, and the whole night ahead of me.

Salisbury was swinging! The place was *soooooo* big after my Matabeleland. There I was used to pulling up in a largely empty car park at the police Blue Lamp or up at the Baobab Hotel. To me anything resembling a jam or even a line of whities was a novelty. There was a drizzle in the little City that night. Reflected in the puddles were the advertising lights above, colouring the black of the road. Cars were packed, horning it in anger and fun. People were everywhere, shouting out, whities happy, loud laughing whites. It was the Mardi Gras, or at least my idea of it. This was Rhodieland; this was the future and the freedom that apparently we were fighting for. It was exciting. But I was also alone, one man looking in, the damper I became the more my suit smelt of moth balls.

'Hey, Doug! Over here!'

A chair was pushed out for me, a fresh beer slid over and the chatter opened to pull me in. I hadn't seen Gonk since 1967. He was a Selous Scout now, a sergeant too.

'I'm triple 'S',' he guffawed, slapping my back, then to his friends, 'and

this man's soon to be a DC!'

The group had been there a while. They'd been talking about getting on home or wherever Scouts went but now, respectfully, they stayed seated and had one more. They gave me a happy synopsis of their war.

'We're smashing them,' was the tone, 'it's a duck hunt.'

These were the guys that were 'It.' The whole nation revered them, legends in their time. Their achievements were fact to all, they were in the know. But I knew things weren't as they were saying. I knew it wasn't a duck hunt. I knew Wankie was living on a prayer, that we were totally vulnerable and it was, simply, a matter of time. I didn't say anything, these were scouts, after all, but inside, my eyes were opening.

'What do they really think, what do they really know?' I wondered.

My drinks round with them left me without the price of a bed. I lied about my flight and Gonk saw to it that I got to the airport. I was woken from a sprawled sleep in the departure hall. I followed a man down a passage. He opened a door and nodded me in to where a bed awaited me. The next morning a stubby black guy greeted me with a grin, a towel, soap, and when I returned coffee and toast.

'Sir, please, be hurry. Bulawayo board soon, sir,' he announced. Now, that wouldn't happen at JFK!

I returned to find the town in a tizz. There was worry in the air and the mine wanted a public meeting. I wasn't surprised. In the past months the JOC and the police had been somewhat successful in getting greater participation from the mining community - getting more of them involved in PATU and police reserve, but soon they realised that with the help came a new challenge, that the enemy was real and overpowering – our efforts to get them involved had turned on us, in a sense. They were now grasping the threat that lay out in the TTL, on the border and most disturbingly, now in the

townships beside their homes. Don's team had helped them gently pull their heads out of their jobs and games at the pub and look about. Then, as if perfectly on cue, wham! A new look radical-right party held a meeting in a PATU man's house.

The JOC was okay with it, free speech, etc, but I didn't feel right about attending being policemen and neutral up-holders of the law. These young guys, mainly from Mashonaland, told a packed house that we needed a new way to fight the war because, as things were, we were losing it. They were talking American, 'roast the fuckers in their tepees, Vietnam this and that' stuff. Mostly they exampled 'up there – Moz border zones' but they brought their reasoning home to Matabeleland with the remark that Wankie was in the way, it was on the Black Nationalist's path to Bulawayo. I was standing next to the SB Super in the hall craning to see the speakers in the lounge. Nothing policeman about him, he was dressed in his salesman drag, and at the mention of the pathway he chuckled.

'Now watch the whites of Wankie look for assurances,' he muttered.

Right enough the Mine management read similarly. They forced the issue by organising an Open to the Public meeting in their main hall where they wanted an answer to the question, 'where is our civil defence network?' They wanted an answer from government. Of course government was the DC, the DC was Civil Defence and our particular DC had opted out of the war. There was pressure big time.

City Boy responded by saying he would handle it.

Banished, and huffy, I took to the rugby club. Inspector Rod burst in.

'CB's lost it!' he hissed as he hustled me over to the hall, 'he's going to tell them we can't cope. He's lost it. He wants to tell the town they're on their own with no support from Intaf!'

Jesus! The fallout would be catastrophic. Rod had me in the hall just in

time to find a crowd gone deadly silent. We were too late. He pushed me onto the stage steps. Public speaking is not my forte … I was frightened.

'Say something. They're looking at you twit.'

I simply went into auto.

'He's kidding,' I began, using some sort of a smile that I found somewhere. The audience stared. 'The DC's making an example.' There were one or two titters in response. 'What he's saying is that we need your help. We have to pull together to make this work. As Intaf we are fully committed, and we have things in hand, but as things escalate we need to escalate too. Along with Mine Management and the Municipal Authorities we want to put a new Civil Defence Plan together that will…'

Cheers erupted. I guess it was easy because it was what they wanted to hear, it was what I wanted to hear. There were simply no alternatives. We hadn't the means to protect ourselves and so hope and the relief that came with it were our only option.

After the meeting it seemed the whole crowd retired to the pub. Amongst back slaps and the mounting party I couldn't help but stay quiet within myself. I wanted to be away, at home in my bed. Standing there the truth was simple, and stark.

They were afraid.

There was more confused fear in the air in this pub, in other pubs, on playing fields and in the privacy of bedrooms out there than anyone was appreciating – not at provincial level and certainly not at national.

Superintendents Don and Ian, the SB Chief Inspector had seen it … but they were voices in the wind. To 26 year old me this was a revelation. As a lad growing up in our war I had been in watering-holes all over the country. I had listened to these combinations of bull-necked, broad shouldered, tanned, half-shaved, dressed in grubby shorts and *veldskoen* men, to the fancy-

dressed, squeaky clean, slim-trim, weedy intellectuals. I'd listened to women who boasted about their shooting skills, how the 'kids were fine' and how they handled that and this, handled anything and everything. All the miners, farmers, speculators, doctors, the business managers, all were full of how they would keep on fighting to save civilisation. When I was fresh out of the army, part time Aide de Camp to old PC Bawden[99] we used to wait for his wife to pick him up at the Long Bar in Bulawayo. There, when he scoffed at the macho stories flying about in the spirit of the hour I'd chosen to believe he was out of touch and that us Rhodies were as tough as we sounded, as resourceful as we proclaimed, as never-say-die as we wanted to be. I chose to ignore this father who had seen war in all its facets, who knew what it was to collect a man's dismembered body from the ground. Five long years on I was now wondering, as he had, how will we, us tough Rhodies, really cope if the chips are down? Standing there, watching my fellows in the pub in the midst of the Rhodie dream, the dream of nights like this with your friends and no worries for a 1000 years. I was wondering, too, what if the cards were flipped? What would happen if just *one*, with the spontaneous support of another *one* only, had suddenly stood on his bar stool and questioned,

'Hey? Are we doing the right thing here?' Would the macho-ness, I wondered, the inexhaustible supply of Rhodiehood for Rhodieland, have prevailed or collapsed? What would really be revealed underneath? What would we really want if really given the choice? The answer, I knew, was in the meeting that had just been had. They, these Rhodies, my people, male and female, young and old, these of the big strong beer and braai voices were full of shit. We were scared. We were wondering, privately, if we were managing our house, our Africa, correctly. We were wondering, but only from the viewpoint of what could we take, rather than what could we give. Did the idea not occur to anyone to reverse the order? But the beer was good

and golden, the chatter was lively and the air was thick with our camaraderie and the rising kill rate, the utter destruction our forces were wreaking on the CTs as they came loping through the bush. Right then all of us had more than enough excuse to believe, even though we all knew it was a lie, it was all a game.

'Bezant!' someone shouted up and out of the smoke haze and the drinks swirling. There was a simultaneous rush in two directions. Some getting in, and the rest getting out of the way. I watched the set up. Bezant is a simple Matabeleland whitie game for times when all are feeling simple. The general, indeed, leading idea is to simulate doing things while outa-mind, not minding, and feeling like a laugh at someone else's expense. Someone placed the target, a can of Bezant orange because it was a big can and therefore best, in the centre and another handed a suitable club to the man of the moment, chosen just then by short straw. The club man bent low, his forehead touching the club's handle, then began to spin, mates around twirling him fast, round and round. He stopped spinning and tottered, drunk and dizzy, then began lashing out with the club to try and hit the can and chaos ensued. The Bezant can disappeared, lost in the surge of attack and dodge, the thrill of letting go, total abandon, of accepting a thwack and a whack and shiner and nose-full of blood, should it happen, as a token of release. This for us was a moment of honesty. Drunk and half-drunk we could let go, celebrate our violence and be openly confused by this world and war growing larger all around us while we careened from one mirage of safety to another. I joined in, knowing that we were so deep then that we would have to continue to fight merely to survive, knowing, as I jumped into the fray, that we Rhodies were in for a hiding short of nothing.

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I never did co-ordinate a Civil Defence plan for Wankie. The deal that

came through the very next day was that CB would go on a 3-weeks leave, I would be appointed Acting DC and thereafter I would be sent on to a DC's post. I accepted. AO Dave and the police weren't so happy … I should have forced the issue, was their opinion. In the end I didn't even do the three weeks … the DC Bikita needed to be relieved; a bunch of his men had been taken out.

The Elephant

I shot an elephant once. What had happened was this old cow had damaged her trunk. The first report had reached the District Commissioner's Office the previous Thursday. The messenger had spoken of a huge cow elephant with a badly damaged trunk. The Saturday following another tribal elder had arrived, pleading with me to send someone to shoot her. She was, the old man had said, going mad to get at their water supplies. She would have known that we'd be after her before long.

I was along with another young DO, Roy, and being led by David, the AO, and Charles, his man in the field. We'd covered around 15 kilometres or so, first the walk in to pick up her spoor and then the follow along her meandering trail. 15 kilometres through rugged bush and we knew, another 15 to get back again. I was a sight. I'd managed to rip my shirt courtesy of a 'wait-a-minute' thorn tentacle and on top of that had ripped the middle seam of my trousers, my arse peeking out on every 'up' step. The walk was long in the rocky ground, and hot.

Suddenly Charles stopped, all four of us standing dead still in the heat. David crept his way forward to stand next to him and they spoke in whispers, pointing up at a small hill in front of us. It wasn't high. A rocky granite-like outcrop covered in dry, grey, thorn tree and thorn-brush, vegetation that looked for all the world as though it was dead. David motioned for Roy and myself to come forward.

'She's up there', he whispered, his voice not much more than the air around us. 'Probably under that big thorn tree.' He pointed up to a large tree that stood just a level short of the top. 'She'll be eating the pods or just getting some shade. Keep quiet, watch…'

He rechecked the breeze, bending and then spilling a dash of fine sand

from his hand, then began to move. Charles moved too, following parallel, the two working together while Roy and I set off behind them. The outcrop wasn't high but it was steep, the constant crouching and careful tread causing my thighs to burn.

Charles stopped, straightening up slowly, inch by inch in the boiling air. David also, stretching his neck out and peering forward. I tried to see what they were seeing; all of us bush peeping toms. David turned and called me forward. My heart was pounding. David pointed, I looked, and suddenly there she was. I didn't see her at once. At first I realised that something was there in the bush, then a grey boulder behind the dry, fluffy leafed bush became her. Breathing became difficult. She was huge, standing only twenty feet away. Far, far bigger than I'd ever imagined. I raised my rifle, concentrating on slowly pushing the barrel through the tangled branches all around, their tiny fluffy leaves dislodging and settling on the rifle, on my arms and floating free in the air.

'Now,' mouthed David, just the shape of his mouth.

She was calm. I remember. She had one foot tipped at ease, her trunk hanging motionless, like a ruined arm, its broken tip barely off the dusty ground. She was comfortable in the grassless shade, standing idly, at peace. Her ear was stretched back. To me it seemed she was groping for the sound of the creak of the trigger, I had the very real feeling that she knew we were there, waiting for the inevitable.

The world went to noise. Crack, and thud into her skin, and 'whaaa-whooop!' as five tons immediately collapsed. A perfect lung shot. A sudden, wet tear at the spot of my aim. The dust rose up around her. All of us stood, us four men, two forward, two behind, craning to see through the bushes and the mini dust storm that swirled. There was silence. Total silence. All shrieking and constant clicking and twittering of the birds had stopped. I

made to step forward.

'Wait', said David, holding his hand out. 'Reload'.

I began to, pulling back the bolt, and then the bush to our left exploded.

It shook, was parted, was trampled, and from it and the dust still swirling, poured tribesmen shouting gruffly and tribeswomen ululating in high pitched screeches, banging metal on clanging metal. Roy and myself were dumbstruck, David and Charles watched impassively. We had imagined ourselves totally alone. Instead, the bush was alive with shouting, stomping, screaming humanity. A whistle sounded, bringing everyone to an instant, silent halt. A wizened old fellow came striding through the mass with their knives, axes, buckets and tin baths, the massive carcass of the elephant still twitching with dying nerves. He stopped a respectful distance in front of David. Over the course of the next few minutes reality was revealed. This mass had followed us since we stepped off the road, had known we were coming since the message was first sent, and had been waiting for us to do our work. After a negotiation with the spokesman, the super confident little fellow, in which it was agreed that the tusks, skin, tail and heavy hair was ours, that they would carry it out, and the meat would go to them, their pangas began to rise and fall. Axes flashed in the sunlight. It seemed like only minutes before teams of men were setting off, laden with the tusks and panels of folded skin. A frenzy of butchers worked from the inside, top and the sides of the old elephant cow, all coated in blood and gore. A bonanza. As the minutes passed so she changed. Her huge old bones, her great rib cage emerged beneath the peeled away flesh. Nothing was wasted. Buckets, small drums, tin baths were filled to overflowing and then some more meat was draped around their necks. It had to all be done before nightfall, and down at the kraals the meat would be shared.

Later, on the long walk back.

'Where did they come from?' asked Roy, finally.

'They were with us all the time,' said Charles.

'Better to think of them as having been waiting for us,' added David. 'We're the ones that came along.'

'So you guys knew they were there all along?'

'It's not that we actually saw them,' said Charles, 'but they're there … that I could sense in my feelings. It's something you get to know if you live in the bush. It's natural.' He came to a halt. 'You're never alone out here', he said, gesturing around him, miles and miles of bush encircling us. 'Nothing you do goes unnoticed. Somehow, someone else always knows. It's not that someone is watching, it's that everything is connected. I can't tell you about it. You need to live here to know it. The circling eagle tells an instant story, a hut with no smoke in the evening another, a strange footprint at the water hole tells still another.'

David, using his FN as a crutch, lifted his left foot and pulled from the sole of his boot a giant thorn.

'Remember,' he said with emphasis, 'you are never alone out here, nothing goes unseen.'

I looked at the tree and bush and sand and scrub. At twisted, desiccated branches and heat rising up in a mirage.

'I don't know how it works either', said David, finally, 'but hear me. Whatever happens out here, somebody else, they,' and he pointed out, into the empty bush, 'know about it.'

He settled his cap on his head, shrugged and hitched his rifle up so that it sat more comfortably. He smiled, turned, and walked away, into the bush ocean, Charles falling in a few paces behind. It seemed they were mates taking a stroll in the local park or garden. In reality one was watching for the other. Myself and Roy followed. Doing our best to copy, doing our best to

understand.

Part 2: WAR
1967 – 1979

Externals

“On 3 April 1977, General Peter Walls announced the government would launch a campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of Rhodesia's black citizens.[77] In May Walls received reports of ZANLA forces massing in the city of Mapai in Gaza Province, Mozambique. Prime Minister Smith gave Walls permission to destroy the base. Walls told the media the Rhodesian forces were changing tactics from contain and hold to search and destroy, "adopting hot pursuit when necessary."

On 30 May 1977, 500 troops passed the border and travelled 60 miles to Mapai, engaging the ZANLA forces with air cover from the Rhodesian Air Force and paratroopers in C-47 Dakotas. The Rhodesian government said the military killed 32 ZANLA fighters and lost one Rhodesian pilot. The Mozambican government disputed the number of casualties, saying it shot down three Rhodesian planes and a helicopter and took several troops prisoner, all of which Minister of Combined Operations Roger Hawkins denied.[78][79][80]

The United Nations Security Council subsequently denounced the incursion of the "illegal racist minority regime in Southern Rhodesia" into Mozambique in Resolution 411, on 30 June 1977.[81] Walls announced a day later that the Rhodesian military would occupy Mapai until they had eliminated ZANLA's presence. Kurt Waldheim, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, condemned the incident on 1 June, and Rhodesian forces withdrew. The American, British, and Soviet governments also condemned the raid.[78][100]”

From Wikipedia. Sounds right, doesn’t it?

Our Own Green Area, Almost

I was flying through the cool night, no headlights, every mile bringing me closer to my first DC posting. I was 25, going on 26.

'Drop everything, wife included and get to Bikita,' had been the message late October 1976. There'd been a police reserve "do" that night and apart from me being a dry spectator - I was driving immediately after- the gathering of all I'd come to know in Wankie town was a perfect send-off. Lib wasn't coming along. She hadn't had a life with me in Wankie and on hearing SB Super Ian commenting that 'Bikita's hot, very hot,' and Inspector Rod enthusing at me having my own command she knew not to expect any better. I knew she was right. I'd remonstrated but even then, at the party, I was keen for her to get her lift home with her police reserve buddy so that I could get on with my journey. I wanted to see the PC in Fort Victoria first thing and to spend a first full day with DC Pat in Bikita. I'd calculated the 380 odd miles would need about seven hours with stops and knew late night travel would be the best security wise. Conventional Gooks didn't set ambushes and blocks late night … that was the time they moved as far as possible from their last action to throw us off. Late night was also most comfortable. We were into the hot months - late nights and crisp mornings were cool, man!

I analysed things as I drove. I'd heard that the Police Inspector in Bikita had been taken off for forced rest and recuperation. I knew Pat personally; he'd been the senior ADC in Plumtree. He was a tough and uncompromising civil administrator but not an army man.

I passed very little traffic. I chuckled at Bulawayo; the street lights, the soft shadows settled in the mid-night cool, white Rhodesia slumbering safely, soundly. Petrol, a pie and coke at the all night BP then I pressed on. Soon

Bulawayo was just a glow in the sky while, forward, the dotted white lines on the black rushed at me, urging me on. I stopped in Shabani, had a yarn with the petrol boy at the Mobile - I used to get my car and landie looked at here - then stopped again shortly after at the bridge marking the division between Shabani in the Midlands and Victoria Province, my new home. Crossing the bridge would mark my return to an area I hadn't visited since school, before this highway bridge had even been here. What I'd known as low-level cement and stone work crossing was now modern, huge and concrete. The place had a special significance for me. It was here that I'd bought all my beautiful soap-stone carvings, Sergeant Major Sam with me. The carver's shack was gone. I wondered where he was now. Opening Lib's offering of breakfast sandwiches I looked down to the river bed below. As a boy I'd collected Yellow Bishop egg's from their reed nest down there. I remembered that as I'd climbed back up with my prize, delicate blue egg safe in my breast pocket a grown black boy had asked why I had taken it. I gave him a story about learning about our national heritage. It was strange, certainly, crossing and re-crossing one's life out there in the living bush, moving from one war torn place to another. It didn't take much for me to imagine the blood of all of us swirling in the river below.

Then I was off. The Citroen whirred the night by. The darkness rushed through the cool of my Africa, cigarettes and thoughts for company. Soon the horizon brightened. Just a line of less dark at first, growing slowly brighter, until suddenly it was light and the world was that fresh that comes before the sun. My timing was spot on. I pulled into the Shell Station in Fort Victoria at 7am and immediately headed for the loo.

'The sir has driven far,' said the Shell-boy to the young family waiting their turn after me, 'please be patient.' I heard them through the window and saw the awed look on the young boy's face when I stepped out, hair wet,

beard slicked back and FN in my hand. His dad said nothing. I found a pie and was off, bang on with my appointment with the PC for a little after eight.

‘Something that claims to be a DC is here to see you,’ said the secretary after I’d arrived in her pristine office, my quick wash suddenly inadequate. The PC was tucked away in his office and soon called me through. Not long after I was making a new enemy of my betters. My all night drive suddenly seemed irrelevant, as well as my super charged response to ‘get there quick’. Things snowballed quickly.

‘Pat will brief you,’ said the PC irritated, exasperated at my questions on the current state of Bikita and his own lack of knowledge. At the end of the meeting he tried for some conciliation by offering me two Uzi sub-machine guns. ‘For the armoury,’ he said benevolently.

I took the guns.

‘Any magazines?’ I asked, eyeing the empty slots.

The PC and secretary looked at me with utter puzzlement. The silence stretched out. They began to search the waiting room with their eyes as if I had asked for the latest Farmers’ Weekly.

‘They fit in here,’ I prompted, pushing my fingers into the hole of the butt.

‘Oh gosh – yes, I’ll get them,’ blustered the secretary, suddenly bustling off.

I managed to leave without further incident but I was pissed when I discovered what he had called a ‘little way’ off the National Highway was an 11km drive along a very bushy dirt road, full of bumps and sand slides around corners I didn’t know, full of ambush spots staring quietly out from the *veld*.

As my new, beautifully appointed office came into view I felt a surge. This was my new home, my new adventure. I was clearly expected. A square

shouldered Shona directed me with a flourish into my new parking bay, a huge, sparkling smile on his face. I took to him immediately – trust at first sight –my new Sergeant -Major. He opened the door, saluted and welcomed me in Ndebele!

'*Salibonani Baba – Nkosi!*' throwing it to the sky as if he really was addressing a King.

What an honour, a Shona man greeting me in what he knew to be my language, by golly I was chuffed. He was about 50, a man with natural confidence and power.

'The men wait on you, sir,' he said, gesturing over my shoulder.

I placed a hand on the roof of the Citroen as I swivelled my stiff body, then I stood, staring, for one hundred and ten million years. Standing on the little parade ground was a group of about 80 men. They were armed with pick handles and shovels, dressed in rags and whatever, standing proud, firm as rocks, staring straight ahead.

'Present – arms!' barked their Sergeant, an ancient man so bent at the back he seemed a hunchback when he walked.

Weapons' flew from feet to shoulder to holding out front; a shambles, a jumbled poetry. I spied amongst the gardening equipment a dozen FNs and 20 or so .303s of yesteryear.

'Trained and armed,' the PC had said, 'talk to Pat.' I began to quail.

'Welcome sir!' they shouted as one.

I melted. These men were willing. More than that, they were mine. I made my way up to the DC's residence armed with the knowledge that the original place had recently burned down, apparently the result of Pat's kids tipping the candle while playing spooks. The re-build was almost ready. It had been so for a while. I found him with a beer in hand, waiting beneath a huge monkey puzzle tree in the garden.

‘Thanks for coming so quickly,’ he said, gesturing me to sit on the folding chair he had ready for me. He cut a distraught figure, a soft, flabby shadow of the man I’d known. Half-heartedly he waved at the diamond fencing around the huge garden. ‘At least I got them to do that.’ He pulled at his beer. I looked around. The garden was a liability … it needed to be cleared to improve firing vision from the house and reduce attacker cover. The fence was fine here but the rest of the government compound had only five strand barbed wire to keep cattle out.

‘I see the police are ok,’ I said, referring to their suitable fencing that joined onto the back of his property.

‘No,’ he replied, ‘they’re not. There’s no Inspector. He won’t be returning from R&R. His wife … they’ve left. There’s a junior S/O‘.

Pat sipped at his beer, I felt as if I wasn’t there. Suddenly he started up again. ‘*’n ware Engelsman*,’ he said, ‘*a real Englishman*, with a pencil moustache to boot.’

I was confused.

‘The S/O,’ he said.

Pat’s wife came roaring up the drive, the same old car they’d had in Plumtree.

‘You recognise it?’ she shouted before bounding over and giving me a hug. We chatted a moment, just like old times, but then her eyes strayed to Pat.

‘Let’s get you settled,’ she declared, suddenly business-like, and began pulling at the chairs and loading us all in. She ferried us down to my new temporary digs.

Pat spent time briefing me, packing for their departure and answering calls. The Magistrate hadn’t been to Bikita for a long time, he said, wasn’t expected anytime soon, nor had he heard any Civil Cases for over a year. He

had an AO, a black officer (I had never heard of a black occupying a white post in government).

‘He can’t be trusted,’ announced Pat dashing my hopes, ‘and I’m not allowed to lock him up.’

I learnt that he had had some staff - a white field officer and three African support - shot dead six weeks before and as for his community/agricultural advisory staff, who knows where they were.

‘People aren’t coming forward,’ he said, shrugging, packing, ‘how can they? If they do they’ll be admitting that they still subscribe to Smith’s system. The Chiefs and Headmen don’t approach the office anymore. I’ve stopped pushing for any meetings at all, never mind monthly.’

The district to the east of the office all the way to the Mozambique border, which included a big chunk of Chipinga, was considered lost and further than that, he just didn’t know. The army came and went, he said, always Rhodesia African Rifles and always the same Major.

‘The problem is no continuity. He comes and before I can run up the flag he’s gone.’

On the map he showed me his southern and northern base camps.

‘What do you have them open for, Pat?’ I asked.

‘To show a presence.’

‘The DO operates from there then?’

‘Nnnnn-no. You’ll meet him now,’ Pat replied. ‘As Afrikaans as he is he’s never held a weapon in his life.’ He rubbed at his face. ‘Both he and his wife believe completely in a deliverer who will end the war. They refuse to have a gun in the house.’

‘Okay. What do you do with the base camps?’

‘We have a regular re-supply and change over schedule. The truck goes down every …’ He paused, trying to remember.

‘Do they get shot at, Pat?’

‘Oh, yes.’ He thought a moment. He made to speak, but stopped himself, thinking. ‘Look,’ he said, finally, ‘that’s why you’re here. I know nothing about war.’

His face brightened as he showed me the silver lining, as he saw it; a modern armoury he’d had built. ‘Once the stuff’s in there nobody’ll get it out.’

I didn’t have the heart to tell him the thing was useless. We didn’t want anything lying in the armoury … we wanted weapons in the hands of the men trained and loyal to us.

The Armourer, a smiling, attentive young black guy piped up.

‘The two Uzis from the PC sir, they have no firing pins, sir.’

That night, sitting in my new office I squinted at the map of the district on the wall, my new cabinets filled with files pointing to every corner of this new place, to the lives of the people I was now responsible for. Hell it was dark! The map on the wall was in shadows, as if blacked-out. I resolved to get a new light bulb. Sitting there I could imagine Brigadier Barnard looming over my shoulder. He was the Director of the School of Infantry who’d coughed when I suggested that Intaf and the army were partners, that I’d be just as much use staying where I was. Sitting there it was clear to me, with the state of the district and the state of the others I’d been involved in, that Intaf was no more than Com-Ops’ garden boy. We had no staff, no weapons, no transport. Except for the sub-offices where the men merely sat and guarded themselves, Pat had withdrawn from the field and unlike the areas I’d been before, here the CTs were certainly active. I decided to phone home, so to speak.

‘How can you expect to operate without what you need?’ said Chief Superintendent Don to my request for advice, ‘you need to insist on

something. That's part of your responsibility.'

'Can I? Everything is so stretched already … I must make do.'

'Did you know the Minister of Defence is handing out whatever they need to the Meikles Southern Sun Hotel Group[101]?' he asked, a neat, pointed reply. 'They're being equipped to protect the Falls area tourist chain, they're building their own little army. There's always a way for the guy who pushes.'

I stewed on what Don had said. I felt an anger building inside me, and a certainty. I had vowed to myself that I'd go at Bikita with everything I had. I decided we could do great things, as long as we worked hard enough. I had willing men under me and I had energy inside. I was prepared to go all out, to see my world go mad like when the films we district communities hired decided to go at extra speed on the projector.

***

The morning after Pat had left Sergeant Major was there early, checking that I had all I needed, and together we got my first day started. I began with issuing orders to close the base camps. Apart from the danger of running up and down to schedule, particularly with few trained and properly armed men, Bikita hadn't the vehicles to tie up on doing non-work. I followed that up with instructions to close the northern most bus route, from the turn off on the Birchenough Bridge side of the district. This would mean all busses going south had to go in and out the way that I'd come, making monitoring from our side easier and the threat of ambush and mines considerably lessened. I was happy with the move simply

because we couldn't actually monitor that route anyway; the place may as well have been in a faraway and distant country. At least now all who wanted to go to or from that faraway and distant country had to come via Bikita's "main'' road, or walk from Moz to the National Highway from where they could pick and choose.

Next I looked at the figures with the District Accountant. This elderly man, a failed small time farmer, was excited. He disparaged Pat as a has-been and promoted me as the new ideas boy to get the place shipshape while he jumped on board. He informed me that we had an established compliment of 30 DAs and of those we were allowed one Sar-Major, one Sergeant and three Corporals. These guys, like me, enjoyed the full range of benefits right through to pension. They were also the older and more bent of those I had available, the wiser and the sleepier and definitely not the soldiers. We needed more trained men. The District Accountant informed me we had 'war budget' authority to employ another 100 and, with a squeeze here and there, 120 giving me a total potential 'army' of 150. To date Pat had employed an extra 50 of that 120. These newbies, a sort of emergency guard, kindly referred to as militiamen or auxiliaries by the general public, were temporary, un-established, daily reckoned but monthly paid, grade minus, self-qualified, self-dressed black guards who earned next to nix and who were expected to be 100% loyal. They earned about 1/50th of my salary. They were Grade zero and I was Grade hero. Given my DO's attitude to the war and his abilities, war wise the Sar-Major was the next top rank, earning a tenth of what I earned. In the life and death stakes of Bikita outside of the police, he was number two to me. My private thoughts were to find a way to pay them more.

Immediately things backfired. The Accountant was an RF man through and through and I hadn't anticipated the depth of his white superiority feelings. When I asked that he and Sar-Major work out the admin details in building the militia force to the full complement allowed he refused.

'I don't work with blacks,' he said, 'I direct blacks,' making our good feeling gone. After a terrible row in the quad, among the beautiful garden flowers we had growing and with, it seemed, the whole world watching, I finally ordered that he put his feelings aside and get on with it.

Next I took a crack at the PC. Don's advice had been don't mess about with body blows, go for the throat and don't let go. It seemed they had the same idea.

'There are no more weapons, and that's final,' said that same secretary, immediately.

'Right,' I replied, 'with effect from now, I have closed the sub-offices. Please relay the message and we can talk again in the morning.' I hung up and went out, happily busy with making Pat's emergency airstrip more strip and less half cleared field. I bothered because it was there. It was in a ridiculously dangerous place and it would take a ridiculously dangerous drive of 15 minutes to get there. The next morning I got an earful about manners, the standard message that the PC was very busy, the order that the camps were to be reopened and a repeat broadcast that there were no more weapons in the cupboard. 'Have you discussed this with the police?' she enquired sarcastically.

'I haven't,' I replied, breathing deep to control the adrenaline that always leaps up for me, 'because there is *no one* to discuss it with. Please advise the PC that I'm going to shut Bikita down.'

Seconds passed. I breathed. The wire clicked.

'What are you playing at?' yelled the PC, 'you've got no authority!'

'Sir,' I said, my breathing stilled, 'in the sense that when I leave everyone will follow, I do. Sir.'

The first of the arms consignment arrived two days later by kaffir, um … Long Distance Rural Bus. Mostly the FNs worked and came with two magazines but little else did. Firing pins and return springs were missing. There was no webbing or basic kit and no transport. I didn't comment. I knew not to shoot myself totally in the foot with the PC, after all, we still needed each other and I wanted to be a good dog, um Doug, um … DC.

Little did I know that back in Wankie PC Trevor was to take my remarks about Intaf gearing up and getting involved to heart; he had appointed a commander and trainer; Rod - the Senior Cadet I had combined with so well in Lupane - and Rod got whatever he requested.

'Doug, I don't know from where the kit and equipment originated but I have nothing but praise for whoever sourced it for us.' My boss was Trevor Hemans and so I just took it for granted that he sourced the stuff. He was a wonderful man.

There were no supporting forces when I arrived in Bikita … DC Pat had been alone. My calls to the JOC were brushed off with a confident 'we'll be there when needed – 'don't worry' response to which I added my knowledge that DC Pat was scared of shadows but the men keen, all serving to embolden me with a sense of security. In that first week I took Sar-Major and an escort on a couple of drives they saw as ill-considered, but we weren't interfered with - thankfully - and there was an upside; they saw I wasn't afraid of the dark. It did a lot of good for morale and confidence.

Unlike the Meikles Southern Sun Hotel Group, Bikita had no staff development money nor had we any trainers. What had been achieved to date - 80 men able to parade and march with about 30 competent, up to basic weapon handling - was entirely of Sar-Major's and those he had trained to train's doing. His basic knowledge dated from his WWII service - he was of the Royal Navy. His greatest support came from the fact that Bikita had unbridled enthusiasm, an energy that made vitality normal.

In the face of this I saw no reason to alter Sar-Major's approach, only adding curricula, mainly IA [102]drills. His team did all the selection, training and certification. If a man couldn't make it he didn't advance beyond the steps they had put in place. They only picked smart dudes … we never had an accidental discharge nor a runner from, or leading up to a contact.

They knew each other and supported each other and were all from the district. To ease Sar-Major's burden a long retired pre-WWII gent was pulled in from his nearby village. As far as my assistance went I found an obscure allowance with which to pay him and I assisted with 'upgrading' a few of the men with some experience who were keen to set to training. Beyond that personal input and regular whole company talk and exercise sessions, all the rest was left to Sar-Major and his team. They identified and forwarded for promotion section leaders and asked me to find a responsibility allowance in the ADF books. It soon became clear that we would need a young, military minded 2nd I/C to assist Sar-Major. When out in the field our soon to be 150 armed and dangerously trained men would simply be too much for our hunchy, elderly Sergeant with the same applying to the old school corporals.

From the ranks Sar-Major brought someone.

'He has a background as a clerk in town, sir. He is now a fully qualified DC's Army man, and a smart button, too, sir.'

The young man (two years older than me!) stood firmly to attention and stared at my soap stone figurines, once again unpacked and in place behind my desk. His overgrown hair and the way he had to tie his pants to fit his slim waist didn't strike me as Senior Sergeant DC's Army material.

'He is my nephew sir,' added Sar-Major, noticing my frown.

'Then I approve,' I replied. My trust in my number two was already implicit and it was a decision I would never regret - he proved to be a fast learner with a natural leadership and soldierly style as well as an ability to move men.

We began to make real progress. While we certainly didn't have the Meikles resources to train men to the 'highest possible standards', we did give them each a grounding in the basics, and, most importantly, something to work towards. In our little army each man received about five days

intensive training around the office plus five more on attachment to a fully qualified man. Here each trainee had five rounds of live ammunition on our 30 yard range, at least allowing him the feel of the kick of the butt and the noise from the chamber, after which it was on the job training out on patrol.

Within weeks we were able to physically mount a guard around the Bikita government reserve.[103] Leaving my office it was a hoot to hear my two sergeants shouting ‘action left!’ and seeing the men responding by bailing off the tractor trailer or the Isuzu truck, practicing the drills. Only once we were well out of the government compound did we settle into our journey with the men in position, each watching the sector they had been taught to scan. Soon, I felt, we would be an even match for the opposition.

While our training and development was coming on at a pace our presentation was still dismal. Apart from the original District Assistants who had khaki shirts and shorts, putties, boots and their distinctive hat with the red ribbon, our DC’s Army were still dressed in what they’d arrived in from their home somewhere around the corner. They looked like typical ADF gang road workers, dressed in torn overalls or ancient, ragged T-shirts … sometimes they laughed at others laughing at them but it wasn’t a proud laugh. Our ex-Scout ex-cook now proud corporal wasn’t much better with one set of camouflage and our so-called ex-Gook had a pair of jeans only. Watching them I decided that without uniforms, that final indicator of their worthiness and place in our growing system, they’d never reach their potential and so I set about finding some.

Easier said than done.

The PC was no help. I phoned about, dropping names of friends and contacts from other services and finally it was Provincial Security Liaison Officer Ian who returned my call. Ian was a young, enthusiastic, and injured, ex S/O policeman.

‘I’ve left your name with the RAR Quarter Master in Fort Victoria,’ he said, ‘I’m not promising anything, but I think they may be able to help you out.’

The introduction did help, although the service was depressing. I was led by an RAR corporal to a pile (and I mean a mile high pile) of discarded camo’s lying in an otherwise deserted hangar. I was told I could purchase the throwaways if I wanted, but we’d need to wash and mend them ourselves. I, Sar-Major and a DA got stuck in, slowly pulling out the makings of a real team. The price charged, relative to the effort my men put in to raise the money, was expensive. Nonetheless the clothes were washed, repaired and issued. But first, a nice thing happened as we were driving off, the RAR Corporal flagged us down and, following a very traditional recognition of his tribal rank, handed Sar-Major a sack of discarded water-bottles. I wondered whether it was out of pity or embarrassment but certainly blood and community ties were stronger than inter-service co-operation. These thoughts faded, though, as back at home and issued with their kit my men’s faces were reward enough. Their proud, beaming expressions proved to us all that we were progressing, and made me even more determined to find ways to pay them more. Right then they were only earning the pittance allowed for ‘auxiliaries’. Their working hours were far longer than the budgeted eight - off station they worked as long as it took to get back which on occasion stretched to three days – sleep on the job. The pay level was to my mind unacceptable. Added to that was the accommodation problem. The DAs’ lines had been built to house only 30 back in 1950. Sar-Major and Senior Clerk Dube came up with a suggestion.

‘What about using the African’s Guest accommodation?’[104] They asked, ‘we could also clear out the original Pass Office and the old storerooms, sir.’ They had a point. The rooms were only filled with ancient

junk including elephant tusks and hippo teeth anyway … a fortune in collector's items, had one the time and BBC exposure. That decided, we went further, adding the idea of 'doubling up' to our plans. Those on day duty gave up their beds to those finishing night duty … hot bedding could be a term.

Just as we'd accepted and were settling in to our new arrangements a new surprise fell into our lap. Gerald, the whitie owner of the Concession Store at the bottom of our road arrived to see me. I was intrigued. He'd been rather offhand when I first introduced myself and so I wondered what he wanted.

'I need some help,' he admitted, after the standard opening chit-chat, then went on to outline his situation. He revealed that his position just 'inland' from the highway and on the bus route that thereafter branched to every corner of the central and southern part of Bikita made his store a five star gold mine, a vein that improved with every escalation of the war[105], although with escalated action came escalated risk. He came to the point:

'Err,' he hesitated, 'could I possibly hire some guards to be with me during the day?'

I was taken aback, and immediately investigated with questions. How did he know about our project? What had he heard?

'Everybody knows about it,' he said, 'your boys are doing good things.'

I was flattered and decided to go in high. I mentally calculated the monthly pay for 8 men, a section, and times 5 (or was it 4) for exclusivity, divided by 22 being a working month and added something for supervision to get a daily rate.

'Done,' said Gerald immediately, obviously chuffed at getting an army cheap.

No matter. The situation was now that we had a section of eight that were occupied during the day on their days off. Sar-Major and his team happily worked out the details of how the money would be used (some would go to

communal concerns such as more uniforms to be purchased from the Rhodesian Army) and how the balance would be distributed. I forcibly encouraged the District Accountant to open a DC's Army account in his books and accept the nominated signatures. Soon the 'Hire a Guard' scheme was adding a substantial improvement (relative - enough for a few beers in a whitie bar) to their pay packet.

It wasn't long after Gerald's smart move that a Gook popped his head up in the scrub on the far side of his store just as the men were going off duty. I was chuffed to hear how my guys rushed him and popped off a few shots. The activity brought the police sergeant screaming down in a Landie … that also pleased me but the best was him telling Gerald to be careful. Gerald took on another section for night duty. More money in the men's kitty and less beds required.

More good news was in the offing. I'd been spending late nights alone in the pub, searching the Intaf Public Service Board rules and finally uncovered something worth sharing. I discovered that militiamen qualified for a night plus food allowance if they spent time off-station in the field. I also discovered that off-station meant a minimum number of hours physically out of the government compound area … even if it was one foot. I mean both feet, one foot out. We implemented. Now our men were working longer hours but getting paid what wasn't there before, and, by simply shifting the compound entry gate post from just inside to just outside (the guard post in front of the almost completed DC's residence was already in the TTL proper) they qualified for the off-station 'bonus'. The station's growing squatter camp provided further opportunity. In the weeks since Pat had left, the DAs' recreational soccer ground had quickly been filled with new shacks springing up, and while Sar-Major assured me that the squatters wouldn't let Gooks in we nevertheless implemented a roving patrol. Again, these were signed as

‘off-station’.

My arrangement had the District Accountant spitting.

‘Am I to be paid more, too?’ he wanted to know. I laughed. He had hardly enough work in peace time and now his only regular customer was the Sar-Major. I continued, authorising both Sar-Major and Sergeant to sign off time sheets against which the District Accountant would pay the DAs and DC’s Army men their extra money.

While we seemed to be beating our DC’s Army issues the process of getting the office shipshape was still dragging on. I knew that compared to Lewis in Lupane and John in Shabani I was inexperienced and ill prepared … information they had at their fingertips I would have to go digging for in the hundreds of Intaf procedure circulars. We needed new ideas and so once again I turned to my black staff. After all, it was a brand new game out there, one in which the rules were still being drafted. I began to ask Senior Clerk Dube[106] to handle the trickle of disputes that were coming in. Whether it was an inheritance, marriage, land dispute or a minor’s birth certificate alteration he got it to look at. Still my in-tray didn’t quiet, filling with amazing numbers of letters, often things as silly as Head Office wanting to know why a health report hadn’t been done before a General Dealer Licence had been issued by Pat. Anybody who knew the situation would have welcomed the man coming in and paying for the licence! It was money in! Again, what I could send to Dube or to the District Accountant to answer, I did, including the few customers who did come in to pay for licences and those who approached for safe custody facilities and pensions/social welfare, etc. For Sar-Major, in addition to recruiting, selecting, training and passing DC’s Army men I added discipline to his portfolio with the rider that serious cases had to be discussed with me.

And so, painstakingly, with as much thoroughness as we could muster, we

began to look outside of our immediate surroundings. The office and our residential protection were in hand. Now we had to begin to use our newly won recourses. Looking outward it seemed clear that ground coverage was our next challenge. By now, in Bikita, the network had totally disintegrated. I knew it was a ridiculous call for me to try to start anything new but at the same time the concept was so central, our efforts were so hamstrung without it, that we decided we would give it a try - we needed today's info today. By then we had no collaborators with whom to build a record; the police were closed up, SB Fort Vic had phoned and left a "'Hi" message while the Provincial JOC hadn't even acknowledged me - even though I was assured my PC and his secretary attended their meetings every night. Once again I turned to Sar-Major, putting him in charge of regrouping and recharging our informant base. He was the obvious choice. He and the elders knew the district backwards and they knew the youngsters in our army who in turn were of the district. We all had as much to lose if we got it wrong.

Over a bachelor's supper that evening, or an evening close to it, my FN on the one side of the table and the armful of files I'd been working on in the pub in the other, I found myself thinking. It dawned on me that, for perhaps the first time, in my experience at least; black and white were equally involved. Certainly we weren't on the same level, but both of us felt personal responsibility for the same situation. I saw that mine and Sar-Major's, his nephews and the bulk of our DC's Army's dreams and fears were perfectly entwined and working towards a common goal. Rhodieland and Kaffircountry, in this small way and in that small place, were on some sort of equal footing. I realised then that it seemed we were building our own Green Areas Protection Team, at least a stripped down, humble version of it, and it was working. The idea was a good one, the DC's Army men were enthusiastic. The moment was brief, but gave me fuel. From then on, with

this realisation in hand, I was conscious of not a day going by that I did not deliver my safety into the control of my men.

I realised we were doing something special and more than that, I was being the DC that the area deserved, personal faults and fuckups included.

A new feeling began to run through the office. All of us felt it. We were succeeding, modestly, but we were moving forward, our actions were having an effect. Morning parades had become a jolly affair … the men were fresher than the morning sun, they stamped their feet and slapped their rifles with gusto as they crashed through their drill routines.

We were now ready to branch out, to use our base to move into the community. We reviewed our position. I had set our priorities on getting the district healthy again. As Intaf had always done that meant physically doing, while at the same time connecting with the people - we had a lot of people, about 150,000 (I guess). I knew we had to get to and involve them without isolating any group as a favourite and most certainly I couldn't use the traditional tribal structure. To encourage the Chiefs to once again be involved would be either an act of signing their death warrants with the Gooks or having them come out openly against our Smith government. In that respect it was a simple black or white choice.

We set to work. A new going through the books revealed that Pat had left most of the maintenance money in the budget untouched and Sar-Major reported there were considerable tax monies outstanding on the council books. The question, then, was how to spend it? (Err, once collected.) I was poring over the maps, questioning and absorbing as much as I could of the district's history and from there discussing the current with Sar-Major and that incredibly bent of body but full of knowledge Sergeant. As knowledgeable as they were they had been trained to answer questions and to report happenings only, not to give advice. I learned I had to strategise

carefully. Rather than asking them I had to test my theories with them and by their reactions formulate plans.

Careful deliberation ensued and soon we had our basic solution. We decided to attempt to engage Bikita on two fronts; education on one branch and the restart of roads maintenance and development on the other. The task was daunting. We would be moving out of our comfort zone, reaching out and involving others who weren't yet part of our activities, we would be taking risks and we had little help. No other ministry had put a foot in the district for over a year and the AO had made his feelings clear – he was not pro-government. (I made my views clear too. That was the last I saw of him.) We knew our two fronts would have to expand as we went along with only our little team driving them. For me, the sweetener was that both meant I would be spending my time out in the field. Yes! After all I was by nature a field administrator, not a desk man.

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The northern portion of Bikita straddled the National Highway, running from Fort Victoria over Birchenough Bridge and on to Umtali. It was a portion filled with kopjes and more kopjes that amongst ourselves we'd taken to calling The Peppercorns. While the highway and all immediately right and left was obviously well serviced and not in any need I suggested the area deep north of the road was surely a good spot to chew on first. It had only one circular access road beginning on the western edge and coming out on the eastern. Sergeant's reaction to my first suggestion enlightened me.

'Our men are not ready for it, sir,' he exclaimed and proceeded to describe both the CT infiltration level and the terrain. I listened intently, slowly building up a functional idea of the situation.

'Not even the army have been in there in the last two years,' he expanded.

The same applied to much of the length of our eastern border with

Chipinga and the big centre chunk - the Peppercorn extension - immediately east of the office (though this was serviced periodically by the army, for the reason they could get into the fringes from the Highway, from behind my government office complex and from the network of roads in the Purchase Area to the south). It was then to the south that the staff urged I go. The road running from the Highway, past our compound, on into the southern (and major portion of the district) eventually crossed into the Lowveld and down to Chiredzi. Its repair would have the most benefit to all … the people, us of the civil authority and the army.

Decision made we now needed to move on to convince the Super Council Secretary (a rank equivalent to an SDO/ADC with pay at a white clerk level) of our Bikita African Council[107]. I walked down to the council complex - an area consisting of staff houses, offices and a meeting hall in the lee of government hill for our appointed meeting. I was happy to discover that the man Pat had put in place was certainly of ADC material. I outlined what I had in mind. He agreed that they had tax aplenty to collect - knowing that every dollar collected attracted a dollar from government - and they had money unspent on the various councils' books for maintenance and development. He also agreed on the proposed area for upgrading.

'But sir,' he added, 'there are other things we must think about.'

He began to outline his concerns for safety. Patiently and carefully he explained that he was willing to get involved but if they were seen to be co-operating with the Smith Government they would get blown away.

'It will happen,' agreed Sar-Major.

'It is a line,' he continued. 'Sar-Major's job is with the government … that is recognised, but we are not. We must be separate.'

With probing his requests solidified. His concerns were as clear as that uncommon mist that appears on low ground, disappears, and just when you

start to doubt your eyes, when the chill slaps at your shoulders, you suddenly realise your feet *are* wet. He revealed that he wasn't going to ask specifically for Gook permission to start working with the DC again, but that he would need to allow the story of the beginning of council and DC upgrading works to blow through the trees of Bikita. He was pledging his support for the good of the community but taking care to not alienate himself from the dudes really calling the shots.

'Are they really that much in charge?' I asked.

'When the government is asleep in its bed,' he replied, 'they are awake. But as to whether they are in charge or not, that is as unimportant as it changes. Bikita here is an entry point and so there is not a commander who is in place all the time. Sometimes there are just groups passing through and at other times a man is in place. Then he is in charge.'

'Well,' I replied, 'we agree. Float the word out that Intaf is going to work and if we are interfered with we will react.'

As I walked back to the office I realised I had made a serious mistake in isolating the AO. Given the position explained, his anti-Smith pro-people tune could have been an asset … but I never saw him again.

With the council sorted it was now time to find someone to actually do the work. There were plenty of contractors about with the skills, but convincing one of them to come out to Bikita … ha-ha, and the PC's secretary passed me to the Provincial Agricultural Officer. He complained he didn't know me or any willing contractors. He was equally clear in stating that he and his two senior AOs were too busy to get involved. I quietly went ballistic, but kept digging and finally unearthed some names. The common thread through all was that they no longer worked Bikita, it was too dangerous. One guy said that with a danger premium and army escort he would come.

‘Great!’ I said. ‘We have a local army here,’ and explained the progress of the DCs men. He laughed and told me to shove it.

Chief Superintendent Don, phoning to find out how I was doing, laughed too, but with me.

‘Coincidence!’ he cried. ‘There’s this fellow Ron who is looking to start his own outfit to do exactly the work you’re offering.’ Ron was in Wankie. My wife was there, our marriage was there.

I drove back on a Friday night with three objectives: Persuade Lib to come to Bikita, at least to see what it was like and hopefully convince her to stay, meet Ron, and finally celebrate friend Hamish’s engagement party.

I got two out of three. Ron was ready to start *Triple R: Ron’s Roads and Reconstruction* ASAP, and Hamish’s party was in full swing when I arrived. Being there was wonderful, an awesome respite from the loneliness of Bikita. He being a PATU stick leader I was able to catch up with everyone bar Don. SB Superintendent Ian, impeccable in his Canadian lumberman check shirt and brown trousers, was easy to spot in the throng and I was happy to sidle over to him.

‘Things aren’t going our way,’ he said drily, those all-knowing eyes of his hinting at unknown secrets, ‘and we aren’t responding in the right way, either.’ His words gave me the willies. ‘I’m expecting a move order,’ he announced.

‘Promotion?’

‘High jump more like it. You’ve come to meet Ron, eh?’ he intoned. ‘He’s a good man. He’ll get the job done.’

As for my third objective; Lib was staying. She reminded me I had come to see her and had spent my entire Saturday and night with work. She was right. Soon day broke and it was time for me to head back.

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In order to run Bikita I knew we needed supervisory staff in the field. For all his determination and fitness Sar-Major was 50 plus and the bumping and walking at 20 year pace was taking its toll, leaving me with just his nephew, 'Senior Sergeant', and two one month experience corporals. We weren't coping. In those early days we had already come under fire twice meaning a simple trip to view a piece of road needed supervised and planned protection. And there was so much to do. As with most things, once looking for it, an answer came. Provincial Security Liaison Officer Ian sent me a message one day letting me know that National Servicemen[108]were now being allocated to Intaf and that the Province did get allocations. If I wanted any, I had better squeal. I wasn't the PC's favourite, but perhaps?

I did squeal and when the PC hesitated I reminded him that he and agriculture had staff coming out of their ears.

'I'm alone,' I insisted. It was true.

'They're busy,' he humphed, but did promise something and soon I got what I'd asked for. Just as his weapons, though, there were some issues with the gear. Indeed, the realisation that Rhodieland had sunk, with only a straw to breathe through came with the Rhodie part time males allocated to me. They were termed 'operational para-soldiers' – presumably meaning they could look after themselves. The first three ambled in at around midday one day, giggling like kids and on their way from the police camp. They hadn't seen me because I was striding back from a late lunch. Seeing three uniformed, armed men ambling, giggling and punching at each other's shoulders threw me. I knew I shouldn't interfere in police business but when one of them started dragging his rifle on the ground I saw red. Things went pear and they ran back up to the police station.

An hour later they were back, now presented by Sar-Major as my first crop of Vadets. Men who Fort Victoria claimed were trained were only good

for keeping the white office staff company. One of the handful of good guys I did receive, however, turned out to be from that first intake. He, a Funeral Parlour Director (I called him Undertaker), was determined to prove me wrong and himself worthy. He made up one of three men who chose to come back time and again to do their few weeks service before disappearing for home.

With the road plans in hand, for the moment at least, it was time to concentrate on our plans for local education. I kept at the schools whenever I could - whenever we passed by and there was a little time to spare I stopped in. My message to them was always

'We need an educated society, that today's children would fix this war and that anyone who took away the right of education was the real terrorist.' It implied, of course, that I was well educated. My DC in 1971 had pointed out that that wasn't the case, but I was more educated than they. The headmasters I spoke to were similarly disadvantaged but they shared my feel. Talk always led to more talk coming from inside me. Most often I got to address either the kids or the teachers, both of whom were great. One experience particularly sticks in my memory, a day when I really felt the attention was paying off, that we were getting through. As we approached a school Sar-Major and I watched the Headmaster decide it was indeed my Citroen coming up the road. Satisfied, he waved, spun about and dispatched the two ladies beside him left and right.

'Oi,' I snapped to Sergeant Major, pulling up sharply. 'Trouble?'

'So-kay sir, they are teachers …'

'Yes, but …'

'Sir!' he said, 'we know who is who, and we told you so years ago.' I looked across at Sar-Major. He was staring fixedly ahead, his neck muscles taut. 'So-kay sir, I know them.'

Sar-Major was correct. The teachers had zipped off to round up some of the students … school was closed for the day. The Head implored we be patient. Soon there were a dozen kids lined up in the dust of their play area. With the warming autumn sun dipping into evening they sang a song, for me. Afterwards one of the kids stepped forward and presented me with the double page carefully pulled from a school exercise book. Folded into a card it was filled with pressed and labelled grasses. They had actually prepared a gift in the belief that I would pitch up. Clearly, I've never forgotten it. It wasn't long after that I found out that that school was very close to the spot where Field Assistant Mynardt and his three Messengers were killed in the weeks before I took over from Pat.

If I ever classified myself as having a bee-in-my-bonnet about anything singularly specific in this amazing wide world of ours, it was education. The future of the country depended on it and here we were at the tipping stage. I wasn't in the position to make any changes for the better but I could at least work to ensure that kids stayed at school, that the council continued with their share of the funding and that there were teachers. True too was another reason. Back in Shabani days DC John and I had speculated on the effect of having thousands of kids wandering about if the schools closed down. If that happened, we mused, they would be pro-Black Nationalist within days simply because the White Nationalist, the RF, would offer nothing in return.

Not all school visits were uplifting. Sometimes we would arrive at a school to find it filled with only the smell of people gone and, for a soldier, an intimidating silence. Sar-Major would never allow me to get out of in the car alone. Together we would look about, jiggle a door here and peek at a classroom there before proclaiming loudly, 'nobody here,' or, 'they're watching you.' On that note I would stride up and down on the side with the deepest thicket and give my prepared talk exalting education.

‘We need an educated society,’ I’d begin. ‘Today’s children would fix this war. Anyone who takes away the right of education is indeed the real terrorist...’ and so forth. I didn’t feel silly talking to the trees; Sar-Major was convinced kids and teachers were hiding there, watching.

One day he and I came upon a hospital that was lying empty, dusted over. Not a hinge was stolen or window broken. I boldly marched in. The cold hit me immediately. Two operating theatres looked terrifyingly complete with their great ceiling lights, operating tables and trolleys. The building rang horribly with the noise of my filling footsteps. Outside Sar-Major pooped the horn of my Citroen. It was the only time I ever saw the man off balance. He couldn’t handle that desolate healing centre.

‘It is not right’.[109] I knew that on that day nobody wanted this war. People wanted attention and confirmation that they were acceptable. I felt it.

In those opening months I was spending varying portions of my evening down at the white community club pub. I always took work with me; mostly it was done, though sometimes I just played darts against me and myself and in between throws wondered at what sort of parties had happened here. Back at the lodgings there was hot water for a nightly bath and then only solitude once I had padded down the old, broken lino to bed. I wondered about god then, a lot, mostly pondering whether he could see me in bed and what my fate was to be. Duty called, that I knew and I knew too that I was messing with probability, believing I would come back from a trip to the interior every single time. It was a thought that surfaced; ugly, laced with depression and loneliness. I would watch it uneasily, twitching and turning before allowing it to sink back down below. Then I would sleep. One pity-me-late-night I walked back to the house from the club, turned on my heel and went back to the office to phone Lib before I forgot her name. To do that I had to walk past the Telephone Exchange hut and I ignored the light throwing out of

the hut door. From the office I called the Telephonist and asked he connect me with Wankie. I waited.

'I cannot get through, sir.'

'Well, try again, please,' I slurred. He did and the same response came back, and again. Finally I gave up and went to bed.

The next morning I went over to their little hut.

'Why couldn't you get through last night?' I asked.

With a careful, quiet and caring tone the two men suggested that as I was trying to get back together with my wife, and that as she wasn't too enamoured about Bikita, and as my condition was somewhat … delicate, it wasn't a good time to phone. A light went on in my mind. These two guys knew everything in the district. I was lucky I listened this time - and understood - what they had (gently) said to me. Of course there was always the possibility that they were passing information the other way too. There were several telephones in the TTL. But that analysis I left to Sar-Major.

The loneliness continued to build. That Christmas I decided enough was enough. I shot off, telling Sar-Major to take over, and arrived in Essexvale at Lib's parent's home where all, including my parents, were just sitting down for the family meal. As happy as they all were to see me, the chorus was, 'are you that busy that you can't spend more time with us?' The truth was, yes I felt I had to be in Bikita and preferably in the field. That was my duty and, it was, after all, my choice to be a DC.

Sombre news coloured our meal. Bishop Schmitt had been murdered in Lupane, my old stomping ground. It seemed he and some nuns had been driving between Gwaai siding and the main Falls road when they were held up by a Terr in full camo. He'd demanded money and they'd said they had none. He shot them all down, starting with the Bishop, riddling them all, one by one.[110] It wasn't long after that more tragedy struck. At Wankie PATU

had been hit hard … half of Hamish's stick had been blown away in an ambush. I heard that after an idiotic single vehicle pick-up the Gooks took out three of eight in the back of the truck. The guys in the middle, sitting in seats two, four and six were, understandably, traumatised.

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Bikita was going ballistic. It was early 1977 and I and the rest of the station were gathered at the main road side, staring. A massive dump truck was rolling past. Behind it came Ron and Barry in a Land Rover, and behind them, a freshly painted canary-yellow galleon grader. Behind that was the even more awesome sight of a full size bulldozer, battered and scratched, the paint work dulled, a massive machine that looked ready for anything, on a low loader thundering behind. None had seen such a powerful machine combination up close. The 'dozer,' looking down from such a height had the children running up their mothers' skirts as they too backed away. My men were so proud to be ordered to climb up and be part of the travelling band.

The last pieces of the getting-the-machines-here puzzle hadn't been easy. Ron had arrived for a preliminary inspection six weeks before, and while full of gusto he'd also dropped the bombshell that he had no start-up capital at all. Bearing his recommendations in mind and seeing our new roads cambered and drained in my mind's eye I'd taken action, asking the District Accountant to pay out an advance on the first month's work to allow Ron to establish his cash flow.

'No.'

'Yes,' was my response before grabbing my DO and getting him to perform his first executive action ever. Together we counter signed the government cheque, the magic two signatures forcing the District Accountant to grab it and take it over.

'I'm under duress,' he grumbled, writing it out in his impeccable hand.

[111]

I decided too that once we had a price we would pay for the deposit on the purchase of a bulldozer and a grader and take it from there. Now that day had arrived.

The convoy roared, the kids shrieked, and all got straight to work, chugging immediately out of town so that that night we were camped in position to start first thing in the morning. Super Sec was a godsend. As agreed he had recruited the labour gang that, although strictly not needed by Ron (because the grader could cut drains), was vital in terms of community relations and overall growth. The process wasn't straight forward. As anticipated each and every labour man on selection had to go back into the bush to get permission from the resident Gook commander to work. From then on, though, things settled to only the appointed boss-boy having to go, reporting movement, progress, etc. There was never a problem.

When Barry wasn't on site the bulldozer and grader operator, the amazing Jeremiah, was in charge. This man knew his onions and wasn't slow to put me in my place. It wasn't that he saw himself as white, he just adopted an attitude that said,

'Yip, I am black but this is me and I do know bulldozers and graders like no one else in the world.' You've heard of the man who could lift a tickey with a grader blade? That was Jeremiah with a bulldozer.

On that first day another surprise greeted us. Ron, Barry and I carried on south to re-view the work agreed on, when we were stopped by an RAR Captain coming up to see what the noise was all about. He had positioned his company on top of a kopje not far from the sub-office I had closed down. He was interested and knowledgeable not only about what we were up to but regarding the equipment my DC's Army had too.

'I was a farmer myself, until a year ago,' he told us. 'With the call-ups it

was impossible so I dropped a rank and started full time soldiering. I'll go back to the farm at some point, but for now the wife and kids have got more security.'

He invited us for tea in his kopje-post. We parked at the bottom alongside his vehicles and walked up. Ron meandered off alone. By the time tea was served a smiling Ron arrived back and immediately boosted Intaf.

'I can make you a road to about 3/4s of the way,' he offered.

Captain Farmer beamed. He slapped his hand into Ron's.

'When you're in the area I'll take some of your Army boys and give them some training time among my men … we can rotate them between us.'

We left the meeting smiling. Our work was paying off. Energy and effort was inspiring more. Our world was moving and shaking.

Arriving back at the office, though, the news that Dr Decker, the missionary, had been shot execution style at Lupane's St Luke's Hospital greeted me. We heard that the Gooks had come into her mission and asked for money. She said, we heard, that she didn't have any with her but would go to fetch some somewhere close by. We heard that they shot her as she was going to fetch it. She had attended to me when I had smashed my back.[112] It made no sense at all. First the Bishop and team, now the diminutive doctor. It made headlines all over the world. To us it seemed that ZAPU were finished, joined with ZANU to be recorded in history as beyond saving. Up to that point ZAPU hadn't stooped to the level of outright viciousness I had heard of happening up in the Mashonaland war zone. Now they had surpassed ZANU's evil. We had to march on, I decided, we had to defeat these animals.

A few months later Lib arrived. Things seemed complete, all the different strands of my life finally coming together. We moved into the incomplete but liveable DC's Residence and she took over as my secretary and general office

manager. Given that it was now pretty much procedure she and the old Sergeant sort of ran village protection when Sar-Major wasn't about. Just as she'd settled in though, the Gooks mortared the village. The bombs came from the southern slope below the police camp (near to the council offices) and exploded on the northern side, just to the front of the forward guard post of our house, in the guava orchard. It was the farthest fence corner on the police line but close enough for Lib to leap into the sandbagged hallway (a late addition by the builders) and near enough for the police to spray Lib and the house and our compound, firing in the wrong direction. Thank goodness we were conducting hide and seek training around the courthouse when it all happened. We were ideally placed to see the mortar arc and to phone the duty police constable. Soon the shooting stopped.

Before Lib could give the mortaring too much thought another addition to our growing village family arrived. One hot day, just like all the others, a short, seriously overweight and bearded man waddled into the office. Wordlessly he handed Lib a note from the PC. It was to the point:

'He is a mechanic and he wants a job,' it said. 'His wife is a vet.'

I had just returned from a night out in the bush and was getting out of the bath when Lib brought the new man, Jan, up to the house.

'I've interviewed him,' she whispered, 'he seems to be what we need … a mechanic with it sounds like, quite a bit of military experience. He's ex-Congo, and RLI.'

That sounded good, I thought, the more skills we could use the better.

'But,' added Lib, whispering even lower and eyeing the soap suds in my water, 'he's the one that needs a bath. Wow!'

He sweated a lot did Jan but why he was wordless remains a mystery. He spoke picturesquely and often, as often as he smiled and sought to soften bad news.

‘It’s completely fucked … pardon Lib, but you know what it’s like … me n Brian’ll fix it.’

Brian, our coloured, unqualified but very qualified mechanic made things work and carry on working. Jan was also able to assist Sar-Major and he took on a number of field tours. His diminutive Swiss wife was indeed a qualified vet. She was an asset to the now eight strong permanent-white village. To add to them, Ron’s wife Moe and child moved in a few weeks later. Lib couldn’t let them stay down in the bachelor’s Mess; Moe took over half our house. It seemed with our new station little family we could truly take on the world.

Around the same time another man arrived; our new MiC (Member In Charge). When he flew past, kicking dust and gravel over us on our mini parade ground, I was surprised and excited. Surprised that Senior Sergeant would drive so fast and excited because I had been dreaming of a Doug and Rod partnership taking on the district. My mouth watered. The police had a near *platoon* strength of trained constables, plus vehicles, radios and whatever … a grand marriage to be. The S/O (Senior Officer) acting in the post had kept his head down except to disappear when off duty, leaving the inexperienced P/O alone. Perhaps, now, I thought, things could be different. I strode up with a bounce in my stride.

The Inspector greeted me with his little wife at his side and daughter in his arms. I prepared to make my first play, to get it all going.

‘I’m not taking part in the war,’ he said, baby on hip, his wife nervously clutching his hand. ‘I’m a civilian commander. I’ll keep the law within the boundary of the government compound, and of course prosecute all transgressions that come to my attention … which I’m able to substantiate,’ he added, being as firm as he could.

Jan and I stood open mouthed. That was that. The only time I saw the Inspector was when he presented detention orders, from SB somewhere, for

my signature.

Paradise

‘You are rubbish! Use your own money to fix the road! Don’t come and take mine for a holiday in Salisbury!’

We were in the midst of a tax collection and found ourselves cornered by an old Shona woman in her hut, sitting in her rocking chair. She was giving us the tongue lashing that none of the younger members of the tribe would dare to, chief reason being because they’d run away and she, being too old, was left behind. In an unending stream of verbal that bounced far ahead of my interpreter and had Senior Sergeant ungraciously rolling about laughing she swore that I had reduced the white government to the level of the Matabele raiders she remembered from the days of her youth.

‘What are you doing helping him, young Moyo?’ she asked, pointing to one of the men. We shuffled and grinned. What do you say?

Some months before I had sent word out generally and widely that (once again) taxes were due, and that the DC expected payment. The floated word stipulated that, on behalf of the council (here the wording needed to be clear that I was doing the ordering) we would arrive at a kraal complex and the money had better be available. I allowed time for the message to spread both locally and to the many employed in Fort Victoria, beyond and down in Chiredzi, and then we started.

We began by having the office and the council open for business on Sundays (the day folk returned to their work places after a weekend home), stopping busses, and actual field collections. Our method was to descend on a clump of kraals early in the morning and walk through, calling for payment while the council set up their table beside my vehicles. Invariably the residents of the huts not immediately caught would run. Invariably we used threats of taking their kettles and cattle to get them to return. And so the old

lady.

With time we became more efficient, smoother in operation but as the TTL folk warmed to me we got less effective. Once I employed a 70 man sweep through the central Purchase Land and adjoining TTL. It was a training cum counter-insurgency operation that I hoped would also yield far higher tax collection results. The night before we'd put five 'stops' in place … groups of five men just off strategic paths and roads beyond the point I was to close down the sweep. We went in quietly but if they had spotted us it wouldn't be an issue as we weren't stealth operators. Our goal was for them to not know we were starting the round-up from the other side of the Purchase Lands. The 70 man surprise sweeping them in from five miles on the far side would have them queuing up to pay, or so we thought.

I collected nothing; outfoxed - could be - but very strange that no one was at home. Our counter insurgency kraal searches found a pair of boots and a Tokarev pistol. The kraal belonged to a known ZANU member, a wealthy fellow, a most unlikely communist, who was never out of his small truck. To the shock of Senior Sergeant I ordered the pistol put back. I left a note that he was to come to the office. My reasoning was it would be obvious we had found it, now let them fight among themselves as to why I had left it. When he arrived at the office I left him sitting waiting for hours without a word passing, then I made a noisy show of thanking him for his time, out on the very public verandah. He was a neutered politician thereafter.

Overall we collected far more taxes than I expected which meant Ron' Roads was free to keep moving forward. We'd now reached the point where the road had once split and gone west into Zaka, my neighbouring district. Ron reckoned he could repair the bridge and the foothold into the road on the Zaka side. A good enough reason to visit my brother DC, and so my land rover was manhandled over the river and off I sped, a couple of guys in the

back and Sar-Major with the huge corporal Ben, a powerful young man I had inherited and Sar-Major had trained, riding shotgun.

Henry, the DC of Zaka, was shocked to see me. I was shocked to find his office open for business in the style of Intaf circa 1968, except no customers.

'Who do you thinks' going to train my men?' he asked, 'only my ADF Field Officer has had any military training, and he's no teacher.'

As big and solid as he was, Henry was no believer in war. I gathered the same applied to his husband and wife team of ADC and DO … they must have been the only such team in the country. However, as frightened as he was about travelling about he saw the merit in beginning an inter-district relationship.

'I'm happy to go half on replacing the bridge,' he declared, and we shook on it.

It was the last time I saw him. He had a heart attack at his desk.[113]

The drive home was long and soon quiet. Sar-Major dozed, I watched the road edge. There was very little bush left … it was mostly ploughed or barren and blowing dust. Suddenly Corporal Ben stuck his long arm in front of my nose as he pointed out of the window.

'Oh, sorry sir,' he exclaimed excitedly, 'my kraal is over there. I could so easily have been born in Zaka. My grandfather was.'

I looked out, wondering on that same thing, how arbitrarily it seems destinies and futures are made.

'Me and wife trying to have baby, sir!' he added, flashing me his huge smile.

'Wow-whee!' was my immediate response, followed closely by thoughts of safety and concern. 'You must bring her into Bikita village just as soon as she's pregnant,' I advised, but he disagreed.

'Family is very important,' he said, 'she must be with them. Also, the

Gooks hardly ever come over on to this side, sir. Zaka has had very little trouble, sir. The terrorists have no need to go there. They come through Bikita and on into Fort Victoria.'

***

As much as we were progressing and our projects were working we were still being stifled by head office.

One day I was called through to Fort Victoria for a routine meeting. I arrived on time but after a late start and the revelation of a non-event I got niggled and made a comment about the PC's rather bloated staff.

'We could use some of these men out with us,' I ended.

'That's all good and well,' replied Mrs Secretary, 'but these two (pointing to two AOs) are in the Provincial Cricket team, in fact he's the opening bat, so it won't help having them out there, will it? Further,' and she smiled, 'these boys are working a full eight hour day and are entitled to their off time.'

'Mine are working 24 hours seven days a week,' I replied with just as stinging a smile, 'and while it's impressive that your man's opening the batting, I doubt he could do much damage down with us, anyway. Bullets are a tad faster than balls, even the slow ones.'

Driving back I knew I'd put my foot in it, but, hell.

Blow me if on the following Monday I was told that they, the AOs, were coming to review and report on the work done by Ron's Roads following an audit query … an audit query that obviously originated from my District Accountant.

They arrived at the office in a sparkling new Leopard, a steel protected mine proofed six man carrier. They were armed and webbed to the hilt, sporting dark glasses –wow-whee. I wanted to pull their legs about being dressed as the soldiers they had told me they weren't, but let it go. When they

refused tea-and-bikkies and instead leapt into the Leopard I thought they were genuinely enthusiastic and so was happy to take them for the ride. But … oops, when we arrived at the Zaka river bridge for the first inspection they refused to get out of the vehicle. We went on and that's how it went. Arriving at our end-point they still refused to get out. We continued the last kilometre to have a late lunch at the now back in temporary use sub-office. Captain Farmer, Ron, Barry, the Vadet and I sat on the verandah with our tea and sandwiches discussing our next move … a simple landing strip to serve the south, in between wondering what those town AOs were up to. Finally the Captain went over and engaged with the guests. We watched as under his tutelage first one then the other crept out, stood on the back mounting of the Leopard, had a quick pee, then disappeared back into the depths.

'They're petrified,' reported Captain Farmer, grinning. 'The only reason they're here is to confirm Ron has actually done the work!'

We were happy to see the back of them and happy to get back to our work. And, despite my growing reputation for being an uncivil hothead word of what we were doing was getting around. When Dennis Connolly became the new Intaf Chief I invited him to visit and he agreed without hesitation. I had been at the end of his rough tongue when he was a senior DC in Matabeleland South and I a wet nosed puppy serving PC Bawden in Bulawayo, and so was therefore proud and anxious to show him exactly what we had achieved so far. By the time he touched down on Pat's rough emergency airstrip everyone (bar the police) had gotten involved. The ladies including the Accountant's wife had baked and set up the tea things in our garden quad. Jan (explosives), Ron (ex-stunt man) and Barry and Vadet Sargent Blair (unbridled enthusiasm) had pretty much taken over stage managing and we put on a full 'training show' to knock all of our socks off. Chief Connolly watched as Senior Sergeant's CTs ambushed a DC convoy,

the DC's men countered, immediate action (IA) ambush drills went banging out with beautiful precision, 80 men involved with live ammunition (special allocation of five rounds per man) and homemade bombs popped, snapped and boomed. It wasn't long before Mr Connolly's pilot (we'd flown together in Wankie) decided to get in on the show, 'dive-bombing' the scene and adding atmosphere. What we presented was pretty much as was happening to us on a regular basis now, with real gooks. Afterward, back at the office, Sar-Major and Sergeant had the 30 older (mainly guard-duty) men present a 10 minute parade exercise spectacle. Again, all the men were inspired by the occasion and performed with energy none of us had seen. Finally we sat down to tea in the office garden.

'How is it,' asked Chief Dennis, his cup aside for the moment, 'that you don't have any graduates of DC Alex's Intaf military school[114]?'

'I don't know anything about it,' I replied. And I didn't.

Surprised he declared that it should be remedied. Suddenly the afternoon was over. He asked me one last thing.

'What are the men's water bottle holders made of?'

'Macramé,' I said, eyeing our cast off bottles dangling at the men's waists from a collection of belts, 'made by their wives and girlfriends.'

We were to learn that Chief Connolly had been very impressed with our presentation, the work done to date, and embarrassed. It wasn't just the handmade water bottle holders that got him, or the few remaining pick handles still being clutched, but the way the men wore their throw-out uniforms with pride.

The next day the PC (himself) phoned to say that I would soon reap the benefits of Alex's work. We didn't. Instead, a few weeks later there was a sudden call from Head Office Audit Division. They wanted to 'clarify issues'.

‘Am I breaking any rules?’ I asked and then immediately phoned the PC. He reassured me.

‘You’re not breaking any rules,’ he agreed, but added that ‘those’ over whom he had no control were hinting heavily at coming to audit the entire office plus the council books.

I knew where this was coming from; those cricket playing bastards. Listening to the PC’s voice on the phone, with the flush of our success so fresh in all of us, I was certainly put out.[115]‘Do they have the AOs’ report on the road works completed, yet?’ I asked. He mumbled that they had said that what they saw was good.

‘Except to wave their little willies they only saw the inside of the Leopard,’ I snapped.

‘At least you have a Leopard …’

‘… blown up, scrap, now deceased,’ I roared, not giving him a chance to finish (we had had a meeting with a landmine in the intervening time).

Troubles with my ‘betters’ were to continue. As I worried my head about getting Bikita and Zaka better protected I heard that Captain Farmer had left the Kopje, replaced by someone new. I drove along to say hello and found a young 2nd Lieutenant in charge, taking an ‘exercising run’ down the Ron-made road with my Intaf National Serviceman (who should have been with Jeremiah) alongside. Our meeting did not go well.

‘Will you be able to keep training my men?’ I asked.

‘Perhaps,’ he replied, then, ‘no, I doubt it. There’ll have to be some changes.’

‘Changes?’

‘For one, they’re not in line with our infantry training and I certainly don’t share with Intaf where my men are patrolling …’

As usual, things escalated, fast.

‘How bout I bulldoze you and your men back up the hill?’

‘You’ll be hearing about this,’ he squeaked.

‘Twit, come down here!’ I said, ready to readjust his face for him, but he wouldn’t. Angrily I set off back to the office. On the way a chopper flew over going south and minutes later it returned going north. I knew what it was for. Clearly the boy-soldier had squealed again, this time to JOC.

I arrived back at the office at around nine to find an instruction waiting for me. I was to meet the PC in Fort Victoria the next day and bring Lib along. This was a new tone and with no choice we went, travelling early the next morning (but after the busses), me still seething but calming rapidly to a feeling of “to hell with it.” I couldn’t care in just the same way as going out I now no longer cared about getting shot – god’s will, fate, what will be will be.

On arrival a man introducing himself as the Acting PC immediately whipped us off to the hotel where reception shot us up to their one and only suite. Lib and I were uncertain, never before a suite for either of us. We were guests of the Minister of Internal Affairs.

‘We’ll have to go to the JOC,’ said this new man, ‘for Doug to explain his behaviour to the commander. Doug,’ he continued, ‘I certainly agree with you, but I’m afraid we’re going to have to entertain their gripes. We’ll have to let things be with the army and work Bikita as best we can.’ I agreed to put my best foot forward with the army boys.

Easier said than done. At the JOC I discovered the Brigade Major was my course officer at the School of Infantry seven years before. Relaxing drinking coffee and ‘reading’ Playboy were more army than I had seen in one place since my platoon commander days. Radios lay abandoned on trestle tables and vehicles, trucks and Landies were parked outside their super hanger. The dressing down was a to and fro argument followed by an according to script

‘let’s-work-together-on-this-chaps’.

‘How was it they didn’t assist Bikita?’ With a dose of pity-me coming on I wondered, ‘how was it that I, with a Public Service Board rank of Colonel, had to drive through a Terr controlled area with my wife to a complaint session when the complainant puppy was helicoptered in in a helicopter I was told wasn’t in existence?’

We put it away. After a night on the Minister of Internal Affairs with the Acting PC playing host Lib and I drove home.

Days later, weeks, we were surveying a new project down south west on the district boundary. Suddenly Corporal Ben heard a squawk from that same young Loot’s outfit on the radio.

‘What’s up, bro?’ asked Ben in Shona, our rare radio in his hand.

‘Contact!’ came the distorted, frantic reply. ‘Contact! They’re running down the border fence line! Moving in, engaging. Over.’

I calculated the Gooks must be coming south towards us but well east. If we could get over to the kopjes overlooking the fence line we would be a well-positioned stop.

‘Affirmative!’ came the RAR section response, ‘quick as you can. In hot pursuit.’

We dumped our landie and took off like sprinters. Every now and again FN fire motivated us … we ran hard, and up, ignoring the thorns and slips on the sharp granite.

‘They’re moving!’ bellowed the radio, ‘contact! Contact!’

More rifle crackle just as we, hearts pounding, arms and legs bleeding, reached our vantage point. We scanned the north east. There, way below us, the RAR section was rolling about laughing their legs off and pointing about as though they knew where we were.

Fuck.

CRACK went my FN as I placed a pattern between their feet. They hopped off shouting with arses crimped I'm sure. Frankly, I wasn't in the mood. Oddly, though, the incident seemed to help relations between us. He came forward when I cried for help on two occasions. I guess some pressure had been released. But the pressure in Bikita was increasing.

Days later, a day within a day, a day like any other in that time, Senior Sergeant, three sections, a land rover and Jeremiah with the bulldozer had settled to sleep over at a school as the sky began to darken. As the sun went in the west so suddenly the east lit up. I was at the main works when we heard the crackle and pop. RAR were long since packed and away, my guys were out there alone. With Vadet Undertaker next to me we took a short cut along an old donkey cart track, one hill, the next, next, and then there, down below on the plain was Senior Sergeant. In outline he was bellowing to his men to stand firm as what seemed to be hundreds of rifles flashed and roared from the long ridge several hundred metres to his east - the moment still burned to my brain.

'We must get down!' shouted Undertaker, ready to move. I stayed his arm. I knew our ex clerk now DC's Army Senior Sergeant (pay subsidised from goat herding) would be setting his men in place. As we leapt back into our vehicle the Gooks started with tracer bullets, their electric light blinding the eye. With the hill behind they seemed to fire out of a black hole while above them the stars were appearing, one by one. As we set off machine gun pounding was augmented with the start of mortar thumps, ka-boom as they exploded at the front of our lines.

We drove into the school grounds to see wild sparks flying from Jeremiah's pipe. The old genius bulldozer operator was casually lying up against his cool steel dozer blade, watching the proceedings.

'Fa-ken idiots!' he shouted as he waved me through, 'the whole lot of

you.’

I was chuffed. There was Senior Sergeant instructing the men on judging distance, allowing one man a shot at a time while the others watched and learnt.

‘Lights out,’ I bellowed, adding, ‘you and your bloody pipe too Jeremiah’.

‘Sir!’ he snapped, and turned the other way to puff.

The Gooks were lost without a reference point. As their firing died down Senior Sergeant pulled the men up, saluted me and said, ‘he’s inside, sir.’

‘Who?’

‘The Schools’ Inspector, sir.’

I peeped inside the classroom. Squashed into a kiddie’s desk and chair was a fat guy, my size.

‘Umuntu lo err … u u uya-bang!’ grinned Sergeant, ‘Mambo!’

‘Scared? What are you trying to say?’ I asked a little sharper than I intended. I was in a hurry but here he was trying to speak Ndebele (with a splash of Afrikaans). *‘Umuntu uyesaba kakhulu iNkosi’* is correct Sergeant.

‘Uye? Sir. Not *uya?*’

‘Sergeant Nephew! Where did he come from?’

‘He was here sir. He asked how to get hold of the headmaster and then the shooting … yes. He’s very scared sir.’

I could see that … the man was oozing white.

‘I am pleased you have come,’ added Sergeant with a smile that lifted his scalp and his tangle of hair. ‘I will make tea.’

I saw the outline of an extra landie parked beside the tree. The inspector had obviously come bumbling through Bikita on his own. Of course I couldn’t keep the vehicle. He was escorted to the highway the next morning, gone for good.

Another day, another month and we were alone, totally alone. All RAR,

apart from the totally unpredictable in and out visits by the Major, were gone. We were up at the northern edge of the Purchase Area, at the southern entry to the central Peppercorns, collecting tax. Under sporadic fire the entire day Vadet Sergeant Blair, Rus and myself were fighting with our transport – unloading and pushing, praying and cursing, first this then the next engine refusing until finally, nothing.

‘Up that tree,’ ordered Senior Sergeant to his lightest and tallest militia man (this day we had a working radio). The chap went scurrying up, a sputnik aerial in the hand with cable trailing down. We managed to get our police on the line. They called the Inspector.

‘Use code,’ commanded Bob on the other end of our feeble radio wave.

‘What code?’ I barked, ‘this is your Intaf. We need help!’

‘I need the correct code!’

I effed him. I pleaded with him. No he wouldn’t send his men but he would send word down to Sar-Major. Great. ‘Tell him,’ I said, grasping, ‘to get Jan to come fix us.’

Four hours later dim headlights came puttering over the rise. I was expecting the tractor. It wasn’t. Instead we saw the homemade, Jan’s ingenious self-constructed anti mine vehicle. Strictly for emergencies only, the original chassis meant it was only for tar roads.

‘Sar-Major!’ I cried. ‘You shouldn’t have!’

‘I needed the air, sir. Brian doesn’t know the way.’

Under his 12 volt lamp assistant mechanic Brian fiddled about. It was past one in the morning when he had the truck and two Landies in formation to pull each other up the steep hill.

‘Split the load,’ I shouted as Sar-Major and I, sitting in the comfort of the Landie, set off.

BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!

AK47 fire was slamming into the home made, armoured box, echoing terrifyingly, the men inside nearly made deaf for life.

RAT-A-TAT-A-RAT-A-TAT-TAT-RAT! went our return into their muzzle flashes from the dark truck following, shutting them up and giving us a breather. The drizzle returned. It was close on four am. We trundled along the muddying up road and slowly rounded a corner. Suddenly the front wheel on the metal box collapsed, mega tons of metal rolling half onto its roof. Brian screamed, his fingers crushed under the metal rim, all of the buckled weight of the roof box bearing down on them.

‘Corporals! Guards! Positions!’ Sar-Major barked at the gawking men, rain pelting down. Three went waddling out onto the wet road forward of the truck to check the corner, they didn’t make it.

WHOOOOOOOOOSH!

A TTL bus came tilting around the corner, as only these busses can, with the chassis following the bend, the cabin attempting the opposite, bearing down on us. That the driver stopped is a tribute to his and the skill of all such bus drivers who ply the rural roads of Africa, but none had time to congratulate. As quick as he had the bus stopped the man was on his knees before the three guards, pleading for his life, their rifles over him, the bus headlights bright behind the rain straight in our eyes. Shadows flitted from the bus, some into the light and sure as nuts, some into the dark and away down the slope.

I watched as Brian’s hand was prized free with the bus’ jack, the screaming restarting as blood returned. I looked at all the bus passengers standing around watching, chatting with our men, all indistinguishable, and thought of our enemy in the dark all around us, indistinguishable.

The following day, while on late parade, we received a summons from the police citing the “assistant mechanic for driving without a licence”.

I charged inside. The PC said I could do nothing about it. Later, I asked Bob Plod why?

'It's the law,' he replied.

'I take it you observed the crime from your gate or did you go "specially" to the fence overlooking my office and watch?'

We, my little team and I, we had a plan, we had hope on our horizon based on our successes. It wasn't to last. May had arrived and autumn had drawn in. Our southern RAR unit under the young loot was gone too. The Major and his now-and-again short RAR visits to our compound were less frequent and when he was there we hardly had time to compare notes, to talk of common friends … we never even had an evening beer together. The army, or our JOC certainly, were clearly working on the premise that if they drove, made dust, unpacked and packed, the CT information stream would get confused. Not good thinking. When he arrived he rarely stayed longer than a week. Our police force remained behind their fence and that was noted by the CT network too. The area between us and the Mozambique Border was essentially no man's land … shoot on sight. Indeed, now in the corridor between Mozambique through the combined Bikita and Zaka districts right up to the JOC's door in Fort Victoria the only fighting force was my DC's Army. I was the only fully trained military man in the entire zone. All of us knew it. Outside of Gook run districts everything was completely distorted. Firstly by the Rhodesian Front driven media which pretended 'all's well' and secondly by the style and standard of living of Rhodies. The journey from Bikita to Fort Victoria was like moving in a science fiction situation-warp from one zone into another. My wife, Kathy, Mrs District Accountant and Mrs Jan had been mortared and the DC's village peppered with bullets (the bullets courtesy of the police). For the ladies a simple task like shopping was to put your life in the hands of the Lords, yet the PC's secretary, in the course

of making small talk, found it fit to tell Lib about the niggle of having to attend daily JOC meetings, how her shopping chores had to be fitted into lunch-breaks and Saturday mornings. The PC's office, the home of the most senior civilian representative in the city, was situated only a 40 minute drive from the operational areas yet they had absolutely no appreciation of what was happening in the district. There was no appreciation that we carried weapons to use, not for photos for the grandchildren. They didn't understand that we were dying, one by one, as our time came.

'Three SB whities are trapped in the Peppercorns,' said Lib one afternoon. Myself, Jan, Brian and Sergeant Major were in the workshop. 'According to the Patrol Officer they were ambushed around lunch time.'

We were all silent at that. The Peppercorns, any Peppercorn zone, was a no-go area for my guys.

'They need rescuing,' said Lib.

'Now we'll see Bob Plod stir,' laughed Jan, ducking back into the grease pit. The phone rang. 'There sir,' pointed Jan from behind the lead lamp. I located it on the cluttered bench and stuck the greasy handset to my ear.

'You have to help,' said Chief Inspector Jock of SB Fort Victoria, 'they're part time SB and they're in the shit.' My tone of voice was clear; *you haven't returned any of my calls.* He caught the ball. He referred to a common thread of friends in Wankie and Bulawayo, then went back to the problem.

'Look,' he was stressed, 'I didn't send them in. I don't know how they ended up there. I don't even know them except I do know they aren't pros …. pros don't usually need help.'

'Why are you calling me, we aren't pros.' Jan and Lib liked that. 'We haven't even a radio. How do we make comms with them?'

'Combined Ops Fort Victoria, the JOC,' he replied slowly and

sarcastically, ‘have, er -cough-cough, declined to go in. They’re saying the Provincial Fighting force … um, can’t risk either men or equipment … in that area … for so few.’

We were both silent. I was visualising the suicide of entering that area, and the plight of the men there now.

‘We need a favour, Doug,’ he said, ‘there’s no one else.’

‘What about you?’ I asked.

‘I haven’t a man spare, Scouts Honour … tap-tap,’ he replied, then cut my next query regarding our Inspector Plod, who had a trained team and vehicles, with him, ‘he’s refused. Provincial Police Command are shocked.’[116]

‘He has vehicles lying idle,’ I said, ‘I could take his men …’

‘Forget it,’ he cut in, ‘I’ve asked and I’m pleading with you because I know you can do it. The guys …’

He didn’t really have to say anymore. We went in. I and Sar-Major took seven men in the sandbagged Isuzu and four in the tractor and trailer. The tractor escort had a double function … it pulled that Isuzu, our only truck, up the inclines and dragged it through the muddy patches.

We weren’t exactly sure where the boys were except that their radio SOS had placed them behind my sub-office near to the circular drive through the Peppercorns north of the Fort Vic – Umtali Highway. The first entry point was directly opposite the Bikita turn-off and the second up a way near the sub-office which I had temporarily reopened because we were planning to target the road line for a tax collection. I had Petrus, our middle aged Vadet, living at the camp while patrolling the Highway and warning the residents to have their tax money ready. Reasoning that if the SB lads had gone in that way I would at least have heard from Petrus … he was under instruction to phone in from the nearby African store. I chose to go straight in. It was

evening and darkness was approaching, we only had an hour of light left.

‘Best get into the hills,’ I mused to Sar-Major, ‘establish a presence and warn the Terrs off. Then either those boys will see our lights and come to us, or we’ll find them in the morning, if they’re still breathing.’

While crossing over the highway we passed by a Ministry of Roads’ work detail patching a road-side rut. I couldn’t help but compute that these guys were all on R$35 per month, my men were on R$20 and the whities we were going in to rescue would be sitting on R$600 at least. Looking at the fully functioning long-back 10 ton truck with the road detail, no escort, I had half a mind to pinch the fucking thing.

We entered the hills. It took a while. Muddy holes gripped the Isuzu, unhooking and pulling and uphooking while she did her best with her three working, three cheering cylinders. Soon dusk hit. We had to be ever more careful. Every dodgy looking section of road Sar-Major sent four out front on foot. Then it was dark. We had to make camp. There, far front, up left, high in a kopje came flashes from a torch. If the flashes were ours it was up to the lost now to walk into us. We waited, not knowing.

Three hours later two white men came tottering in, collapsing with exhaustion and joy at the feet of our perimeter guard. Helped over to me in the centre of our spread, the light from my torch revealed a tiny, shaking fellow and a 300 lb blob.

‘Where’s the third guy?’ I asked.

‘He’s dead,’ moaned Blob while Tiny shook all the more. ‘Petrus’ dead.’

‘Petrus?’

‘Yes,’ blubbered the first. ‘We were dropped at his camp this morning. He had a landie. We thought we should…’

The story came tumbling out as we stood there in the dark. They told me that they’d commandeered sweet tempered, untrained, 40 plus Vadet Petrus

and my ADF landie for a ‘drive’ through the Peppercorns. They’d been ambushed. Petrus was gone. I cursed them. I was tired, cold and disillusioned. Boredom had cost a life.

‘He’s over, done, funeral and church for him now.’ We didn’t pause, we couldn’t because we valued all of our men. I still needed to get them out without any more casualties. We sat through the long night.

With dawn we continued through the hills and found the landie still lying immobile on a corner of no escape. Seeing the scene it was clear that Petrus would have had to have changed down to first gear to negotiate the rut, on his right a river, and his left a line of huts leaving nowhere to bolt. The Gooks would have opened fire from the huts or perhaps they had been washing in the river … both shooting points only metres from the road. Behind the huts the verdant bush would have welcomed them.

Petrus sat, still in the driver’s seat, riddled. Blob and Tiny were quiet. I ordered them to remove him, clean him and wrap him in the tarp.

The drive back was black. I was seething. We’d found them only three kilometres from the road works at the turnoff, only three kilometre’s between an area fit for road works and an area to which Fort Victoria Com-Ops couldn’t risk their ’copters or send in a trained stick of men with proper transport. On the same road, three plus just a bit more from Birchenough Bridge, was where the depressed, ‘life is one big eFF’, the Bikita Police S/O who Pat had described as a *waarige Englese man,* the man who we thought disappeared to Ft Vic when off duty, but who was in fact regularly bonking his black girl friend in a room in the ‘Hotel and General Dealers.’

Logic and reality began to settle in my mind. I was beginning to see all our activities in a new light, our attempts at forging something better against what now seemed to be a rising tide from both sides, as small, pathetic. Who, I was wondering, was really the enemy here? Who was in charge? Whose

side was I on? How come my side hadn't picked me to play with them? Logic said our local Gook commander's orders must be to leave the Hotel proprietor's clientele alone, leave the road untroubled, leave the road gangs to do their work and, thank the Lord … his Lord I guess … ignore me in my blue and white Citroen regularly shouting my mouth at schools and other meetings. Why had I survived so far? At those other meetings I soundly castigated Mugabe as the Marxist devil explaining that under Marxism there was no private ownership or place for merit which would … err … err … err come when this war was over. Why were some dying and others not? What were the rules? I reasoned the Gook Commander didn't want his Freedom Fighters having trouble at the bus queue, he didn't want money to stop changing hands at the hotel and he wanted better roads, schools and services. Who was I working for, really? Whose priorities was I really in line with? I was reeling, my reasoning breaking down in mire. I shifted my eyes from the bush of Rhodesia, the quiet kraals along the road side, the not-waving people we passed, up to the blue sky and back to Petrus' corpse, stiff now, finished, juddering as our motor rumbled along.

'Action right,' screamed Sar-Major pointing into the thick grass beyond the gravel piled into the verge.

I saw the flash of gun-metal and a black face too and another, then more in front on the corner. I stamped the Citroen brakes, hauled on the handbrake as the car went into a slide and opened the door ready to bail out, Sar-Major was already braced to roll.

'RAR!'

'What ho!' shouted a voice I knew from the seat of a mini-moke; the Major! 'I'm testing this machine. We're thinking of buying them in from Denmark or somewhere. Playing silly buggers really. Amazing suspension.'

'Did he call, "what-ho"?' I asked myself angrily as I slammed shut the

Citroen door, family car. I launched straight in, ‘Did you hear about our rescue of the SB fellows? Last week? From the Northern Peppercorns …?’

‘Not a cheep old chap. Hmn, just where were we last week?’

It was toward the end of 1977 when one night, late, with only I, me and myself in the pub, there came walking in the half size friendly P/O in full cammo dress. He was seething.

‘I’ve information about CTs nearby,’ said the shaky looking young man. His news didn’t surprise me … there were CTs everywhere, but him being there and dressed for war did. ‘The Inspector refuses to act,’ said the youngster.

‘Does he know you’re here?’

‘No, but I am off duty …’

That meant nothing … in the bush on station meant on duty even when off duty but on the premise that to check is best, I called out our Stand-by group and added Sar-Major for good measure. We bundled into two Landies (his and ours) and sped off, not going far before disembarking and walking west towards the Zaka boundary. The tension soon subsided. After a half hour it was clear the young commander was buzzing on something as he was only leading us in stumbling circles. I had two men escort him back and on home and then, seeing as we were out already and as it was a beautiful night, I decided we would wander for another hour or two. Finally, as the stars drifted to clouds and a drizzle began to fall we decided to head back. Suddenly; cries and flashes of far off lights.

Running, rushing through, darkness on all sides, huts outlined against the horizon, darkness as we climbed, more cries. We pushed hard. In daylight a five minute gap is about a kilometre for fit men, on a dark night and working in formation that K widens to as much as five. We hit the kraal. No sign of an enemy, only a weeping, bleeding and petrified Kraal Head with his distraught

family. We set to, questioning. Where? Who? Which direction to pursue? His story, when it finally emerged, cooled us in our tracks.

‘They were farmers,’ said the old man, ‘white men. They beat us and warned they would take our cattle. They complained we had stolen theirs.’

We trooped back, digesting the knowledge that instead of just missing a group of CT’s sowing discord we’d avoided a group of farmers marauding through the village, threatening to collect livestock as they went. Of course I’d heard rumours, all sorts of stories half-whispered of farmers forming their own militia’s and raiding, casting for herds that it was said were disappearing from their own farms, but it had never been real.

The next day, as an uncommon mist still shrouded Bikita north I approached the farm sharing a border with the TTL area of the night before. I had specifically come alone.

The drive from the highway was only 100 metres or so. The garden appeared dead, the homestead was similarly without warmth and the arrangement of workshop and outhouses was deserted. I climbed the unkempt steps to the front door and knocked. A dog barked. A voice scolded. I knocked again and set my nose to the opaque glass of the top of the door.

‘Who’s it?’

‘DC Bikita.’

At first I heard whoever it was shrink away, then he was berating the dog and rattling at the locks. The door swung open.

I exclaimed. He was one of the big five we first year boys had idolised at school. I couldn’t expect him to remember … there were 950 of us younger than him but the fact was certainly enough for an introduction. He didn’t recognise me. We settled to a coffee.

‘Yes, we are losing stock,’ said Farmer P, ‘and yes, we were out last night, in your TTL without permission. And yes,’ he sighed, ‘we do take back

stock though obviously we never find our own so we take, you know, replacement stock. Last night we came back empty handed. And yes, we did use methods you'd rather not know about.'

'Which is another reason you prefer not to involve the police?'

'Ja … I guess so. But … see it's because the police have done nothing,' he said bitterly. 'We've reported the thefts and had no help.'

I tried without success to establish just how many animals they were losing. He couldn't quote any facts. Slowly the story began to unravel. I learned that he now lived in Fort Victoria, hence the state of the house. So did many of the other farmers. We didn't argue that.

'Was your stock stolen?' I asked finally, as I rose to go.

'No,' he replied, 'but others' have been.' We were silent a moment. 'At least that's what I've been told,' he qualified, walking me to the door.[117] He paused. 'Read the paper man – you know the problem is huge.'

He changed tack then. 'I'm not a Smith man. The war has to stop. Too much damage's been done already but that doesn't mean I'm not a committed capitalist. We're losing the war wholesale. But we have a chance now with Smith including Sithole in the Internal Settlement deal talks. If Nkomo came in and elections followed we could be saved.'

I kept very quiet. I disagreed.

Back at the office I sought my senior staff's opinion.

'They are making the terrorists appear to be the good people, sir,' went the first comment, and swiftly sank deeper. My men questioned why the whitie farmers came only into the flat, eroded, shorn of grass and easy to negotiate piece of TTL immediately south of the main highway. They pointed out that no rustler would ever take his stolen cattle into such easily accessible land. The rustler would herd his prize into the broken Peppercorn country from where we had rescued the SB lads and lifted Petrus. Not even the army

dared go there. And it conveniently lay directly to the east of the whitie commercial farms. The consensus was if the farmers had lost animals they certainly weren't fussed about what they replaced them with. As some – actually a lot - of the farmers were staying in Fort Victoria now anyway and only came out on forays, perhaps their own underpaid underfed staff nicked a beast or a nod of corn.

I consulted Gerald. He was a long-time resident of Victoria. He knew a lot of the guys banging about the top in the province's political scene. I settled into the cool of his Concession Store and told him about the farmers. He wasn't surprised.

'Farming assets are moving over the border,' he said, 'and at a rate faster than most appreciate. Many assets aren't moving through the border posts either.' He walked his fingers along his counter. 'Some are being reported as losses, some are moving out from far away, from farms far inland. There's a system in place. The story is that it's not only the border farms that are shifting out. Look,' he said to my disbelieving face, 'how can a guy leave here and move to a fully operational farm in South Africa overnight? Now P, he's a good guy. He was brought up right and he does definitely want to stay in this country but, who knows for sure? I do know that some farmers who are losing stock, are not.'

Outside the sun was setting. I pulled on a coke as the store grew dimmer, staring into the growing gloom of the packed shelves along the wall behind.

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'Oi! DC! *What the fuck* were you thinking pissing about at ABC?' barked an unknown voice from somewhere, a few days later. I seem to remember listening to the tirade and calmly looking at the bakelite hand piece of the Post Office supplied standard DC's office phone and saying, in the nicest of tones.

‘I say old chap I was out there in pursuit of my duty. I was patrolling my district, extracting money, planning the new road and scolding poor listeners. May I ask, sir, who are you that you make such an odd enquiry?’ but probably I didn’t. Who knows what I did?

‘YOU screwed up a life and death operation you PRICK!’ said the voice. ‘We had a designated Frozen Area. You were NOT allowed in there. Next time watch your arse boy. Planning wasted – days behind – potential Gooks escaped … TWAT.’

The dead line thundered in my ear. The PC could tell me nothing. He knew of no “Frozen Order[118]” notices being issued against Bikita. Perhaps I hadn’t read my mail, perhaps, I thought with best sarcasm, I should ask the telephone exchange guys if they had heard anything. The thought bubbled above my head and weighed me down. I sat down, heavily.

It was December, 1977. Bikita was unravelling, the war was unravelling and so was I. To us it seemed the DC’s Army were the only Smith Regime servants in the entire district. All the way from Mozambique to our main Fort Victoria bus stop and all ports beyond, technically, I wondered if I was the only Smith-military trained officer at all. Captain Farmer was gone, the young lieutenant gone, the police were behind their fence … our forces had vanished. As Gerald queried, “all in Moz?”

We were blind, disorientated, daily plodding on with the ludicrous task of pieces – the pieces that suited me - of community development while planning ways to kill members of that same community. The details of our defence were taking on surreal proportions. Jan and I had earlier created the position for five snipers to defend the village – the rifles courtesy of Farmer P’s pals. They were on daily lookout to the wild side of the village facing the central Peppercorns. All day they were peering through telescopic lenses, their only function being to dissuade an attack, never mind taking the fight to

them. And they were the conservative option. In lieu of the absence of rifles, as had first been discovered, it had been suggested that we try homemade pipe bombs and cross-bow booby traps[119]. Luckily Farmer P had stepped in with the offer of a loan of hunting rifles.

Sitting there other details came to mind, more instances that proved our growing separation, of Rhodieland falling apart.

A few days previously I'd taken what turned out to be my last drive to Zaka; a DC had been appointed. I'd gone officially to sign more 'stuff' and unofficially to say thanks. I was haring around the last corner when there, directly in my path was an army encampment spread over the road. I screeched to a halt.

'What ho?' cried the Major.

'What are you doing here?' I asked.

'I'm not exactly sure, to tell the truth,' he replied, 'but the hint is I am to be in Zaka for a while.'

Zaka? Jesus, Bikita was the more pressing area – Bikita, we needed him. He answered my thoughts.

'Rear support, I guess'.

That was it. Bikita had been abandoned exactly as the territory between my eastern border and Mozambique had been. It went some way to answering why we, when we did the 70 man sweep line[120] of the Purchase area and the central portion of the Southern TTL, found it deserted bar one or two individuals. I now suspected our covert operations people must have been in there many times behind my back. Perhaps here was a reason, a likely one, for pulling out Capt. Farmer and company. That also answered the abusive phone call. There was no need to seek Frozen Area status orders as the army clearly believed there were no friendly forces in play in Bikita. They hadn't remembered us. The Major's presence in Zaka, confirmed a truth we

all were dreading, something we hoped would somehow be averted but secretly knew was true. None of us Rhodies were in charge anymore. We were disconnected, at each other's throats, frayed and tired in the face of an enemy that just kept replicating itself, the more that were killed the more that appeared behind them, and our resources slowly but surely breaking down.

Terrible things were happening out in the TTLs. Thank god Bikita and Zaka appeared to be exempt … our war deaths were the result of contacts not atrocities. We had the fear sure, that's why the squatter camp was growing but so far the Gooks were happy to pass through. The Ministry of Information's reports on atrocities were confirmation that they were happening. There were mistakes with napalm. Occasionally solid tales came of common garden officers and patrol leaders who, out of frustration, perhaps a colleague had been killed or a contact went wrong and the CTs got away, shot a village's livestock. It had happened that our own forces told people to run, 'get away!' and then shot them down, reporting the event as an unavoidable shooting. It's easily done. Why, just the other day I had agreed to Sar-Major's sentence of a DC's Army man to solitary for two days, no food, only water, and was phoned by Inspector Bob five days later, enquiring as to whether we planned on killing our boy, or what? Five days. We'd simply forgotten about him. Five days. It haunts me still. One of my own men! If I could do that, what would I have been capable of out there, under that strain, surrounded by war?

The sun was down. The last of its light for the day was showing my men their way as they set out for their night exercise from our road works base camp. They had only gone a mile when a man came charging out of the long grass at them. They responded as they had been taught, facing the charge, hitting the ground and firing. He was down, a civilian. We hadn't a vehicle between us that night and could do nothing for the old man.

Serious talks

Gerald waved me down from the verandah of the store. Always keen for a bit of a chat I swung the landie in.

‘What was the score?’ I asked, knowing he’d have listened to the game in Salisbury over the weekend.

‘Smith had his arse licked,’ he snapped.

I looked askance at him.

‘Yeah, it was like that,’ he continued, scowling. ‘I only wanted to listen to the game and instead I nearly threw up.’

I wasn’t sure what to say.

‘Man,’ growled Gerald, then raised his fist into a make believe mike and whined, “and from the commentators’ box high in the stands at Salisbury Sports Club, I can tell you our Honourable ID Smith has arrived and… oh, oh yes… he is waving to the crowd! Oh, my, I want to cry …and yes, oh just will you look at that, they … the young men and women of Rhodesia are getting off their bums to give him a standing. And heavens; Janet, the mother of our nation … “

‘It couldn’t have been that bad,’ I said, laughing.

‘It was almost,’ he replied in his normal voice. ‘What’s up with these bloody people? The adulation is pathetic! Your guys say there was shooting again last night. Why isn’t this all over for pity’s sake? Was it in 1974 Vorster and Kaunda urged Smith towards peace?’

Gerald was right. And 1976 had seen world heavyweight Kissinger on the spot. While Smith whined about a lack of loyalty from the White-Christian-Capitalist west Kissinger had emphasised the need to share, not because that was his belief but because a stable, capitalist, Central African region was needed to stop rampant communism. Stability also meant bringing in a few

other colours to gain acceptance. Now Kissinger had spoken again. He had told South Africa he would cut them off unless they cut us off. And he did … for a few weeks we had no reserve of 7.62 ammo. What the men carried was it.

Now Smith and Muzorewa were talking earnestly about how to split the turkey dinner and the scope was being widened. All the Chiefs had been called to a national Indaba/Meeting in Domboshawa[121] to affirm support for the talks. The Reverend Sithole had been included too, not at Domboshawa but in the talks. Broadly, those of us in the know knew what talks meant and Gerald knew a lot.

'Now that fellow,' said Gerald, referring to Rev Sithole, the man Farmer P backed, 'is a waste of time.' Gerald's opinion echoed that of my staff. 'He's spent,' he continued. 'Fine, he's no commie, but his support is very local – Chipinga - without the other heavies at his back. He won't bring credibility to a settlement. He has more support in Mozambique than here!' Gerald dropped his voice and beckoned me closer. 'You know the South Africans are in Moz too?'

I shook my head.

'Well they are. Their spooks …'

'That I know. Our SB are talking to their BOSS boys,' I smiled at my word play. Gerald didn't. 'Bureau of State Security,' I said. 'B.O.S.S. We had their police helping …'

'Not those idiots,' interrupted Gerald seriously, 'I'm talking Recce. The professional soldiers. They're in Moz with our guys. Now you tell me how this works. Talks at home, and kicking arse abroad?'

Later, at our little whitie club.

'There can't be any doubt that the tempo of the war has picked up since the talks began,' said José,[122] serving the drinks, his unending smoke

dangling from the corner of his mouth while we'd all been discussing the Woolworths bombing[123]. I accepted the news as just another war event - like the death of Dr Decker - to be pushed aside because if you didn't there'd be a breakdown. But José, he was a city boy. He got news from the street that wasn't re-packaged in our bulletins.

'You know that's a black shopping spot, eh?'

'Down by the station?' I asked.

'No, on the other side.' When I looked blank he added, 'Pioneer, Rotten Row side.'

'That's what I said,' I insisted. Pioneer Street had struck a bell from school days, the place where, I was told, all the black prossies hung out.

'But not near the station,' said Jose. 'Indian shops. Few whites shop there, most of the staff are black … convenient for a bomb not so? The police report states the bomb was believed to have been placed by black terrorists.'[124] He paused, then leaned in. 'Now how the fuck …'

'Yes, yes,' I said shoeing him on but it didn't leave me because Dr Decker hadn't left me either. Later on the beer had mellowed all of us and talk had turned to the Chiefs and the RF Internal Settlement idea.

'A bunch of yes-men agreeing to agree to an earlier agreement can hardly be termed peace talks,' said Jose. 'The simple issue is that the war shouldn't have started in the first place. Is Mugabe that bad? The varsity didn't think so … well not all of them. Hmm, I guess it was split down the middle.'

Still later, after darts and food and more beer.

'You're trying to achieve a lot,' he said, 'but it's being wasted. For every political step dawdled we're burying or chasing away someone needed in the future. No, for a future. Why has the war gone on so long?'

Asking me that at 28 made me feel awfully old. I didn't want the war, not this one, I knew that, but I was in it. I believed we couldn't have a Mugabe

and I wanted to do my best. Also, ever since the night the DC Chipinga had given me a lift back as a 16 year old, *I had wanted desperately to be a great District Commissioner*. I couldn't tell José this, this truth that I was still holding on to a dream that probably could not and would never exist again.

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Lib came into my office. She hovered, thinking. 'He wouldn't say but, gee, I knew his voice really well …'

'And?'

'… and he wants to speak with you urgently. He'll phone back. I say he's police, maybe SB. One of the Wankie guys?' She pondered.

I couldn't wait. If he didn't want to leave a message with Lib it had to be serious. Or perhaps it wasn't that at all and that burned my butt. I phoned Wankie. Supt Ian was no longer there.

'The Chief Inspector?' I asked.

'Disappeared', I was told. One day they found his desk clear, his wife at home and him gone.[125] 'Ok', I said, 'Chief Don?' 'Promoted and gone, now Assistant Commissioner'. I asked the Exchange guys. The calls were coming from Bulawayo area but that was all they knew.

It was late one evening soon after, and I was alone in my office.

'He's on the line, sir,' whispered exchange, putting the call through direct.

'Don't use names, listen,' said a voice I knew well, 'answer, don't argue … okay? or I'll put the phone down … no names, listen, answer, don't argue.'

'Okay.'

'You know a DC is being investigated[126] for stealing government property?'

'Yes.'

'I know you aren't stealing property. Are you stealing money?'

‘No.’

‘Good. The smell’s[127] out. Somebody in Salisbury is after your neck. We’ve picked it up but we don’t know why. We’re happy with you. You sit and think through what could be upsetting the big boys. Pack it in. Better still get a transfer, get away from the rumours. Understand?’

‘I, err ...’ but he was gone.

I replaced the phone and sank back into my chair. As cold as it was I started sweating. That was a shock … serious, what did he say? Money? Okay, I was having the fight over moans of improper payments. The PC had agreed I was within the regs to pay but Head Office Audit had threatened to come and tear the office apart, unless …

‘Unless what?’ I’d shouted and told them the Cadets’ House was vacant.

‘Bring everyone, come!’ They’d reserved their position on actually coming - cowards. Ha! It had to be something to do with me allowing… no, be honest. I was encouraging Super Sec to inform the Gooks of our work schedule and labour requirements. But, if I hadn’t the gangs would have been chased off, or shot. Or could it have been Sar-Major being honest with the bunch of school leavers?

‘That’s it,’ I thought to myself in the dark of the office. It was my determination to keep the schools open. Not once had I been shot at on those school excursions, not once. My enthusiasm for my detective work crashed. To be accused, by my own people.

‘Hang on. What about the police?’ I thought. ‘Could the Inspector have misinterpreted, put his own spin on my way of working?’

‘Fucking hell,’ I shouted and tried to slam my fist through my desk top but succeeding only in bouncing every damn thing, ash and dead ends everywhere. ‘Is this the recognition I’m due?’ I thought.

I went up to the workshop.

‘Come on Jan … close up, it’s late and I’m buying.’

It was a few weeks after that a gravelly voice broke the silence in my Secretary’s office. Blunt, it commanded,

‘I would like to see the DC’.

Kathy pushed my door fully open squeaking in a tiny whisper, before, wide eyed, trembling and squashing herself against the wall a James Bond and two my size men shouldered their way in. Dark glasses, leather jackets, James’ long, expensive leather instantly making me think of my war comic hero General Rommel. No names, no uniform, no appointment. Sheer authority.

‘We need to talk, Mr Schorr.’

As he slipped his darks into his breast pocket he smiled a smile that greased his sharp, handsome face, lifting his moustache. There was something about him, something familiar. He refused tea for all of us and instead insisted we take a hike.

‘What for?’ My tight gut asked. Had this anything to do with the warning? I was ready to fight but I knew it could be that he was genuinely concerned about bugs. My office was full of them but the crawling kind only. There were black folk out there watching me all the time, pseudo customers Sar-Major called them, but no bugs.

‘Away from the office,’ he was saying, ‘open air Mr Schorr.’

He gave me another greasy smile. We walked past the court room and armoury to the ADF scrap yard. There, standing next to the retrieved homemade truck now with creeper spreading over its tyres Mr SB smiled again.

‘This can never be repeated,’ he said, the other two nodding and grunting. ‘The linoleum’s lifting in Salisbury’s corridors of power’, was the way he expressed himself. ‘We’re doing a tour of operational areas to visit

some very select people. You're one.'

I felt chuffed, recognised, but before I could fluff up too much he hit me – 'Would you support a forced change? A coup?'

'Support who?' I countered, after a beat, full of confusion.

'You wouldn't know him.'

The man went on to outline a bewildered picture. The Rhodesian Front was being hammered by all sides. Smith was roped firmly in place as leader simply because his was the only face of note on the local and international public poster … the brand, so-to-speak. He used the word 'leader' as I would 'the bugger in front'. The RF Party, he was intimating, the Company and their stooges had to keep him in place, but a new group, his group, saw differently.

'Smith's no longer the man,' he said. 'He's now the desperate loser. We need war leadership.'

'No Rhodie voter will accept anything unless Smith proposes it,' I replied. 'The whities are supporting the talks of a Muzorewa led internal settlement only because Smith and the RF suggested it.' They listened, watching. I blustered on. 'But the Internal Settlement won't work, it wouldn't change anything, not in the real world, not out here. The world won't accept anything less than Zanu participation.'

We talked and agreed that Bishop Muzorewa wasn't going to move beyond being a face hanging from trees on an election poster. He smoked, I smoked, the others didn't. I noticed the way he tapped his cigarette, the odd way he cupped his lighter. Flashing into my mind came a visual of a police farewell party I attended as a final year school boy. He was there too, one of them. That was it, that was the memory. I held my tongue. We talked on. Muzorewa hadn't a hope except in his own little TTL. I told them the word according to my black guys was that 'he isn't a name, certainly not a force,

sir'. We laughed when I told them my guys called him 'Who-Muzorewa-Who?' As for Mugabe and the B-Nationalists, they had been painted so evil they didn't even appear on the black canvas of white Africa. Whites, and from all reports that included the UK government, had been so brain-washed they wouldn't have him.

'I couldn't have him about me,' I said. 'He's a communist, and a bad one at that. He's a Marxist.'

They nodded. We all went quiet. I was flustered.

'It's a road with no turning,' I said.

SB, looking straight into my eyes said,

'Exactly! Exactly. We have to, we must break the deadlock. Look…' He proceeded to tell me that up in Salisbury groups of opposing views buffeted Smith mercilessly. Some wanted a negotiated surrender with a full joining of hands with the blacks, others dreamt of a middle of the road approach ala Fearless of 1968, meaning whites retained a chunk of privilege and yet others demanded a proper American Indian style slaughter with no restraint.

'Where do you stand?' I asked.

'You wouldn't know him,' he repeated, flashing the same smile.

Gee, I knew of a lot of the big guys. I served in Matabeleland South with our previous Secretary, I was at school with the immediate past Commissioner of Police's boys. The commander of Police Black Boots I still count as a (lost somewhere) friend. Walls, Hickman and Barnard I had met and through Bulawayo stories even Ken Flower was a known entity. RAR's new commander I had met back in the mists of time, as with some SAS, SS and I was soon to be told all about a SB Superintendent McGuiness. So, just who this mystery man was, well… who?

'What would I support you with?' I asked.

'We know all about your capabilities here. You're keeping the district

together against huge odds and we've the capability to take things further. We want to put you, us, back in charge.'

I shook my head. My DC's army had proved that they would be truly magnificent in the field in support of a Green Areas initiative but that was it. My sergeant major and his men weren't in the killing game, not for killing.

'Come and see.' I led them back to my armoury. As we walked and talked my brain whirred. If they were backing, on the one hand, the Reverend Sithole, who Farmer P described as a total capitalist and who would buck no commie opposition, or if they were a group following ex Minister Harper, a man who was said to be hard-right and who might go for a scorched earth type approach, either way I was in a prickle. That wasn't the way I saw the country evolving. Mind you, I thought, there were also rumours that Harper was a British Mole![128] Where were we? Where was I? These three travelling salesmen hadn't a clue of the real situation. They didn't know that my own boss and his staff weren't prepared to risk visiting to cheer us on, never mind raise the flag. They didn't know that Bikita was alone, no different, I am sure, to other districts close to the border - a fact proved beyond doubt by the new Colonel for the Fort Victoria Joint Command. The man had flown in to see the new air strip we'd had built down on our southern border.

'I wish I had the men to use it,' he'd said.

'9mm bullets, 9, sah!' shouted my armourer once we stood inside Pat's vault. '7.62, sui-table for FN, allfinsh sah! 3-o-3 bullets, one box sah!"[129]

My visitors looked around. Chucked in a box were weapon pieces Jan and the workshop couldn't use. Some shot-guns donated by some American Christian group lined the far wall, better for ducks, and hanging from pegs were the useless radios we had been sent ... bagless for the Armourer had issued those as packs. They looked at me. Thinking back I'd say those three

senior men, probably of an office in Salisbury with contacts through to the secret of secret places in Mt Darwin, had stepped out onto the set of a Rhodesian version of Sir Humphrey's TV show 'Yes Prime Minister'.

I decided the two listeners were South African. I didn't have much option. *I had been offered a coup spot*. That matters were out of control was virtually shouted out by these three visitors. I strolled back to the office, brain bursting, to receive further news.

Art Verbeek, my DC in Lupane, the man who had so inspired me, who had told me the metaphor of the three legged cooking pot that I had carried with me from that day till today, who had jumped in front of me and shot down a charging buffalo when my rifle jammed, was dead. Shot by a Rhodie police patrol. Nobody phoned me, I found out as 'an after event'. They thought I would see it in the Secret Reports or on the TV news. What fucking TV and who read every secret bullshit? Art Verbeek had been shot by Rhodies, murdered by our own side.

'He was riddled with 7.62 bullets,' confirmed my SB contact of years, staring after the stream of his exhaled smoke. 'It was an unfortunate accident, the shooters didn't recognise him.'

'Which shooters?' I asked.

'Police patrol.'

'The police patrol?! But it was his boat?! It was tied next to their launch every day?!'

'They thought he was a black trying to escape,' said my SB friend since junior school, 'into Zambia.'

'Art was blonde!' I cried. 'He was so fair that he got pink and blonder still in the sun!'

'The shooters were blind drunk.'

'Art was a leading proponent of the Green Areas,' I growled, anger rising,

‘and had long been an African advancement man.’

‘The District Police were supporters of the concept too,’ said my friend, lamely. He had been a criminal catcher and espionage man all his working life. He was more associated with grey areas, not painstaking, arse burning, talking and convincing development.

‘The black man killed with Art was his long time personal servant, trusted interpreter and confidant,’ I menaced. ‘He followed Art from district to district with every transfer and even went on holiday to Botswana with him. I was meant to go on that trip!’

‘Yeah. It’s a way of working more of us in the security field should adopt,’ agreed my friend, my long term associate.

I ignored the growing sarcasm. ‘Many things point to Art having an educated black lady companion hidden in his house,’ I said, spitting, darkly angry, determined to go all the way.

‘Please,’ he said, ‘pretty please. Leave it, Doug. It’s done and we certainly can’t change it.’

I sat down heavily in my office, stared out of the window and focused on the dahlias on the far side of the quad. They had stood so tall they looked down on me! Dahlias! They had needed supporting, a wooden rod for each stem. I needed support. We were fading; the sun going down over Bikita and over Rhodesia and over the world as I’d known it.

Was it now a horrible game? I wondered. Is that what everything we’d been working towards had boiled down to? Was that the sum total of our Rhodie dream? I knew none of us appreciated what the politicians and the holders of the secrets to our war were up to. How many more shouts of peace, ‘it’s over’, only to be told, ‘hold in the horses’? I was just old enough, and adventurous enough as a kid, to have seen something of the old Rhodesia. Now older but not markedly wiser, at 28, I knew to ignore Top Secret

information postings from Salisbury HQ and ‘see’ for myself what a cock-up had happened to our beautiful country. I had seen what had happened to Bikita and surrounds … it had been so beautiful… of people and geography, then it became a place of battleground fear until the opposition were firmly in charge with me and my rag-tag army, built by my rag-tag soldiers themselves, tolerated. How was it happening? What was keeping us going? What was holding this awful, blood soaked world together?

The kill rate that our forces were publishing, those fantastic numbers that were still climbing with every evening news broadcast was the chief reason I knew. It meant nearly nothing in practical terms. It wasn’t that our forces had become more professional or deadly, it wasn’t that we were winning, rather it was that their numbers were simply increasing, exponentially. It was a duck hunt. I thought back to expeditions as a boy. Ten adults, all of them with shotguns, me along - learning. When this war started, when our forces first started clobbering theirs, perhaps it was as a hunt where only one duck would flutter up at the dog’s bark, and instantly be shredded with ten bird shot shells. Three years later, I thought, when things had escalated, when our forces had established themselves but theirs were still growing, then, instead of one, say five ducks were to rise at the dog’s bark, again all shredded instantly by the ten. And then, at that same dam in 1972, 19 young naïve ducks rose from the reeds and were instantly blown out of the sky by Rhodesia’s own. But now instead of ten of them, there were nine. One shooter had left, gone south, or to Australia, or the UK. And, I thought, on that occasion one duck, by chance, by the rules of the world that govern us all, by luck, had hidden in the reeds rather than rise up and had stayed unseen. And then another shooter had left the country, gone on Dad’s money, happy to buy dinner in a cold land rather than hunt anymore. Now there were eight and together they bagged 35 ducks just as easily as seven. This time

though, another duck got away, wounded with a severely bashed in beak. ‘That duck will surely die,’ the RF owned TV would report and so the number 35 remained when in reality there were 34 dead and one kicking out in the bush, perhaps to die or perhaps to return another day, wiser. Certainly to have quacked his pain to his countrymen and women as they stared on.

And so the pattern was continuing. Two of our expert shooters, I thought, could bag 70 between them, easily, but how many would be flying past and walking through? And now we were external. *They had taken us external.* Now, instead of sending our remaining six-shooters to the local farm dam where the ducks knew the sound of the dog and the arc of the guns they were going out to the wild, to water pans far away where the ducks were still naïve. There they were simply shooting them in their droves on the ground, just like that day back at Maitengwe - no dog needed and many of them, I knew, not ducks at all. For our forces there was nearly no risk. As they performed they had trained buddies to their right and left, there were no land mines waiting and few ambushes ahead. Their target didn’t know our external lads were coming for them. I saw these announcements in the press and was given them as DC on the African owned (the arrogance) bus-delivered Top Secret reports to my office. What was the relevance? What did these announcements and these happenings really mean?

As a DC in Africa I was one helluva big man.

Even then, at a time when trust levels were below ground, when I arrived in a cloud of dust at a business centre people would stare, realisation would hit, they would stand a moment and then begin their nodding and bobbing and greetings. The simplest thing ever would be to shoot them. Why my DO’s wife who believed her god was going to sort out the Gooks could have walked among them and whacked them all dead with her bible. Were they cowards? Idiots? Nope, nothing like that. We Rhodies of the bush represented

all Rhodies, we were still trusted and among many we were still their fathers. Sar-Major had told me that even from the short stretch of borderlands facing off Bikita many people had fled to Mozambique. Therefore, if the total border length were considered, Moz and Zambia had to be full of our people shacked up as refugees. Botswana too. And I knew Botswana's first arrivals! The little Bushman family that lived beside the pan had fled on the occasion of the duck-kill-incident in Plumtree. Refugees would culturally be easily absorbed for we colonialists had drawn the country boundaries quite arbitrarily, cutting family from family. They would have been mixed in - not exactly welcomed but accepted - with the equally destitute locals so that when our SS (and as Gerald had informed, South African Recce types) men arrived, so official in their correct looking vehicles in their correct looking garb, it would be just as if it were DC Doug arriving. They would stand respectfully and curtsy and nod. Not all targets were as innocent I'm sure. There may have been a good crop of young folk in the early throes of militarisation. In the middle years the war was against the Black Nationalists and they and their troops were the targets. Now … I wondered who?

Com-ops were coming up so terribly short; the twits couldn't add. Whereas our external killer-boys were so efficient with one bullet going a long way with lined up ducks, they didn't see the flocks that had learnt to keep their little web feet in the water and their heads tucked in the reeds. They were swimming under the raised guns and waddling into the long grass of home. Even my DC's Army were getting kills. The RF had dictated that it was open season - no licence required anywhere - shoot, shoot, blam, gunhot, change, blam, shoot, shoot, hotgun - on anyone who looked like a terrorist. We were all shooting but still they poured past, wave after wave.

I could see that the B-Nationalists, at least 'ours', those along the Mozambique border, had seized the moment to push, *push,* ***push,*** their

soldiers back into the border TTLs from their holding and training camps. They were very likely achieving maximum infiltration by shortening the already poor training and making do with whatever equipment they had. They didn't know chapter and verse of our daily moves but they knew the big picture far better than we did. They were getting information from South Africa and overseas as well as direct from our own dinner tables and pub counters. There was a food shortage over there. Their situation was probably worse than in our border TTLs where food[130] was being withheld. The B-Nationalist Command knew the border TTLs were as good as unguarded by the fast dissolving Smith Western-Capitalist-Nationalist government, I thought. Strongman de Kock [131], for one, had fled. Following him, the back-room boys we public didn't know had probably gone too. The irony, I thought, had to be that the ZANU (Shona based) soldiers coming in from Mozambique were safer than they had ever been before. Although their weapons were shoddy (but, phew, lotsa-ammo) they had safety in numbers. Our kill rate was climbing but the rate of kill per insurgent entering the country was plummeting. And they weren't cannon fodder. Rather they were safer from the sniper and Fire Force units … it was simply bad luck to be in the group that was seen by one of our many OPs and to then get hit.

My SB pals were estimating that on average, surging though Bikita every day, were 35 Gooks. While they caused nonsense with my guys regularly our Ground Coverage information was, bar an area commander that the Gook-men moved on into the heartland of Rhodieland and the central TTLs. Clearly, by and large, they were tasked not with fighting but with conforming, infiltration, domination and probably - almost automatically - education of the masses that the Rhodie was a spent force. I'd heard of the attack on Fairbridge Park[132], passed on to me because folk knew I lived there in my High School days, and we had the post box bombings in

Salisbury[133] (the police were warned) but these events were nothing compared to the numbers of the B-Nationalist men in the country ready, operating behind our backs. Operating as our Community Advisors had been doing just a few years back … educating.

Who were they? If this battle was against the growing communist hordes, why were so many Christian educated joining up? For all of us, really, the thought still remained that this war was between us and the ACBs (African Commie Bastards) fronting for the raping Russians and the cruel Chinks with support from the backstabbing Brits. But, when I thought about it, I knew that wasn't possible. Our kaffir cousins, our black cousins, were Christian. Some said that the majority of the rebels came from Christian Missionary schools. [134] That wasn't right. The numbers didn't add up but those that didn't go to missionary schools had a normal family up-bringing in the church of their area or in Rhodie houses or at the service on their Saturday afternoon off. Most town Rhodies can certainly remember them blacks ominously congregating in their best white, red and black outfits under the big tree in the vacant spot around the corner in our classy suburbs. We wondered just what they were up to but we knew the answer. They were praying to Jesus for a better life. Just as we were. By then Smith and the RF were setting regular national church days calling on a God to help. Sitting there, afternoon fading, the dahlias beginning to be swallowed by the gloom, I could easily call those radio broadcasts to mind. Lib and I, when very occasionally together on a Sunday in Bikita would listen, we'd hear the clumping army footfalls fading away, on top of that a mystery voice saying, 'the Colours have been presented and are about to be blessed'. It was easy to hear that voice saying 'blessed', so reverently, so full of loss, and I knew that it was common to all, not just us Rhodies. All wanted to be blessed, all believed in blessings. Our black countrymen were Christians too but they were reaping none of the

benefits. While small policy changes were being made, a settlement deal was being talked of and the odd black was being invited to the whitie church on a Sunday, in Bikita they were buzzing off with the unsaid there-is-no-other-way blessing of their priests and fathers and mothers. Why, Super Sec's lay-minister father and brother had long ago signed up with the other side. From all over, having heard the word and believed young blacks were leaving. They had failed to continue with their schooling. They had failed to get work in their own TTLs. They had failed to become servants to whities in Rhodieland because Rhodie industry was at a standstill. Even attempts to join us in the war were failing. My Sergeant Major had long informed me that the African Rifles centre at Balla Balla (south of Bulawayo) was full.[135] The only growth industry in the whole country was the army game and they had stopped handing out Rhodesian invitations to blacks. I overheard Sar-Major talking about this to young bucks. My Shona is bad.

'I am but a Matabele-Rhodie!' was my usual little superior to subordinates joke, but that day I knew enough *Sho-glish* to yell, 'what are you saying?' He'd just told them that to get to Zambia was the easiest but Mozambique was the closest.

'That'll keep them busy for a year or two sir.'

His reasoning was sound. Regrettably. It was obvious that the employment of militiamen/auxiliaries was a desperate move to counter the massive waves of CTs entering and operating in the country. Their joining up in numbers was a fact neatly turned by both the Ministry of Information and the army; they projected a picture of thousands of able bodied blacks joining up in support of Smith (and later to promote the Smith-Muzorewa Internal Settlement deal). It was a community infusion cum vital cash in-flow strategy that needed to have been implemented back in the Community Development days, the 1960s, I thought. A process that should have been managed by the

civilian authority, I thought, the police/Intaf combination. But we'd missed the opportunity and the RF had passed again when the Green Areas was mooted. The truth, I and every other Rhodie with half a brain, whether they were honest about admitting it or not, was that the men were joining the militia/auxiliary units to feed themselves and their families, not to be patriotic. Their genes, their inner being, were in survival mode – the emotional conflict within the families must have been hugely stressful to watch daddy take up the slave master's gun so that they could have food and water. Sometimes they were lucky and secure accommodation was supplied. If not they (the families) could at least show and tell our Security Forces they were on Smith's side to avoid a beating. (A tribesman would never – never ever - report a security force beating to me. Viewed from his (lowly, disadvantaged, unrepresented, etc.) point of view, reporting to his (district) King what his king's men had done was to most likely get him another beating. Likely, worse … "off with his head".

Just what was the RF up to? I wanted to know, sitting there in the dark, Rhodesia's stars winking on one by one in the heavens, the place quiet with everyone else gone home for the evening bar the regular clump and voices of the guards changing, discussing, another evening in what by then seemed like a lifetime of war. Every time Smith addressed the nation about the continuing process of getting rid of discrimination the war tempo in our area increased. Absolutely, no doubt. All the nonsense about the Chiefs and their people supporting the Internal Settlement was just that, nonsense – nice-to-believe-stuff, we all knew it. The notables at the Domboshawa Indaba, tall fit Ndiweni (I met him when I was an ADC at some Matabele function) and the big and imposing (on TV) Chirau were nice guys … great, wonderful, the types one would want to visit when one was feeling down. Now the betting was the diminutive Bishop Muzorewa was to be our first black PM. We knew

it wouldn't happen.[136] We knew we wouldn't accept him, they wouldn't accept him, and none of us Rhodies would accept Mugabe. We knew it. Silly, childish conundrum. Rhodesia was lost. The whole thing was gone. It, we, were history. I knew this wasn't appreciated by anybody outside of those of us actually working the rural districts and those we reported to directly in the system. Ken Flower[137], SB and those he reported to or instructed knew it – particularly the Prime Minister and his ship. They knew, but your average Rhodie did not.

I thought of the horror I'd felt when the New Zealand couple from Shabani had suddenly arrived in Bikita to spend the weekend a few weeks back. They'd just arrived, unannounced, grinning at my surprise. Didn't they know what was out there? Months before, Ron and Moe, two who should have known better - but Wankie had been so quiet - complete with their three year old Bianca had arrived, the same grin, the same eye shine and thrill at being out in the pleasant bush. Their super sports car (Bulawayo to the Falls in 1.5 minutes) couldn't handle the road from the main road turn-off so they hitched a lift into Bikita! I wanted to show them the bodies, to point out the places where bullets had struck the village, where mortars had exploded, the places where human beings had been twisted and broken with the landmine blast. They had no idea. Clearly the RF propaganda machine was working. They were lucky they were not attacked.

Where were we? I wanted to know, sitting there in the now perfect, African dark. Where was our compass? Which way to turn? Most of the Settler Rhodesians I spoke of who had regaled me with stories of bringing the unenlightened blacks along with them into the new world of washing machines and telephones in houses were dead. They were creaking along in 1970 but by '76,'77,'78 their time had come. They - from Umtali, Gwaai River, Kenmore, Turk Mine, Nyamandlovu, Essexvale, Balla Balla, Filabusi,

Shabani, Umvuma, Penelonga, Chipinga, Birchenough Bridge, Plumtree and Fig Tree - so many places but so few voices, had warned me that we were messing with a good thing called Rhodesia. Now, as I sat there in Bikita I asked where were the Whiteheads (and team), the Todds, Gibbs, Welenskys, Palley[138], Savory[139], Fields and so many more high profile public figures of my teenage years, when we needed them? Those that were prepared to compromise, no, wrong word … to look deeper? The retired generals, police commissioners and secretaries of ministries would surely have come and stood on the stage in support. All I had to measure by was the RF and even they were playing musical chairs. In my view, to van der Byl the war was a personal play thing, a chance to be a mini Winston Churchill and yet he was looked to by RF core and soldier alike … prick. Intaf was into its 3rd Minister since I joined up, our 4thSecretary. As an ADC I used to joke in the Blue Lamp that Walls, Hickman, Barnard, Flower, Sherren, should every morning, I said, half drunk on my beer, pop all the Smiths, the cabinet and crew into one of our redundant Dakota planes and haul it high in the Com-Ops hangar. There they could play 'flying to war' for the day while we practical folk actually got on with things. Sitting there I saw that the point was valid, the comedy was spot on. Sitting there, losing it all, I decided to myself that our Rhodesia was no longer the land of God and the breadbasket of Africa, as we Rhodies had believed, as Smith had told me as a schoolboy standing beneath the firs, as my forays into the bush and my adulation of my seniors had taught. Rather, the devil reigned.

The devil reigned in Rhodesia and *we* had invited him in.

Art was dead. Shot by us.

That night my belief in the dream ended.

That night I decided to resign.

An in-between time

Lib didn't bite my head off when I finally dragged my tired self in past witching hour.

'Hi. Sick?' I asked wondering why she was still awake sitting in the place the floor map said was the 'sitting room'. Two coffee tables and the fine dralon suite - the one she'd fallen for in the window of Wankie Furnishers - were plonked uncomfortably in the space.

'Must be brown darling,' her mother had advised, 'that's fashionable'.

The book on her lap didn't warn me until she held it up.

'I'm pregnant.'

***

Lib and I hadn't any savings to speak of, owning only what we had in the house really – shucks we had only been on the big salary these last two years. Had I been too hasty, should I have found a job first?

***

'The men are ready, sir.'

'I'm ready too,' I answered buckling my webbing, patting for cigarettes and magazines. Suddenly, a sound. We both cocked our ears. The army had arrived. 'The Major?'

'He's the only one, sir.'

I strode up to the yard. Again I offered our Bachelor Guest House and again he deferred. 'I'm happy in my tent.'

'See you tonight, dinner,' I said, chuffed at the hustle and bustle about as I walked off.

'Wait! Doug! Meet my new platoon commander. Lieutenant, meet DC Doug.'

Tall, bronzed and sporting a ready smile, the young Lieutenant transferred

an energy that took me all the way back to the School of Infantry. Those memories and Major enthusiastically preparing his men swirled. Had I been too quick with my resignation?

'… to get going now sir,' said the young man breaking my thoughts. 'I want to be in position by dark …'

We returned from our patrol late. I was desperately tired. Passing the Telephone Exchange hut I saw something was wrong, disorder in the Major's camp.

'What's going on Sergeant?' I asked, confused now at the sight of packing.

'Sah!' he answered, pulling himself straight and saluting, 'our lieutenant is killed.'

They had accounted for a handful of gooks. It wasn't a good trade.

***

The Agreement to move to an Internal Settlement - elections and all - was signed in March 1978. An Executive Council was in place. I gathered all my staff together for the last time. I explained that racial discrimination was over, that from now on they could do and be anyone they wanted to be, go anywhere, buy a farm even. I asked if there were any questions and there were none. I explained that the new laws meant that they could even become DCs. From my right a corporal blurted, 'can we have sex with white women?'

'Are you serious?' was my thought. 'Yes,' my answer.

The tension broke; there was laughter, calls of 'silly' but most set off back to work with pace in their step. Senior Clerk Dube was alongside me.

'He was really asking,' he said, 'will things really change? Really?'

***

The first black officer I'd ever seen arrived at the office to introduce

himself. I pretended to polish the two pips on his cloth epaulet and we immediately stamped up to the club for a mini piss-up. The little P/O represented the police. A white Intaf Vadet served the officer, Jan and I with no problem, even calling the RAR Lieutenant ‘sir’. He didn’t stay too late. Jan poured me into my back door late that night.

***

My three month notice period was running out. Three mouths soon to feed. No-one had phoned to talk to me. I was a dinosaur. Intaf’s time had passed.

***

They sent a guard to fetch me from the club, the phone there out of order.

‘An only-for-you call, sir,’ said exchange. ‘Caller says it’s urgent.’

‘Caller’ was indeed serious. His voice instantly took me back 10 years to when I was a cadet and he a fresh graduate of the police Morris Depot. Wow! We had been brothers then; working to exhaustion, exercising, bathing together, drinking and falling over together. Terrorising non-conforming civil servants, crashing my car into a wall that promptly fell in on us, making up new games. I saw him in Salisbury in 1973 for an hour, grown-up, no time to play, serious and ‘duty calls my man. I’ve some top blue stuff … you got a projector my man?’

‘Where are you now?’ I asked excitedly into the static, trying to time the delay and the echo with my own perpetually ringing eardrums.[140]

He didn’t answer that but ploughed into,

‘We hear you’ve resigned my man.’

‘Who’s we?’ I shouted into the phone.

‘My big boss,’ he began, ‘he’s a Chief Sup SB …’ Slowly, with occasional interruptions of ‘say again’ for it was an odd call, a terrible line, my old friend told me my rank, pay and everything would be matched for

they were doing some really fine work and needed some really fine leaders. I was excited. Then … I shoed the Guard Commander out and collapsed into the DO's chair. The foul words of booby-traps, poisoning water supplies, animals and funnies floated and echoed and twisted down the line.

***

Lib was bleeding. She was hanging in – just. This baby was fighting.

'With maximum rest and quiet there is no reason why you shouldn't have a perfect baby,' said the government specialist in Fort Victoria reassuringly. He looked over my khaki outfit, scuffed boots. 'But forget going back to Bikita. You need care, attention. Lib, where are your

parents?'

***

'Yes, nearly my last days.'

I was in the front seat of a Cesna, taking a flip over my district with the daredevil pilot I'd met in Wankie, the same who'd brought our (resigned) Secretary Dennis down. We were having a look at the airfield Ron had built on the Chiredzi border. There'd been a storm before. I warned him it may be sticky. Going down was a doddle. Getting up, as the mud patch at the end sucked at the wheels and the prop dipped to show land instead of blue sky, we both held our breath.

'I'll mark it unsuitable for commercial jets,' he said, grinning. 'Good that we've got a new strip available. We're close to having our own airforce in Mashonaland.'

'The Ministry's broke, my PC's always telling me,' I said.

'Don't you believe it,' he replied. 'DCs are flying! I could soon be out of a job myself.'

***

A company of RAR moved directly into the central Peppercorns,

foregoing their usual camp spot in my ADF yard. They promptly sent word to the locals, to have it spread in turn, that while they were not defecting, they were no longer Smith's men either. They would sit in peace in their camp but, if threatened, they would retaliate.

I phoned SB Bulawayo. They told me not to mention it to anyone.

***

Kathy stuck her head out of the door and screamed, 'PC! Urgent.' Her pitched voice dug into my beer head. 'The PC's holding on for you – the PC!'

I picked up my pace, my veldskoens squeaking on the polished floor. An excited Kathy thrust the phone into my hand. What, I wondered, had Kathy all lit up?

'We'd like to offer you the post of DC Shabani.'

'Doug?'

'Sir?'

'Doug, we'd like you to forget your resignation letter. We're offering you the post of DC Shabani.'

Did that mean whoever was after my head had changed his mind? I was okay? Did it mean recognition?

'Yes!' Kathy flung her arms around me.

***

My successor had been announced, a man who was my senior at school. I was packing, wrapping my soap stone figurines when my outer door rattled. It was Sar-Major, I heard the others behind him. Immediately I knew. I hastily took to my seat as they filed in. Cpl Ben, the man who had told me of his pregnant wife on the way from Zaka, a 6'5" ebony skinned man who was so powerful he could act as a jack for a Land Rover, had been home. He had found the family kraal deserted except for his wife. She was on her back, slit

open, her twins lying in the well of her tummy. Dead.

I sat in my DC’s chair behind my DC’s desk. Sar-Major, Sergeant the Elder, Nephew and myself were silent. Ben sobbed.

Shabani, The End.

I dumped our stuff in the DC's house in Shabani. Bikita was over. Shabani didn't look as though it was to even start but work was work. I phoned Lib from the lifeless lounge. Standing there I remembered how one night DC John and I had positioned his powerful stereo speakers well apart on the lawn facing the police Charge Office just across the paddock. They'd leapt about when we played the Charge of the Light Brigade at full blast. The Chief Inspector phoned in seconds.

'Hell and damnation!' he shouted above the cannons and charging horses, 'you scared the crap out of my guys!' Now the echoes of my voice bounced about the empty room. With Lib's history of miscarriages I had kept her away from the move nonsense. She said she'd feel strong enough to join me once the furniture had arrived; she didn't want to face a new, empty house. I looked at this sad house, stripped of being, all around it a heightening war mist, directly contrasted to the life Lib was promising. I walked onto the verandah … the feeling was worse, embracing. I stood looking over the remains of the garden. I saw only the noise and pollution of vehicles way down on the highway at the end of the once tended paddock. The clouds were low. Drizzle wet my picture chilled me. I had given up; an alien feeling. There was no drive anymore to create, only the grim determination to hang on and to stop Mugabe and his communists from taking over. And, to get that job. Which job? It was still a priority. I had found myself in a dead man's fix in Bikita. I mean … hey, but my thoughts were interrupted.

A helicopter came chop-chop-chop up the paddock, low … that's how they come in the bush. You know they're there somewhere but your horizon is cut by the trees and kopjes then suddenly they appear; turbulence and roaring and wind at your nose, dust in your eyes, cap gone, only to be gone

somewhere again. This one stayed, hovering over the last piece of lawn, his bundle swaying under. He hit the release button, the tangle of stiff black limbs caught up in the net crashed to ground. Five floppies, their heads and limbs unnaturally posed. Joke, I guess. New DC … a lark. I looked up at the machine. The pilot smiled. I pointed to the police camp. He waved and pointed to me and pointed to the police station. I didn't respond. He grinned wide, flipped into that dramatic sideways glide and thundered away. I stepped off the verandah, hunched against the drizzle, kicking stones.

Mother lifted my spirits by being my first call in my new office – 'congratulations!' She proceeded to tell me that Essexvale … our PM's constituency … was carrying on as though it was exempt. And she knew what was going on because her police reserve duties saw her filling the role of confidential secretary to the Member-in-Charge. Partying had long ago got to such a level that the club had challenged the hotel by opening a humongous pub opposite the pool. The police, she said, were both overworked and leading the charge in the pub as were the farmers who were, to complete the circle, the police reserve. Little had changed in Shabani town, I told her. The revelry of 1974 was still there, unbelievable. The police inspector explained that he could –just—cope with policing the town and its municipal township. Patrols to the TTLs were out, a definite no-no.

So what had been my immediate reaction? I arrived to find I had 100 sound and loyal men on the parade ground with not one day of military training between them. Why, for heaven's sake had they been engaged I asked my new PC, a man I was never to see. "Because," he replied. Now Sar-Major Sam, the same DC's Messenger Sam of three years before, said the men wanted to be trained.

'Like you did in Bikita Sah!"

Through the police I organised for a miner from Belingwe, an off-duty

Selous Scout, to train them. They contributed to his minimal ask …

‘Call it a labour of love, my civic duty to help,’ he had said and he and the lads set to immediately. I left them to it.

There were no other government folk supporting the TTLs … no Animal Health, Health, Schools Inspectors. Of my own staff Field Officer Des was alone. There were still no Agricultural Officers. Of the 40 plus African advisory staff accommodated out in the district only Senior Community Adviser Maggi was still active. Even then, given the new national non-discrimination policy I thought he would have been the first to have been promoted into a senior white post. It hadn’t happened. Why? The only thing not white about Maggi was that he was black. Of the DC’s office staff, two of the 1974 ladies remained. There were no cadets. My Senior District Officer Ernie was alive and a genuinely smart cookie but far removed from war reality.

We had a mini-JOC.

‘Doug, hi. Louis here!’

‘In-*speck-tor* Louis I heard! Congrats. Where are you?’

‘I am your JOC my man. You recall the airfield you drove past on your left as you came in from Fort Victoria?’

Silence.

‘… on Monday?’

I did now. So Louis was both our JOC, our troop commander and our troop. After years behind a desk he was very unfit. He ate and sat, I drank and ran about the TTL. He told me he had a Cabinet Minister flying in.

‘He’s your baby to entertain. He comes to see a lady with a sore back.’

I offered Mr Smith’s newest Cabinet appointment a lift into town. He was done-up in a fancy suit, tie and polished shoes. He wanted to wait for his car. I walked the airstrip in the dark with him.

‘So you didn’t see fit to join the army …’ and he went on to assure me that Mister Kissinger could go fuck himself and if he didn’t like it the SAS would sort him out. ‘We have the capacity and the men to do it …’

I tuned him out. Instead I thought about how in Bikita I had put Mr Dube up for immediate promotion to Senior Cadet. It was refused. Senior Sergeant Nephew had also qualified and I had put him forward as Cadet with particular focus on operations. Refused. The best qualified academically of all my black and white staff was the Armoury Clerk with ‘A’ levels, refused.

‘Get their details,’ I’d said to Sar-Major when the refusals came through, ‘and apply for a new birth certificate with a white name.’ The district accountant phoned Salisbury. To hell with him.

‘Enjoy your stay sir,’ I said and closed the door.

Days passed.

In Shabani TTL’s all new works were at a standstill, even private projects. The people were hungry. There was drought. The southern parts had always been dusty-dry but now even the northern parts, up towards Smith’s family farm[141] in Selukwe, were barren. The tribesmen there called me to shoot a hippo. The cow was competing for the remaining pooled water, desperate to avoid sunburn, and she was nearly my undoing. A FN is not a rifle. It is a weapon to inflict damage on other humans but, I thought … yeah-well. It was the fourth bullet which dropped her, sunburnt and furious, with only the branch of the shrub I was using as a barrel rest between her and me sitting on my butt. Near panic but instead adulation. For a moment we Rhodies were top of the pops as the old mother was reduced to food. Weeks later the elders travelled to the office and presented me her tail fashioned into a *sjambok*.

In Bikita I’d started having ‘talks’ to explain the disease of communism and that Mugabe was one. I’d exhorted the tribes-folk to pick somebody, anybody but Mugabe. Of course with the coming internal election deal

Mugabe and Zanu didn't feature but, nevertheless, in time he would, so now I continued. I took every opportunity I could to hammer home the idea that communism was going to sink us, that any hope we did have left lay in the opposite direction of what Mugabe was offering. I spread the message that when the elections come, vote for whoever you want except for Communist Mugabe and any person or branch standing for Mugabe. I told gatherings of tribe-folk that to trust Mugabe was like trusting in the devil. I explained Mugabe was a hard-line communist … that's what Marxist meant, eh? I explained that he was someone who would take over even the little they owned and soon the place would fall into the depths of anarchy we had all witnessed further north, particularly with the on-going troubles in the Congo. I laid at Mugabe's door the growing list of atrocities being put out by the Ministry of Information.

'I don't need to tell you all this,' I thundered, 'read the newspapers. It is on TV!' Yeah, TV … who had TV out here? There was the booklet put out, "The Murder of Missionaries in Rhodesia"[142]. I kept thinking about it. As I rattled around in that empty Shabani house, in the aloneness of the night, the execution of Dr Decker wasn't sitting right with me. I was confused, disturbed and now the anger rose, faded, and rose again with disbelief.

"If the Jews had not killed Christ, I would have done it myself," was one of the opening lines of the pamphlet, purportedly the words of a B-Nationalist leader/cadre. That didn't hang right. While my Bikita Super Sec was ambivalent toward religion and Sar-Major believed but was lukewarm, both their families were strong believers … man, both Super Sec's dad and brother, lay preachers, had joined Zanu. And we had talks ongoing with Bishop Muzorewa and Ministers Banana and Sithole plus a few other moderates as well as the Chiefs. Over in Matabeleland Nkomo's men were the players of note, he the son of a minister, and they had been actively

solicited (on the quiet) to join up with the Internal Settlement. Okay, so they hadn't joined but the point remained, why now?

The barrage I summoned up in those talks was, therefore, not from my heart but from my training, my habits and the hope that we had been, *that we are*, right. Even as I thought that and grasped hold of that hope of righteousness I had to push, push hard through my chest the message of support for the Internal Settlement. Certainly even as I spoke to the crowds I reflected on the fact that they would probably be better off under any other government than a RF one. But I was out on a limb, I had lost touch.

Maggi and Sam quietly entered my office one evening. They told me how much they liked me and they apologised as they told me I was an idiot to be carrying on the way that I was, that while Shabani was very much a central district of Rhodesia it was no longer a place for me to treat as my own.

'Smith has no name here anymore, Sah,' lamented Sam. 'They are listening to other people, those you talk about …'

'… haven't you noticed,' interjected Maggi sternly, without losing his apologetic smile, 'how the people slide away when you have finished speaking.'

God! He hit the word alright, they did just quietly slide away and they never uttered a cheep during my sermons.

'… no army here,' he continued. 'The SB is one small team with no officer. The Zanu and Zapu people are the ones free to move as they please, Sah.'

I went for a beer. There was a National Service Vadet, easily spotted with his red beret tucked at his epaulet, having a cold one in the Blue Lamp when I stuck my head in. I joined him. He was on his way back to Belingwe after some errand. It was danger time … sunset approaching. I told him to stay over at my place, it was too late to go on, especially with no detached escort.

I found them gone when I returned later. The police and reservists laughed at my concern.

‘Old Mother Hen.’

I knew they hadn’t had war here yet, not since the Pearce Commission riots. And I was right. We found the pelvis and part of the spine of one of either the Vadet or his two DAs the next morning on the bridge marking the division between Shabani and Belingwe. They were driving with the steel door open for cool and took a rocket, effectively melting them.

Sam pulled me out of the office late one Sunday night. Our trainer, SS, had arrived, with a truck jammed with teenage kids surrounded by my anxious men.

‘Take these *majubas*[143] to the police camp for debriefing … ’ he commanded. Little Sam lit up fearlessly.

‘He is my grandson!’ he shouted. ‘These are his friends. Their fathers …’ Sam was ready to wade in. War was war but what the fuck was this? The mistake was resolved.

My job now was maintaining, a constant grind going slowly backward as I searched for a new future for myself. I applied for a quarryman job … the amazing money would have allowed me to save. I didn’t get it. Nor did I get it that the money wasn’t considered amazing outside of government.

Lib arrived. This time she stayed quietly at home. Her pregnancy was holding. It gave me a boost, I felt support. I approached Maggi. I explained how in Bikita we had managed to keep the schools open and to get development work done. I explained how – not that I knew the ins and outs of how—Super Sec had maintained an aerial liaison with the Gooks. I intimated whether it would be possible for us to do the same. He shook his head and leant forward, close to my desk.

‘Bikita was a corridor into the interior,’ he explained quietly.

‘Of course,’ I nodded, that I had been over many times.

‘… and Shabani is a recipient of that corridor. These guys are proving they can provide an alternate to you. They aren’t shoving new men through. So, whatever you do new in the TTL I would say they will destroy. To prove a point.’

We sat quietly, each to our own.

‘See here sir,’ said Maggi with an edge to his voice, ‘I’ve got to find out how I am to be treated - anyway.’

Maggi was awfully vulnerable. His huge family, 15 wives spread throughout the district must be in a state of huge anxiety … what was to become of them?

I decided I would have a go at the government’s “kill-a-terr-for-cash” project. I knew bounty hunting paid well and didn’t see why it should be the preserve of overseas pros. All that was required, I knew, was the handing in of a nice fresh black ear at the police station, two (both right, or both left, of course, and not one of each) would mean as much as I earned in a month. I’d so often been out on my own, I’d be doing nothing different except earning dough.

Killing on government time is for free so I took a week’s leave. I went out early into a close-by section of the northern TLL. By sun-up I was querying, midday I decided it was an idiot’s game and by mid-afternoon I knew it was time to march to the tune of a new career … seriously. Completely new.

Sweaty and grubby and back at the office Sam and a delegation … a delegation –bloody hell, shuffled into my office and brazenly asked if I’d had any luck. The men, they explained, wanted to earn a chance at making money on the government’s scheme. I flew into a rage and had the Army assembled in the Court Room. From the dock I explained where we stood with the political process.

‘Discrimination is over,’ I shouted, ‘there’s equal opportunity for everyone,’ I blustered, ‘the war will end as soon as the internal settlement elections draw in.’

The men nodded dutifully then rose as one.

‘Teach us to kill,’ they said, in essence, ‘we also want the chance to earn cash. On our days off. ’

‘That’s bullshit! The settlement …’

‘There is no settlement sir,’ said Sam, ‘and sir, what the men really want is for you to carry on teaching us to defend ourselves. We are not killer people.’

I had a decision to make. Step up the training, or? I was still on holiday. Lib wasn’t home. I went to the Mine Club for a swim – my first. I was distracted with thoughts of new ways to do things. I asked a garden-boy how to get back on the right road. He ran to the corner ‘to explain better my baas’, and showed me exactly where.

‘I’m 29,’ I thought, ‘and his attitude about sums up the way I have been treated –mostly - by the black folk of the country.’

I was empty, the pool was empty – of people that is. I needed new ideas but the head didn’t respond. I made for the change room.

‘Ah,’ beamed in unmistakeable German accent. Tall, slim and sporting a Field Marshall Smuts goatee complimenting his short cropped hair, holding his towel properly and thrust out a hand, ‘good to see someone take advantage of facilities. Professor … Stellenbosch. You don’t know?’

‘Yes, yes I do … been there.’

‘Student?’

‘No. Wine tasting.’

We sat under the trees on a bench on the grass and he told me all about the need to change, seek new ideas for working the future, the requirements

and benefits of a MBA - that's a Master of Business, folks - and that he and his partner professor were right now emphasising to the Mine Management of Shabani and Mashaba Mines how to set the ball rolling by starting up a Personnel Function.

'They need to embrace capitalism. What do you do?'

'I am a DC.'

'Oh … what's … hmnn I tell you we have drink beer competition and you tell me all then, okay!'

I didn't know it, but the seed for a new career and the next 20 years of my life had been planted.

Meanwhile, our SS trainer said he was ready to take a stick into the south. The DC's Army vied for selection. Sam gave me a short list and I made the final choice of four. I included my favourite soldier, a young man every bit film star looks who had displayed to me all the attributes of being ready for officer training through the Gwelo School of Infantry. He had one problem … poor English. I was prepared to put effort into rectifying.

We, that's me, SS and the four, planned for the coming Friday for a full weekend out. On Wednesday I was called for an urgent meeting in Gwelo. The summons was from the new Secretary for Intaf meaning it had to be serious. The men were insistent. They wanted to carry on without me and even Senior DO Ernie offered to go along for the walk.

I arrived in Gwelo at sparrow fart to find the other outlying DCs had come early too. We were all cleaned up and resplendent (but feeling odd) in our suits, and had coffee in a coffee bar. I have to admit that I really felt part of the DC team. The General was delayed so we, the DC boys, trooped for an early lunch. I was lifted. We sat and shared information, and for the first time in years I heard myself sharing thoughts.

Later, we listened with shock and gratitude to our newest Secretary for

Internal Affairs announce that the government of Ian Smith had instructed him to say it was all over.

It was all over.

There was no surprise, versions of the same had been said before, the writing was splashed bright red on the wall, but here was the leader of Intaf telling us it was all over.

‘Avoid conflict,’ he said. ‘Destroy politically sensitive files,’ he ordered.

I laughed at that. Back in Bikita I’d handed the job of destroying all sensitive/racial material to Lib. She went ape. I returned from a trip out to find her and Kathy had taken over the quad garden and the almost empty files lay everywhere, plumes of smoke from a paper smelt while the DC’s Army looked on curiously.

The Secretary barked, brought me back into the room,

‘STAY IN YOUR POSTS,’ he commanded.

Later, I wandered over to the other DCs filling their plates at the finger supper. An elderly guy urgently beckoned me.

‘I’m your Midlands Provincial Security Liaison Officer - ex-police.’

I nodded and we shook hands. ‘I’m surprised you took that SS man on to be your training instructor?’

That kick started me. ‘He was put forward by Shabani police,’ I replied, ‘why?’

‘Shabani, eh? Surprised any police recommended him. You should check with Belingwe, immediately.’ He was suddenly very agitated. ‘Check with SB anywhere, then get rid of him.’

‘He’s in the bush with a section of trainees right now. Down south …’

The look in his eye said everything, the concern but most of all the unwillingness to be concerned, the wanting to remove himself from the conversation now, because he knew what was coming. He turned his back

from me, as if we hadn't spoken.

I flew back through the dark, gripped by fear but telling myself it wasn't real until the wheels of my motor crunched up the gravel of the office entrance. My lights lit the long driveway and in them I saw crowds of men and women, our colleagues, brothers, sisters, wives, congealed at the corner of the verandah at my office window. They were wrapped in themselves, blankets drawn tightly. I stepped out. On the polished concrete floor were four of our DC's Army men, their heads all but missing. Moaning filled the icy morning air, crying. Our instructor had gone home. We stood in the dark, the sun still a long way off.

SB telephoned all the way from Bulawayo.

'How,' I was asked, 'had I been so stupid as to take *him* on as a *teacher*?' He had been stood down by his unit as uncontrollable.

The response from Joint Command in Gwelo and my PC was, not a call returned … unbroken silence. The next day news arrived that 17[144] territorial soldiers, at one go, all young, white men from the mine, had been killed in action. Their bodies were on the way home for burial.

Shabani went quiet. The hilarity ceased. That weird, endless party that had flowed for so long was over. The mine was in mourning. As the government's senior representative it was my job to attend the funeral, to provide the face for Smith's regime. Along with the 17 were my four DCs army men. The families had elected to bury them in town … town was where they had worked and played for the last 20 years. The four black dead, brothers almost, had been for many years been so closely associated with many of the whites that they could be said to be family. So close was everything … the war to the village, the village to the mine, the mine to the people and now the holes in the ground to each other. In life all had known each other and in death they lay together.

Folk floated as in a stumbling dream from person to person. As I waited beside the gates at the cemetery's entrance I noticed that they were shiny silver, they'd been repaired, painted. The place weeded, the green-grey piles of shale raked into tidy mounds. The priests were coming as well as the Company Major of the seventeen dead. Together we would be the Lord's Methodist, Presbyterian and breakaway Zion, traditionalists, the Government and Army and we'd all march into the grounds with contingents of the DC's and the Territorial's following behind.

I knew the Major when I saw him. We were the same age, our paths had crisscrossed through high school sport competitions and we had done a camp together on the Zambezi as Lieutenants[145]. We stood together as the coffins were lowered.

We attended the funeral family tea put on by volunteers at the Moth Hall, funded by the mine and public contributions, then we both went back to the DC's house to talk. We parked ourselves out on the patio. The garden we looked out on was untended but still full of Africa's beauty. The giant fig stood proud, next to it the single, big, flat topped 'fluffy' thorn and the few smaller, beautiful Msasa whose leaves changed colour with the seasons. The first DC to occupy this site back in the 1930s had ordered the garden be designed around them. He was gone. We ordered beer from Luke the houseboy.

The Major began to talk.

'When we arrived with the platoon,' he said, 'we would make it look like we were fresh to the area, even though I and my sergeant knew it well enough. I would have the men create an air of slackness. We'd stop at a business centre and let the men pile out like kids to buy cokes and buns ... whatever the shops had … make a noise and arse about a bit. Somebody's always watching, they always know.

We'd go from there to our campsite which I'd preselected, but we'd make it look like we'd just chosen it, and settle down. All my boys are briefed,' he said, 'we all know the game. We'd all jump out, fuck around a bit playing soldier, make camp, looking like a herd of amateurs. We'd talk a bit of shit, do the fire and braai then all drop off to sleep right there in the open.

Always the same,' he continued. 'When it gets good and dark we slink off into ambush positions, and wait. It worked every time. The Gooks would come down thinking they were going to find us all conveniently snoring where they had watched us settle in. They'd come marching in and we'd just nail them. Every time. Massacre them. Enormous kills, not a man lost.'

He looked out at the garden. He took small, jerky sips of his beer.

'This time,' he said, 'this time they knew. This time no one came wandering in on the first night. We did our whole routine and nothing happened. So on the second night we pretended to have a good thrash. Drinking water pretending it was beer, acting out the whole issue with radios blaring, everything. As it gets dark we get quieter then I put out the order to start making your way to bed.' He raised his hands and wiggled his fingers, inverted commas around 'bed'. 'Seconds later they opened fire. The sergeants hadn't even put out their sentries yet. They were waiting just beyond our ambush positions.'

We were silent.

'I should have known better,' he said, finally, 'but I couldn't. There is no supervising, wise elder out there. There's no one to blow a whistle.'

'It was inevitable, 'I said.

He sat, quiet, then nodded.

We drank our beer and watched the sun moving, the breeze sighing through the giant fig and the thorn and Msasa. I was no longer a schoolboy standing in the firs watching Smith while smoking a teenager's rebellious

cigarette. My daughter was about to be born, I was a man now, a Rhodesian, but I was no longer a Rhodie. The myth for me had come full circle.

It was over.

Part 3: The Myth of Smith Today

“Believe me do not fear crooks or evil people, fear the honest person who is wrong.” -

FerdiandoGaliani 1770

I live in a condominium now. Alone … three grown kids are scattered about the wonderful wide world in their own nests and Lib is in the Cape. The city is Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I came here to recuperate following surgery to correct another horrible back injury. My brother said he would get me walking again; he did. He introduced me to the magnificent jungles.

It's 3 am.

Next door a 50 storey apartment block is being constructed and a massive flood light shines out from the site. Exactly as happened the night the Bikita bus came careering around the corner, hurtling through rain and pitch dark straight towards us, shutting out our view of busyness behind, so someone has just tilted the works light carelessly. It shines on to my ceiling, on to the cupboard door which reflects into the mirror and over to me. I cannot move the ceiling. I've gotten up to adjust the angle of the door, to send the reflection spinning back out, into space. Standing there I look down. I cannot see into the bare workings running deep into the ground but I know there are labourers down there, doggedly playing catch-up to the bosses' demands. They're men imported from poor countries of the region, the Malawians of South East Asia. Just as we did, so the Malaysian developers pay a pittance. The image of that deep black pit, a dark hole cut deeper by the wayward light, filled with men, is stuck with me now. That's all it took for me to straddle a half turn of the globe; in memory I am back in the land where I was born. Rhodesia, and name corrected, Zimbabwe, is closer than the air. That was how the TTLs began to feel to me from '76. There the people had lost their last absolute need; the luxury of fitful sleep. Like the labourers below me, the Africans of the TTLs could no longer afford it.

Even though all appeared tranquil as I and my men (and the dozens following after us in the days, months, years that were to pass) moved

through the villages in the chill and dark of the night, making just enough noise for them to know we-were-there, I knew the poor helpless people were sitting scared in their castles, the little mud houses, mothers and fathers themselves petrified as they pulled their shaking, confused children towards them, clamping their mouths shut with trembling fingers. In the middle of the war only a wired piece of tin for a door formed their barrier against all evil. In the middle of the war they were living as if pegged out, perpetually, in the harsh, merciless heat of the day, wearing nothing but what we, the government, had left them.

Now, sitting here, looking out, alternatively looking for insight from the wall and my computer screen, one question repeats itself, spinning like the endlessly journeying rays of the intruding floodlight.

Why?

Why did we fight and, crikey, why, by 1976 when it was clearly all over, did we continue to fight?

I've been thinking on this for years, and I've come up with lots of reasons. Here's something crucial to what I want to say, a concept that has made all of that past make sense to me, and my present.

The British scientist Richard Dawkins introduced the word "meme" in his book *The Selfish Gene*, *co-incidentally* published in 1976, the year we lost the war or as Paramount Chief Mabigwa expressed it, 'lost the plot'. Dawkins described a meme as, something that "conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation," meaning it is an idea that gains acceptance in a society and spreads, taking on a power of its own as it evolves from mind to individual mind. I'm fairly sure that no Rhodesian heard of his book at that time, but his idea was one that we Rhodies understood, it was the basis of our lives. We knew memes, we understood them well, but not by that name. For us we called them 'because'.

‘Why can’t we go too?’ we’d ask mom and dad.

‘Because,’ they’d answer.

‘Why do I have to go to bed now?’

‘Because,’ they’d say and it would so naturally slide into,

‘Why are the blacks killing the whites in Kenya?’

‘Because.’

‘They stuck their knobkierrie up her baby hole,’ we’d say to each other in the junior school playground, ‘they put a pig’s thingy in her before they cut her throat.’

‘Why?’

‘Because,’ would be the answer, ‘because they’re black.’ And we’d be solemn.

‘Because’ was the basis of our Rhodiehood, a building block as essential as sunlight. In ‘because’ we found comfort, in ‘because’ we didn’t need to understand ourselves, we only needed to trust that those above us did.

‘Blacks will steal, they’re made like that,’ we heard spoken all around us.

‘It’s the communists that have caused the troubles in Kenya.’

‘Mugabe is a communist.’

‘The communists are coming.’

‘The communists will kill us all because we are Christian, we are Civilised, we don’t believe in apartheid, we believe in merit.’ We heard these from each other and from the television. There can be no greater authority than the TV especially when we all knew the bona fides of the presenters.

We whites will rule for a thousand years,’ we heard Smith say, and we believed him. We were relaxed and extremely happy with it. It made perfect sense.

How? How could it make sense?

Because' was so central to our existence. Because we whites had arrived in Rhodesia with our white ideas, standards and our skills and we had built a new, white country on top of what had been there before. We created a Rhodieland on top of the incredible beauty of the third world's unblemished sunrises and sunsets, trees and grasses, hills, plains, rivers and wild life, and told ourselves it belong to us.

To me the idea of the meme, the insight into the power of 'because' is the best illustrator of why we continued to fight. It says to me that we continued to fight because we did not appreciate our world for what it really was, only what we wanted it to be. We didn't see, we didn't know, we failed to appreciate things as they really were.

'*Dearest Mom*,' I wrote one day, from Mashaba Mine, a stone's throw down the road and roughly half way back towards Fort Victoria from Shabani.

'*I'm having an absolute gas*,' I said. '*I have freedom! Mom, it's just like being back at school. I have minimal instruction and maximum leisure time. And there are so many civilian people my own age to mix with … people who don't understand bullets, who talk about different things. I've joined Round Table, I play golf, the captain of Rhodesia's Ladies Squash gave me a squash lesson and I even had the opportunity to put a shot at an inter mine competition!*'

I had retired from my final Intaf posting as DC Shabani when I got the job with Shabani and Mashaba Mines as personnel officer of 'white personnel'.

'*Put your worry beads away*,' I said. '*I am fine, Lib's fine and so is your granddaughter. The pay is far better than I was earning but it isn't the fortune I thought. Don't tell but, here people doing straightforward*

clerical jobs are earning even more. The mining professionals and expats, phew, they earn money I didn't know was paid out on a monthly basis. Anyway, I'm not complaining … I suppose I am, but I have the time to study towards qualifying as a personnel manager, I work half the hours I used to and I have zero responsibility. My secretary does what work there is!'

She was the happiest Mom in the world.

'*Mom, the big thing is I am no longer running in a different direction to my head so I have had plenty of time to think. I am coming up with some disturbing thoughts …*'

"Please-please," she wrote back, "don't get called up …"

There, in my comfortable residential house, full of time for leisure, no longer chained to the war and with my Rhodie-heart demoralised, with the ability to think and see through a filter other than that of the RF, I began to apply some disturbing facts to thoughts. I had plenty of time. The Internal Settlement elections went on without me to its foregone conclusion - the arrival of our first black president. There I began to question what I had been told to be true, a process that is continuing today still. Next I'm putting down some of what I've come up with. If I read it with the heart and mind of a Rhodie, as I once was, and in my habits and deepest childhood dreams will always be, it's with a heavy soul. If I read with the mind of the person I am today, with the eyes of one who is looking for the truth, I'm thrilled, and empowered.

Blacks

The average Rhodie, that overwhelming majority of Rhodies living in the suburbs,only got to know how to deal with our home-staff and the small cross section of blacks we dealt with at work.

"*Moo-zzs um fana, tata lo hosie pi pee annn fa-ka lo water opa-lo flaugarrden. Aikona fa-ka lapa wedz!*" we would say in kitchen kaffir (as we called it). "*Moses my boy, take the hose pipe and water the flowers. Do not water the weeds.*"

99% of suburban us only knew our employees by their accommodating Christian first names, didn't know how many kids they had, where their spouses were or where they came from. If we did happen to know the 'where' it would mean as much to us as the capital of Ethiopia, or Mecca. Us Rhodies knew more of Durban or Beira Beach Front than 10 miles down the road towards a TTL. Except for his annual two weeks off, and occasional visits from his wife, Royal (Khumalo[146]) lived a solitary existence in my friend's mother's kaya. He was the apple of her eye. "He's been with us for 14 years, you know," she used to tell folk when he presented the dinner back in 1965. Where he went, exactly, during those two weeks leave he was awarded, no one knows. We didn't know them.

Maybe 6% of us Rhodies were in farming or allied rural activities[147] in those pre-UDI days. Maybe double those numbers were, all told, in government or in quasi-government service. Perhaps 2% of the career civil servants were actively involved in the Tribal Trust Lands or townships, mixing with blacks by segregating, speaking as much of their language to get make ourselves understood, applying our regulations, sorting out problems according to our way, and yes, discussing their customs and learning together. Of that 2%, I guess something around 60% were the BSAP and

Internal Affairs (including African Agriculture[148]). Health, Animal Health, Education, Water Affairs, the Railways and allied and Quasi Government made up the rest. That was it. The rest of us, our Mom's and Dad's and us the baby boomers born post WWII, were sitting in our Rhodieland homes looking at a vastly different picture.

We looked over the pool at the garden-boy gardening.

'Yes, I have shown him what's a flower and what's not doll!'

We heard the girl thud-thudding the iron.

'She's doing it deliberately, sweetie, take no notice!'

We smelled the cook basting the lamb.

'I have told him to wash darling! And, by golly, honey, don't get angry, they're not all bad.'

'You are correct my puggle-woggle-honey-bunny and there's time for another drinkie-poo before din-dins.'

'They'll be in each other's pants tonight,' squealed the ironing maid, *'as soon as we've gone'* and she waved the pink frilly pantie set without the elastic in the legs.

'He'll try of course,' sniggered the cook poking the joint to check.

'She'll over eat, over drink and get a headache,' laughed the gardener showing a bent finger, and the dog barked. The dog would have been at the fancy gate emphasising the sign that read *'pasop lo inja'*- literally, with the commonly understood silent addition of 'kaffirs', making it *'beware of the dog, kaffirs.'*[149]

These were our homes. Satirised, sure, but true. Who were these £3, £5 and £6 per month domestics?

They were people who *had complete access to everything in our homes* from the wallet hidden in the drawer next to the key for the cabinet filled with guns in the bedroom, the move-tummy *mootie* set up out of reach of the

kids in the bathroom, the tempting sugar[150] on the kitchen-dresser with rat-attract pellets under, the rusty old tin of ant-killer next to the pool acid which was piled beside the huge felling axe in the storeroom and the knife that carved the Sunday joint - which they sharpened, too. Bizarrely, these loyal servants, Luke, Peter, Pauline, they were the very same natives thought of as the TTL heathen drummers summoning up the devil. While them £3 blacks tended us and our Rhodie kids - readying them for their first crack at school, making their sandwiches and checking their bikes - their own kids, the ones people scowled about in news reports, were unwashed and underdressed, herding goats and collecting water in the TTL, blissfully unaware of TV, politics, or that there was, in fact, more food in the world. As much as we, with nonchalant airs, earnestly re-reminded our servants of the long term horrors of having nothing under communism but the duty to work for little for a minority elite forever, or (wow, we used to hit this one), of the fate that would befall them if the Shona were let loose in Bulawayo with that very axe from the storeroom, or the Matabele in Harare, we *completely failed* to appreciate that in Rhodieland them blacks had little job security and almost zero future job challenge. There was simply no change. A tyre boy in 1968 attended to my clapped-out Beetle, in ’77, my Citroen. No job meant no stamped pass, no stamp meant, legally, back to Kaffircountry where their babies, black versions of the white ones they were taking care of on a daily basis, were near starving.

‘I am only here for myself’ is not the way we saw ourselves we told ourselves, we believed we were compassionate as we gave clothes and shared our leftover food with them and the pets, we were quick to remember we weren’t here to love because we were the greatest.

‘Yes, but they are *satisfied*. It’s okay, *because* they are satisfied,’ we would say.

There is a measure of sense in the thought that Rhodesia's employed Africans, around the time of UDI, on the whole, were generally satisfied. As we sat at home and set off to work and play after, for some odd reason we decided the blacks we saw about us were the only ones in the country and, by golly, hadn't we played Santa and given them a job?

All black parents believed that their own, personal growth would come through their children. With this thought[151] in progress they were not unhappy to earn their monthly pittance because it was a part of the process of growing; a clear investment in their own future. Aspiring to be 'of white standard' was a many-faceted goal for the disadvantaged, the colonialised everywhere. But their children, *they* were discovering that despite the schooling they had received, despite the work, patience and the faith their parents had put in, they were not being offered anything. They were in a catch 22 situation: think back to the great South African radio game Pick-a-Box beamed up to us, and add a twist. Even if they (pretend nig-nogs could be contestants) won they got to carry away an empty box. However, early on they were intelligent enough to appreciate that a white, at least, equalled providing a few black jobs. They were also intelligent enough to see that their kind would, could now, do some of that work and equal a few blacks too if given the opportunity. Some, and certainly not only the B-Nationalist leadership but many others, my mother-in-law's garden boy, for example, who we ragged so badly when he first arrived out of the bush with thorns in his hair, realised they could actually be proud and progressive as blacks and need not aspire to be whites or simply to be of 'white-standard'. We had a maid who not only played tennis but claimed she was good when she was a youngster. But we didn't take notice, we didn't even notice.

Even as we began to see in the 60's the emergence of a unified Black

opposition to the way things were, about 95% of us Rhodies were only able to grudgingly accommodate the differences amongst ourselves and other whities. My father's mother criticised my mother's Catholicism until she died … and me for beating her at draughts. The Italians were wops, we could only have one Irish in the darts team at a time, for example, but together it was easy for some of us to combine and put the boot into a black or some black-*boetie*[152] for some silly reason. When the 'I'm Greek' married a Dutch Protestant lass there was division in the town for a good while. English Charlie getting Afrikaans Joanna pregnant … well, the game was on! In one of my platoons, among the English and Afrikaans and couple of Greeks, was a Jew. If a laugh was needed he was always the butt of it.

We were united, united by *not accommodating, in any way, black anything.* 'Jesus didn't make us equal,' our Rhodie Minister of Law and Order, the Honourable Desmond William Lardner-Burke, often liked to say. He was also the Minister of Law and Order for Kaffircountry so that was them done and dusted.

We were so out of date. When questioned 'who are you, kaffir?' by the policeman from the vantage of his seat in the Land Rover patrol vehicle, a black man no longer grovelled,

'Pleezmah-baas, Ah izMiz-ta Doug-boy lapa (by) tu-tu Duhum Road. Ah izmainboyindagarr den baas!' Nope. We had educated him. He now said something like 'Good evening sir, I work the garden for Mr Doug at 22 Durham Road.'

Whether it was rehearsed or not didn't matter, he was strides ahead. And he looked the policeman in the eye! This new man had pens in his breast pocket for writing though his writing may not have been great. He read too, persevered and stuck to it with determination - a want, a need. He read

something of and certainly grew his own myths and memes about Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyetta, Dr Banda, ‘Free’ Mandela, Mr Nkomo, Sir Gary Sobers, Basil d’Oliveria, Martin Luther, Cassius Clay or Mohamed Ali and the straight talking missionaries and visionaries about and among us. These were not the same blacks that our Rhodie memes still told us they were. They were now articulate[153]. They now had new heroes and they were looking at filling a pair of shoes – similar to the ones we wore.

Instead of seeing, though, we held on tightly to what we believed. We found we needed more than just ‘because’, because we weren’t children anymore. We found other words, lists of them, all embedded in the same, steel, meme foundation around the idea that *blacks are fourth class citizens.*

The Pearce Commission, with (effectively) its vote of no-confidence in the RF and its concessions, should have showed us emphatically that we really didn’t know even our own servants, that we weren’t aware of the calamity, the depth of the despair of discontent among the African folk around them, and us. At that time, around ’72, I had just been appointed ADC and even there, in a relatively senior post, I didn’t know the full extent of the groundswell that was left by Pearce.

Our Rhodie memes, our ‘becauses’, told us that blacks were fourth class citizens, savages, communists. In fact, they were our countrymen and they were motivated by earning a living for themselves and their families, by creating a future for themselves. We didn’t heed this, we didn’t understand it and we didn’t try to accommodate it. Instead we chose war.

‘They are stupid,’ we told ourselves.

‘They don’t want what we have, they don’t deserve it.’

We were wrong.

Generals & DCs

We Rhodies did what we thought we had to do. We did what our leaders told us was necessary for the good of all of us. Did we have a choice? Was there another way? Did our leaders have a choice? I believe so.

It was in ’68 that our Security Chiefs General Coster[154] and Air Vice-Marshall Hawkins told Smith to get on with ‘negotiating’. It is there in the history on the net. A couple of my older ex-Rhodie friends confirm they knew it. Indeed, they explained to me the two chiefs announced their assessment following talks with people in South Africa.

On what basis did Coster and Hawkins form the opinion so early on that we should be seeking peace? I wouldn’t have appreciated it then but it stands that they must have had some degree of backing from SB. I know that because given protocol and inter-service links back then it is the *most* probable happening; they wouldn’t have spoken publically without consulting Ken Flower in deep private first. Research shows that the young, newly promoted Flower (was he still under 40 when he made the equal of junior general) wanted to do things the right way in the sense of being a nation builder, looking to and promoting ideas to seal a consensus peace[155], a peace that would allow blacks to drive the bus provided they followed the map set down by white authority. He saw an extended and deepening war wasn’t what we could handle. He was to follow this up in the early to mid-70s (in support of the DCs) saying[156],

‘Every black man fighting on our side is committed in our favour. If he is for us, he is not against. Every black man fighting with us is one man and his family not committed to the terrorists.”

He was the dominant and prevailing man of the time, he who came to hold the keys to all of us black and white and thus the war.[157] He served

probably Todd and certainly Whitehead in a senior capacity and was appointed chief action executioner of CIO/SB by Field. As to supporting the generals, he apparently supported district administration too - it is not common knowledge that at around the period that the DCs were calling for massive financial stimulus for the TTLs (a process started before) Flower himself suggested the employment of great numbers of trained and armed blacks for duty in the districts. Smith et al turned him down.

I was still at school or shortly after – so around 1967 - when an issue, not known to the public, was argued before me at a braai following a pick-up cricket match in one of the lonely district stations. The central point was that before UDI the leadership of the Rhodesian Front Party were told in no uncertain terms by Internal Affairs and the Police Command that a breakaway from Britain would be beyond silly. Winston Field, his deputy Smith and the boys were advised *then* that the situation had changed dramatically since the 1897 war. The senior Civil Servants, the DCs and PCs who spent their lives working with the blacks, explained that in the TTLs and in the townships there were now determined and educated groups organising. The RF was told that the time of hallucinating, ancestral driven, crazed naked blacks running around an unseen deity in a smoky-fire-in-a-cave crying that the whities had stolen their women, their lands, the rain and had brought locusts, small pox, etcetera, were long gone.

Those career District Commissioners (of service in the 40s,50s and 60s), men that collectively knew every inch of the Rhodesian landscape, who knew who the bad eggs were and why they were bad eggs, their seniority and how they got there, warned that unless the politicians, the society definers, did something, they would be more active still. Field responded by wanting to talk through the position with Nkomo. He released Whitehead's budding B-Nationalist detainees. There can be little doubt that Flower, and likely Intaf

and the Police, would have been consulted by Field before he made such a huge step. In response Rhodies such as my Dad and his friends accused Field (from a distance of course) of wanting to hand over the country. They were bitching blind for they knew naught of that warning made by the civil servants in the know. They knew nothing of those behind doors discussions; the agenda wasn't for the public. This was real, hard core government for the people by the 'know betters'. What the Rhodien public read and heard was Much Ado About Nothing.[158] They didn't know that the RF had been told, graphically, that the opportunity, the day to do anything along the lines of an American wash of the indigenous population, or a South African total segregation exercise, had long since passed. Indeed, the RF must have been shocked to learn that on the question of black promotion Flower again blew the same tune as the DCs.[159]

He is no longer just 'a tribesman', the DCs said, and certainly, he is far removed from the European view of an endangered savage.

The message from the old DC's (who Smith had rid himself of) had been 'you have to enfranchise, now'. The message from the new was the same. They told the RF that we Rhodies had offered new horizons; we had inspired a new person in the previous black tribesman who, although he is of the bush, would now have to be brought directly into the economic and political power play.

The RF received this information, repeatedly, but chose to argue the fall of the coin. Although it fell 'tails', and although the RF leadership themselves had tossed it, the experiment was disputed, disregarded, the facts were not accepted. The RF core politicians took no notice of the message from the new crop of younger and young DC's that were put in place post '65, the men I was to watch and learn from. They, still well before real hostilities broke in '72, told the RF government that Community

Development, or to call a spade a spade, black upliftment, was proceeding at a speed far greater than anywhere else in Africa, faster even than progress in America.

How'd this happen? How come we missed it? Why didn't those facts filter down? I was 19 then. We were hyped up, gung-ho to repeat the outcomes of the First Chimurenga.

'That the Rhodie army was still a largely untested force …' what nonsense! We hot-blooded Rhodie teenagers and young men *were* the army.

'That we had had one hell of a lot to learn about guerrilla warfare…,' that was equally ridiculous … '*moniepoepnie,*'[160] look who are in opposition - zots!

Us 19 year olds believed that, and fantastically, so did the men who were leading us. They were full of that belief. Blacks were fourth class citizens, went the meme, the 'because', blacks were savage, blacks were not capable of mounting any real threat.

Instead of accepting the Internal Affairs-Police assessment the RF, now publically under Smith, transferred, retired or retrenched those old time District Commissioners.[161] Radical right winger William Harper was appointed Minister for Internal Affairs leading to WH Nicholle (an advocate of South African apartheid) becoming our Secretary.[162] In doing so the RF took the baton from the civilian authority and handed it over to the Armed Forces. Flower was to get on with it. And they did. In the creation of our covert forces his men, the men I knew and grew up with, went after those who declared themselves against our government with a passion.[163]

This drastic shift, replacing the authority that had once been invested in a system that was built on gradual integration and wisdom collected over a hundred years, that knew the 'enemy' intimately, with the new and untested armed forces, went unnoticed. With that shift, and what was noticed and

greeted with shouts of ‘so what, have another beer’, was the implementation of press censorship, financial restrictions, personal regulation and the formations of units like the Selous Scouts and Psy-Ops to forcibly compensate for what Intaf and the police would no longer be able to deliver. This handover, this reliance on aggression rather than knowledge, was the beginning of the end for us.

Stock Theft

In the Pioneer days it wasn't stock theft but stock appropriation and the recipients were the Pioneers. Our theft of 'native' stock merely got more legal, white-collar style, as we moved through time until I helped run cattle sales, an event seen as helping them, as our speculators and beef industry helped ourselves.

The people of Lupane had been squeezed into a very inhospitable place. Alongside them there were whities with huge farms to play with. A couple of those whities and their sons were, according to agriculturalist colleagues, unable to mix pig swill without help. On our side of the fence, two AOs set to teaching the thousands of blacks to limit their herds, herd their herds outside of the patches of cultivated lands and well away from the whitie lands. Chief Mabigwa's father was of the elite sitting before Rhodes when he peered down from his rock at the Chiefs below … the cattle Mabigwa's father cared for on behalf of King Lobengula were not bound by fences and were certainly not impounded by some half educated whitie for crossing a line drawn in the shifting sands of Lupane.

On the www, in the defence of introducing the 'hunt your human without restriction scheme', please look up the web and count the entries using this introduction:

"during the *Rhodesian* Bush War, cattle rustling reached epidemic proportions in the late 1970s. This was ..."

If we agree that rustling of epidemic proportions is true, we need to ask one simple question; 'where'd the thieves corral the cattle so rustled?'

Are we saying that a collection of prime cows which were used to decent grass meals daily were stolen and hidden in a TTL? The TTLs were denuded and scorched[164] to the extent they couldn't support the livestock they had

of their own! Hence, the Internal Affairs cattle sales system!

So just where did the ‘rustled to epidemic proportions’ moo cows go? Ha! They were eaten raw in one night at a beastly feast conducted in total silence lest they be ‘herd’ or seen by our Selous Scouts! Unlikely because, by this time of the war, our rural nig-nogs’ tummies had so shrunk that a small plate of maize meal would cause digestion problems particularly if taken with a swelling glass of water. They surely didn’t take them cows into town … that would have been commented upon … ladies who held a pinkie aloof as they sipped tea on the verandah would have complained to the authorities.

Back to my simple Q and the basics … where’d the thieves come from or are we suggesting the black grandmothers and kids did the job?

Okay, say it was a farm right on a piece of the border that hadn’t been mined and the gooks did the rustling, running the cattle over into Moz … would the Rhodie farmer immediately restock in order to afford the Freedom Fighters a second, then third and so on helping of the prize, on a daily basis, to finally build it up into the reported epidemic of rustling?

I am not suggesting that the cattle didn’t go walkies. I question the bed time fable that those/these cattle, as alluded to by the RF “Think-This” machine, disappeared into the pitch black TTLs. I am not even suggesting the possible/probable that they went for trips on trucks or on holiday into another paddock. I am suggesting that very few whitie cattle ended up being associated in any way with our black people and that they may well have ended up in the black part at the bottom of someone’s group financial statement. Yes, I am suggesting that if they did go missing and missing in the numbers we were led to believe, it may have been a financial fiddle. While the average Rhodie played to the foreign exchange rules, our rulers were exchanging those rules for their own.

Miracle Men

In 2012 I overheard an ex Rhodie (left in the early 60s) expertly explain that the Blacks of Africa only knew to plant enough crops to allow them to garner the strength to go begging. It took an hour for him to put the message across, but there it is in a sentence. Brother to what he was saying was the idea that whitie farmers from back then, in Rhodesia, were magnificent. This is a mighty component of what is remembered and still trumpeted today; the idea that our Rhodie farmers were miracle makers, men who turned a tea-pot shaped chunk of earth into the 'Breadbasket of Africa'. The belief is that they did this by hard work, Rhodie guts, and an incredibly green thumb each. My thinking and enquiry and the life I lived back then has shown me something different. I remember my talks with farmer P about stock theft, back in Bikita, and I know what I saw in the TTLs. I know that things were far grayer than black and white. Understanding the reality of white farming in Rhodesia in those days is crucial to understanding the entire structure of our society back then, and our war. As with the rest of this book, I've found that the truth resides in that place where Rhodie and Black African met, in the relationship between Rhodieland and Kaffircountry.

In the early days of Southern Rhodesia (into the late 30s) about 60% of Settlers lived rural and farmed for a living. These men and women were considered vital to the country's future. Indeed, for a long while they were the centre of Rhodie industry, driving the infant economy with their production geared toward wider use, rather than the subsistence orientation of black farmers. With readily available black labour, and with the fertility of Rhodesian land, these white farmers were fairly successful. The crops they planted grew.

Between 1930 and 1960, roughly, there was a move from the outlying

farms to the villages and towns until only around 6% of the white population were left farming, a massive shift. As the number of farmers became less and less, so the ready-made market of those that remained increased. By 1950 the second emigrant wave had happened, a massive influx of new Rhodies[165] and mouths to feed. Commerce and Industry were growing on the back of farming and the cycle was gathering momentum - new immigrant, more food and provision required, more industrialisation. The Rhodie ‘can-do’ attitude, the fantastic fertility of the earth and readily available and cheap black labour were still doing the job. Soon farmers’ were confident enough to begin to look at exporting their wares.

At this time in the whitie farming sector there was a mix of (foreign) major business entities playing-at-farming on their truly massive ranches and a few thousand serious white farmers who collectively controlled an equally huge area. In the TTLs however, where black farmers continued to farm, as they had since we popped them into the reserves, the landscape was different. There the environmentally friendly, traditional ways of farming - pyro-culture, minimum tillage, mixed cropping, bush fallowing - were over.[166] Black folk needed to be into the imported-from-Europe crops and animals but, as old time district personnel can attest and as we all knew, the white system didn’t facilitate black farming evolution. African farmers were systematically denied access to agricultural markets, and when they did manage to get in, at much greater cost than their whitie counterparts, they were charged onerous levies – taxes. Worse, wages were regulated meaning the Rhodie farmer had an even greater competitive advantage because his labour costs were artificially low. Recall my description of cattle sales in Lupane. There the African seller trekked for days to bring his cattle to market, losing their flesh on the journey, while white buyers waited to buy at an essentially fixed price.

There were wider factors too. Long before Dr Banda[167] saw it, Nyasaland blacks (Malawians) from his destitute country were being brought in by Rhodie farmers to keep wages even lower, further undercutting the ability of the TTL black man to earn his living. Our Rhodie farmer was also one of the beneficiaries of the enormous benefits Rhodieland gained from the Central African Federation opportunity and subsequent break-up. During the Federation, while Rhodesia focused on farming development and the understanding that we would supply the hard food to the partnership, Zambia and Malawi had concentrated on mining, tea, bits and pieces and the provision of labour, allowing Rhodie farmers the protected space to develop with an even wider, readymade market. Those benefits didn't disappear after the Federation folded. We'd taken huge steps from the starting line before Zambia and Malawi saw they weren't dealing with a friendly supplier any longer and had to get into their own food provision race. Too late; we had garnered much of the available finance, experimentation facilities and scientists[168] and we'd had the time to tune market and crop development. Our farmers were not cutting their teeth in a theoretical capitalist, free market environment; they were protected, and their abundance was artificial. In contrast to my friend's perception, the Black farmer did have larger aspirations than wanting the strength to go begging, but his playing field was different, and far more difficult[169]. Black farmers needed finance and education to compete but competition wasn't wanted nor was it to be allowed under the RF. White farmers, on the other hand, received all of that.

The idea that Rhodie farmers were miracle makers morphed into a legend and a global meme in the cauldron of our war. It's in that time, when Rhodesia was painted as a global outcast and at the same time as a golden, against the grain rebel, that the reputation of the farmers - those men who continued to feed the dream of a white Africa despite being shot at, mined,

maimed and killed daily – was truly solidified. They became heroes and the Breadbasket idea seemed to become fact. But things were not as we thought.

When UDI was declared Rhodie farmers were, in a manner of speaking, in the enviable position of being fully employed, fully financed with their land at their back as security. Those whose families had been lucky enough to have been awarded farms suitable for high-veldt tobacco were doing extremely well. We all - my Dad and 110% of his mates - aspired to be farmers, tobacco in particular. They were revered, and because of their export earnings politically powerful.[170] Not only had they taken great swathes of virgin land, cleared it (through the toil of hundreds of blacks), planted and made money, they were their own master in their own land under the clear blue sky. They were in heaven on earth in God's own country, they were the dream. What was not widely known is that despite a system that favoured any whitie with land, the estimate is that in the period 1965-1969 over 1000 farmers/small holders went belly up[171]. Their failure had nothing to do with terrorists and all to do with combinations of farming badly and the weather – in other words, normal maladies. In other words, normal human frailties.

When UDI was declared the Rhodesian Front anticipated that tobacco, principally, would generate the cash to carry them through the few days or, shudder, as long as it would take for the Western Christian world to recognise them as a legitimate government. Rhodesian tobacco leaf was in high demand and our RF leaders rightly made the assessment that our tobacco was far too important to the British tobacco manufacturing industry to do without it. What they hadn't anticipated was that the British tobacco industry had read of politics and had been keeping two years supply of leaf on hand. With shock and horror the RF suddenly appreciated that out of the whole 'upset-with-us' world it was the British tobacco industry that was going to be the

most sincere about observing sanctions. It was in Plumtree that I learnt that other users of our produce, Botswana or British beef for example, carried on buying – just with a different purple ink stamp on the carcass. The Brit tobacco industry, however, was quite firm in acknowledging its legal responsibilities. British Tobacco, with their stockpile, had been handed the ability to control supply and therefore inspire demand, to crash prices and raise profit levels overseas. Suddenly Rhodesia's biggest (so we thought) foreign currency earner was in jeopardy and we the public knew nothing about it except to follow the unfolding story through the little that came in the newspapers, second hand talk of the lessening action from the tobacco auction floors and from farmers themselves.

Even though I survived on it on patrol in the bush, none of us eat tobacco. In terms of the 'Breadbasket of Africa' legend, Rhodesia's biggest and most revered export, already enmeshed in a web of global economic strategy, was the export of drugs not food. Our tobacco was widely prized, taxed, and contributed to the ever rising standard of living elsewhere. In that sense Rhodie farmer efforts had little to do with nutrition and even less to do with Africa.

Again, the divide between Rhodieland and the TTLs is the stark example. As has been shown by the incredible uphill battle Intaf had in getting even *enough* money to develop water supplies in the harsh, dry Matabeleland TTL areas, no tobacco export earnings were trickling into the TTLs. The big Buck stopped with the Rhodie tobacco farmer and those he wished to spend it with. They certainly had more income than needed. In that early RF period the importation of niceties rather than necessities (such as spares and replacements) rose, as did the general standard of whitie living, but the pressure in the TTLs continued to increase. Intaf, in its reduced state, was trying to bring in and encourage the use of new seeds, stock and new

management themes, but there was not enough of anything. At a guess the best we achieved in normal times was one agricultural (college/uni graduate) tactician/planner/initiator/negotiator/change agent/teacher per 80,000 people in Matabeleland.

The second blow to our Breadbasket tale was when the RF got their numbers wrong and it emerged that growing tobacco was actually costing the rest of us a bundle instead of bringing in the cash. Initially the government continued to guarantee floor prices to tobacco farmers in the hope that illegal exports (through the sanctions loophole, made possible by the clever folk in the RF and SB watched/assisted) would return enough money to continue to finance the war. Instead, from as early on as the late 60s, the stockpiles grew. The RF continued. They kept pushing money into the pockets of farmers because that kept them committed and therefore the rest of us too. They did manage to sell some tobacco at sharply reduced prices[172], a process that had those RF mates (the middlemen, not the farmers) coining it[173] but the floor prices being offered by the RF were soon only just covering costs. The above average farmers (in skill and land positioning) were fine. It was the average farmer who wasn't coping and the debts of those constantly below average (30 or 40%) were building up, harassment from the bank was increasing. There was a new terrorist … the money collector! It was David Smith who was sent to get farmers to switch to maize production.[174] By 1972/73 it was an open secret; both Finance Minister Wrathall and PM Smith confirmed what the tobacco export council had leaked years before, we weren't selling our tobacco[175] and what we were selling was at bargain prices.

To help things along, all Rhodie farmers were paid a subsidy of 8000 Rhodesian dollars (R$8000)[176] a year. Good or bad he got his R$8000. Presumably whether he was on his farm or renting a house in town (as some

of the Bikita vigilantes were) he got his dough. Consider Lib and I. At the time my middle ranking civil servant salary plus her secretary pay didn't amount to that and we were seriously in the operational areas 24/7 365 days a year.

Now consider the black farmer, the unheralded average and better one who was in the business of producing a bit more. On top of all the previously mentioned uncompetitive issues the Rhodie farmer now had that cash input start over him. Add in the war restrictions – tougher than ever as the war unfolded - the harder and smarter a good black farmer worked, the worse off he was. The hungry beat a road to his door and he became a target for the authorities and the security forces.

Then came a number of real terrible RF whammies one on top of the other. First up is the story of the sad maize silo. Come the early 70s Rhodesia suddenly had a serious over production of maize[177]. With sanctions we hadn't anybody legal to supply to (except our own blacks, but we didn't do that). Now, Rhodesia had added stockpiles of maize to her already flourishing tobacco stockpiles. Initially, while Portugal was still in the team, exports flew out of Mozambique[178] (Portuguese maize production statistics made interesting reading for a time!). At that point, and critical to understand in terms of the Bread-Basket-of-Africa myth, surplus maize was, at a very healthy price for the buyer, mostly going into Europe and Japan.[179] This situation bred a beautiful irony. The non-agricultural Rhodie was subsidising both good and bad farmers through the famers RF subsidy, in turn all Rhodies were subsidising the wealthy European overseas! The very countries who could most afford both their food and their morals shouted about our human rights violations while chewing on our cheap provisions.

In Africa the situation was the reverse. Far from what our RF leaders were saying out loud it is an undisputed fact that exports to Zambia and Malawi

dropped dramatically with UDI. Contrary to worldwide belief affordable Rhodesian maize[180] was not feeding Africa and certainly not our erstwhile Federation partners. Malawi's Rhodie imports were cut by almost two thirds between 1965 and 1972, the period of the so-called phoney war. Import demand from Zambia was sharply down also. I certainly accept that for Zambia it was a given that bringing in what was needed food wise was both understandable and necessary, but bringing in extra, when you have already declared support for the freedom fighters, would not go down too well. Therefore they stopped. The result was that the people of Malawi and Zambia bore the brunt of our UDI experiment. Britain, South Africa and later Australia in turn creamed it with cut price imports from us until around about 1973. Only then, when the 'liberal' heat was on, did Australia discontinue taking advantage of our situation. Our low, super hypermarket loss-leader export prices were the result of us having to sell our goods as if the stuff had dropped off the back of a truck, behaving as does the neighbourhood stolen goods receiver.

The impact of the railway closure on our tale of the Breadbasket was terrible. Up until 1973, and with daily boredom Rhodesia Railways carried our produce and minerals to Moz and RSA and returned with goods. The money that Zambia paid us to move their copper represented the grandest security backing for our signature on our cheques. It was because this copper cash pot was there in support that our revered middlemen and their directors had the leeway to make the incredibly cheap deals that sold our agricultural produce and mining product to the world. We sneered and gave Kaunda the finger when we closed the border to Zambia, or so we believed. The truth is it was Kaunda who, by refusing to accept Smith's offer to re-open the line in '73, closed the border, not us. We didn't know that by keeping the line through Vic Falls closed (and he did for six whole years) Dr Kaunda was

tearing up our copper bonus cheque, an income greater than the profits from our farmers efforts[181]. What we Rhodies have not appreciated is that the closure of the railway to Zambia changed the face of Rhodie farming even further. It was not a ploy by the RF to teach Zambia's blacks a lesson; it was a desperate blow that forced our negotiators to then have to really sell our stuff cheaply.

In terms of the Breadbasket of Africa concept our farmers, with their new and improved seed varieties were not feeding Africa to any degree at all. What one could say is that, for a time, Rhodie farms were Europe's breadbasket in Africa. And our farmers couldn't stop farming. We Rhodies needed the money returns to blast into Kingdom Come the B-Nationalists and their 80% following of the 9 million or so resident Blacks.

What did all of this mean to the black farmer? Here was a further body blow. Our low, low prices played havoc with food production *wherever* folk needed credit or tangible assistance to get started. No-one is going to finance a farm in a poor emerging country when the crop expected in four months is already lying in a silo needing only a liar and a set of false documents to have it sent over from Rhodesia, a Rhodesia desperately trying to sell its stockpile. In that we taught the Americans a thing or two about destroying the agricultural base of poor countries struggling to grow their own food. As we messed about Australia went all out to take over markets we were losing. Huge parts of Australia are similar to Rhodesia and when there are Rhodies available in Australia to show how … you have a winner.

As our Rhodie farmers built our expensive, totally unproductive stockpile, production was hitting all-time lows in the TTLs. Appreciating that black Rhodesians had no option but to farm to survive, in spite of all the obstacles, the recorded food production in the African areas almost doubled in the period 1954 to 1967. Now, with the export bothers[182], farm and business

failures, emigration of previously permanent whites (replaced by opportunists) and belt tightening by whites, employment opportunities for blacks went from bad (from the early RF days on) into reverse. They had no option but to stay put in the TTL. To start with all they had was a tiny plot per family – meaning the new adults couldn't be easily accommodated. Years before Smith and Co, in the days of Intaf Secretary Morris, the politicians had been warned that the human pressure on the TTLs was too much. Come the late 60s and into the 70s and the phoney war period which made these matters intolerable, Intaf and her Agricultural partner were collapsing. When there should have been intensive farming education and funding the reverse was in progress – Intaf was expected to perform war-duties. To top it all there was the mailed fist. Right then our army was at its disruptive best. You didn't pop many seeds into the ground or weed weeds when a whitie with his new found power in his corporal stripes was making you do press-ups until you told a truth. At the height of the war in Bikita and the surrounding area that I saw, and in Shabani, if Rhodie Security Forces were sniffed in the air the fields were left to care for themselves. Fear was the only growing thing. Research, I am sure, will back up my experiences and show that African food production took a second huge fall from the day the army began treating the TTLs as a seriously belligerent foreign country.

Exacerbating the problem, the hardest hit were also the best producing areas. The Mashonaland - Manicaland grain belt is a prime example. Come 1974/5, choice areas were the first thrown into PVs and black farming totally halted. In terms of the statistics of that old Breadbasket saying, when this 'best of everything' Kaffircountry northern division, which produced by far the most of the entire country, got war-whacked it is easy to see that the picture showed that the whitie Rhodie farmer was, apparently, the miracle maker. From the early 60's when the Rhodie share of agricultural food

production in the entire country was only 30%, it leapt to 75% during the war. Much of the Breadbasket story is based on this.

And what about cattle? Livestock production in the Rhodie areas actually grew faster than the grains. The standard of living was going up everywhere in the world and that meant more good, tasty meat was required. Again land pressure in the TTLs was the central issue. There can only be so many grazing animals per acre and within that there needs to be a managed way of caring for the animals. To advance management through the Agricultural Officers the government had pushed out agricultural advisers (the numbers being trained fell dramatically during the phoney war). We also had a number of agricultural high schools but, patently, not nearly enough for the revolution required. Even as we at Intaf were failing so the white sector was taking advantage.

As I hitched my teenage time around Manicaland, the Midlands and Matabeleland, one couple regularly passed by and if they had space they always picked me up. They were buy-and-sell-quick merchants. One wicked wet night they jammed me in among the pile of mattresses on the back of their truck and hours later they woke me, dry and rested, in Bulawayo. I rolled out and set myself up to hitch on the first roundabout into the city. As the cars sped at me, lit up my life and flashed away right, I sat reflecting on what they had said about their ‘starting tomorrow, a new life’. They had saved enough to enter the big league. Many were doing it and it was simple - you bought TTL produce and sold it on at the right time - cash out, bigger cash in. The next time I saw him he was in a new truck and boots and his wife was tending home, not labouring, they had been successful thank you. I was a senior DO then and he a livestock dealer. This category of Rhodie miracle maker included fulltime farmers, Rhodie folk who ran small holding agricultural units in tandem with their jobs, others who rented underutilised

land from lazy hazy farmers and non-resident Rhodie landowners, public bodies, or even from the extensive lands owned or rented by the Rhodie quasi government Cold Storage Commission. In the TTLs these white ‘farmers’ bought from starving people their starving goats, sheep and cattle, took them back to their rental, fattened and sold them on. Their herders were equally desperate blacks needing work. In this practice the buyers say they did the blacks a service by buying their emaciated stock and keeping it alive. Factually that is true. Having cared for the animal from birth, having paid for its dipping and health costs the tribesman had to sell it to the whitie who had grass, but here is another truth. A white Christian Rhodie buys walking dead animals from a black Heathen from Matopo TTL at say $100 per head. He drives them 30 miles from the denuded lands of the seller to his Essexvale grassed valley, lets them wander about for seven weeks, doses and pumps vitamins to the tune of $10 and sells them on for $200. Now, to further hammer it home, up until the 1940s the land that the cow was transferred to belonged to the chief of the poor fukka who sold the beast off in the first place.

The truth is that a significant portion of that prime mouth-watering beef that was sold all over the world wasn’t actually white farmer meat; it came straight from the TTLs. That meat of such quality was going so cheap was because countries who were stocking up on emigrant Rhodies were entering ‘our’ market and we had to undercut them.

The truth is that the greater the distress in the TTLs the greater the opportunities for those with idle money or land. An African of the TTL society sending his family cow to the Cattle Sale is in the same position, god forbid, as a European handing over his savings bank book to a dude at a bank’s Customer Service Desk and pleading, ‘be fair, give me some money from my book … I have a wife and some kiddies.’ The banker then asks,

“Now of this, how much do you REALLY need to get back?”

I remember Chief Mabikwa of Lupane. One day he confused me with a story about the ‘big sell off that happened in the middle 40s’. Shucks, it was 1971 and I hadn’t a clue what he was talking on about … Here are the bones of what I have been able to put together:

The then Southern Rhodesian government decided, because the pressure on the land in the TTLs couldn’t continue, that they would forcibly destock. I believe, talking cattle alone, one million head were removed, no questions answered, from their TTL owners. I doubt very much that they were just shot and left to rot. I suggest this was the beginning of White Farmer Speculation on Black Farmer assets as a formal job career. Calculated in today’s money, at a nominal live price of just Rand 10 p/kg, the Black Zimbabweans were robbed of Rands 5,000,000,000.

The statistics casting the green light on Rhodieland were skewed by other produce too. The granite quarry that made the guy in Shabani a multi-millionaire, the timber from the forests of Lupane which had value added outside of the TTL, are examples. Every animal, seed, boll, piece of fruit or mined rock marketed this way went on to the books as the produce of the world’s miracle men, the Rhodie filler of the Food Basket of Africa, the white-Christian-Rhodie-farmer. The levy (or royalty) that was paid on all TTL assets sold into Rhodieland was calculated on the raw value. Its sum was what the DC’s were expected to develop the TTL and its black African residents with.

For forty years the world has believed that a tiny minority of Rhodesian farmers created a miracle in Africa, and were finally halted because of the actions of black Africans. Within that breadbasket belief is the statement my friend made, that in contrast to white farmers, black farmers could achieve nothing but feeding themselves enough to go begging. In fact the truth is the

opposite. The perception of the might of white Rhodie farmers was in fact a construction, a meme that was not fact, created almost entirely by the deliberate action of the RF government, and on the back of the pillage of the TTLs that left both sides of the fence wanting, once that unsustainable recourse had run out.

The RF's political power came from the perception amongst Rhodies that the farmers - those men that encompassed the African dream of every town bound Rhodie male - were the backbone, were 100 per cent behind the Rhodesian Front. The truth is the farmers *had* to be kept in place for the war to continue.[183] They were the guys the people looked up to. They were the ones featured in the cartoons, the macho men of Africa in a sensual advertising campaign that was unique, incredibly successful, and far from reality. Millions throughout the world speak as though they saw it happen. They saw something happen, but it wasn't the truth. Unfortunately, if we Rhodies are to be remembered as the Bread Basket it's better that we are remembered as being the suppliers of cheap fine leaf, quality fillet and foodstuff to discerning customers of Europe and for a time Japan, operating in a protected market place as far removed from the theory of a market-capitalist system as it's possible to be, while our young men were killing, and dying, in the name of it all. Our government was dishonest, corrupt, our farmers were artificially inflated and supported, and we all paid for it, none more than the TTL farmer who had none of the advantages, who was literally starved off of his property for the enrichment of others. Far from being the "Breadbasket of Africa" we … us Rhodies, farmers-and-all-the-middlemen, were leading the way in how to destroy the food production efforts of others weaker than yourself. Our farming practices were another exercise in might is right. We made no miracles. All we did was prove that aggression and strength will get you ahead for a time, but it will not last, and that the wheel

turns, it always turns, for everyone.

The farmers cost us a lot. They cost us in terms of their protection – the elaborate home security, training and placement of home guards, vehicles, police reserve on stand-by – and in terms of the price we had to pay to sell our produce to opportunistic dealers. The money we got in return we used not for building but to prolong the war. It was an idiot exercise but nevertheless the Rhodie farmer was held up as Mr Extraordinary, the backbone of the Rhodie fight against communism.

Our Covert Forces

'All of us started at the top of the mountain, young and full of hope. But our parents' war changed all. There was no glory – just drink, drugs and death.'

- "Who Dares Loses" by Greg Mills and Graham Wilson[184]

In Rhodesia we had our accredited journalists, we had our Rhodesia TV, our Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation staff teams and the super simple FM radio sets[185] (one station only) tuned for reception in the bush. The stories put out by all of those were full of praise for our armed forces. They painted a picture of our heroes battling against all odds, performing with almost superhuman abilities against barbaric and communist-inspired insurgents. Now, thirty years on, hindsight and the slow trickle of new information casts a different perspective, bringing the dark-side of our bush war to light.[186] Ex SB/Scout Jim Parker[187] and RLI corporal Chris Cocks[188] for example, have written books that the reviewers say punch hard and don't follow the traditional rah-rah Rhodie lines. As for my experience, I am cast back to the unwritten observations of the hundreds of men I commanded and managed in the districts. The wholesale atrocities, news of events such as cutting off a man's lips and forcing his wife to eat them that we were led to believe were being carried out by CTs in accordance with Mao's Little Red Book,[189][190] didn't make too much sense to us. Almost to a man these men and myself shook our heads.

'How?', 'why?' and 'who is doing this?' was thought over and over, out loud and in private, before misgivings were pushed down and away and we got on with the 'job'. That the Patriotic Front (PF) forces were brutal and

sowed terror through Rhodesia is true without doubt - they acknowledge that their Freedom Fighters sought out, disciplined and executed ‘sell-outs’[191] without mercy. What is in doubt, however, are the actions of our own forces, behaviour often at total odds with the picture put out by our Rhodie media, and where the true blame of the brutality of our war can be laid. Seldom spoken about is the gradual breakdown of discipline, morale and morals among our men and women during the later years of the war. There is every indication that our Rhodie soldiers, regular and territorial alike, packed their social problems, anger and sorrow too, into their kitbags and hauled them into the operational areas where we were hell-bent on reciprocating[192]. An eye for an eye is a corruption of the even older maxim, a maxim we had never followed – ‘treat others as you would like to be treated’.

By 1976 we Rhodies were in a desperate position. We had lost de facto control of the townships. In the TTLs we were in charge only of the ground we were physically standing on[193] - for the first time in our history there were huge chunks of Rhodesia where blacks didn’t need an *isitupa*[194] and our forces only went about openly in large, heavily armed groups. On paper, though, in the killing stakes, we were still winning the war. We were smashing them but it was coming at a terrible cost. From ’76 onwards we sustained 2/3 of our casualties, black and white, armed forces and civilian. We were in a dirty war and we were escalating it. The ideal of Rhodie forces striding into the bush, despite massive odds, to uphold the white Christian values of our 1000 year dream was over. Our armed forces, particularly our various covert branches, had severed ties with Rhodie morals and entered a collective nightmare. We had become the demons we were meant to be fighting, so say a growing number of writers and organisations Rhodies don’t usually take notice of. People and groups like Col (Rtd) Panganai Kahuni (an active columnist[195]), “The Voice”, Jo’burg based author/journalist Stan

Winer[196], Terry Bell, a South African labour analyst[197], Assistant Professor (MIT) Clapperton Mavhunga[198], one of the University of Rhodesia's first black students, now politician and author Aeneas Soko Chigwedere is Governor of Mashonaland East[199], author Robert Nowell[200], and the damning doctoral investigation write-up by Jephias Dzimbanhete titled "Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation"[201] represent a small sample of writers of those other views.

To understand how we arrived at our own moral wasteland a quick detour into the evolution of our Rhodie Special Forces is needed. I credit Commissioner Ken Flower with indigenising and expanding our Central Intelligence Organisation[202], SB to most of us. His study of the Mau Mau[203] Emergency showed Rhodesia's only chance would be by fighting an unconventional war, a war of hundreds of skirmishes fought by small groups wherein the owner of the best information would be the last man standing. He realised that to be ahead on the information highway we had to adopt the pseudo-terrorist model developed by the British colonial policeman Ian Henderson in Kenya. This was to both lead to our longevity and our downfall. When Winston Field's conciliatory attempts[204] led to his replacement by Smith, Flower and his regional Superintendent's began testing police teams consisting of a couple of local black policemen who pretended to be B-Nationalist cadres or DC's informers (whatever role the situation demanded) supported by a small team of well camouflaged and armed white undercover policemen in the shadows. On the information collected the senior whitie right there and then made action decisions with Godly powers; those of life and death. It was reverse Ground Coverage with big teeth, the pseudo teams approaching the bad guys on whom we had full files. Success came easy. We contrived a way ahead of the incoming, newly resident or passing through CT pack. Forget the spy and war stories,

everyone talks. It is merely a matter of when, and we needed him or her to talk fast. To the principle of extracting information in a just war there is no place for being squeamish; information collected can and does save incalculable lives elsewhere in a conflict and leads to successful sorties against the aggressors. Of course, sometimes a person who knew nothing was picked on. War is filled with casualties. At this stage, however, our operations were regulated, lines of responsibility were clear, and actions taken were results driven. But the blueprint couldn't last - increased activity required greater manpower. Some army personnel were pulled in so that by 1970/71 a host of specialised units such as The Combat Trackers, Psy-Ops, Mounted Patrols and Grey Scouts were being birthed. The completely unconventional Selous Scouts was one of them and it was to grow into our largest attack force. It was the obvious way to go … in theory we could field hundreds of small teams (from two men up) searching for and harassing insurgents. The real limitation was the number of white team leaders available. Attached to an SB agent, these units (of a size to fit the expected task) would undertake specifically targeted operations - be they against individuals or groups, or to set up ambush or Observation Points (OPs) - all on SB information. It worked. Well camouflaged SB and their black operators collected, decided, and the newly established military units acted. The OPs fed (initially RLI, later RAR as well) Fireforce reaction units.[205] The war was expanding fast. Soon the Selous Scouts teams[206]were out there alone.[207] Still we were under pressure. By 1976/7we introduced crops of National Servicemen volunteers who made up the backbone of the Special Air Service (SAS)[208] and for the Scouts they performed the critical task of sneaking in and out of OPs, spotting the CTs and calling in Fireforce choppers or the jets. The RLI Fireforce sticks were soon augmented by National Servicemen[209]riding alongside the professionals. Big kills were

recorded.[210]It doesn’t matter that in most cases we were fighting half trained, ill equipped, half starving and often sickly garden boys valiantly masquerading as Freedom Fighters[211] - we were ahead of the pack and we had to be. Our forces, though, were by then seriously stretched and consequences were slowly settling in. Now young men straight out of training were jumped up into specialised roles, given those godly decision making powers alongside the seasoned professional, for both the overriding goal being to kill gooks. As the distance between commissioned commander and operator was increased so that commander’s direct responsibility was diminished and the man-on-the-ground’s heightened. The strain on an unprepared individual was magnified for ‘leaving him in-charge’ out there in the bush amounted to giving him the authority reserved for officers. The buzz-word was ‘COIN’ … every Rhodie knew it and maybe even knew it was short for ‘counter-insurgency’. Academically COIN is simply the heading on a manual like the Bible or Get Fit Responsibly. Flick the cover and the inside page should detail how insurgents will be answered and strategy should have embraced a complete Green Area initiative. But by 1976 COIN meant kill gooks:

"The policy of winning 'hearts and minds' was largely abandoned in the field just as the first moves towards a political strategy of a moderate black government were coming to fruition. Perversely, it was considered that black participation to the political process would permit tougher, war-winning operations. Martial law was extended, the punitive destruction of villages and livestock of those who were accused of aiding the guerrillas became routine and a more aggressive external strategy was adopted,” says an extract from an on-line discussion with Mark Adams, ex RLI Troop Commander debating Jephias Dzimbanhete’s “Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation”. It continues. “As one senior officer at Combined Operations

admitted: 'We relied 90 per cent on force and 10 per cent on psychology and half of that went off half-cock. The guerrillas relied 90 per cent on psychology and only 10 per cent on force.'’

By Christmas of 1976 vast stretches dominated by the PF were declared by our senior politicians and field commanders as ‘No-Go’ or periodically as ‘Frozen Areas’.[212][213] These accelerated the degradation of our troops’ ability to maintain personal integrity and justice in the combat arena even further. Whoever went into any of these declared cleared areas had carte-blanch to do exactly as he pleased because he had the right to assume all suspicious persons were enemy. As all other friendly forces (especially Intaf and its many and varied employees[214]) had been barred entry, it followed that all persons left in the zone were suspicious.

Makoni District was as blunt with this air-dropped leaflet: *“WARNING TO ALL Tigers. Terrorist informers. Terrorist agents. Sympathisers and feeders of terrorists. Recruiters for terrorist training. There are still some people who continue to help the terrorists and a few even try to do their evil work for them. These people are counted as terrorists and will be killed by the Security Forces.”*[215]

With such instructions in place from the Father-of-the-People (the DC), the army could arrive at night, make as much noise as they liked, order the Rhodie squads - our highly trained fresh, eager and memed-up National Service youngsters (often teamed up with ‘imports’[216]) - to de-bus on the move and set themselves up in a suitable OP/sniper spot, and their gulag was in place. If anything moved during curfew hours (or in the case of kids [see No 7] at any time) it was a legitimate target. Our forces didn’t even have to debate, just shoot. The official Frozen/No-Go zones were worse … nobody had any warning of the rules being applied. This admission by us of loss of control with its draconian measures to regain control had to have told our

men on the ground we were in a sad no-win-ever situation. Once imposed the people were never ours again, their land became a killing field, a field under the command of junior soldiers with no internal moral compass[217] other than that single goal; kill gooks. Our security forces didn't need anyone with even a fragment of thought capability. He could perform by rote. Most of our home grown whitie soldiers were racist[218] and filled with memes quite handy for the business of war. One day in the back end of Bikita a regular force major asked me if another major was senior to him because Com-Ops liked the way he cut throats? He was junior in the first place but the thought that the more wanton you were – being of a cruel, violent disposition – the more you were favoured by our leaders was clearly embedded in my colleague's mind. Activist Jeremy Brickhill noted that Flower said there was a place for the mad in the Selous Scouts; Flower is quoted as saying some Selous Scouts shouldn't be free to walk about. My experience in Shabani confirmed that. 'They are "things" said one hard SB man describing to me some of the men who operated in the dark nights.[219] Added to those home-grown men were our imports, those that arrived to volunteer or as mercenaries (in answer to our ads placed in international magazines[220]), some had vague ideas about defending capitalism but they were not there to save Rhodesia. They arrived complete with their own memes, joined up, served a while, and gapped[221] it, some to come back for another shot later. [222]

We all heard the stories in the pubs and at tea after church; most of those throwing gooks from Dakotas, getting rid of captures down mine shafts, etc. was legit stuff. Raging alongside those and the ambushes, OPs, Fireforce and more routine patrolling and follow-up actions of our RAR and Territorial companies was another facet. Out there in these potentially hundreds of pseudo teams we had bundles of Turned Terrorists - TT's we called them.

‘Nice enough guys, for blacks – har, har,’ we used to say. Nominally under the command of SB, as the toll mounted they were in all practical senses under the Selous Scouts. Some were captured members of the B-Nationalist armies or even of the former Mozambican rebel forces who agreed, under protest, to become members of our very deep Underground Army. Those chosen from Moz were chosen because they were of the same immediate family grouping as our North Eastern and Eastern border folk. Others forced into TT work could just be a likely-looking kaffir who’d been unfortunate enough to be seen by an SB/SS member as being just a likely-looking kaffir. Still others were undoubtedly blacks whose police record of past (even current, as in currently in prison) indiscretions or murder charges were used to convince them to participate. The police continued to process men and women through our judicial system but I suggest our High Court had the opportunity to rule on very few CTs and those they did testified with well expanded juicy bits for international PR only. Those ‘selected’ to become TTs were brave people, sure, but once their nuts were in hand they saw the light so brightly it was hardly necessary to explain that any refusal to do a wrong-doing well meant his whole family would be gutted before him. As in Vietnam, also, I can’t see how a little substance or three would not have been used to help discipline the mind to the job on hand. After this they tended to be very good at obeying commands. They were robots, doing exactly as told. Don’t be fooled. There were not white men painted black hiding amongst the tribes as popular myth infers.[223] These were black men, turned by[224] and controlled by white men, in turn reporting through to the RF and Smith. They were capable of anything. What were the actions of these men, let loose in an environment where brutal violence was the norm, and there was no watching, moral eye?

The TT scene isn’t new to the world at war[225] but it seems we elected

to improve upon the particularly brutal Kenyan version[226] in an attempt to dominate, rather than bring around, civilian life out in the bush. It is well known that while our RF government was united in its press proclamations, behind closed doors we were very split[227][228], a culture which filtered down to the JOCs and into the ranks of our forces. Com-OPs commander General Hickman was shocked to find out that Lt-Col Reid-Daly, the commander of our biggest and most diversified secret unit, had a secret direct link to Smith and his cronies. Did this mean that over and above the Scouts performance within the normal command structure there was other work on the go, the scope and results of which only Reid-Daly and the RF (and its propaganda machine) knew about? Was there yet another team (brace of teams) out there we knew nothing of? What is certain is while Intaf were fighting to stay alive our security forces were split into so many distrustful units by 1977 the war had become a killing game. It had little to do with preserving Rhodesia.

When I arrived in Shabani in 1978 rumours were wholesale of ‘experiments’ taking place in the semi-secret (as in known but not talked about) base in Mount Darwin.[229] Rumours even surfaced about our own academics and doctors lending support to experiments being conducted in the labs of the University of Rhodesia right in the heart of suburban Salisbury. I dismissed this as hard to swallow but it seems I was wrong.[230]And it seems, in something of a confirmation of the red telephone direct from the politicians to our scouts, our Ministers were directly involved:

“Defence Minister P. K. van der Byl[231] contacted Professor Robert Symington, head of the clinical program in the University of Rhodesia’s Anatomy Department, for more powerful idioms. At the end of the exercise Symington compiled five pages worth of poisons, toxins, and venoms commercially available and purchasable without difficulty from

“organizations …”[232]

The voices were tying in South Africa and the USA.[233][234][235]The gossip that we attempted to follow the Americans with the use of pesticides, poisons and viruses was true, to a degree,[236][237] and the internet now is full of confirmation. We didn’t aerial spray but we poisoned water[238] far and wide, food (open and tinned), spread/attempted cholera and anthrax and the one most of us did hear about, impregnated clothing with delayed reaction poison. A number of colleagues spread around the world have confirmed little bits and added a measure – apart from paying well to have the poisons taken up our forces used both priests and white farmers[239] playing both sides to help with the deadly distribution. That some of the stuff had a delayed reaction was another factor that played well into our hands, leading to black communities accusing each other and generally developing a suspicion of all folk (their own kind) around them. Even I had been called to join a Rhodie endorsed unit doing funnies.

What were the Rhodesian Front cabinet up to? They issued unnumbered, unrecorded licenses to kill. And it seems their madness wasn’t enough for some. I was approached about joining a coup to, in three words, advance the war.

In contrast to the cloak of secrecy thrown over the other events that happened in our TTLs the external story is documented from our side with pride and available to anyone with a keyboard.

There’s the hugely successful 1977 raid on 4000 (others say 10,000) strong ZANLA base in Chimoio, widely cited as a legitimate military target (even ZANU acknowledges we took out about 3000 of theirs[240]), which I’ve no argument with. Add to that, though, that Chimoio is a district capital and the fifth largest city in Mozambique. It is better known to Rhodesians as Vila Pery, Umtali’s cheap weekend of fun and food. It was and is a civilian

area, packed with civilians, of which our boys killed many.[241] Picture it. 200 of our best attacked the base *following* an intensive air-bombardment[242][243].

Near to Chimoio is Nyazdonya, a refugee camp claimed ZANLA, a claim widely accepted overseas.[244] In their book, "The Rhodesian War: A Military History"[245] Paul Moorcroft and Peter McLaughlin write/acknowledge that "it seems" *nearly all of the camp was unarmed* though, they qualify, *many may have* been trained guerrillas or guerrillas in training. That makes Nyazdonya what – a rest and recuperation camp?[246] It was hit by the Scouts the year before Chimoio, in August 1976. The famous lines from varied book reviewers, "…they first cut the telephone lines to the town and drove on to the guerrilla base. They opened fire on the guerrillas killing between 1,028 and 1,184 …[247] Captured ZANLA documents revealed that many of those killed in the raid were either trained guerrillas or were undergoing guerrilla instruction."[248]

"Such raids were replicated with increasing frequency," wrote ex colleague Major Wilson and while I acknowledge that there were some really heavy (joint Rhodesian/SADF), very successful actions way up in the far north of Mozambique against well trained troops, there is little point in rambling through them all. What is important is this: Just who were the people we were 'taking out' in Mozambique?

As a direct result of all the action and all the not funny 'funnies' happening in the No-Go, Frozen Areas and Curfew zones and in the TTLs generally, about 250,000 of our citizens fled, setting up temporary homes among their distance cousins in Zambia and Mozambique.[249] These people were from the deep bush. To them, young and old, male and female, uneducated or mostly so, desperately poor, frightened, the sight of a DC (a white with a superior attitude!) was an awe-inspiring event. To murder them

would be as easy as swatting flies. Our boys mowed down this mix of people as we would spray flies beating at the fly-screen door[250].

Panganai Kahuni wrote in 2011 that the attacks on Zambian Camps **“**continue to linger in our minds. A mention of these camps regurgitates chilling memories that provoke bitterness within those affected.”[251]

Reid-Daly argued that:

“External operations, although rarely more dangerous than our internal operations, always excited interest and enthusiasm in the troops and proved to be a great morale-booster. They also provided a welcome break from the general tedium, which often bugged our internal pseudo operators.” He also notes that the majority of insurgent casualties caused by the Selous Scouts, in fact, were created by external operations.”[252]

The number of black civilian casualties could have numbered 25,000 (a nominal 500 per district!). Far from acknowledging the trauma ex-Rhodien attitude fails to even acknowledge the grief that crushed down upon hundreds of thousands of Black mothers. And we haven’t attempted to add up the by-product deaths of our actions from the collapse of everyday health services never mind unattended disease and malnutrition. We started a war in 1965 against what we believed were a few dissidents but we were wrong … universally our black brothers and sisters wanted change (and about 30% of whites voted with them by leaving long before the war turned sour), therefore it was obvious and logical that any attack mounted externally had to be against our civilian displaced population. We were searching for 30,000 among 300,000 of our own civilians and however many Mozambicans living in those ravaged areas. We hadn’t the right – any right - to do that. There are some horrific accounts of our security force actions in Mozambique.[253]

The more I flush away the press releases and anecdotes of the second half of our war to plumb the depths of truth the more befuddling it gets. I have

agreed this much with myself: While General Hickman and the Chief of Police Allum were on stage they were no longer directing. I recall just before I left the service (March 1979) a splash either in the Top Secret newsletter or as a separate circular stating something on the lines of ‘commanders performing outside of orders approved by Com-Ops must understand their actions will fall on their own heads’. That’s a neat way of saying ‘we aren’t in charge/we have lost control even though we may have looked on approvingly six months ago’. We were caught in a war out of our control.

In ’77 I was given the impression, gained from my SB contacts, that they (and hence Chief Spy Flower), were ‘not in tune with’ (I cannot be more definite) the Selous Scouts’ teams (or elements of) working to the politicians. That Flower and Reid-Daly loathed each other was something of an open discussion yet clearly at the beginning they had to have worked together. [254] An incident in the Vic Falls area comes to mind. I have no reason to doubt my informant and I also believe I am one of the few outside of SB middle/senior ranks who know it happened. It was either ‘76 or ‘77 (I think I was in Bikita), when a friend, Chief Interrogator Inspector ‘Wal’, was very busy interrogating a gook general in Vic Falls. Suddenly he was called to join a senior officer who had appeared out of nowhere for lunch down in the Village - there was a forces regular haunt there. The surprised Wal wasn’t too fussed for his patient. He told me, ‘he wasn’t in any condition to carry on talking, never mind walking’. The lunch was a non-event, a time taker. He returned to work to discover his patient gone. The man reappeared in Lusaka some months later.His escape could only have been on Flower’s orders.

We ‘sort-of-knew’ too that ‘our-people’[255] were having talks with Nkomo’s people and indeed it was confirmed that a top level contact had been made late 1978.[256] It was also gossiped in buddy to buddy chats that the reason the army attempt (SAS, twice?) to take out Nkomo in Zambia

found the bird cage empty, the breeze of his leaving still lingering, was because he had been warned. It is well known that Flower had little confidence in Company RF and Smith right from the beginning,[257] and that extended to General Walls,[258] our Supreme Commander and technically his boss. Walls choose his pal and pre-war sergeant major Ron Reid-Daly in what Flower could have seen as something more than a simple act of favouritism. This animosity and distrust added to a soap opera starring an army that didn't understand Intaf, police who wanted more decision power making but struggled to put boots on the ground, and regional army controlled JOCs doing their own thing. Was Flower in search of an early end to the war to seal a peace and found a new order with whites quietly running the scene? On behalf of some other power? Certainly it is possible as Flower, it seems, was in the spirit of advancing a compromise peace while the Selous Scouts were going the other way[259]. The trickle-down effect of such top level division in our ranks was felt and catastrophic. Our forces were without decisive leadership, in the midst of escalating violence and fear.

"Home armies resort to terrorism when, [there is] a change of social relations or a change of regime, where there is political, economic or social instability, where there is moral decadence, where cynicism and nihilism triumph, where vice is legalized and where crime spreads." These are the words of General Leonid Ivashov, Chief of Staff of the Russian armed forces, speaking during the Axis for Peace 2005 conference. His words illuminate what many Rhodies knew of that time of war. At one stage we had the highest divorce rate in the world, out of marriage liaisons were at a peak, we matched any country on alcoholism and we were starting down the road to drugs. Some in debt simply left the country leaving the key in the door, farmers and businessmen were moving assets - this is how we behaved among those we loved. To top it I came upon an incidence of black women

being forced into sexual liaisons in the PVs.

Our white dream was done and dusted by ’76 but we didn’t throw in the towel, instead we crossed the line into hideous practice. Our young men, thrust by a directionless government into the adult roles of prosecutor, judge and executioner slaughtered many innocents. In this and in the many bad apple rogues that populated our ranks, our men were not the covert supermen we painted them to be; much of their victories were hollow and their legacy is one of pain, blaming, and terrorism. Atrocities happened in our war, sick and brutal things were visited on Rhodesians. Exactly who was responsible for those actions, however, is now under serious question.

The Murder of our Missionaries

One thing that stood out for me then and stands out for many of us still, a series of events that catches our breath and fills us with dread ever since we first heard about it, is the murder of our missionaries.

Back in Bikita in 1977 I had already decided Bishop Schmitt's murder was a question of being stopped by the wrong bad-egg at the wrong time. When, only a few months on, in March of 1977, Dr Decker was murdered, I was incensed. I labelled ZAPU the worst of the worst and it drove me forward deeper in to take ever more risks. Jan, ex RLI and Congo, took me to task saying taking risks are fine but 'regroup your mind and consider your men'. He was right. We were being shot at and seeing the frailty of my men daily, as I had for many others I filed her death in a cabinet in my mind and swam on. Then at Mashaba mine, in my leisure time, I began to mull on it, and mull.

I was of but a handful of whities who knew the politics of Lupane well. I seriously doubted there were Freedom Fighters or even half politicised B-Nationalist/Zapu boys involved in such a sensational murder. Originally I brushed those thoughts aside, frantic with the demands of holding our crumbling fort together, of preserving our great dream but that was it – we were frantic. At Mashaba, with the time and absence of pressure that allowed me to think with a filter other than that of the RF, I began to question what I'd been told.

Colonel Reid-Daly[260] at a press conference claimed black Zapu cadre Ncube was involved. Ncube is about as common a name as Smith is in England (and Rhodesia). They produced him for a photograph. I thought about that. He had unblemished black skin, was medium height, athletic build, and sported the standard tight curly hair, small ears, wider-flat nose,

sparking white teeth, uhmmm …yer. Then he escaped. Checking with ex-soldiers and police, Ncube was the only escapee and certainly, I was assured, you don't 'escape' from the Selous Scouts[261].

It was clear, it is clear, that both Dr Decker and Bishop Schmitt were shot by terrorists. But who's?

I had been asked by Rhodies, on that dark night in Bikita, to become a terrorist to fight terrorism. In that moment I had realised that some of us weren't fighting for anything, anymore, except to ensure that pain was transferred maximum to the 'other' side.

As a boy I would regularly, while woofing my food bite the inside of my cheek. Opposable molars tearing into the soft pink inside my mouth caused great pain. I, a giant schoolboy, would erupt, cursing, my sisters, the maid and the dog, all steering well clear. One day my Mom put this in my mind forever:

'You bit your cheek. Nobody else had anything to do with it and what's more, you've done it before. You should know the pain in your fat head is your making, even if it's unintentional. Stop terrorising everyone around you. You aren't the only person in this house. Deal with it and move on.'

Pain was the real face of our war, the face of any war. It was the face that your average Rhodie didn't know but which anyone, with a little guts and a little common sense (sense that only came in spurts to me years later) can divine.

"She said that the bishop's party were driving from their home mission, Regina Mundi, to St. Luke's Mission to visit a sick friend. On the road between Gwaai siding and the main Falls road a terrorist held them up and demanded money. According to Dr. Davis, Sister Ermenfried said: "We told him we had no money with us, that we were missionaries just out for the afternoon. We said, If you really need money, come back with us to the

mission and we will help you." The terrorist replied that as we had no money he would have to shoot us. He began gunning us down, starting with the bishop. He riddled him with bullets. Then he mowed down the others." Sister Ermenfried said she presumed the terrorist thought she, too, was dead. He fired at her leg which was protruding from under the car. According to Sister Ermenfried, the terrorist was wearing a balaclava and camouflage uniform and carrying a machine-gun."- The Murder of Missionaries in Rhodesia[262]

This document is available on the net detailing many of the missionary murders that happened over the period. Compelling, shocking reading. I ask you, of Sister Emmerentia's recollections of the day, what makes that man a B-Nationalist, other than his black skin? In the previous chapter I detailed the lengths to which members of our security teams were going to sow discord on the other side, and the totality with which our Turned Terrorists were controlled, and able to act themselves. In the light of war, in the dark of what was happening out in the TTL's, in the frenzy of the pain that was being inflicted on all sides, and escalating, we certainly had the men willing to do it. At the time Mugabe and Nkomo were quick to deny the murders and instead suggested that the killers were our forces, in turn vehemently denied. At the time we all believed that sort of nonsense was unthinkable.

For *us*, to do *that*, unthinkable.[263]*Why* would we do such a thing?

Africans came from all over, Zambia and further included, to see Dr Decker. But not her alone. Her order, the German Catholic, was rooted, loved, copied and asked to do more. They had been active since the early Settler days; they weren't Johnny-come-lately types and the Settler attitude I described didn't vanish as their members died, they were replaced with inducted newbies. Unlike us Rhodies, where we chopped and changed DCs and MiCs under the RF, they were rock solid.

Everyone knew Father Vladimir; his heart lifting laugh was audible miles away, his beard a visible beacon and on the practical side his education programmes overflowed with students. He was an example of a true teacher … he was a blacksmith, moulding, shoeing and releasing into the world well-disciplined men eager to begin life. When Intaf's development monies were slashed and staff compliments crashed, the German Catholics marched on without a falter in their step doing exactly what we the government should have been doing.

Why would the CTs execute them? I knew Dr Decker well enough to know she wasn't any lover of Ian Smith, or me in my capacity as an Intaf officer for that matter. Her politics didn't affect the quality of my treatment when I consulted her though. It was she who treated my smashed back after I found myself under a horse in Lupane. The vibrant and committed missionaries were calling for an integrated Rhodesia louder than any other white group in the country at that time. After 1972 growth and self-respect for the black person, as a person, came from the Missionaries alone because Intaf was totally hamstrung. In *The Murder of Missionaries in Rhodesia* our Ministry of Information made the assertion that the Roman Catholic Church was described [by B-Nationalists] as "representing the evils of capitalism"' and that the churches ran foul of Russian communist philosophy. Conveniently our rhetoric forgot Stalin promoted, within the collective system, family unity, strength and support, ideals promoted in their own way by both the Germans and rural African society. Most of the B-Nationalist movement leadership, the majority of the masses, were cross over Christian[264], so much so that they had the support of the World Council of Churches, which we didn't. While our black countrymen still acknowledged their forefathers (as we do with flowers on the grave, etc.) they also sought to follow Jesus, the giver of all things good that us whities had. The Black

Nationalist leadership had studied in Capitalist environments and were themselves socialists within the capitalist framework. The B-Nationalist's tie to China and Russia was for immediate equipment. Sure it was understood the 'debt' pay back (a capitalist process in itself) for these 'free' issues would be years in the future - Russia and China were not rushing off anywhere in the meantime. Almost 100% of training was conducted in Africa, probably following the lines we adopted in Bikita with the DC's militia. There are only so many ways to patrol in single file. Exactly as my Sergeant Major did, if the B-Nationalists, the Gooks, were concentrating on any single aspect it was on developing a positive relationship with their customers - the tribes-people of the TTL. That known aspect of the so-called CTs' training is so contrary to what out Ministry badly sought to portray. Therefore, why did the missionaries who were calling for an integrated Rhodesian economic society get shot by the CTs? What sense does that make?

Just for a moment, putting emotions, putting memes aside, only thinking straight sense, it seems absolutely sound to say that from a political and PR stand-point the German murders presented a fantastic opportunity. The whole world was involved in the prayers for their souls, the whole world condemned Nkomo and by association Mugabe. The world outcry was excellent for our PV 'containing' efforts up there in the North-West of Rhodesia … indeed it once again converted, by fertilized opinion, by mass meme plantation, the Freedom Fighters into blood thirsty savages, Communist Terrorists (CTs) and beautifully nullified some of the anti-Rhodesia demonstrations in London - demonstrations attended by the likes of our own Smith junior. And all the while General Walls was prevailed upon to issue statement after statement that we were winning the hearts and minds of the people, that the amnesty programme[265] was working. So easy to fabricate.

‘Bullshit!’ cried my ex Special Forces pal, ‘we were knocking the shit out of them, why would we kill missionaries!?’

Pal, My-man, Wal, Mate, we were not knocking the shit out of them. We were knocking the shit out of a fraction of them. Missionaries were, if one can say this, on the other side. Remember Bishop Lamont was sentenced to 10 years merely for failing to report the medical treatment of some Gooks. [266] Their sympathies lay not with the B-Nationalists per se but, at the economic level, with all things that would encourage change toward fairness, a measure of equality with merit, and, at the missionary level, with those that needed help the most - including us Rhodies.

What really happened up in the Vumba mountains on June the 23rd 1978? Thinking of it doesn’t leave me. The Vumba massacre surpassed even the downing of the two Viscounts[267] in terms of making on-going, to this day, worldwide news and annual remembrance services that restore beliefs.

The Gooks had already demonstrated they had the capacity, months earlier, to scare Grand Reef (Umtali Fireforce base) the traditional way by subjecting RLI Fireforce to 10 minutes of bullet and mortar fun before buggering off. They were crossing the border at will, nipping past our OPs with ease (recalls a pal who did duty in the area). The Missionaries - and there were plenty up in Mashonaland and Manicaland- generally had open relationships, so open that some of them were prosecuted for failing to report the presence of terrorists and they continued treating the sick and beaten. Many of their graduates joined the B-Nationalist Movements. The open relationship extended to our boys coming and going with a kick here and a kick there and to the ‘terrorists’ who took meals, maybe with a thank you and maybe not. The mother body of Elim were no different to the other missionaries in overrun Mashonaland before they moved to Vumba in July 1977. The Elim Missionaries admit that the Freedom Fighters had even been

fed from the kitchen of their new home in the safer Vumba and that from there even some of their lads had left to join up. The new location was at the old Eagle Boys' School[268] right in among many very privileged Rhodies… it was a unique, enchanting spot with small farmers. In that area I am only aware of one farmer being killed -by a landmine down at the bottom of the mountain. I don't know, were many of them harassed even at the time the Freedom Fighters were just about in control?

"It takes a large dose of 'intentional ignorance' not to see the facts" says Noam Chomsky. A simple search of the net will throw-up a number of investigative journalists who differ with the official version of the Vumba Massacre and some who offer comment without referencing[269]. The book, "Against the grain: memoirs of a Zimbabwean newsman" by Geoffrey Nyarota is one of many books[270] that raise some serious issues. He talks about other tragedies I cannot recall, probably because we were too busy surviving ourselves. Some reports are to the bone: "These "pseudo-gangs" evolved into the celebrated Selous Scouts. By the late 1970s, these gangs appear to have been involved in major atrocities, such as the massacre of seven Roman Catholic missionaries at St Paul's Mission near Musami and that of 13 Pentecostal missionaries, including four children, at the Elim mission on the eastern border".[271]

On the Elim murders/Murder of Missionaries web page; "The reactions of the media in general *were predictable, with many newspapers being singularly outspoken*." The italics are mine. It continues, "The Citizen Newspaper of South Africa had this to say on June 26: Non-violence in many ways is being practised by the Patriotic Front. I asked one of their commanders, Tongogara[272] , what they actually do in Rhodesia, and he said they're not doing much fighting, except when they are fired upon, or when the Rhodesian defence forces find them and try to run them out."

What possible sense could it make to murder one's own sympathisers, particularly when the international media backlash would be incredibly harmful to your own cause?

Conversely, and this is the great, burning, painful question that stabs at all of my love for Rhodesia, my childhood, my family, my friends, everything that built my soul. How could we be the killers? Well, because the space was there to be filled, because we had lost touch with everything, because our war against our black countrymen had long since entered the dead goal area and to go further was inevitable. Whatever morals, whatever white and right Rhodie values we as a collective had, had been left behind a long time before.

Two other snippets from the Murder of Missionaries document:

"In the main however, the professionally meek and gentle were seen by the terrorists to be unprotected. Therefore, they were safe to murder, rape and expose to brutality of the most vicious kind imaginable."

"Missionaries have been murdered not so much for their faith - but because they were easy to murder. Their deaths are a tragic commentary on the arrant cowardice of "freedom fighters" and the inept leadership of those utterly undisciplined terrorists."

The only sense, the only reason that the murder of some of Rhodesia's missionaries during this period still goes largely unquestioned, to this day, is because our one, singular meme, the strongest of them that shaped all of us, still operates. Gooks, it says, blacks, are savage, they are communists, bloodthirsty, stupid, and certain to betray you if given half the chance.

My thinking on this topic has been long, and anguished. I know that the above meme is not true. I know that when I, Dave, Rod, Don, Jon, Lance in Wankie, Geoff, Bill, another Rod, Don in Lupane and the list goes into the farming world, were out on our own doing what needed doing with regard to TTL development, we did not get whacked. We, often with our wives in tow,

were essentially just as unarmed as the Missionaries, and we were adversaries. John got badly shot up at his shop in the Gwaai Forest but they didn't press home and take out his family. I know also that the CTs were not cowards. For ZAPU, those operating in my area of Matabeleland, it wasn't a case of slinking about waiting for the Shona to win the war; they met aggression with aggression.

"I was involved in a tracking mission with the Engineers and the Scouts. Thirteen of us ambushed a large group of terrs on the Gwaai river[273] and they countered and over ran our position. We ran for our lives until a Fire Force of RAR and Scouts arrived on the scene. They really made an impression on me…."[274]

Again, I am not for one minute saying that the CTs were incapable of savagery, or that atrocities were not committed by them also. What I am saying, simply, is that when emotion is put aside, when the truth of that time and the actions of our side is revealed, that the missionaries were murdered by CTs makes no sense at all. The probability is that it was us that murdered them. We did it because it was necessary to preserve our misguided dream, and because our 'becauses' were running dry.

The History of the Meme

Memes, ‘becauses’, don’t suddenly spring into being. Neither do Rhodies. They are developed, made over time as time and opportunity demands. Before us white Rhodies arrived in our Rhodesia we were European and all of Europe was (nominally at least) Christian. Certainly every man and woman was born into an officially Christian home. By rote it may have been but still, to not officially call oneself ‘Christian’ was unthinkable, it was to be out of society, whether an individual practiced good neighborliness or not. For Rhodies, the earliest of our Pioneers suddenly settled in Africa, to be ‘Christian’ was to be a part of the vast (Capitalist) hierarchy of the West, to inhabit a place on the towering ladder leading from the most lowly of the poor to the most privileged of royalty. To be ‘Christian’ was to be normal, to be non-Christian was not. Both constructions, in reality, were and are memes. A man’s label does not determine his manhood, nor a woman her womanhood, it is their actions that count.

By the same token, to the Pioneers, blacks were kaffirs, unbelievers, non-Christians, non-normals. This was a statement of fact, not a moral judgment.

Then the first Chimurenga came and for white settlers the sting of retribution, the sting of how horrifyingly vulnerable us whities really were in this new Africa. There was the pain of perceived betrayal - no matter that their retaliation was logical and even expected. *Then* the word changed into a judgment, the meme changed, the ‘because’ began to gather fuel for its fire. Instead of simply individuals that did not officially profess to the teachings of the church, kaffirs were now savage, stupid and blood thirsty. This was the new fact, but it wasn’t, it was a moral judgment. The meme was a lie but it was taken as truth. It was functional. It was what was needed to preserve the white man’s status, to continue the conquest and to quell private, individual

fear. Those men then made their ‘because’ real.

40 years later, after those ‘becauses’ had begun to fade in the face of natural, wholesome human contact between the Settlers and Native, the post WW11 emigrant wave inundated Rhodesia with a flood of fresh, unsalted minds. These were the start of the Rhodies of today. They added to the panoply of memes the idea that the country was rightfully theirs because they had a hand in building it. They added the determination to hold on to what was theirs in the face of the knowledge that the TTLs were bursting with people that wanted something, on the back of the fear that to give all of them something would diminish their Rhodiehood. I joined them. Over the period 1963 to 1974-ish (for it crept up) us Rhodies, the majority of us, declared war on all of our black countrymen who didn’t stand right beside us. Our memes took hold, feeding on the essential, privately held terror that ultimately the black man would not submit, that us whities were not welcome and ultimately would be removed. We were driven by the idea that our meme was true, that our ‘becauses’ were true, and, wow, our leaders fed us more.

‘You know what thought did,’ our teachers said when we applied it as an excuse for being late. We listened but none of us understood.

We Didn’t Know

On Skype, so that is recently, I asked a few ex-Rhodies how many whities they thought remained in the country in 1980. The perfection of the Rhodesian Front censorship machine was reflected in the range of answers. Top was 270,000 with 150,000 to 170,000 being the most often suggested. Only one correctly proposed 100,000. Folk who answered in the middle range in my ‘survey’ declared they recalled there was little change in the mill of white people on the shopping centre sidewalks, the crowd of friends seen when (old) Transvaal played here and the full pubs after … things appeared so normal! The sidewalks were as narrow as ever, the white shopping sector as restricted as ever. We all hung about in the same groups. We baby boomers of my survey who hadn’t kids yet were still there, we’d stayed. The group who were then middle aged, Mom and Dad Rhodies of the age between us and our parents, they were home alone. Alone because, if the kids hadn’t ‘gapped it’, they were likely in the two year national service cycle. We didn’t know their kids, they were 10 years behind us. None of us knew anything.

We didn’t know. Yes. Hold onto that.

The majors and lieutenants and sergeants and corporals and riflemen, the women soldiers then helping to run the bases when all were away, the operational policemen of the special units, they were all based in our cities and towns. They commuted to work in the sharp end,[275] or beyond, some ‘doing externals’ into Moz (mostly) and Zambia, they knew nothing outside of where they specifically were stationed. The RLI did tend to fight in town, on occasion, but out of town, when Fireforce were operating all they saw was their operation and their kills, nothing outside of that. One valley, one village or gully behind a kopje, a ploughed field, were all the same – a temporary

space, a killing field and then they moved on. The same applies to the Selous Scouts and even the Independent and Call-up Companies. They did their thing under tough conditions with great success and came back weeks later to an evening at the Theatre and pubs in Salisbury. “Jesus Christ Superstar” – the film and the (I think) the Reps Theatre production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” drew more attention and created more comment than the death toll.

The uniformed police? Well, the Bikita police knew nothing. Shabani police knew Shabani Town and they had their hands full. Down in my home village the Essexvale police and their reservists were called on to escort civilian vehicles part of the way along the main highway to South Africa, and acted as guardians to the farming area but that was absolutely it. Not even our top war men - Walls, Hickman, Allum - knew what was going on with any sense of completeness. Only the RAR and Black Boots were playing a wider part in the field in Rhodesia and they were being pulled hither and dither. As for us, the hill-billys of Intaf and the deep rural District Police, we were spread over many districts, communicating through overstretched JOC and mini JOCs and our PCs by telephone. We only knew what was happening in our immediate environment which may have included something of our neighbours’ troubles. We were so up to our necks in surviving that little thought was going into taking time off to think through the real problems. But, and this is where the real truth emerges, that glimpse of honesty that resonates with that voice so often pushed down inside; those of us in more senior positions, those who were daily involved internally in the districts, no longer believed the nonsense put out regarding the security position. We couldn’t, because we saw that our own situation was not correctly reflected in the Top Secret Bulletins. We *knew* things were wrong. We saw. But we chose to ignore it. We chose to believe that Smith had our best interest at heart, that

those above us knew the answer to the ‘becauses’ we gave our own subordinates. We chose to ignore the disquiet in our souls.

We had several chances early on to retract, to re-join the winds of change process sweeping the collapsed Brit scene. I guess Smith saw it as I did, except he was at a very much higher plane – he made the ideal and I swam in. Up to 1972 it really was a tussle against a few out-of-step blacks and even fewer whities.

From ’76 Team Smith negotiated with greater vacillation. Whether they got the hump from the Yanks (Kissinger in particular)[276], were playing for time for an army knockdown (but never a knockout) to hopefully gain a side seat nearer to the peace talks table as befits a winning loser, were trying to split the black vote that was to come, or they couldn’t decide on an approach - be it PK van der Byl’s last bullet to save face or secretly waiting-hoping-praying for some godly intervention to allow the minority voice of reasonable men and women to be heard, assume command and settle - or something in-between, it doesn’t matter. By adopting the ‘we are holding on for an honorable peace package’, good people were dying for no advantage.

The only good it did was to hold many of us in our posts. That Smith and RF core leadership did not know that the war was lost, and could not be won, is a lie. They knew, because, like me, they could see that the information they were feeding down the line, namely that the war was still winnable, was not reality. They knew how empty their ‘becauses’ were.

I think back to that awful devastation on the Matengwi pan. As a young Rhodie, then, I knew something was wrong, I knew what was rotten, that what I saw was not the dream we had been fed. But I chose to ignore. Every Rhodie, all of us, had our own experiences, which we chose to ignore.

We did know.

Letter to my Dad

My father was born in South Africa. As I've said, he was a tough man. He took his first job at fourteen. He fought a war in his twenties. He moved his family to Rhodesia and he made a life there on the back of hard work. Despite not being born in Rhodesia, he was a Rhodie. He earned his title by laying hundreds of miles of electrical line, and by casting his vote. He was a staunch supporter of Smith. He, like all of us Rhodies, bought the 1000 year dream and made it his own.

He was in Rhodesia when the modern troubles started, before Smith. Then the more liberal Whitehead government ordered into the townships the police with security force support. Yes, there was a political element that got seriously out of hand and white Rhodesia acted to quell the rebellion. But, Dad, apart from protesting over the handling of the break-up of the Federation, there was something in their anger that you and the rest of your generation did not appreciate. They were in it to achieve a similar deal to what the new Malawi and Zambia finally got. There was a desire for a better life behind it, the bucking at lack of money and all things that go with having not enough.

Dad, it was my experience that the African of Rhodesia had hopes, not expectations. It is documented that over 25% of British kids expect to be called (by the TV, by a talent scout, a lottery administrator) to be instant millionaires. Not in Rhodesia. They, and we of Intaf and the police, were prepared to work for hope.

Dad, we took the term 'national' and we applied it to Rhodieland only.

Dad, the TTL population was growing at greater than the equivalent of a new district per year.

Dad, rather than defining the problem correctly to ensure we were moving

towards a right answer, a single country requiring multi-development, we turned the issue exactly the other way up. Instead of educating we used the growing unschooled to keep costs down. That's not sustainable.

I can't really fault you, a learner engineer often working 12 hours a day and studying too, to have had a handle on our reality, on the reality of our coming future, then. Could I have expected Umtali Mayor Musset, later Minister Musset, a founding under-father of the RF and one of the signatures on the UDI document, to have read the book of Common Sense? Minister Musset, the TTLs of Manicaland were so close to Umtali that they were a *drive, time for a picnic, and drive home* before sun downer time. Yes, I should have been allowed to expect you, Sir, to have understood. Instead you chose to believe that the TTLs were doing a fine job, that there was the space there for the inhabitants to build a life, to raise a family, to earn a living, that the fact that they were serving Rhodieland's needs and not their own was enough. You chose to think "why interfere?" You and your cabinet colleagues. And who were they? Never mind them being newbies to Rhodieland, a lot of the cabinet were new to Africa! Well over half were far better powdered and prettied, skilled at pounding the concrete pavements and arguing in court and board rooms, over business deals and at cocktail and 'hunting' parties, than developing a brand new country in a brand new, unknown world. Mister Musset, I have asked many times how many committed their sons and daughters to the front line and never ever had a response.

Dad, we Rhodiens had instability - social, economic, political – which a few used to dive into moral decay.

Dad, when we saw ourselves as a losing home army enough of us, not many but enough, deemed it right to resort to terrorism, reasoning that if we whites could not have it, no one will – like a one sided divorce.

“There’s the danger of condemning the many because of the actions of a few,” wrote an Intaf man friend of mine recently to me. He was so in tune with our country that he could joke in both Ndebele and English without hurting, who was in the thick of things until the end. He’s right. It wasn’t all of us, far from it. Nevertheless, the final targets were black and the directors were white. Nevertheless, our attitude, defined by the actions, the result of our war, was “if we cannot have it, no one will.”

Dad, my phone call offer was made to me in Bikita in early 1978. That was two full years before it was finally all over. That was the reality that those sleeping safe at night in Rhodieland did not appreciate, but which was the outcome of our choices.

Dad as you look down on me (from my thought-box, no big ideas about heaven please), understand that I do appreciate you guys were doing what civilised whites were doing all over the world right then. But even so I find it difficult not to see just what idiots you, me, and the other 59,999 Rhodie voting adults on the street were. The man who was available to tell us about colonialism, Aimé Cesaire, summed us up along with other countries under the western chain. He said:

“I am talking about millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life—from life, from the dance, from wisdom. I am talking about millions of men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkeys.”

Dad, the decisions our Mom and Dad’s group made, we – overwhelmingly the children of the 1963 to 1972 school years – were called upon to defend. In turn the boys and girls of later years saw us as models and continued to defend. We did nothing to protect, to alert those young ones following us. We took into our hearts and minds your memes, your

conditioned and adopted standards. We absorbed your foregone conclusions without enquiry just as so many today accept and pass on hoax (even the most ridiculous) e-mails. We had the meme in our teeth, the ‘because’ on our lips.

We had a unique place in the history of our world; we of this central African area were of the cradle of humanity. It was from our region, where everything was just right – not too hot, not too cold but just right - that everything sprang and we, bent on defiance, sprang the wrong way. We soldiers of the 70s, all just about drawing on our pensions now, years after you and your generation are gone, were not just the next crop of Central African leaders but were also the kiddies of Rhodieland. We had the duty of the silver plated spoon of the Christian middle class in our mouths. We had a duty and we did it as best we could, but we failed.

My Dad came back to his beloved Harare to die – ‘passing through the door’ he called it. I call it opening & closing the lid. He had put in a good year when he called all of us kids to his bedside.

‘I had a good life,’ he told me as I sat on his bed holding his massive hand. ‘I regret nothing. I did what I thought was right.’ We were alone, the others out shopping for scarce groceries. ‘Doug,’ he said, ‘I woke up just in time.’

The waking he was referring to was this:

In his retirement years, he and Mom, now on South Africa’s Hermanus coast living out their last on the back of a life of hard work, he slowly came round to the idea that Tutu, the black Arch-Bishop and anti-Apartheid campaigner, the supporter of the little, was okay. At the same he came to believe that De Klerk, South Africa’s last white president, the man that took the first concrete, open steps to end Apartheid, was a twit. Now that takes some explaining which I won’t do here. Instead I’ll say that as Dad lay dying

he found that he had managed to come to his own awakening.

He had looked at his own memes and threw them out. He'd taken his 'becauses' and seen them for what they were; constructions, justifications, untruths.

'I am,' he told me, 'proud and happy to be dying among the Africans of Zimbabwe.'

Why did we fight?

Recently I was hitchhiking in Malaysia and I got a lift from an outrageously expensive Mercedes sports. The owner, a retired Director General of the Malaysian civil service, answered the question of sharing with others obliquely.

‘Nobody,’ he said, ‘just gives away the rights and privileges they themselves have been given.’

Sitting here, Malaysia, early in the morning with the pit of the works next door signing on, those words echo like the light from next door, like the beauty and horror of the past, like the beauty and the horror waiting still.

Men are moving in and out of the hole next door, hitting overtime hard to hit production deadlines, ensuring their bosses ensure that earnings outstrip expense, ensuring that money flows in, not out.

The men working down there live in a slum nearby. They’ve congregated there in numbers because they’re far from home, looking, as best they can, to make a living, to raise their families. They are paid enough to hold body together, enough to hold shack together with a bit of wire, but nothing near what’ s needed to create a secure future, to educate their children, to create the space to strive for something better. Nothing near it. And those men down there are looking for something better. They are looking for some means to ease the pressure building in their own three legged cooking pot, they are compelled to do it not because they are looking to protect their privilege but because they must protect their loved ones. They are becoming more and more desperate.

Watching them, thinking about them, I ask myself the question that I suppose drives this entire book.

Why did we fight?

Remembering the devastation of the TTLs and the opulence, the safety and solidity of our Rhodieland, I can come up with only one solution. The RF, and by extension all of us that fought for the RF, myself included, took up war positions for the protection of privilege. We were fighting, and dying, simply, to protect our privilege. Not to protect what was right and take a stand against what was wrong. No. We were defending our lifestyle, an entity built on the back of the cheap labour of the TTLs, and we used our fear of the unknown, our belief in the ‘because’, to excuse it. It was our privilege that brought us to the position of war, it was our privilege that Rhodesia’s non-whites were asking for a little bit of, and the refusal to lose any of our privilege that stopped us from bending toward their demands, in any way.

Surely us Rhodesians were good, God-fearing people? Surely we had in mind something more than simply protecting our leisure? Surely we were, as Smith said to myself and the 999 other Umtali Boys that morning, building something good, something great, something for the benefit of all? In the 33 years since Rhodesia’s war ended, since I moved on, built a whole life for myself in another country, many countries, I’ve never stopped asking myself that.

Because I can’t shake the dead.

In my long thinking I’ve come to the opinion that says no, I don’t think we were as lofty minded. No, I don’t think our dream that still persists today as the holy grail for so many ‘when-wes’, was anything like we remember it.

The real answer, the answer right down underneath it all, is we fought because we feared the unknown, choosing instead to run with the herd opinion. Instead of reaching out and discovering that unknown, we tried to destroy it. We refused to acknowledge our black countrymen and women. Instead we declared war on them. We delivered much pain.

Many, many Rhodiens, perhaps even some of our Supreme Command

too, didn't appreciate the real horror happening around us, the real brutality both in deed and minds twisted and broken, in goodness lost. There are many unanswered questions swirling around those days. The demands of daily life were difficult, all sorts of vagaries. But, whatever happened then, whatever we are able to admit we knew then, it is important to know it now. Every day I see those around me making the same mistakes us Rhodies made. I see us, many, many people of all nationalities, believing lies fed to by others caught up in their own fears, their own twisted agendas, desperate to preserve their own privilege, feeding 'becauses' downward in order to preserve. I see the men in the hole next door in just the position black Rhodesians were in in the 70's, for just the same reasons, and I see them straining against the yoke. I see pain passed on.

In Rhodesia, in those final years of the war, we began viciously destroying our own because we thought we had no option. It was not stupidity that drove us but a curious and quite authentic inability to think beyond our memes. Of course that is a smooth academic statement that doesn't fit when lead is flying all over the place but I refer to our deliberate activities; the planned moves and worked out contingency plans before – long before - the action began.

The Communist tide, the *Swart Gevaar*[277], was coming, we were told, and even though it came from one badly thought out source, we believed. And it wasn't only us. The West was being warned. We were not cowards. I was not a coward. Going backward in a fight is not in a European's genes; for so long we've fought and killed our own over the most trivial of things. I cannot conceive of not standing MY ground. I and we took up our duty. If only, if only, we understood better what that duty truly was. If only we noticed, before it was too late, that in our quest to protect our privilege we became the very thing we were afraid of. We, us Rhodies, us 'when-we's,' us

tough men and women of Africa, prepared and capable and willing to carve a miracle out of the virgin bush, became exactly the thing we feared. We became savage, bloodthirsty, and stupid. Certain to betray our brothers at the drop of a hat. We did and were all of those things.

"Thinking conditions men against evil doing," contends Hannah Arendt. And so it is. Why did we fight? The answer is basic, and brutal. We fought because we didn't stop to think.

What If?

In Bikita there was a time, lodged for a brief moment somewhere within the chaos and the dying of those around us that I, my black staff, the white villagers, the black villagers and the black members of the TTLs were all on the same side. We were gathered in the council centre for a meeting I had called with all the headmasters and representatives of all the schools in the area. Super Sec had seriously underestimated attendance but no matter for we hadn't enough chairs anyway. Significant was that every school in the district had a representative, even the lost to the Freedom Fighters northern and central Peppercorns and the length of the eastern border. I had, as was normal, brought my FN along. Before the proceedings were opened everyone gathered began to castigate me for coming to a community meeting with a gun.

'It is not right,' said one old master.

'This is no place for it,' were very audible murmurs coming from others, so much so that a spokesman was asked to address me.

'We are here talking community, sir,' he said. 'We are talking peace and progress, no gun!'

I hadn't anticipated that reaction at all and began to mumble about being among people I was meeting for the first time in a war when they shouted back, they roared at me, *at the DC*,

'We're not strangers, *we're your people*!'

I apologised and suggested I'd put the thing under the table, which seemed okay to all concerned. I stooped to stow it, and dropped it! These old men went flying, left and right, ducking behind chairs, cowering under arms. We all knew that AK47's have a habit of going off on their own; luckily the FN wasn't of the same mould.

‘Sorry! Sorry!’ I shouted, leaping to my feet. Thankfully everyone else got up too, lifting stools and laughing with none hurt at all. The meeting got under way.

‘Our children, our schools, are all we have left,’ said one old gentleman. He was the first speaker, before him the most senior Headmaster had been called upon to ask Jesus to bless our conference.

My message that day was in the form of a request. I asked that they put across to the ‘administration in opposition’, the communists, that closing a school was bad music. I knew I didn’t have much more to offer and so didn’t, and they didn’t beg. By the end it seemed we had an accord, and I couldn’t help but mark that we as a community had come a long way. This, I felt, was where a DC should be, the job that Intaf had originally asked of us. We were becoming a community. A fractured and striated one, sure, but one thriving on the relationships between its members … and being nourished by them, rather than in spite of them or at the expense of them. I refocused on the old man, who was now ending off his sentiment.

‘I am happy to be here to hear your words, sir,’ he said before cautiously, slowly, lowering himself to the concrete floor. That was my experience of the ‘enemy’. We were fighting the families of these old men, their sons and daughters.

Sitting here, 30 years later, obsessed, pained, tortured even by our past, our unfulfilled dream of our home, by my wholehearted actions that crumbled to nothing, actions that now I need to resurrect and make matter, I ask, what if?

What if the RF, we, had woken from our superiority stupor?

As the Bikita record shows by ’76 Intaf were given the light to add (quadruple!) to their DA compliment. By 1978 the RF government was doing exactly as the DCs and SB had called for in the mid 60s[278] but not in the

form they desired; all over Mashonaland money was being thrown at the problem. Militia were being engaged - thousands[279]. The excuse for the about turn, from virulent opposition to arming ‘munts’[280] (under the supervision of Intaf), letting thousands loose with little supervision or training, could be conveniently laid at Muzorewa’s door.

What if instead of going against Intaf, District Police and SB the RF had agreed to

a) massive financial stimulus for the TTLs and

b) in that package, the employment of great numbers of blacks, trained and armed or otherwise when it was asked for? It would have connected into a vastly expanded Community Development, an early Green Areas initiative … a civil authority scheme anyway, and just at a time unemployment was at its peak.

The RF response was short term in the extreme. They had ‘1000 white years’ fixed in their heads. Recalling the attitude to African Education I feel free to presume their objection was on spending money on zots in ‘inefficient’ jobs and on the idea of arming savages while always, anyway, having their eyes on salvation coming from down south[281].

Instead of integration, of moving toward the TTLs, PVs were decided on. University bursaries to tempt Rhodies to return after their studies were decided on. Military upgrades. Teaching men to kill, only to see them gap it. Laying and constructing ineffective mine fields and fences. Buying and manufacturing poisons and paying for expert advice on their use and setting up labs to test the same. The horrific cost of sanctions were decided on, funeral expenses and pensions.

Do not be fooled. There is no glory in war. Even today in the various theatres men in power are campaigning. There is no glory in Syria, or Iraq, or Palestine, or the DRC, or any of the multitude. When I shot big game, except

for Mrs Hippo, they dropped dead every time ready for the pot. On the battle field, though, appreciate that war weapons are designed differently. They wound, they make a horrible mess so your colleague lies there crying for his mother, his brother, asking where god is and finally, as the blood gets sticky and yuk to touch, and you are pulling off a sock to plug the hole, he asks to be allowed to die because the pain is so great and anyway, he wouldn't want his wife to see his half head, his smashed hip, his missing arm. And then I wrote a letter or, if the family was nearby, went to see them and said how brave he was and how he fought gamely, was manly, how he was heroic to the end keeping our leaders on the throne. Standing there, writing those letters, I didn't say anything about his officer who planned badly, or about their idiot son not obeying orders, or that the guy next to him had an accidental discharge, or that the human who shot him used to be the garage attendant who filled his car with petrol for years, saying, 'thank you baas for supporting our petrol'.

The dead are gone … impossible to denigrate. I was twice declared dead, once it went as far as popping me in the old easy to wash police tin body box and I assure you, you are not even aware of nothing. Go on ask me, ask what I felt. Nothing. Once death comes we have left it too late. Our Rhodie dead are today still neatly fitted into their little boxes and, speaking for me, I miss them but, facts are that we will never join around the dart-board again, not here nor up or down there.

Our world was designed to support the meme, to keep white and black separate, because it's only in the mixing, in the spending time with and the letting the common human soul emerge, as I was privileged enough to do working out in the bush, that the meme dies, or changes, or mutates to something else.

What if every adult Rhodie was obliged to take responsibility as a teacher

for only one black person? *What if* every business and government department had been charged with a similar role in respect of their employees? *What if* the politicians had agreed (to the constant calls from senior civil servants) that well performing black men and women were promoted? *What if* a service cum loyalty (still a word with meaning in the 60s) qualification meant the vote and residential-social mobility?[282]

What if selected members of the RAR, the police, Intaf and all the various support ministries were promoted into Public Service Board 'white grade' positions?

What if?

When I was a young adult and new to Intaf '*m'hlope*' meant 'white' in a very special way among the Matabele. It meant 'he is smart, upstanding and to be trusted anywhere'. By 1978 it meant simply, 'he is a white', and if it was said in your hearing, ie, loud enough, it was derogatory and designed so to be. A dreadful turn. We didn't, we *couldn't* see that by undoing their frustration we could continue to live according to our dreams. What exactly was at risk? Our Rhodie hierarchy?

Our cherished memes?

Our bedrock 'becauses'?

Rhodesia was not as we remember it. Our leaders did not attempt to lead us to utopia, they created hell for all of us; black and white. They spread lies and they spread them knowingly. They did what they thought they had to, and we followed them as we thought we had to, all of us caught in our own private fears. The RF knew what was happening. They knew the terrible injustices being wrought, the crimes against humanity, and they knew that ultimately none of it was necessary, that the killing did not need to be. Smith knew. He knew that his dream of a thousand years of white rule, all of our dream, was a myth. He knew that the golden, rugged picture we Rhodies

beamed out to the world, that we still remember fondly, was and is a myth. He knew that that dream, like any fiction in the face of reality, was shallow, fuelled by agenda and pressure and the desperation to preserve privilege, powered by lies instead of truth.

The truth, underneath it all, is that the TTL's were to Rhodieland a cheap source of labour, a labour pool, satellite labour ships, slaves. Our black countrymen were the means for us Rhodies to maintain our privilege by denying them theirs. Those Indonesians next door are today in the same boat. They've come here on a wing and prayer, they're looking up and out at the world and wishing for something greater than their station. Some among them are finding ways to find it. Our little bush war in Rhodesia is today's global conflict.

Today this world is swallowing itself in a frenzy of oil, economics, dollars, global business, war. Today, the world is destroying itself with the very same fear that drove us Rhodies to do what we did. Today, my duty to see beyond what is fed to me, to look deeply at my own intentions and to answer truthfully the call of my conscience is more critical than ever. Because now I have perspective. I lived through that war. I made mistakes, I've seen them. I won't make them again.

What if we had called back the rejects; Todd(s), Gibbs, Welensky, Palley and Field?

What if, in that last white general election a few more of us had thrown just a basketful more of support into the hands the 'independent' opposition, the National Unifying Force, led by Savory and Gibbs the younger?

What if we had put money into a green areas initiative, into upliftment, instead of the PVs?

What if, as I had mused back in Bikita, we had put our resources (those smart young men doing National Service) into helping, the vast fortunes that

we applied to war (a million a day) to connecting and developing instead?

What if we had chosen to accept the mantle of teacher and guide in our privileged position of being ahead, in the civilisation stakes, instead of the path of war and division we chose?

What if we simply reached out rather than shut the door?

The answer is unavoidable. The answer is evidence of the horror of our memes and the truth of the good human spirit that all of us Rhodesians, black and white, ultimately shared. If we had reached out, if we had chosen to build rather than destroy, we Rhodies would still be living there.

The purpose of this book, simply, is to admit, in front of my fellows, that I assisted in destroying that beautiful country that was Rhodesia, that is Zimbabwe, because I didn't have the courage to utter what I suspected to be true, and to assure myself that I won't do that again. The purpose of this book is to suggest to you, reader who has travelled this far, to look around you, to look and to listen, and to make your own decisions. We are in the midst of a terrible world, and a beautiful one. We are capable of such love, and such terrible violence.

'Why did the terrorists destroy the twin towers?'

'Because they're terrorists.'

'Why was there a war in Iraq?'

'Because the terrorists had to be caught, and killed. Because the terrorists will kill you, for no reason, at any time. Because they are crazy, without reason, without humanity.'

'Why does petrol cost so much?'

'Because of world economics. Because the Arabs are selfish and don't know how to conduct business properly.'

'Why are there no electric cars?'

'Because they don't work as well as petrol or diesel ones.'

‘Why do we need genetically modified crops?’

‘Because they work better than natural ones. Because nature is primitive.’

Sitting here, in my flat high above the ground, with the sun coming soon now, I’m still a Rhodie. That country is still in my heart, that place in Africa is my heart. I long for it, but everything is changed. The world is wide. New horizons are everywhere, and the same dangers lurk. Only when belief is confronted by evidence to the contrary does the meme fade. I end this book with asking you. Look around at your world now. Question it. Know that truth is more important than comfort. See for yourself where your life lies.

A New Beginning

Smith and Muzorewa went ahead to concrete their internal settlement even though the Brits had made it clear the deal would not receive their or international blessing. The elections were held in April 1979, a month or so after I left Shabani and government service. It was a tough call for the people being called upon to vote for they saw no resolution in Muzorewa, but there was also no alternative. On the First of June 1979 Bishop Abel Muzorewa became the country's first black Prime Minister with government servant Josiah Gumede installed as President - a nod and a cover to the Matabele folk. To further promote reconciliation little Abel kept Smith and his RF team in command of the armed forces, the judiciary, business and finance. Instead of a gesture of reconciliation it was seen for what it was; a display of who was really in power. The Republic of Zimbabwe Rhodesia was never accorded any recognition. It endured the worst of the war and closed shop six months later.

I wasn't a part of those events. I had already taken the Professor's advice. In record time I had passed all the introductory Personnel Management examinations. Unable to get a Rhodesian sponsor I had landed a job near Cape Town, South Africa, with a company who were prepared to assist me through the three year part-time MBA at Stellenbosch Business School. We left shortly after the 1980 elections, Lib and I watched the edited version of Robert Mugabe's first address to the nation on South African TV.

"His biggest problem now is to revive an economy with inflation running at 120%, hundreds of thousands dependent on food aid and millions out of work," said the BBC that day.[283]

Even though I'd left, my destiny and that of my country were still linked.

I was mowing the patch of what we called a lawn for the first time when

an old friend came to visit, sounding me out about joining a covert team. The idea was to enflame my old stamping ground, Matabeleland. I declined. Often I was called on to return to Harare but the money of my new life in South Africa was simply too good and getting better, so I watched as the statesman extraordinaire Robert Mugabe made a magnificent success. It seemed that as I was growing from strength to strength so too was Zimbabwe, and that Mugabe, at the head of a truly mixed society and a truly mixed economy, was doing the same. Then, in 1988, my bank yanked their carpet from underneath my feet just as Zimbabwe began to crash. I went from hero to zero, only my true friends standing by me, and watched as Mugabe went through the same. I was bewildered, desperately trying to tread water in an economic ocean that was out to swallow me. In my confusion I could hear warning bells, far off and indistinct, but ringing all the same. ‘What had happened?’ I was asking myself, and slowly waking up to reality of my crash, and the reality of what was happening in Zimbabwe. Over the years it came to me, bit by bit, piece by piece. I discovered, finally, that just as our Rhodesian war had not been what it seemed, so my manoeuvring through the capitalist system that I had very nearly given my life to protect, and that had extended its benevolence to Mugabe and Zimbabwe and then taken it away, was an illusion also. I discovered that it was not the people and not the politicians and not the various aid schemes that meant nurturing development in Africa that were making the decisions, but big business. I discovered that in the end Capitalism was just as restrictive as what we thought Communism to be, just that the ideals were different. I saw that in the profit and loss stakes any scheme was fair game, as long as it made a profit. I understood, finally, that a seriously destabilized black government was exactly what global big business needed, and that I had been its pawn all along. My enquiry and assessment are the product of another 30 years lived, and is a tale for another

book.

More from the Author

On 30 October 2014 Douglas Schorr launched a website as a platform to publish shorter, topical writing. His first entry, ‘My Awakening’, is an account of three moments in his life that led to a complete turnaround in the way he views the world - from committed, conservative Rhodie to a rejection of the very foundation of Western Capitalism.

‘My Awakening’ is published on the following pages.

For more of Douglas Schorr’s work, and to stay in contact, visit him at www.douglasschorr.com.

My Awakening

Although born in what was then the South African Transvaal, I grew up in a country known at that time as Rhodesia - Zimbabwe today.

As with most of us kids, I thought the world was made for me and those who I counted as my friends. I was fed the ideas and ideals of my parents, their friends, our teachers and our leaders. The rich diet of white can-do, Christianity's moral might and the Western World's ability to create dazzling societies through the sacred tenet of free enterprise nourished me, and I grew into a shiny example of Rhodie pride. By the time I took my call-up into the Rhodesian Army to fight the Black Nationalist Movements - all of them preaching a poisonous regimen of Communism and Anti-Christ destruction - I was a 20 year old, 6"5, 100kg Rhodesian beef fed Rhodie, ready to tackle any enemy of our nation and support any decree of our leader, Ian Smith. That was 46 years ago, and a lot has changed since then.

In the 36 years since I left Zimbabwe I have been through a journey that has shown me, piece by piece, brick by brick, a viewpoint that is the polar opposite of what I once believed. Looking back I see that my awakening took place in three distinct stages, each one spear-headed by a single, soul-shaking moment.

One

In 1970 our little Rhodesian Bush War was but a dark cloud on our horizon, a storm dumping a deluge but still far away and nowhere near the ferocity it would ultimately unleash. I had completed my basic military training as a 2nd Lieutenant and, according to the army, the country was reasonably prepared. I had also been promoted in my chosen career to (a very

young) SDO (that's Senior District Officer), in the country's Ministry of Internal Affairs (Intaf)..

Although the term 'Internal Affairs' sounds like some sort of spy operation, it was in fact a department charged with the holistic economic development of the 'natives' of Rhodesia. There I learned to work with rural tribes people, focused on slow development tempered by the idea that there was a time and a place and a black man best not get too big for his boots too early, mind. The first of my three life changing moments happened that year. It was a conversation with the District Commissioner of Plumtree, when I was posted to his staff following my army stint.

'Forget about the gung-ho you've been practicing in the army,' he started, 'you're not inside that white buddy-buddy safety net now.' He was sight impaired, his eyes behind dark glasses as he sat in his office, chain smoking, and explained that the Zimbabwean Black Nationalists we were heading into a fight with were neither uneducated nor Heathen. Over that hour, with an example here, an anecdote, with cold logic, he showed me that all I had been told in every Rhodesian newspaper article, news report, speech or chat with a pal was simply not true.

'It is not that we shouldn't fight. The question is, who are we fighting? You've been taught to see our blacks as children needing a parent. These are men, demanding their freedom.'

His words shook me. He was my DC (District Commissioner), a man appointed to single-handedly take care of 1/50th of the country by our government, an 'office' of final authority. I didn't see it then but his words were the beginning of the end of my Rhodiehood, a seed of my personal renaissance planted.

As the whitey death toll mounted, as bitterness escalated and as I was promoted up the ranks and became privy to more and more top level

information, I began to piece together that whatever ‘rightness’ our crusade had once had, had ended long before. In reality our fight was an obvious losing one, the deaths of my friends were the result of politicians refusing to lose face, and the word ‘terrorist’ that we used to brand our enemy and legitimise our war was even more applicable to our side than it was to theirs.

In 1978, by that time a DC myself and disillusioned by what we Rhodies had become, I resigned from Intaf. A new direction and the impetus to my second life changing moment came later that year.

While serving my notice in Shabani, I bumped into a professor of business management in the changing rooms of the Mine swimming pool. He didn’t know what a District Commissioner was, I didn’t know professors were souped-up mortals. After I outlined the throne-base and gazetted crown of a DC he talked about the Dodo bird of Mauritius and outlined the Master of Business program he and Professor Swart were setting up at Stellenbosch Business School in South Africa. Over a few beers my future appeared.

Two

Even as Prime Minister elect Robert Gabriel Mugabe enthusiastically acknowledged the cheers of the thronging Salisbury blacks after Zimbabwe’s first democratic election I, my wife Lib and daughter Barbara were flying to Cape Town. I had a job offer. Everite Limited in the City of Bellville 30 km from Cape Town had agreed to the study time I’d need to do an MBA.

My doubt meter, now activated after ten years of war and the turning away from my first way of life, kicked in immediately. But faintly, always faintly in the beginning.

Between Cape Town and the International Airport there is a squatter camp. To us Zimbabweans, used to the small shanty affairs outside our cities

and towns, and even more used to the traditional villages in the countryside, this was something new. It was winter time 1980 but we didn't even notice Table Mountain, so glued were our eyes to the rows and rows of shacks.

'Ironic they have such an incredible view of the mountains,' our coloured driver remarked. In the rear-view mirror he looked at our open mouths and, gesturing with his thumb, added, 'beauty all around - that's the Hottentots Holland behind you.'

He turned right, taking us through the low cost coloured folk box-housing in the flat-land bordering Bellville City's industrial zone, on our way to the white side. There the land was pleasantly undulating, split by green areas and play parks and the houses… bigger.

I put my doubt aside and with typical Rhodie gumption marched through Stellenbosch's MBA. Halfway, in 1984, I left Everite, started out in the big-league as consultant manager-trainer and did very well thank you. Capitalism, the excitement of an open market hungry for men with energy like me, was my new life. 'Profit is the basis of all business' it said, 'and profit is available to anyone with the vitality to make it.' I believed. I had found a new way. But soon the bubble burst.

A year after the 1987 stock market crash, I crashed. I took the traditional three in one hit. I had changed my business focus that year meaning I was unemployed when my investments soured, and I got divorced. All of it went. Money, business, family – gone. Hello vindictiveness.

'Thank God it's over Doug,' said some, 'you've had your three. Now to get on with your life.'

I learnt a lot about being poor, despised and pitied and then I managed to re-invent myself in Jo'burg only to be hit with a cycle of family illness. First Dad, he recovered, then Mom's cancer came back and my childless Aunt and Uncle took turns at being very unwell. Mom died, the others recovered only

for my (new) mother-in-law in Ireland to collapse. I went over. Where before I'd journeyed south and changed countries, now I'd swapped one continent for another. I went to Ireland in the midst of a new rock bottom and nearing empty, was once again ready to be filled.

I arrived in time to assist my wife's family with their taxes – Her Majesty's Revenue folk wanted answers to questions that went back a considerable time. I learnt a lot, sharpish.

I discovered how invisible international borders are in Europe, in my case particularly between the two Irelands when it came to moving money. I discovered banks from different countries are extraordinarily friendly about sharing the business of keeping, transferring and returning a customer's money in the most obliging and quiet of ways. I experienced how extremely accommodating a foreign bank, say in Dublin, will be if the request is to hide data from a foreign-to-them Revenue Service. I also saw how unhelpful, dismissive and rude that same bank could be when it was 'their' own Revenue Service doing the asking.

I went to the Channel Islands where I was given the original electric shock treatment. I found that there is indeed a separate heaven for the money of the wealthy, a place where they are guaranteed anonymity and worse, where the stuff piles up never to be of use to you, me or the so-called Capitalist system ever again. Trickle down?

My experiences added on to the wealth of cheating I had witnessed in near 10 years of practicing among South African businesses, and crowded in.

Back in Cape Town I fell into a cycle of depression, drink assisted by family sickness and wars. My only respite was my super garden and my gardener Samuel. In our conversations, a ten year later replay of my days in Intaf, my doubts crystallised into the knowledge that I, ensconced in a giant Durbanville house funded by foreign money, was living a lie. Samuel's

stories of survival in the homelands (Mandela's area) and horror in the Cape Town squatter camp set the, by now hundreds, of balls of doubt crashing like agitated atoms around my head.

It was break-down time … the massive bursts of adrenalin that carried me through adventure and contact after contact in the war were now with me all the time only to suddenly disappear, leaving me for periods feeling as only a giant rag doll can. When my second father-in-law died a life-saving second divorce happened. To Alcoholics Anonymous I (again) added church, but torment continued. And then it happened, the second moment I was looking for, the catalyst for a whole new ride.

My friend and lawyer Graham took my distress by the hand to lunch at the steak house opposite the Moullie Point Light House in Cape Town to meet his Jewish community senior - a long retired judge, entrepreneur and success story.

We sat at the back in a dark corner. He was bundled up against light. His every word was a strike at my psyche. The more I said, 'please explain,' the more he quietly directed that I saddle my bicycle and 'go out. Take time to discover for yourself. You will find a very different business model and Christ to the one you have hammered into your head.'

'Stop automatically accepting as sheep to a sheep-dog,' he continued. 'Look deep into the just passed Reagan Revolution …'

'Revolution?'

'Yes. We are now into a cycle of exploitation on a level never yet experienced. Today's young drivers, as educated as they are with their MBAs, Bachelor of Business, Accountancy Board fellows, doctors of medicine even, won't see it. Life above the surface tension of the water is too good, the temptation to believe that they won't be the one to put a foot through the fragile film too strong. But you see it. Start by taking a cursory

look around the country.'

'Take a drive?'

'Go and see,' he said as he pushed his plate away. He looked up and at me as he pulled on his cigar. The elastic glow, two burning eyes in his dark glasses, opened a door deep in my soul. My second moment had arrived.

Three

My criss-cross car journey around South Africa took me everywhere but Natal North of Pietermaritzburg and Zululand proper. It was a snakes and ladders journey; here I dashed on, there I looped back, shopping at the same Pick 'n Pay I had bought my *padkos* days earlier … something to look at had brought me back. No route, only theme … 'go see'.

I spoke to all sorts … snotty black kids and snooty working white ladies, poked my nose in here … children's homes, old folks homes.

'Anything need doing?'

'You're white – whites don't help for nothing. You're male. What you want?'

'Anything need doing?'

'Are you Catholic?'

'You cannot stay here … this is a shebeen man, for blacks see, not good for you, neither me.'

Coming out of a steak house at lunch time at the same time as a joking-laughing black group I wished them a jolly good day. 'Fuck off white-man,' they wished me in return, and in other places I merely sat and watched.

Back in Port Elizabeth (my fav-city) I had the best bought chicken salad ever … so full of real smoked chicken, fresh crispy greens, plump juicy tomato and peppers, chopped in egg and feta to share. Five minutes and 500

metres later I saw kids begging for anything. They were real South African kids … a bit black, very black, some white, yellow at the gills, all rags. Outside Woolies I waved away a young white girl's sticker and she snarled, 'all the money goes to the UN Children's fund ***waster!'***

'And I don't trust the UN anymore,' I shot back.

Yes I had been reading too, as well as something that became so important … sitting still and thinking over what I had read. I found after a page or two of most of the books I'd collected up I needed to think-sink the information into my previous learning and experiences. It was crazy, it was fun, the margins were steeped in my analogies - simple notes like 'Zim '78' or 'x-ref with (Naomi) Klein @ Indonesia' and I had a system of marking the pages that I needed to come back to (pity I didn't standardise it).

I was pissed when the UN did absolutely nothing about US demanded sanctions that seemed to target children's hospitals in Iraq. Secondly, not 50 metres away were the PE kids I mentioned earlier … why weren't we looking to our own first, I asked her?

Up in the North Eastern Transvaal I passed through bustling towns with sprinklers chucking water about and 10 km later I saw black mothers and children leaning into the haze of heat, their hardened feet carefully set as they struggled with their water buckets along the powdered path flinging red dust with every step. I upped my air-con.

I 'did' a week in locked up and bolted down Jo'burg – the white guy digging the dustbins wasn't doing a survey, he was collecting food.

'Kom saam meneer. Ek sal vir u wragtige arm mense wys.' (Come along, sir. I'll show you real poor people).

Louise, my doctor, had told me there were hundreds of thousands, I didn't believe her but now I saw the destitute whites, they weren't alone … money is a great leveller one whitie told me to the nods of his black buddies.

Across country, to the far west on the Botswana border the scene was a Tribal Trust Land (TTL) of Rhodesian style all over again. Exactly as Australians go shopping for the air-con so here families lined the cool of the concrete of the verandah of the bush-store, the kids in torn hand-me-downs and the older girls so thin they appeared as if dressed in floral patterned tents, but, this wasn't a TTL – it was a white zone.

In the top end of the Eastern Cape and adjacent southern Free State I found towns virtually abandoned … country wide over 100 villages/towns complete with every 1st world facility imaginable - public swimming pool, library, cafes, clinics, schools, hotels, beautiful houses big enough for families not a family - closed except for a 'horse' and its policeman, a convenience store and a single polished men's bar abutting a dark unmanned hotel reception desk.

'We don't get many overnight visitors,' said the barman with a smile.

'Folk normally speed up as they pass through,' echoed the guy examining the dice, laughing. He turned out to be a sheep farmer. 'There are a few of us left but we are selling out to the bigger guys. Theft is hitting us hard …'

'Blacks?' I interjected thinking of the lean and hungry I had seen in the empty stand behind the hotel.

'… nope, err-or could be.' He sighed, 'difficult to say. Somewhat organised, somewhat spec but people with bakkies (little open back trucks/utility vans) nevertheless. What it means is we cannot use any part of our land that has frontage along a major road.'

In the crisp of the morning I took the town walk on the fringe of the little, quiet and smoke filled Black Housing area. It was a poor cousin of its poor cousin in Cape Town but worse, the lean-to shacks were empty! The place had that smell of desertion we soldiers could pick up, a warning to focus on the surrounds, not the little huts, the cows restless in the kraal. But this was a

different, nastier war, there was no ambush, there was no life! 15 minutes later I was joined in my stroll by a black lady, about my age. She knew zilch about the Beatles, but her dream in life was to have a vegetable patch that would bring her children back to her 'from the danger of the city.'

'Why did your children leave?'

'Hope?'

'It must be more than that, surely?'

'Nope.'

She adjusted the bundle on her head, a movement that reminded me of Enid, the South African maid we had as kids in Umtali back in 1974. She would stand on the step and reach up, adjust my cap as she admonished me. 'Can't you stand up straight Master Doug? You are so handsome and tall, why do you want to look bent?' I asked Enid what she was doing in Rhodesia. 'We have no chance to take up our opportunities. No one will support a black project, loan money … I wanted to be a tennis coach … gwauh!' she spat the words at me, 'I could have beaten you!'

My Eastern Cape lady brought me back to the present. 'We have no chance here to take up our opportunities. No one will support a black project, loan money. It is as though the government wants to clear the land, to force us into the cities … it is a mystery to me.'

'Do the children send you money?'

'For every black boy looking for work there are 20,40, ***100,***' she cried, '***more!'*** She added the bold, the italics, emphasising.

I moved on. In the space of the four months I was away a huge squatter camp had grown beside the road, up in the forestry region at a spot half way between Cape Town and the retirement paradise of Hermanus. It was a place where there had been no people before, just thousands of acres of commercial farming trees. From there on, all the way along this world famous 'Garden

Route' of Africa up to Plettenburg Bay, all I saw were camps where people were making an attempt at living. The wealthy and white (mainly - 99%) were clumped in the warmth of homes along the coastal plain, while at night up in the dominating hills the cooking fires of thousands twinkled - a photographer's delight, a resident's nightmare.

'Jeesusz … will you look at those fffffff up there. Is this fffffff-country safe anymore?'

'If only we had access to that man down there's dustbin we'd eat tonight my love.'

Crazy.

In a little town not far inland from East London the Squatter Camp was boggling and boggy, spread out over hill and dale, literally hundreds of meters from the 1st world, 300 year old town. Conditions were frightful.

The black municipal supervisor Thomas took me around. He was educated – glasses, pens in his pocket - and he had ideas. Fixing roads, establishing a clinic, a kids careplace plus women and men's advice, rubbish rounds... but he threw them all out with one stock phrase; 'who is going to pay for it? Those with money don't have time for helping, they are spending on security companies, fencing, auto-lights … even the guard dogs are better off than 95% of the people living here.'

In his words I heard, I saw with a shiver, that that's what we Rhodies had done. We worked hard at keeping people down, making them thieves, because we believed (there's nothing 'potentially' about it) that they *were* thieves and murderers. But this was South Africa. The South African economy hadn't the constraints our Mickey Mouse country had had. How, I wondered, could they still compare?

Thomas organised me an escorted trip through the town's surrounding Homeland zone. He showed me a 'nowhere' place. It was devoid of the make

it happen young adults and middle aged. Their children were there, Mom and Dad/Gran and Grandpa were there, and by and large they were in dreadful condition. Those people, plodding about with nowhere to go by virtue of their hand to mouth existence, naught to do but scratch to survive, were without freedom of any sort. I saw that they have to go where the system wants them, to do what the system wants, under the conditions dictated to by the system. 'Debt stock,' I said to myself. They were not profitable. The system had no need of them and so they were not provided for. During the war we had achieved the same result but with two differences - they had no vote and we used force. These people were enslaved by market forces, there were no guns in sight.

Turned lands lay blowing in the wind, goats wandered about like sheep. In places I found the schools near empty and in others overcrowded but wherever, exactly as in Zimbabwe, the thin kids looked after their school. The one or two libraries of a hundred books or two were lovingly care taken. Roughly only every 10th General Dealer Store – the backbone suppliers into a community - had any chance of being viable. The rest were filled with lonely emptiness. The parent group of the toddlers and the school children had gone looking for work or they had died. The death stories were thick and horrible but to talk openly of AIDS was difficult … the people had been immersed in some baptismal font that shouted out that to have died of AIDS was the most terrible stain in the world.

It was easy to see the cost of death. Going to and from the Homeland areas on my conducted tour I was shown work stations that had closed down. Brick making, a warehouse affair on a train line that had done some agricultural sorting and packaging, a food mill ...

I was shooting through to Bloemfontein when my aging Ford decided to clatter and temporarily die outside Butterworth. It is a 99.99% black area so I

was surprised when a white Afrikaans guy about 15 years my senior and 15 inches shorter stopped and hauled himself out of the cab.

‘*Jy is nog hier, ek sein* (you are still here I see).’

The little man, his sinewy, scarred arms bunched steady at his side, his feet planted ready to dance, twisted his broad neck and with a frown looked up at me and spat:

‘You, sunshine, are a cunt. You don’t stop here and faff about like you on a holly day. If you don’t get moving you’ll be dead come dark time. They don’t have much time here for whites … and why should they?’

He peeped under the bonnet of the Ford and added an F to the spelling of engine. We loaded my household of worldly goods into his bakkie and he took us home. The car was removed from the roadside that night.

He put me up royally. His young enough Xhosa maid worshiped him, if you catch my drift, but she didn’t join us for the meal including coffee and coffee mint choc after.

He told me about the scar. He was taking his supper on a night like then when three men burst in, one with a panga. A battle ensued, he took a blow on the shoulder but fought on, another nearly, neatly, took his arm off below the wrist and still he fought.

‘I had no option,’ was the way he explained his courage. ‘They had the option and they took it. They left. I staunched the blood as best I could – from shoulder to fingers my arm was useless, hopped in the bakkie and drove to the hospital. They were there at the end of my drive-way, eyes larger than life just standing. They didn’t touch my house.’

The police recovered the Ford minus tyres and then it was stolen from the police station. An intermediary phoned my host and said if I paid R200 he knew where it could be collected.

I spent a few days with this stocky, tough, generous soul and his Xhosa

maid. He had a number of government contracts to supply sand and stone and was doing very nicely, thank you.

‘I started life as a sheep to market herder in the Far Northern Cape. That involved walking, barefoot hey, many hundreds of sheep hundreds of miles, slowly so as not to lose weight but nor to dally. Delivered and counted, the Contractor paid me my peanut and I was driven back to start again. When I was 14 I talked a farmer into giving me the contract to market-herd. I never looked back until I got married. She lives in Welgemoed Mountain Side (Cape Town and sea views) and is very expensive to maintain.’

As he was telling me this we arrived at the gate of the quarry he ran on behalf of the municipality. Through the truck window he was warning a black guy to pay back on time. ‘I charge 2% a week for the loans they come and take from me,’ he explained.

‘That’s a fortune …’

‘No problem. They either work for me or they are guaranteed by one of my workers … I don’t lose money and as for these guys, where are they going to get a loan from eh? They come and I lend.’

There was a bus going to Bloemfontein. From there, like the borehole in the Tribal Trust Lands of the dry Matabeleland in Rhodesia, all roads led. He put me on it and my travels were resumed.

I made for Johannesburg and transferred to a little green Renault. We took to the daily worn roads of South Africa with zip. 17,000 we notched before I sold it into the family.

I stayed in a mix of accommodation. A fine old farm house for next to nothing was my base for a few days on the round trip to the Botswana border, in Jo’burg the head was normally rested on a self-catering pillow in Hillbrow, Pretoria had me in home-stay, but mostly I headed for the caravan parks and took whatever I could. If the weather was fine I’d open up the boot, set the

folding chair on the boot-light side and write and muse and take a beer till time to go cook at the community site, grab a shower before camp lights out, roll myself in my extra-kingsize heavy but soft blue blanket and dream. I was real comfy in the blue blanket, so much so I had it written into my will as the means by which I was to be fed to the fishes of the deep sea.

Never did I rate a stay in a municipal, government or private park below adequate. Most hit the would-come-again point on the rating scale. Centralised bathing, cooking, administration, play area and, and, and … it makes no sense to me at all that we have millions of people living in the most inhumane squatter camps.

In some parts of the country I found the town, and sometimes virtually the entire surrounding district just about owned by a single family who dictated what, where, when and how. The white reaction to this arrangement was mixed, moving from resignation to not so much anger but, 'okay' – the sort of 'okay' a man gives to a woman when he's in obvious pain.

Near Rhodes University I came across a business group that had about bought all the town, fenced it in and were making a game park out of the whole thing, taking people back to the days when lion used to roam the main street. Where were the poorer folk? Well, all but those needed for the menial jobs had been 'moved' on. Back in East London's interior zone again – I was keen to grab a job there – an economic degreed town board chairman told me they were pinning their 'economic revival' hopes on solving their 70% unemployment problem on 160 German retirees. The plan, he said, was that they were coming out en-block to take up a reserved piece of land and make it in to a retirement village.

I wanted to laugh, but I wanted to slap the man in the hope it would re-align the dots in his head also. He had retreated 50 years into classical Verwoerdian-thought. The 1st world white sector of the town - the club and

pub, butcher, hardware and, I assure you, the best tea & scone shoppe in the land would boom, but how could the board's thinking stop at believing 80 monied households would sort out the problems of 10,000?

The day I left the beautiful horror of that town I stopped at the local supermarket, and took in a last long stare. There in a corner the non-traditional (as in not English or Afrikaans, Greek maybe?) white South African owner had applied thought and humility to his business expansion - he had opened a new type of eatery. A simple serving hatch from a simple kitchen delivered onto plastic chairs & tables, plates of sadza and veg liberally garnished with gravy, and a spoonful of meat. Now we're getting there, I thought, seeking out home grown solutions for home grown problems, recognising the human inside the poverty. Empowering from inside rather than expecting a first world import to make a difference.

The spectre of AIDS greeted me in Pietermaritzburg. Neon lights advertised 24 hour burial houses with black folk pleased that there was a price war between them. A small white farmer complained that having allowed a few families to share in his fields for a winter he couldn't get them to leave in the summer, and the town was filled with unemployed standing quietly. Even the 'parking attendants', over supplied, vied for a spot to sit with the basket weavers.

On weekends whites of Pietermaritzburg went out in to the surrounding Homeland areas to 'play' sport, bicycling and paddling being the favourites, and from the banks and surrounding denuded hills the blacks would watch. 'One day,' said a friend, 'one of these savages is going to do something bad on us.' Really?

And then I was in a tiny village where the Afrikaans Nazi Robbie Someone-or-other was nearly captured in the 1940s. The village's notoriety now was that in the shadow of a fine Country Club reserved for wealthy

whites, black people were being taught to ‘farm’ in tractor tyres filled with rubbish, a sparkly light easy pour stuff (I cannot remember the name) plus just enough soil to give the plant inside the tyre traction.

The tyre was positioned in that common space to the front of each block of four squatters’ doors. It would only work if the owners of the four doors cooperated, shared the work and produce. The main organiser/teacher/scrounger (they also ran the illegal soup kitchen in the very deserted ‘shopping area’) was a white unwealthy family who had ‘contacts’ on the railway. He had the old tyres loaded up country somewhere and as the train passed by well-wishers threw them out. His wife and daughter (20) taught farming, his son (14) checked the soup kitchen after school, and staff were black volunteers drawn from the customers.

I saw a notorious town’s history subverted in this real example of working together, I felt the first pricking of a way out, a solution. Everywhere ideas sprouted, hiding the ‘it cannot be done’.

My journey was ending and home was the place to put it all together. After months on the road an invitation to a trip home was offered, and I took it.

Up in Zim it was more of the same. At Victoria Falls we braaied fillet beef steak. The butcher’s problem wasn’t the supply of sirloin, rump etc., but of the cheap stewing meats, cheap cuts and offal. The customers had some money but couldn’t afford what was available.

We stayed in the government chalets a stones throw down from where Dave and I crossed into Zambia for croc eggs during the war. We were the only occupants of this amazing camp burrowed into the bush on the banks of the Zambezi. Careful! Hippos in the reeds, crocs on the banks, tigers in the river, elephant and duiker visitors right up to our patio and the kudu watching us from the shade of the thorn. The whistle of the reedbuck, any amount of

smaller creatures I was aware of but didn't see, but on the drive into town for a beer a leopard was happy to stand a heart-stopping moment in the headlights.

On the Harare road, not far from Biet Bridge our way was blockaded by dozens of friendly black-beggar-men in wheel chairs asking for 'anything', all of them casualties of our war. 20 kms on a single Trading Store offered a few expired tins of Bully Beef and a crate of warm coke – nothing else. It didn't matter because we were headed next door. 100 meters further on stood Riverside International Resort. After relaxing with the crowd over tea and scones I had one of the best self-service buffets I have ever experienced in my life before retiring to the pub where we partied until mid-night. Up early I sucked in the beauty of the Lowveldt of Matabeleland South. As I stood on the green manicured lawn, still damp from its water-before-the-sun soak, outside of my air-con chalet looking over the dry sandy river bed into the tangled, snappy thorn undergrowth beyond, a white Zimbabwean told me that the local farmer (I have genuinely forgotten his name) shot all his cattle rather than sell them because Mugabe had told him to.

'How many?' I shrieked.

'Hundreds … a thousand? He was a big farmer.'

'What'd he do with the meat?' I asked.

'Lay where it dropped.'

Yea gods … whether Mugabe said he was to take the farm over or not is beside the point. Crazy. When Rhodes took the cattle in compensation for there being no gold lying at the foot of the kopjes the Matabele didn't kill them. Why did this man have that attitude? Only the week before, when I surveyed the beautiful Jacaranda city Pretoria while walking the Voortrekker Monument, people had rebuked me for Mugabe having elephant shot.

'To feed people!' I remonstrated.

‘Let them grow their food like we do …’ she stamped.

‘There’s a drought and …’

‘Then feed the elephants … dang, look at what you made me do.’ Her Pick ’n Pay bag had broken.

I did a circuit into the Zimbabwe Midlands. There I saw that the bigger towns – Gwelo (Gweru) and Shabani (Zvishavane) - were overloaded with people yet villages like Selukwe (Shurugwi) and Umvuma (Mvuma) were ripe for a Clint Eastwood dead-town-cow’b movie set. What had happened in South Africa, I saw, was spreading in Zimbabwe.

Finally I arrived back in Cape Town flooded with concept, strategy, and short term let’s-do-it. There was this ‘big man’ in housing and construction I knew. I phoned his office and tracked him, caught him as he was about to move on to check progress somewhere else – he called it work.

We were standing down at the fringe of the new Waterfront development, at the entrance gates near to where the Cape Town Convention Centre is now. The wind was flapping at his suit and throwing sand at my bare legs as I excitedly waved my hands about in his face, describing buying, taking over, encouraging, whatever, a couple of these deserted towns and converting them into completely self-contained Affordable Retirement Villages,[4] something along the simplicity of camp sites that I’d seen. This was the idea, this was the vehicle to make a difference. Instead of those forgotten people being left on the fringes, I was suggesting that we put them in the centre of their world, created a world for them to inhabit, a new economy that according to the laws of our beloved free market would begin to hum in response to the personal responsibility it was imbued with.

He laughed at me. ‘You’re hallucinating. Just where is the money?’

‘That’s the beauty of it. Very little required!’

‘Little money required! Affordable!’ He guffawed. ‘We are building with

no F in expense spared Golf Retirement Villages. We are building with no F in expense spared Sports and Community Centre Retirement Villages. We are building with no F in expense spared Country Estate Retirement Villages *and you want me to do what*?' His mouth was twisted to the side by this stage and his head shook with the tension he was putting into his long, thin neck. 'Build something el-cheapo? Where are the *du-llas* old pal, for my pals? Money must churn, churn to earn, loans, giant loans put smiles in the banks, thousands of people paying, ticking off the box, direct debit's the best.'

He pointed to a site bedecked with cranes, a site that was to become luxury apartments, a six-star hotel, boutiques and up-market eating and drinking spots.

'That is a pension fund development … yes,' his voice raised a squeak, 'pension funds are into building and they couldn't give a hoot whether the bloody concrete is occupied or not because the big paper-money-benefit-showing is reflected as the stages-of-completion hit the books. They are able to report every few months to their board that the square metre of Cape Town backfill and the pocket of cement they bought six months ago has gone up five or 10 or 30 what-the-fuck % and the bigger the deal the better it shows … understand?' He looked for a moment, shook his head and said, 'a $10 project that doubles is $20 but, a $100 million one that doubles is now-you-are-talking-enough-for-all, aaaaaand,' he laughed, 'there is always improvement because in the end who is going to do the valuation anyway?'

'A pal,' said I, nodding.

'So … so, if you said to me those towns have a snow backdrop, the poor have been cleared out and there will be no objection to us sending in the bulldozers to clear that 1880 era or whatever shit you saw, we may have something to talk about with the banks, the marketing gurus, the sales geniuses, us and the share market people.'

I walked on. Much of the old hospital's back buildings at the head of the Waterfront at the Moullie Point side were headed for demolishing but meanwhile portions had been set aside for hostels and I wanted to go see. I discovered that there wasn't enough accommodation to handle needy people. Elderly couples were being split, one to a women's shelter and the other to the men's. And they weren't just in the Waterfront area but in all sorts of off-spots where a place had been got cheap. Yet all around, the expensive building works were on the go, the pubs were fuller than I had ever seen them. Green Point was throbbing Friday and Saturday. Up town had been transformed with drinking, eating, dancing and little theatres. My old bank, now First National, had had a complete facelift, the tiles presumably adding to the value of the money they loaned out to Capetonians with suitable security. My walking turned to trudging. My drive was over, my education had increased 100 fold, and my building pal's words had given me my third moment, the final perspective that I needed.

'In the game of profit, profit, profit,' I realised I had heard him say, between the lines, 'there's no place for anything else.'

Putting It All Together

My latest back injury was proving to be hectic serious.

'An operation will happen' said the neurosurgeon. 'Your leg will come off or I'll have a go at repairing the nerves in your spine.'

Sitting in a wheelchair helped and medical science with the skill and care of my doctor came through for me.

My brother invited me to recuperate in Malaysia. Not only did I come right with his support but I even ran my first ever competitive road marathon at 52, and three more in the jungle after that. My recovery and finding myself

in a safe place in Malaysia with him and a dear lady friend afforded me the time to put all of it together.

I found myself neck deep in self-study. Carl Sagan was my first obsession, along with EF Schumacher, and then the inexhaustible lists: Neil deGrasse Tyson, Richard Dawkins, AC Grayling, Burton Mack, Bishop Richard Holloway, Peritus Hans Küng… it continued, along with on-line lectures (a new thing that) and hundreds of Yahoo'ed articles, later replaced by the giant Google.

'Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord' says Ephesians 6:4. In my reading I realised I had broken from that Biblical instruction and from the implicit Christian education of my upbringing. No longer was anything Biblical simply law, and no longer were the words of leaders, equally implicitly sanctioned by the Bible (under our Western, Judeo-Christian civilisation), law either.

For the first time in my life I saw exactly how incredible this world is, how puny and insignificant we are and how the earth is but a member, not a leader, in a universe(s) of billions upon billions of cosmic 'happenings'. I realised that all those risks I took as a boy growing, as a soldier and administrator and as I settled into my 40s, had more to do with straightforward, in-depth ignorance than any kind of courage. I realised we are not the owners of this world but renters for the time it takes to snap a thumb and pointing finger, and we'd better get on with it.

Sitting there, up on the silent air-conditioning motor that doubled as a stool, stuck out of the way in the corner of the little balcony of the bachelor flat I shared, looking out at the cityscape of Kuala Lumpur with its age old jungle at my back, so far from my roots as a white Rhodie in the bosom of Rhodesia, I knew I had gone full circle, that I was finally free. I had rid

myself of the paper thin memes that had kept me prisoner my whole life. I'd cast off the Ian Smith, PW Botha and FW de Klerk of my past world, and come face to face with the system behind it all.

Greed Capitalism I have come to call it, a perversion of the earliest system of community and complementary living that the much vaunted free market approach is based on - the bully in the school yard, the dad who owns the teachers in the staff-room. My learning had showed me that it revels in cronyism, it flourishes on cheap labour and stolen raw materials, and gyrates according to the churn of so-called money. It is a tool that is owned as well as lies within the many tiers, structures and ethereal piggy-banks of the wealthy, and the industry of war.

I have come to the conclusion that today's obsession with profit at any reduced cost is directly responsible for Africa's (and much of the third world's) people continuing to scratch in the dust for their supper, while growing thinner every day.

My awakening had happened, and since then, it's all I can think about.

To this day the Cape Town Squatter Camp, or any camp that I see anywhere, is my reminder we aren't doing things with any moral correctness. We don't need a professor to tell us that if we all gave a little we'd make a massive change.

[1] Trevor Hemans' book "Those Were The Days" has a photo. I think he worked among them as a young Intaf cadet in 1950.

[2] By the time the Ndebele had settled down in Bulawayo they were made up of the original Zulus plus the collected-along-the-way including a small group up Wankie side (North West Rhodesia) etc. The add-ons who were not of Zulu or near Zulu stock were technically known as the 'amahole' and were treated as 2nd class, a fact not which meant zilch to most white men in the area. To us there were the Matabele and the Shonas and the odd sods. Even the Banyubi, those who had always been the 'caretakers' of the Matopo Hills and the shrines therein, were lumped in with the Matabele by most. The early administrators and academics recognised these groupings. The same applied to the Shona who had very distinct family separations with alliance to different Chiefs (Mambo).

[3] They had an agreement of sorts with the Boers that Matabeleland was for the Matabele and the Boers (Andries Pretorious) would stay south of the river Limpopo.

[4]

[5] We had the standard picture of Lobengula, the same one everyone, even the modern Wikipedia has. He had a big beer tummy.

[6] I was in Thompson 'House' at school. He was one of Rhodes' compound mangers on the diamond fields and was chosen because he spoke Tswana, a language Lobengula also understood. A fact that's never left me!

[7] "When Cecil Rhodes embarked on war with Lobengula in Matebele, his troops used a new "secret weapon:" the Maxim which could fire 500 rounds a minute. In 1893, in the battle of Shangani River, 1,500 Matebele warriors were killed while only four British died. The English Liberals penned a bitter satire on the victory, which Rhodes' men --- the Chartered Company Volunteers --- then cynically adopted as their anthem:

Onward Chartered Soldiers, on to heathen lands,
Prayer books in your pockets, rifles in your hands.
Take the florious tidings where trade can be done,
Spread the peaceful gospel --- with a Maxim gun.
Tell the wretched natives, sinful are their hearts,
Turn their heathen temples into spirit marts.
And if to your teaching they will not succumb,

Give them another sermon with the Maxim gun...
When the Ten Commandments they quite understand,
You their Chief must hocus, and annex their land;
And if they misguided call you to account,
Give them another sermon --- with a Maxim from the Mount."
-- Ignacio Schwartz reviewing Prof Niall Ferguson's book 'Empire' @ http://www.ralphmag.org/CH/empire.html

[8] http://www.memoriesofrhodesia.com/pages/newsletter/memorylane/ … beautifully written

[9] "John Ames, Native Commissioner. A Romance of the Matabele Rising" by Bertram Mitford illustrate superbly. http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile

[10] The wider area of Johannesburg (or e-Goli, City of Gold) was known as the Rand … rocky and hopefully gold bearing.

[11] Meaning 'Revolutionary Struggle' in the Shona language.

[12] A Scottish Major, Rhodesian legend for dying bravely against a multitude of blacks http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Wilson_(army_officer)

[13] Ravai Marindo's "Death Colonized: Historical Adult Mortality in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)" (University of Zimbabwe)

[14] To curl your hair read Clapperton Muvanga's essay. There are a number of links, here's one. "**Vermin** Beings"*socialtext.dukejournals.org/content/29/1_106/151.abstract*

[15] A small and terrifying Southern African demon

[16] Not to mention the number of black soldiers who were lost I cannot get a figure for Southern Rhodesia alone … that's whites. Heaven knows how many blacks never made it back. A Sergeant -Major who served me, served as an NCO crewing a troop and supply ship. He said it was scary not seeing the sky, smelling the sea or feeling the wind for eons on end.

[17] http://www.militarian.com/threads/rhodesian-history-during-ww2.1539/ has up to date information.

[18] "McCarthyism is the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence." From Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCarthyism. It was embraced particularly in respect of err- yeah communist leanings.

[19] Few of the new schools of the 60s had boarding, instead serving their own growing surrounding suburbs.

[20] ‘Overall’ is important for some areas were not only conducive but the conditions allowed, and motivated, the people to enjoy farming.

[21] There were some exceptions. In those jobs that no Rhodie wanted blacks were given opportunity. Heavy vehicle driving was an example. A complicated, lonely and low-paying affair happily left to black hands.

The South African National Party’s Bantu Education Act came into being around 1953 laying out its place in the apartheid process.

[22] The South African National Party’s Bantu Education Act came into being around 1953 laying out its place in the apartheid process.

[23] Probably in the order of 70%. Say of the 4m, 3m are young and the old, leaving 1m of whom ½ are women, leaving 500,000 active men. If the total job market was about 300,000, of which perhaps 50% was taken up by foreign blacks, that left 150,000 jobs for 500,000 … so yes, 30% had work.

[24] October 1952

[25] That Dad was given the vote is a powerful example of just how much Rhodie society had changed. His generation of ’49 settlers were already ranked as of ‘the old school’ - such was the pace in which white settlers were arriving.

[26] The Welensky I grew up with in verse was the hero who pulled himself up by his bootstraps alone, improving himself (a favorite phrase of my Dad’s set) from train driver (Hmnn … he must have known Nkomo) to leading Southern Rhodesia into a commanding position in the Federation. He was a ‘Jew you could trust’, another favorite phrase of my Dad’s set.

[27] He went on to a full career in our secret police, Special Branch (SB). We were friends until the day he died. We could lose touch and be up to date again in a few hours.

[28] They never won anything anyway. I used to haul in the points for Thompson.

[29] He was also white, very handsome, with shining eyes, flowing blonde hair and a big brushed beard. God must have been similar except he was a holey ghost too.

[30] *Kaffir Lover* - A new nickname for Todd, another favourite phrase of Dad’s set.

[31] Cover police unit

[32] Kaffirs … a corruption of tsotsi … naughty boy, thief or gangster.

[33] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Stick_ideology

[34]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Rhodesia_general_election,_1962

[35] T. H. Mothibe ("Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism 1957-1963") He invariably used official government figures too! Consult A. K. H. Weinrich or T. H. Mothibe

[36] What was never discussed in the pub was the fact that 50% of the defendants were white or near white.

[37] Prime Minister

[38] Of whom little to nothing has been written.

[39] 11 November 1965

[40] Party

[41] Portuguese

[42] "Robert Mugabe's Darkest Secret" - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1313123/Robert-Mugabes-darkest-secret-An-800bn-blood-diamond-run-Chinas-Red-Army.html

[43] Ground maize meal cooked with a pinch of salt until the water was absorbed and it was sticky and pliable to the finger.

[44] All the close politicians, the signatories to the UDI document got the entitlement to put after their name ID for Independence Declaration. There is nothing more Brit than a spurned Brit.

[45] Intaf and the District Police lived in each other's pockets. Our only armed Rhodie defender in the early days would be quite alone with his black constable(s) as his only backup. As a broad statement the Town Police were a very different band of brothers. I got to know very few … none until I arrived in Shabani years later. The majority I met were men who came out from the UK either with UK experience under their belts or directly into our Morris Deport Police College. With the furious growth of suburbs and offices and factories and the rise of high density living a town police force grew that had as its hallmarks regulation, procedure and uniformity. Yes, they were active - just about the only ones - in the burgeoning black townships. The difference was they were dealing with people in the concentrated concrete jungle, the modern, fast moving cycle of business. To expect them to take on a patrol of days in the bush was an ask too far.

[46] Dang,dang thing. It wasn't opened in all of my bachelor years.

[47] Known as the 'isitupa'… the identifying paper with your thumbprint on it.

[48] Rh$2

[49] Small truck runabout

[50] Of course the use of ‘Baba’ was a seriously considered choice. ‘Mdala’ (old/older one) was the norm at work and something playful like ‘tsotsi’ (gangster) or ‘isituta’ (idiot) outside of formality.

[51] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodesia's_Unilateral_Declaration_of_Independe … they still needed our chrome but the troops didn’t come … “Rhodesia's unsuccessful attempts to win Western support and recognition included offers to the U.S. government in 1966 and 1967, ignored by the Lyndon B Johnson administration, to provide Rhodesian troops to fight with the anti-communist forces in Vietnam”.

[52] Upfront he appeared the most content and in the best financial position though, as the rest were quick to point out, God didn’t allow sportsmen too long a career.

[53] He and I were to cross paths many times over the next nine years, often in the army. We discovered I taught his elder brother to throw the discus. I did a bad job … in his only competition he nearly killed the ice-cream boy with a throw into the crowd. His brother was also an acknowledged expert on leopard. He was killed in action early in the war.

[54] Real

[55] The ‘age of majority’ was much older than our 21 years. Individual maturity played a part but work on 30.

[56] I believe that not long after he and I rowed, the troublesome chief and his spirit were floated away one night never to be seen again. Unverified but certainly I heard only the disappearance stories and never of him in the flesh again.

[57] Everyone in the police was ‘Wal’ then, not ‘Bro’

[58] A Maximum Security Detention Centre outside Gwelo.

[59] Having said that the SADF did have a top secret specialist signals unit run by professional nerds in Binga but it wasn’t really for us Rhodies ... the listening post monitored a huge chunk of Africa for Pretoria.

[60] Following majority rule in 1980, the Grand Cross of Valour was awarded to Major Grahame Wilson, S.C.R., B.C.R., second-in-command of the Rhodesian SAS, and Rhodesia's most highly-decorated soldier … wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Cross_of_Valour

[61] Founded in 1902 by a railway mission, its headmaster Robert Woodward Hammond steered it into one of the leading schools in Southern Africa. - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plumtree_School

[62] Nkomo was very aware of the need to be aware of the strong and positive feelings of others towards their ‘traditional’ beliefs in the guiding power of the ancestral family.

[63] Nkomo was talking of the need for moves toward equality well before the rest. We whities pulled him out of the Trade Union movement to talk politics and then we didn’t listen.

[64] Being, professing, or having been brought up Christian didn’t mean the Freedom Fighters cut their noses by upsetting the Ancestral spirits. The remembrance of our past is in some degree in all of us and in Rhodesia the tribal ‘spirits’ - recollection and thanks to ancestors - were the uniting factor bringing all the different sub-tribes and the many Christian leanings together. Much to SB’s chagrin they were often asked by the army (obviously on the behest of some other unnamed) to find the head priest and entourage in the Matopo Hills, and Special Branch, as a formality, would ask Intaf. The likely origin was the cabinet – perhaps a minister who read up how the Pioneers (1897) destroyed the Matabele by galloping up, parking their horses, sneaking past an orgy, into the head priest’s cave and fixing him. Such a story would have been authenticated by the minister’s cook, maid and garden staff. The idea was once that once Intaf told them which kopje, SB would tell the army and they would blow the spirit up. Even in those early days we knew things weren’t going to be quite that simple.

[65] One wonder was the stream that fed the government Rest Camp; at one point it was perhaps two foot wide and 30-40 feet deep – crystal clear cold water.

[66] General Dealer

[67] Years later I heard he was credited with taking out 5 Gooks at extra long distance. He had stopped for a cup of tea and they appeared on the other hill.

[68] One part of Ground Coverage was to identify in every district the main B-Nationalist members, the men/women considered threats to national security. Of that list considered real threats we ranked from most dangerous to dangerous. On numerous occasions we expected SB to arrive and the 'list' to disappear. In hindsight I see why they weren't. If we lifted them our pseudos would have to start from scratch hence, as the SB Inspector in Wankie said, we needed to know where they were at all times.

[69] Over in the whitie farms it was a big deal and the Auctioneer fellow (his name will come back to me) became a household name, a millionaire and

a drunk through his lively show.

[70] Employed on daily rates and therefore daily conditions

[71] My wife had added salt to the tea and sugar to the egg and tomato sandwiches

[72] Rhodesia African Rifles.Wikipedia has a write up. They were Rhodesia's oldest regiment. They were led by white officers. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodesian_African_Rifles

[73] To emphasize and illustrate how small the Rhodie community was, the RAR Captain was an acquaintance of mine from Umtali. He was the cousin of my wife's best friend and she and her husband (a part time WO I) who was known to my SB friends visited Lupane on a few occasions.

[74] A British 'survey' to test the level of acceptability of peace initiatives spoken about in 1971, of which no one was interested. We should have been … it turned out to be an important political barometer. Read more here http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1972_in_Rhodesia

[75] To "go kaffir" is to go unbelievably mad.

[76] "When occupation took place in December 1893, there were some Ndebele villages that continued to live in the vicinity of white Bulawayo. One such settlement under Mazwi Gumede was in the Pumula area. It was not long before most of the people were evicted, a large number of them went to Lupane where, under Menyezwa Gumede, the chieftainship continued …" and I continue the extract to show how we split traditional groupings;

"The graves of some of these Nyathis, the descendants of Dontoni, are found just across the Shangane River, to the south-east of where the Bulawayo-Harare road crosses the river. (where I had my total car accident) The farm where they are located is owned by Charles Nyathi, a member of the Serumola section of the Babirwa.

Sihlahla, a man married to six wives, was also appointed as dip tank attendant. The soil at Shangane was fertile and it was clear that it too would be alienated to the whites. The numerous acacia trees in the area bear testimony to the existence of an Ndebele village in the area. The village was called Ezinyangeni, to the north of Ujingaluka Mletshe and was under the Mloyis who later, together with Ujinga, were evicted to Nkayi." From the Sunday News … CULTURAL HERITAGE with PATHISA NYATHI

[77] "In the beginning force was used to dispossess the natives of their land …".

"When the Pioneer Column entered … each member of the column was granted 3 330 acres of farmland … their police escort who were also entitled to this land allocation …making about nine million five hundred twenty five thousand acres of land assigned and alienated to the Pioneer Column "grantees" long before they even pegged any part of the country … Rhodes approved … a scheme which entitled about a hundred Afrikaner families … a farm of six thousand three hundred and fifty acres each … Dunbar Moodie himself, a fortune hunter, had more than sixty thousand-acre farms in Melsetter by 1893."

[78] Perhaps he was laid up. He had a fearsome reputation of starting fights with the army and getting socked.

[79] Later I learned that part of the problem was they were paid less than Intaf's temporaries, and they were paid peanuts.

[80] Chief Mabigwa was a direct descendent of Lobengula.

[81] What a young naïve red neck I was. What I never learnt in history was this man was likely a baby in his Mom's tummy when his people were forced - chased like dogs - from their grazing lands around Bulawayo by the Pioneers. http://pombiyadonha.byo24.com/index.php?id=iblog&iblog=509#sthash.4B5RgeoW.dpuf

[82] Wednesday & weekends.

[83] The word 'potjie' comes from the Afrikaans language and loosely it means stew. A potjie pot is a three legged, cast iron pot, incredibly useful as it can be put straight onto the coals of a fire with its three legs ensuring it won't fall over. We Rhodies enjoyed dusting off the potjie for the fun-days when we had people around for a braai. We would supplement the mountains of meat and salads with our potjie stew, a nice addition, but certainly not the main dish.

[84] It changed the life-style of the west, doing more for men in a single load than the internet. 'Would you like to, err, dear?' 'Yes! One minute love – I only need to switch the washing machine on. Oh, and pull the sheets off the bed will you? They'll fit in too.'

[85] Maize meal, traditional African porridge.

[86] Most DCs tried different schemes; re-naming a post, adding a travel allowance or some other idea.

[87] By 1976, however, they were going out on their own with a supervising policeman back at base. We just didn't have enough district policemen.

[88]A science teacher later explained the extraordinary evenings were mostly caused by the sun's reflection on the hundreds of trillions of dust particles in the air. Let-down, or wonderful?

[89] These men were expected to be able to advise TTL folk on everything from the how, why and when of birth control to the appreciation of what the new council set-ups were trying to achieve.

[90] The old fashioned term was 'Look-out'. It was essential to get into position in the best uncompromised point without the local citizenry seeing you. In the TTLs that meant under the cover of darkness when the little people were hiding in their little huts and the dogs were barking at the moon. Getting into position was made easier when, with the PV removals, vast stretches were cleared of people. If the people hadn't been cleared, issue a notice (see 'Frozen Areas' later). Critical was our OPs had to be in position and absolutely silent, no movement, and no odd smells by first light. Then the wait began. It could be an awful long time and that was where the professionalism paid off. One man Ops weren't usual, two meant company; generally the number decided on was determined by the possibility of the OP becoming involved in the expected fight itself or re-designating its goal to become an ambush.

[91] www.tni.org/.../sanctions-against-Rhodesia-diplomatic-farce-or-economic... "The seminar was held in Amsterdam 29th and 30th November 1974 at the Municipal University of Amsterdam."

[92] A friend passed this gem … 'they broke it, let them fix it'. Knowing he doesn't even know what a 'washer' is, I asked he imagine how long it would last and who would fix it if the residents of the road in which he now lives in Brisbane (Australia) had no water but his garden tap.

[93] Rowland arrived the year before we Schorrs did and had therefore more Rhodie blood in him than most of the RF core. To use "switched his interest" is in pure terms wrong for Rowland was a businessman and the object of business is to grow it. Clearly, while the RF saw the war as the means to growing, he was anti-war. In wider terms Rowland as the competitor, the business-without-war man needs more research.

[94] Harold's predecessor DC John studied the history of European regiments and their Colours. That didn't help his appreciation of military tactics less still how to defend Shabani Town. When it came to recording detail, however, he was in his element. Since white-time began in Africa

intelligence gathering had been the preserve of Intaf and the Police. Like Police Chief Inspector Pat in Lupane District, John had such a feel for the work, he carried the map in his head. A massive job of collating current information DC John of Shabani knew at any stage, day or night, everything an arresting squad would need to know.

[95] Our DC had never ever run a district before. He was essentially the product of our office assisting the Pretoria branch of the Rhodesian Labour Office and it was there, in that safe and one dimensional environment, where he had served his 'time' on the promotions list. Suddenly from stamping 'yes', 'no' or 'review' on a black's application to work in South Africa he was CEO of one of war torn Rhodesia's 50 districts. At the other end, when I was up in Mashonaland a colleague told his DC wanted to take over, apparently making a habit of going to the JOC and leaving pissed with a black eye and an army officer nursing a sore fist.

[96] This was a real Intaf problem. The DO was the type I instinctively wanted to protect from work. He was a charming, physically unfit roly-poly, gentle giant who used his blue eyes and smile to captivate all the girls from six to 60. He was militarily an idiot, completely unsuited to common sense except to sit and jaw war. And that was understandable … he had signed up for Intaf not the army. His commitment was to City Boy's style. His Cadet sidekick was however brimming with a different enthusiasm, a willingness to get to the new style of administration … without the training or experience however.

[97] I cannot remember what we paid the Chiefs every month but I do remember it was a lot less than some of our 'established' informants. Now who could be a more established fellow than a dude appointed by a god?

[98] He was killed in Binga shortly after.

[99] 40 years my senior.

[100] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodesian_Bush_War#Escalation_of_the_war_.2

[101]Zimbabwe - some recollections..... unreferenced … photos with commentary and see rhodesianassociation.com/category/stories-of-Rhodesia/ of Aug 13, 2013 – "With the war escalating, Meikles Southern Sun then had to decide what to do ... the only hotel company in the world with its own private army!"

[102] IA = Immediate Action. These were the drills hammered into me during my army training. Life savers - their aim was to get us to react without

thinking when particular incidents occurred, say, for example, a section came under fire while walking through an open area/field.

[103] We did not guard the police portion. They had declined to share responsibility for the village, guarding only their own compound, which suited us fine … grumble-grumble.

[104] built for the Chiefs and Headmen to overnight in the days of old

[105] The original idea of Concession stores had been to show the locals the way to stock and trade, but now they had more often than not became the lead supplier to the rest of the area, chiefly because of their superior buying power, logistics, etc.

[106] Same family name, age and seniority as the man who started me off in Essexvale except this Dube was Shona and a spitting image of Mugabe

[107] By this time the Bikita councils had reached the point in their evolution where the district had a Super Sec who worked directly with the DC and to whom the secretaries (equivalent to cadets/DOs) of the various councils reported. Bikita was far ahead of the Matabeleland Districts.

[108] It seemed the situation was that where time allowed they were being trained in Mashonaland and then sent out to needy districts. Their title was 'Vadet' … I guess the 'c' of cadet was changed to 'v' for volunteer … although they were hardly that. According to Ian they came in standard, senior (sergeant) and officer varieties.

[109] There will be a reader who will know the circumstances behind and method of the closure. I have tried to find out without success.

[110] What I didn't know until much later was that our Chief, Mr Connolly, also lost his son that month.

[111] No one was allowed to make a mark in his books, anywhere.

[112] I had been hoping for horse patrolling to catch on but nobody bar the AO's wife was keen. "They're too high up." I came cantering down an overgrown path over which somebody had dug a ditch. Me and the 17 hand, 1200 lb horse flipped, changed places.

[113] I found myself a double DC when Lib found my appointment in the Gazette following a call from Zaka

[114]I was to discover much later Intaf, on colleague Alex's personal initiative, did establish a full on training school modeled on the army basic course. It appears they had passing out parades, family days and dished out medals as well. They also handed out kit and equipment.

[115] It turns out I was wrong. It was my Accountant who'd complained I didn't follow the procedure manual.

[116] I have already made the distinction at the beginning between town and district police and I did use the Bikita police as an example of town police in district police jobs. I cursed at the time but, reality said the Inspector Plod did the right thing by refusing – they, Town Policemen, were numbed in an environment they didn't understand. To be sure had I been in the city and if, as I tied my shoe lace on a hydrant, I was approached by a nice chick in lace I wouldn't know what to do either. Now they were expected to go rescue others in an area forsaken by our army for years. Imagine the horror of extracting a group of town police had they gone in and had they been themselves hit.

[117] Upset, a proof reader of this section wanted to know why I didn't move to have the farmers arrested. 'You wrote the farmer confirmed they used tactics you wouldn't want to know about'. My answer: think about putting forward for prosecution a group of saints here on earth in the bodily form of Rhodesian Farmers who would claim to be following their stolen cattle and all I would have were shit-scared Black witnesses. Anecdote has it that Famer P became one of Zanu-PF … somewhere near the inner circle, very early on.

[118] Frozen Areas were chunks of real estate the JOCs designated for a period of time as being Friendly Force Free. That meant ALL Rhodesian Forces had to vacate the area so once our special guys went in they were confident that they had the area to themselves; anyone suspicious was dead meat. I was lucky I didn't appear suspicious, probably more comical as we learnt as we worked.

[119] The man from the PC's Office who was advocating the use of pipe bombs and booby traps was to join Zanu as soon as it was legal as the Secretary to the Victoria Branch Chairlady.

[120] That is a long net … near to 1.5 kms wide with 5 stops watching for runners and two Landies buzzing the roads.

[121] Located not far outside of Salisbury, it was where we had our national training 'institute' … I made it there once. All the DCs and ADCs/SDOs were flown up by Dakota from Matabeleland and urged, fight the good fight, save the country.

[122] A quick word on Jose. Jose was a National Serviceman and as I recall a product of the Intaf school. He got there via Rhodesia University (BA

LLB) via Lourenço Marques. He and his parents didn't flee. Jose was impeccable in every respect down to the comb he kept tucked in his sock. His argument that he would do anything I asked except take up arms against his fellow man was equally well presented. When I asked why he was sent to me and not Head Office to mind the tea staff and rugby guess a score, the Provincial Liaison Officer said the PC decided I moaned so much, he'd throw another bone. I sent Jose out anyway (on a tax project) and as luck had it he wasn't even a half hour from the office when his two vehicle convoy was ambushed. He took his driver's FN and led the charge dispersing the attackers. Jose proved to be an extremely valuable member of the team and a man who questioned my every move, mood and, at times, thoughts. For nigh on three months he was an important player in Bikita.

[123] *www.bsap.org/bsapgallery/main.php?g2_itemId=1949* … Salisbury the Woolworths Bomb Midday 6 August 1977 killing 11 and injuring 76.

[124] http://news.google.com/newspapers? The Byran Times Aug 1977

[125] I was to see him once more at a distance. I was with another SB guy in 1990-something in Mid-Rand (near Jo'burg) and he drove by. He was now living in Soweto. He was happy. He had a black wife and two happy kids.

[126] Yet another DC was being investigated for murder. Apparently he 'lost it', had a breakdown and fired indiscriminately into a passing long distance bus.

[127] That was a common term among my group of pals. It came from the stories of the Zulu Kings ordering a special witch-doctor to smell out the traitor. He of course knew who he was expected to light upon.

[128] Of course there were different factions in the UK and one of them was to hold Rhodesia for their pleasure at all costs. He may have been their man.

[129] Expiry date 1652.

[130] The average Rhodie suburban home had more food casually growing … passion fruit over the fence, paw-paw , beans to keep the boy busy … than an entire black village had in their extended family larder.

Perhaps it was just us Umtali educated types who believed him to be the Smith gang's strong man. He was a mega wealthy Manicaland farmer. Was he not of the group who imported top South African rugga players long before there was any professionalism in the game? Certainly the word was hot that he cracked jokes at the pub one night and was farming the world's biggest strawberry farm in RSA the next. The last I heard he had left a rather

huge farming empire in the hands of his son and had emigrated to the USA to a part where he could, it was said, die black free. He reportedly denied this. A fellow Afrikaner described de Kock as “the rectum of the RF. In my opinion he was the epitome of Afrikaner arrogance.”

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[132] Mention is made in “Walking a Tightrope: Towards a Social History of the Coloured Community of Zimbabwe” by James Muzondidya.

[133] http://news.google.com/newspapers? Eugene Register-Guard - Mar 5, 1978

[134] I am not aware of any other sort.

[135] It was an SB derisive observation (pissed off a better term) that the young blacks would get rejected by RAR, walk along the railway line and hop on the first train to Victoria Falls where they would buy a 30 packet of Peter Stuyvesant smokes … it had the ‘passport to pleasure ticket’ under the 1st layer … and walk across the river.

[136] The PF was to later tell the Bishop that while they had given him the drum to carry he shouldn’t have been so presumptuous as to play it.

[137] Head of Special Branch

[138] Dr Ahrn Palley was dead against UDI and a formidable opponent but again, to the young me, a voice in the wind (a bit of a Helen Suzman (RSA) except he was independent of all parties as I recall) and I was too busy climbing the ladder of success to be bothered with the future.

[139] Allan Savory played a big part in setting up the Selous Scouts training. Maybe it was that he was so involved he saw, my words, we were out of line.

[140] Rifle fire damage, most of us have it. It isn’t high blood pressure.

[141] This, it turned out, was another bullshit weave.

[142] http://www.rhodesia.nl/mission.htm

[143] Young men

[144] Memory is failing here, it may have been 19.

[145] That was the camp RSM Korb relieved me. I got to know something, a tiny little something, of the legend. He would have been the man, the tough soldier, who would have made the security of a National Green Area network work. We wouldn't have needed any covert operators then.

[146] Blue blood coursed through his veins.

[147] Among the famers we had 'outposts' … a hotel and store or garage or a garage with a pub.

[148] So little acknowledgement has been given to these men. Like a good rugby tight forward, to be playing well, contributing at the highest level, was to be unnoticed.

[149] White thieves had right of way. Once Rog convinced me with "they said we can stay even if they're away." The key wasn't under the mat so we forced our way in with the dogs excitedly helping and stayed two days in the empty farm (small holding) house. TV reception was bad. We cleaned up so nicely nobody would have known we were there, deciding that actually they hadn't all that food in the fridge, smokes in the pantry.

[150]

[151] This is a universal meme promoted by employers which we workers of the world accepted as valid and passed on to our staff.

[152] A white guy who spoke up for Africans

[153] Shucks, some spoke their home language, English and Afrikaans. Many from the central Midlands added the 2nd Bantu language automatically. The Batonga routinely spoke their own plus Ndebele or Shona as an extra and the SADF policemen up near the Falls had little trouble communicating with them for there were a handful who had worked on the mines.

[154] Coster was retired in '72, aged 52. As I recall Deputy Secretary (Intaf) van Zyl, of the words, 'we would be wise to recognise just how much they [Africans] have caught up. We need to include, not exclude, him and his kids…' was also pensioned off then.

[155] There is no doubt there would have always been dissidents to whatever peace arrangement short of immediate majority rule. And even then some blacks wanted regional governments, others central … the normal range.

[156] See http://www.themukiwa.com/rhodesianwar/Ken_Flower.htm

[157] He joined the BSAP as a young man in 1937, saw war service up in Somalia and Ethiopia, returned in 1948 and climbed the ranks fast. Not surprisingly for there was cheek to jowl contact between the Brit secret services and her colonies, there is a wealth of circumstantial evidence that he was one of their products.

[158] Shakespeare's play dwelt on "robust hilarity with more serious meditations on honor, shame, and court politics" (Wikipedia). However he kept the comedy to "multiple marriages and no deaths."

[159] I have no reason to think the uniformed police didn't think similarly.

[160] Don't shit yourself

[161] My informants are supported by Angus Selby's research @ http://www.mokoro.co.uk/files/13/file/lria/commercial_farmers_and_the_state

[162] Black advancement as in Community Development was placed on the back burner. Money and support for Intaf dried up.

[163] See 'Our Covert Forces'

[164] Burning grassy areas to make things easier for our troops wasn't unusual. Cattle food up in smoke!

[165] With the boom time of the 50s and 60s which saw Rhodieland take off and Kaffircountry stagnate it was convenient and defensible to widen our definition of hegemony to 'cultural' hegemony. This is a neat way of promoting/justifying the domination of one social class (who happened to be white) over another (who happened to be black) creating in our case two different economic units. It was easy to prove to the world this was right … simply snap before and after pictures on a Kodak of Rhodieland and Kaffircountry respectively.

[166] Read Guns, Germs and Steel, Jared Diamond

[167] Malawian President, 1961 - 1994

[168] Forget agriculture alone. "At independence there were fewer than 100 Zambian university graduates" (Britannica On-line … http://global.britannica.com). The locals and their education was sorely neglected in favour of pulling out copper under white direction.

[169] See for example the fast paced writing of CF Keyter's review of "The story of maize and the Farmers' Co-op" @ http://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/Journal%20of%20t

[170] Details just how powerful @ http://www.mokoro.co.uk/files/13/file/lria/commercial_farmers_and_the_state

[171] I remember the terrible drought that hit the bottom half in the 1968 farming year. A great deal was made of Mashona farmers helping their southern colleagues but it all had to be paid for.

[172] See “When Sanctions Worked: The Case of Rhodesia Reexamined” by William Minter and Elizabeth Schmidt @ http://www.africafocus.org/editor/aa1988.php. “… the two most substantive studies of international sanctions in recent years, Columbia University political scientist David Baldwin's subtly argued Economic Statecraft and a massive study by the Washington-based Institute for International Economics (HE), both consider Rhodesian sanctions a success.”

And “The Rhodesian government was able to announce UDI at the most advantageous moment, in November, just after the sale of the tobacco crop” … from here on prices fetched deteriorated.

[173] I recall on a rare visit to Salisbury being asked over to a friend of the family. The family member was astounded to see the changes his friend had managed about the house since sanctions ‘broke’. His friend described himself as being on special assignment with SB for secret produce marketing operations with apparitions over the seas.

[174] “… there were 3,054 European tobacco producers in 1964. By 1980, only 1,544 producers remained.” See William Minter and Elizabeth Schmidt @ http://www.africafocus.org/editor/aa1988.pdf

[175] 1969 earnings crashed to below half of what was achieved in 1964.

[176] Joseph Hanlon http://www.viacampesina.org/downloads/pdf/openbooks/EN-07.pdf, and see Angus Selby and others.

[177] Between 1968 and 1973 maize production tripled ... “Maize production in Zimbabwe” http://partyreptile.blogspot.com/2013/01/as-is-often-case-i-think-ive-found.html

[178] It is generally understood most of our stuff (and after the Portuguese coup just about all) went out via RSA. RSA businessmen imported our tobacco, maize, sugar, chrome, iron ore, gold - everything - at bargain prices, used it and exported their own into Europe, Japan and the USA. Russian chrome exported to the USA was identified as ‘probably’ originating in Rhodesia. Hence the amendment to re-start importing direct from us.

[179] Ironically since sanctions have been imposed on Mugabe’s

Zimbabwe there is a lot more written of the sanctions applied against Smith's Rhodesia. Here's one from http://www.thezimbabwean.co/comment/opinion/68200/sanctions-then-and-now.html ... "Switzerland and West Germany, which were not UN members, did business with Rhodesia. Japan continued to accept more Rhodesian exports than any other nation …" We did business with the USSR and its satellites, Germany, France, Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Australia, Japan and with many British (and Commonwealth) firms who merely located their dealing office more conveniently. Maize was pretty much a side issue to the already food surplus countries of the northern hemisphere, something tagged on to the really important stuff … our minerals. And see "A Matter of Weeks Rather Than Months: The Impasse Between Harold Wilson" by J R T Wood, the Congressional investigation at http://www.noeasyvictories.org/congress/uscg005.pdf

There is too the speech by a Zapu cadre in Holland at the conference "Sanctions against Rhodesia: Diplomatic Farce, or Economic and Legal Means to raise moral and material support for the Southern African Liberation Movements?" presented at http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/archives/hist-docs/rhodesiaseminar74.pdf

[180] It is likely though that maize from the vast corporate South African farms was going up north. Certainly RSA's coal exports to Zambia surged after UDI.

[181] South Africa was furious. Their trade with Zambia was worth some £300m a year … see "Struggle for Zimbabwe:The Chimurenga War" by David Martin. (other references include Johnson as a co-author)

[182] Sanctions always take a toll on those they are intended to 'help'.

[183] While farmers made up ¾ of the civilian deaths (some of these men died on police duties) during the period 1966 to 1975 there were 'only' 18 killed. In 1976, the year I felt we had already lost the war saw 21 famer deaths and the rest (approximately 236) died in the Internal Settlement/talks period of 77, 78 & 79.

[184] http://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org/files/who-dares-loses.pdf

[185] (Smith's) FM radio sets were branded with the name 'Chief'. The name was apt since they were given to traditional Zimbabwean chiefs who lived in rural areas and who, Smith hoped, would sway their subjects to turn against the guerrillas (whom he referred to as 'terrorists'). Similar sets

(Commando) were given to soldiers in the bush. All the right messages were passed along the wavelengths … www.rnw.nl/africa/article/a-radio-ban

[186] If anyone tried otherwise he was deported … Example … Brain Barron of the BBC. His famous statement, “Well, we only have the Rhodesian security forces version of the massacre..."In “The Rhodesian War: A Military History” Paul L. Moorcraft & Peter McLaughlin talk about some of the white dissidents (CTs?) and their fate. It is an area of which I had no knowledge. What talk I had came mainly from my National Service Vadet Jose.

[187] Colleagues say Parker’s book “Assignment Selous Scouts” raises more questions on the scouts’ (or is it SB) use of bio-warfare and attacks on missions. It is reviewed by Evin at goodreads.com who calls it ‘vague’.

[188] ‘Fireforce”, a description of a bloody adventure that went wrong is reviewed at http://www.mercenary-wars.net/books/fireforce

[189] Rhodies accepted the Mao-guerrilla strategy was to brutally terrorise the masses in order to gain total power. Modern ‘A’ Level history students have access to a wider truth: ‘How did Mao gain peasant support?’ Text Book answer … ‘… He had many ways of gaining support but the main method he used was propaganda. His men put up posters that illustrated the Kuomintang as cruel and selfish people that didn't care about anything but themselves and the rich people. … Another method Mao used to gain peasantry support was that he used his soldiers to help and protect them.’

[190] “That the Africans were influenced by this brainwashing was evidenced in one incident inside Rhodesia where a group of infiltrators went down clutching Mao Tse-Tung’s ‘little red book’” … “COMMUNIST SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO NATIONALIST POLITICAL GROUPS IN RHODESIA” @ http://www.rhodesia.nl/commsupp.htm

[191] Men and women serving Rhodie forces, more often than not ‘members’ of the Intaf and police ground coverage networks.

[192] “Unfortunately, the poor fellow (white troopie in Salisbury) had been mentally affected by his military service and was killed by his comrades later that day …” “When Destiny Dictates” by Michael Daniell-Waugh.

[193] As Super Sec once remarked to me in Bikita.

[194] The official ID issued by DCs which all adult male blacks had to carry at all times.

[195] Col Kahuni writes on defence for The Herald. He is an alive reminder of how black Zimbabweans see the history.

[196] Author of “Between the lies: rise of the media-military-industrial complex.”

[197] Bell traces the life of just one man in his story, “Mister 200 percent”.

[198]“The Selous Scouts went into the operational zone disguised as freedom fighters to kill villagers and leave evidence that incriminated magandanga (terrorists) to local people …” see more from the Reviewer at: http://socialtextjournal.org/article/vermin-beings-on-pestiferous-animals-and-human-game.

[199] Among others (text book included) Mr Chigwedere has written The Forgotten Heroes of Chimurenga I, The Abandoned Adolescents and British Betrayal of the Africans: Land, Cattle and Human Rights … Wikipedia.

[200] Author of “Who really killed Rhodesian missionaries?” in an article dated 18 Feb 1977 makes this point for the Voice: “The survivors of an incident at Karima in June, 1975, when 21 people lost their lives, were convinced that they were led into a trap by self-proclaimed terrorists acting on behalf of the security forces, who then opened fire on the villagers.”

[201]See http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/drawing-lessons-from-zimbabwes-war-of-liberation.

[202]Up to 1963 Flower’s mentors were British Intelligence and in particular those in the deep shadows watching over the Kenyan Emergency. Some say MI5 secretly supported him through our war, nodding where sanctions gaps were. I found one oblique source … Brian Nugent refers to “War without Honour” by Holroyd and Burbridge. http://www.amazon.com/War-without-Honour-Military-Intelligence/dp/1872398006

[203]When “Mau Mau” is added to the basic Brit version of the Emergency it conjures up images of horror. Where does the word come from? It seems it has no basis in language, it is a corruption that came to stigmatise the Kikuyu people as we Rhodies applied the word “ZOTS”?

[204]I repeat my earlier assessment: Field must have been acting on Flower’s (Intaf, Police, Coster’s) advice when he released the detainees.

[205]Introduced in ’74.

[206] Many teams it seems, including, I feel it is logical to suggest, teams the teams didn’t know about.

[207] In time, as the Scouts got to know districts, spotters often used tracks and began to collect on-the-spot information so they were able to

mount follow-up and/or set in place reception parties. This was the idea in my time of sending National Service platoons to the same place each time. Hand-over from platoon commander to commander should have been so detailed the new man could use the integrated information and move forward. It was a luxury we couldn't afford after 1973 and because the local police/Intaf were never (certainly seldom) consulted. Every new commander had to start from scratch when entering a district or piece of a district.

[208] National Servicemen were to play a critical role in keeping our SAS up to strength too.

[209] RLI is a relevant example … "From 1977 onwards around half of the Battalion was composed of these conscripts, who in theory served less time than a regular; however, in practice, there was such a high turnover that a national serviceman could serve longer than many a regular" ... see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodesian_Light_Infantry

[210] "Fireforce … accounted for 12,000 guerillas killed". http://www.mercenary-wars.net/books/fireforce.html reviewing Chris Cocks' book "Fireforce". A kill ratio of 160:1 noted Mark Adams.

[211] "Quite clearly this man knew soldiers were it the vicinity; we had walked towards him in open order, upright in less than knee-high undergrowth; he was well-concealed but had a good field of fire and yet he was shot from a range of two yards having made no attempt to defend himself. That this should happen at all is remarkable; but that 60 or 70% of the guerrillas killed by Fire Force unit should die in this manner is almost impossible to believe …" See Nick Downie, http://rhodesianforces.org/RhodesiaStudyinmilitaryincompetence

[212]As I saw for myself in 1973 the zones around PVs were in effect long term Frozen in that they were under dawn to dusk curfew. By 1977 we had almost ¾ million people in PVs.

[213]There was a joke that to shoot game hunters had to get a license from the DC. He had to ensure the applicant was a proper person to be going hunting. To go out into a TTL to shoot people no license was required.

[214]An impossible task to forewarn any other than those living on station.

[215]http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-F1F-84-al.sff.document.af000181.pdf

[216] Among our youngsters we happily infused mercenaries and veterans from other wars, some undeclared* where atrocities were routinely covered

up in the first instance, not only into our units (it is common knowledge that at times RLI troops were over 30% foreign) but as private bounty hunters also. While we advertised for them in gun and hunter and similar male magazines in the USA most of our support came from UK professionals.

*Kissinger's world in the 70s was a very busy place

[217] For extra reading. "Experiments in obedience leading to willingness to torture …"
http://www.truthdig.com/arts_culture/page2/beyond_the_shock_machine_201 by Gina Perry reviewed by Gabriel Thompson

[218] Racist for many reasons and one that figured a lot was simply 'to be macho'. Face Book is an enduring reminder.

[219] I was to discover later Rhodies were to feature in South Africa's infamous CCB unit.

[220]http://www.alternet.org/story/152413/the_dark_side_of_%22soldier_

[221] A term used by rugby players the world over meaning to run through the opposition's poor defence line. It came to mean withdrawing yourself from harm's way, leaving the scene of the fighting, leaving Rhodesia.

[222] From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodesian_Light_Infantry ... "In many respects the RLI was a mirror of the French Foreign Legion," Cocks continues, "in that recruiters paid little heed as to a man's past and asked no questions. ... And like the Foreign Legion, once in the ranks, a man's past was irrelevant." He gives the example of Lance-Corporal Mathew Charles Lamb, a Canadian volunteer with a history of violence and insanity who became an "exemplary and popular stick leader"

[223] The real Scouts don't promote this nonsense. It has got out of hand with the media, Rambo films etc.

[224]"Inside the base (SADF's Fort Rev), immediately adjacent to the airfield, was a secret torture and interrogation centre where attempts, not always successful, were made to "turn" or "convert" captured guerrillas into so-named "pseudo operators" for deployment in highly sensitive, covert deception operations" … "under the tutelage of battle hardened former Rhodesian special forces operators, had to be kept secret at any cost" … "Tortured Fragments of History" by Stan Winer published by Global Research. A little more ... "Neurophysiologists and behavioural scientists have another phrase for it: transmarginal inhibition or TMI — a state of behavioural collapse induced by physical and emotional stress prior to

inducing new patterns of actions and beliefs. Successful application of this technique, sometimes referred to pejoratively as “brain washing”, requires psychological torturers to have total control of the environment. Existing mental programming can then be replaced with new patterns of thinking and behaviour. The same results can be obtained in contemporary psychiatric treatment by electric shock treatments and even by purposely lowering a patient’s blood sugar level with insulin injections.”

[225] Type ‘counterinsurgency’ in a google search and see!

[226] The horrible reality of the promotion of terror as a means of political control as conducted under the leadership of Kenyan "Torturer-in chief" Ian Henderson (CBE 1986!) (later called ‘The Butcher of Bahrain’ later, "Britain's Klaus Barbie". In September 1997, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning the use of torture in Bahrain (former British Protectorate) and called on Britain to order Henderson to leave the country … Wikispooks).He was the master in (the techniques of) turning enemy members and of extracting information. The facts emerging of the treatment of the Africans in the Kenyan PVs (which we copied*), more widely called concentration camps, are hair curling. The ‘techniques’ didn’t stay in the PVs … This is what one of his white junior’s was happy to make public; "By the time I cut his balls off he had no ears, and his eyeball, the right one, I think, was hanging out of its socket. Too bad, he died before we got much out of him." The publicised story holds that the Mau Mau rebels were the ultimate savages but, things are pointing to the British upping the Mau Mau nastiness. The difference was always the Brits were able (until now) to wipe clean evidence of their own atrocities – just as so many black journalists aver we did. Of the 1069 cases reported how many were really Mau Mau? That is what is being re-assessed now.

* We modelled our PVs on Kenya’s concentration (as in the enclosures for the Boers during the South African War during the seizure of the Transvaal). We DID NOT, as the story goes, construct our PVs in the manner and form of those built in Malaysia during their Emergency – the stuff Walls saw. In the end ours became such deaths traps with overflowing sewage and lack of food they were rendered unworkable. From many PVs the people simply left … long before Mugabe was declared the winner.

[227] The army had little understanding of Intaf, the police wanted to be in the decision making but were struggling to put boots on the ground, SB/CIO was overloaded not only on the battle field where outside of the

Scouts we had other covert teams like Pys-Ops operating. Superintendent McGuiness is alternatively labelled as a bad guy and as an officer who tried to put a stop to some horrible activities. Outside of the war-war CIO seemed to be involved with everything from sanctions busting to secret negotiations to build potential alliances as with Nkomo.

[228]It is well known that Flower had little confidence in Company RF & Smith right from the beginning. The UDI surprise failed yet they continued to believe they could win a guerrilla war. That extended to Walls. Walls choose his pal and pre-war sergeant major (later Captain) Ron Reid-Daly to lead the covert unit for which all the ground work had been laid by SB. The escalating war saw Selous Scouts working increasingly on its own and we learnt Flower developed contempt for Lieutenant Colonel Reid-Daly … why.

[229] There was also a 'temporary' base outside the town of nearby Bindura.

[230] "Orwellian Ireland" by Brian Nugent, see http://books.google.com.my/books?id=rk8LhlzrJZ4C&pg=PA101&lpg=PA101&dq=Selous+Scouts+Bindura

[231]There were stories of vdByl being choppered into the front lines and spending an evening with the boys, sharing his expensive whisky and wine, patting his hunting rifle, talking of a chance to made a kill. On the Nyazdonya raid Peter Baxter comments, "… he (PK) was very much the spearhead of the political endorsement of the raid."

[232]An extract from MIT Professor and Rhodesian born ClappertonMuvanga's 'Vermin Beings'.http://www.academia.edu/435402/On_Vermin_Beings_On_Pestiferou

[233] It doesn't make good reading. Prof Mavhunga provides some references that take us from SADF Medical Corps all the way to Sigma … nice one and so much for sanctions when there is money to be made.

[234] "15 October 1975. … Dr. Edson Sithole and his secretary Miriam Mhlanga are kidnapped outside the Ambassador Hotel in Salisbury … under the orders of the force's Head of Operations Winston Hart. They are brought to the Selous Scout base at the Mount Darwin fort, where they are given lethal injections of sodium pentathol. Their corpses are dumped in a mine shaft on a nearby farm. Disinformation is generated to cover up the truth." … see http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/south_africa_chemical.pdf?_=1316466791

[235]Dr Hatfill, an American who has been linked to numerous biological weapons scandals spent time with our covert forces between '78 and '80.

“CIA SCIENTIST: A KEY SUSPECT IN U.S. ANTHRAX ATTACKS” by Steve Moore (published by Centre for Research on Globalisation) 15 August 2002 … “Secondly, Dr.Hatfill is one the "few" people in the entire United States who knows how to weaponise anthrax spores. In fact, Dr.Hatfill, 48, is a U.S. native, born in Missouri, who served in the Rhodesian white-run military's elite Special Air Squadron and the feared Selous Scouts counterinsurgency unit. Dr.Hatfill was "serving with the Rhodesian military during an outbreak of anthrax that sickened more than 10,000 black farmers in 1978-80." Jan Cienski, National Post, July 5, 2002, p. A12). Thus, one of the largest outbreaks of germ warfare in world history came as the white Rhodesians were on the verge of being defeated by black guerrillas.”

[236] Interview with Dr Tim Stamps, Rhodesian director for Health, Zimbabwe Minister for Health, “That is really outside my capacity to conjecture. But we know that it could not have been the Rhodesian forces acting on their own, they didn't have the logistics ... we know that there was a tremendous amount of support from the apartheid regime ...” Frontline see http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/plague/sa/stamps.html

[237] Dr Meryl Nass, MD; Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine; Mount Desert ... Investigated world's largest anthrax epizootic, in Zimbabwe … ” see www.military-biodefensevaccines.org/meryl/resume.html See too Brian Nugent who included SAS in the distribution.

[238] Type “Rhodesian forces poisoned water in Mozambique” on a Google search page and see how many entries pop up.

[239]I mentioned this to a school friend of who responded thus: “I was for a time attached to JOC Ft Vic but mostly with a difference. I worked to the senior man and him alone, not the JOC. At one stage I was even sent down to Chiredzi in plain clothes, no rank in the manner of a personnel auditor to check on the local scene where we suspected farmer(s) of playing both sides but under whose game plan we didn’t know.”

[240] ZANU ran educational tours to view the graves.

[241] “Radio Free Zimbabwe broadcasting from Maputo claimed large numbers of civilians had been killed, many bayoneted or shot at close range. [citation needed] Extensive film evidence was provided, and though it was given scant coverage … The BBC eventually acknowledged its existence and shocking footage showing large numbers of decaying corpses, including many children, was eventually shown on BBC Television in a documentary on Robert Mugabe called "Portrait of a Terrorist" (reporter Nick Ross,

producer Jenny Barraclough, 1980)" @ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Dingo.

[242] "In their first pass, four Canberra bombers dropped 1200 Alpha bombs (Rhodesian-designed anti-personnel fragmentation weapons) over an area 1,1 kilometres long and half a kilometre wide." See www.herald.co.zw/house-of-commons-rhodie-motion-a-racist-stance/

[243] "Who Dares Loses".

[244] "Unfortunately, the camp was formally registered with the United Nations (UN) as a refugee camp" ... http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub607.pdf ... worse, we set the hospital on fire and all inmates were burnt alive.

[245]http://www.amazon.co.uk/Rhodesian-War-Paul-Moorcraft/dp/1848845227

[246] Someone drew an analogy between the unarmed combatants of Nyazdonya and the downed Air Rhodesia plane sometime later.

[247] The description of the raid is arrogant and surreal a-la Monty Python (or for Americans, Far Side). Only the use of 'guerrillas' saves it from being a duck-hunt … "err oh ho, not sure what happened to numbers 1029 to 1183 sir" and then the writer contradicts himself, launching into 'many of those killed …' etc etc.

[248]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selous_Scouts, and see http://www.history-net.com/selous_scouts.html.

[249] The early UN reports over 160,000 of our citizens fled from us to Moz alone.

[250] " … Selous Scout who shouted through the loud hailer that Rhodesia had been defeated and for all to gather round and hear the news … Warracker, reacting to an extremely dynamic situation, decided to give the order to 'fire, which he did, and what can hardly be described as anything less that a massacre commenced ... The dispensation of vehicles had been carefully decided and meticulously rehearsed, as had every aspect of the operation … The effect of all of this was to create an extended firing line from … the steady, disciplined and controlled enfilade of fire directed into the mass of humanity was manifestly sufficient to execute an extraordinary slaughter. There was no immediate cover for those caught out in the open on the parade ground and surround, while the frenzied efforts of panicked people to flee from there and elsewhere in the camp had been correctly anticipated, offering the opportunity for the well positioned Ferrets to add to the steadily

mounting slaughter. The rate of fire continued for several minutes – later observers of the scene commenting on behalf of various international forums observed that a carpet of spent shell casings seemed to cover the entire scene after tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition had been expended – and continued until all visible movement in the killing zone had ceased" … "Selous Scouts Operation Eland" by Peter Baxter @ http://peterbaxterafrica.com/index.php/2012/10/12/selous-scouts-operation-eland/

[251] www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27752:chimurenga-role

[252] "PSEUDO OPERATIONS AND COUNTERINSURGENCY: LESSONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES" by Lawrence E. Cline, Instructor, Strategic Studies Institute, June 2005

[253] This UN report is damning; http://www.academia.edu/1017303/The_UNHCR_and_Zimbabwean_Refugee 1980_----Draft_5 … "Pah!" shout some, "the UN is little more than the West's dog's body." Well the answer to that is, you're right, but it was Britain and the USA who, when all the casino chips are counted, kept our Rhodesian war alive making this report all the more credible.

[254]Reid-Daly criticised Flower over the Chitepo assignation (see Wikipedia). I am not sure that Flower had anything to do with it. It was too early to be plotting Rhodesia's capitulation as required by the West. It is a mystery. A SB friend claimed to know the man who placed the bomb which only served to frustrate me. Recent writings suggest that the killer could have been another Zanu man have emerged. "The untimely death of retired army commander General Solomon Mujuru in the early hours of Tuesday morning in a blaze which burnt his body to a crisp has echoes of the assassination of Herbert Chitepo and the killing of Josiah Tongogara in a car accident" ... "Zimbabwe: Mujuru's Death - Echoes of the Past" … Opinion … posted @ http://allafrica.com/stories/201108191635.html

[255] The SB Superintendent in Wankie was away more than he was at home. The nod and wink I invariably got was he was in Lusaka, sometimes overseas.

[256]Toledo Blade - Sep 3, 1978 … "Secret talk held by Nkomo, Smith."

[257]The UDI surprise failed yet they continued to believe they could win a guerrilla war.

[258]Walls's appointment followed Coster who, I think, didn't share the

RF's view.

[259]For example, discussing the 1976 Nyazdonya raid, "According to Hart, Flower was contacted and persuaded without difficulty to support the operation, despite the fact that Flower himself claims in his memoir a deep reluctance to compromise the delicate political balance of the moment by pursuing something as aggressive as this. There are other sources that claim Flower was kept out of the picture altogether …" http://peterbaxterafrica.com/index.php/2012/10/12/selous-scouts-operation-eland/

[260]Founder and commander of the Selous Scouts

[261]There was actually a story out that a group of TTs revolted, took over a Scout's camp and had to be carefully talked into coming back into line.

[262]http://www.rhodesia.nl/mission.htm

[263]If the hit men were us, many ex-Rhodie brothers and sisters may ask, throwing up their arms in disgust at the very idea, how come, then, the rabidly pro Black Nationalist Spanish Catholics up the road weren't hit? Many reasons. They were ineffectual and probably pissed off their congregations as much as they annoyed us. We considered that many of those priests, the learned clerics leading the Heathen on to Jesus were here on holiday in the sun for fun, escaping the peasantry conditions of their own homes.

[264] Most sources say 62% attend church. According to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Zimbabwechurch following in Zimbabwe is still in that range. If my pals were representative of the whites, white attendance would be less than 30% - except for the celebratory events, births, weddings and funerals.

[265]CTs were offered the opportunity to surrender 'no questions asked'. I recall at one stage we claimed 2000 had done so. The common braai story was the surrendered were Militia on extra pay.

[266] New York Times, Sept 2, 2003. (Lamont) ".. was put on trial in 1976 for allowing nuns in his diocese to give medical treatment to anti-government black guerrillas and for failing to report the guerrillas' whereabouts … sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment … Then in 1977 … he was stripped of his Rhodesian citizenship and deported".

[267] Air Rhodesia flights 825 and 827: "Air Rhodesia Flight 825 was a scheduled flight from Kariba, Rhodesia to Salisbury Rhodesia that was

shot down on September 3, 1978 by ZIPRA guerillas using a Strela 2 missile." … "… Flight 827 … between Kariba and Salisbury that was shot down on 12 February 1979 by ZIPRA guerrillas using a Strela 2 missile soon after take-off." See http://www.booksofzimbabwe.com/viscount_down

[268] http://www.frontline.org.za/Files/PDF/Vumba.pdf

[269] Albert Hunt in "The Language of Television: Uses and Abuses" states "… of Elim Pentecostal missionaries (who later turn out not to have been killed by guerrillas at all), makes television news. Whereas the day to day violence perpetrated by Ian Smith's regime … isn't newsworthy at all."

[270] "Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga" by PareshPandya,

[271] "DEADLY MARIONETTES, State-Sponsored Violence in Africa", ARTICLE 19, October 1997 … Richard Carver and others.

[272]Josiah Tongogara was described to me by SB colleagues as being one of the young bulls who could draw the country –the tribes *and* races-together. Enos Nkala claims Tongogara was killed because he was friends with Dumiso Dabengwa … together a powerful alliance we whites would have welcomed had we seen an early peace an option.

[273] I walked the Gwaai a few times.

[274] http://kitup.military.com/2011/12/auddis-ward-american-selous-scout.html

[275]what we laughingly called the war zone

[276] Henry Kissinger is still directing Capitalist strategy. Kissinger was so busy defining the world in Christopher Hitchens' "The Trial of Henry Kissinger" Rhodesia warrants about two sentences. He came, ordered the final course and left, leaving the menu and meal preparation to Ian et al.

[277]Afrikaans - Black Threat/Horror

[278] The Mukiwa records Flower's cry from his heart … from his diary, 4 Sept. 1979: "Our war continues, and in some respects, escalates. We officials in War Council have had to listen to insistent demands for 'Militia-types', more 'Security Force Auxiliaries' and the rest, with Ian Smith for the first time strident in his demands. Yet, how many years ago was it that I was advocating just that – a 'Home Guard', or what the Bishop now calls 'The Presence of Men-with-Guns in the Tribal Areas' – advocating to deaf ears and against the bitter opposition of Smith's Ministers who swore 'only over our dead bodies would we agree to munts being armed!"

[279] I recall reading that long after the war, the topic of the ill-

discipline and lack of control of the Militia was the debate of at least one conference at the University of Zimbabwe. I wasn't involved; the letting loose of these guys didn't happen in any of the areas I was working in.

[280] The origin, abantu/umuntu, from the classification Bantu just as we say Chinese or European people, is correct and right but the way we used it was demeaning.

[281] That was the obvious in the box answer for the prevailing attitude was the mines could absorb our labour because the South Africans were having trouble getting their own niggers underground. That was the obvious in-the-box answer for the prevailing truth was the mines could absorb our labour because the South Africans were having trouble getting their own niggers underground. The view was it would keep our frustrated hordes busy and bring in welcome rands which we could insist on changing for Rh$. My DC Wankie was a convert and a labour executive in Pretoria. To me he was an RF's DC. Sit at your desk and take no notice.

[282]The Selous Scouts Unit is, ironically, as concrete an example as the world will ever have that the concept does work! The handful of whities and their multitude of black buddies were certainly successful.

[283]http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/4/newsid_251