

NONE BUT OURSELVES CAN FREE OUR MINDS

NBO

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WWW.NBO.PRESS



The constant free flow of
communication among us -

Enabling the free interchange of ideas

- forms the very bloodstream of our nation. It keeps the mind and body
of our democracy eternally vital, eternally young.

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt

INSIDE

TREVOR NCUBE RANGA MBERI TELFORD VICE
FARAI DZVAIRO PERCY ZVOMUYA ELEANOR
MADZIVA LEVI KABWATO FARAI MUDZINGWA

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AREA MARIKANA

CONTENTS

Issue 1, Quarter 1, 2016



OTA BENGA

PATRICE LUMUMBA

22 ON BLACK PAIN AND IMAGINATION: PATRICE LUMUMBA AND OTA BENGA

Lumumba was only 36 years old when he was murdered. Ota Benga is said to have been 23 years old when he was captured but some historians claim he was much younger.

14 PASTOR OR TRADITIONAL HEALER? YOU DECIDE

What we have these days is just a continuation of the whole “kuenda kun’anga” tradition, disguised as “deliverance sessions.” The smelly bone-throwing, animal-skin wearing n’anga has now been replaced by the smooth talking “prophet” in shiny suit and pointy shoes.

32 ENCOUNTERS; JONAH SITHOLE AND THE CHIMURENGA SOUND

Sithole was to Mukanya what Nigerian drummer Tony Allen was to AfroBeat founder Anikulapo Kuti: brothers and bedfellows, companions and comrades. Sithole was at the nucleus of the music, right at the centre of the smithy at which the Chimurenga sound was forged ...

12 DON'T MENTION THE WAR

50 LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA; A MODERN PARABLE

35 THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE

42 ISHMAEL? THATS HIM OVER THERE

40 LITERATURE IN THE SHADOW OF MUGABE'S GALLOWES

46 ZIMBABWE FROM A TO Z

10 4 FUNKY WAYS TO PAIR WHISKEY AND ... BACON?

18 THE STRANGE CONTRADICTION OF THE HOMOPHOBIC FEMINIST

NO ONE
— BUT —
owns selves
CAN
FREE
OUR X MINDS
- BOB MARLEY -



Editor: Joe Ruzvidzo **Contributors:** Farai Dzvairo, Levi Kabwato, Eleanor Madziva, Ranga Mberi, Farai Mudzingwa, Trevor Ncube, Telford Vice, Percy Zvomuya **Photos:** KB Mpofu, Takura Makadzange

WELCOME

FROM THE EDITOR

My wife and I host the occasional braai. I do the shopping, she makes the salads. I barbecue the meat, she drinks the wine; simple division of labour.

Having friends over means that our downstairs toilet receives a steady stream (ugh, sorry) of visitors spiritually fulfilled through burnt offerings and constant libation.

So I keep a tray in said loo, with a selection of magazines for gentle perusal during pitstops. There are GQs and FHMs and various other acronyms I have collected over the years.

See, the way I select my reading material, especially reading material which will be accessible to my friends and family, is simple. Am I entertained? Will I be entertained if I read it again? Am I willing to present this as entertaining reading material to visitors?

This is the same principle I am trying to apply with NBO. It is not just a way to present and promote writing that is not readily available in Zimbabwe's mainstream media (although that is a large part of it).

This isn't a vehicle to solicit and discover quality short story writing and literary discussion (although that is a large part of it, too).

I am also just trying to share the kind of shit I like with as many people as possible, and to display the kind of thing I enjoy reading.

I am quite sure some of the stuff we'll carry is best read on the dunny, but I hope that most of our content will be worth your time (and one day, money).

The web version is available on www.nbo.press, and the Launch Edition of our digital magazine is now available through various channels.

Please subscribe to our newsletter for updates, look around and get comfortable because I mean to take this a very long way.

Welcome to NBO, enjoy your stay.



JOE RUZVIDZO

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ABOUT NBO MAGAZINE

NBO stands for None But Ourselves (can free our minds). It is a fledgling digital magazine, built on the principle of free, honest & robust media for all. Based in Zimbabwe, the aim is to give a voice to views shut out of mainstream media whilst providing engaging and entertaining content.

I always moan about Zimbabwe's mainstream media, and the stories they cover. Followers of my twitter feed know how I violently rail against our newspapers and how stories are presented.

I especially take offence at stories in the State-owned media, and have been known to swear at government "propagandists" on occasion.

In late 2014, I spoke to a few young journalism students and advised them that nowadays, you can build your own media entities with a few short clicks. Nobody needs to make coffee for three years in a major newsroom, waiting to get assigned a story because there's nobody more senior available.

I have decided to take my own advice. There is no value in whining about the media we have, if we are not willing to create the media we want. The only solution is for me to actually create the type of content I want to consume, instead of complaining all the time about what is available.

The core value that NBO is built on is freedom. Freedom not just to create, but also to consume the media we want. Not just access to speech, but access to information from as wide or as narrow a range of sources as we choose.

We need to encourage a plurality of voices in Zimbabwe, instead of stifling speech through the arrest of journalists, the persecution of media practitioners and an onerous licensing regime designed to be exclusionary rather than to facilitate access.

Fortunately, digital publishing is an entry point into a media space previously the exclusive precinct of a moneyed few. Minimal startup costs and an increasingly intuitive toolset mean that anyone can create their own media if they're fed up with the old.

It is in this do-it-yourself spirit, and with a healthy dose of foolish optimism, that NBO was conceived in early 2015, and is launched in November of same.

This may end badly.

JOE FINDS HIS VOICE

TREVOR NCUBE

In a world of too much PR & little substance, Joe Ruzvidzo (@JoeBlackzw) is something of an enigma. He is actually what he says he is. What you read is what you get. No frills. No PR. He is the ultimate authentic individual.

This is rare these days where so many have mastered the art of blending and conforming. Of course we would all want to be liked. We are delighted when our Facebook posts get many likes. And we feel a rush of excitement when our tweets are favorited and retweeted.

For our generation these have become sought-after stamps of approval. They are the virtual pat-on-the-shoulder that has made social media such a fuel for social discourse.

It's quite sobering to see just how much social media has become a global stage for our lives. At first we used to think that what offends would not be retweeted or liked. But boy, were we wrong.

On social media Joe has stood out by calling things as they are. He's the go to guy if you want someone who will call a spade a spade. He is an equal opportunity

offender, offending without fear of favour. His social media profile is of an ordinary Joe Bloggs; no photo shopped pictures or varnished postings to impress his audiences.

But what he does is to impress by being himself. Your choice is to take it or leave it. And this is exactly what NBO Magazine feels like. In a note instructing me to get on with this piece of writing, Joe tells me that None But Ourselves (NBO) Magazine is not “about curating information for the general public” but more like curating information for himself. And this makes eminent sense. When you have read it, you realize that it is his take of what a compelling magazine should feel and look like.

His audience is likely to be people like him. Which naturally raises the question how many Joe Bloggs do we have out there? The answer is that there are plenty of them. So there should be a market for this magazine.

Though ours is the age of too much information, yet paradoxically ours is also the most uninformed generation that ever walked on planet Earth. Even though there is no shortage of reading material, most of it can be dull and unbelievably boring when it is not self-serving.

Digital media ghettos and self-selection on social media means we consume content we like and agree with. How enlightening can that be?

This observation holds true within the Zimbabwean market where online media has been abused for spreading lies, innuendo and unsubstantiated allegations. Quality has largely been tossed out of the window. Of course there are a few exceptions.

It is my hope that NBO will add to media plurality. That is why Joe must be commended for this initiative. NBO should provide another digital platform for more voices to contribute to the national conversation.

Every society gets the media that it deserves. Zimbabwe is better served by a competitive market place of ideas where robust debate sharpens our ideas. This also raises the quality of our narrative.

As Joe says, he created NBO to solve a problem that he encounters daily, namely the paucity of reading material that he enjoys. This is often the foundation for many winning formulae. Some of the world's successful brands were created by people wanting to eliminate an inconvenience they experienced or trying to fill a gap they spotted. I hope NBO hits the sweet spot and creates a following that translates into a successful business model.

“Zimbabwe is better served by a competitive market place of ideas ...”



CONTRIBUTORS

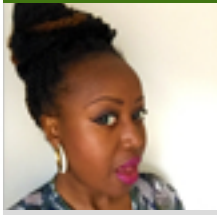
Doom and gloom dominates Zimbabwe's narrative right now. That's why it's exciting that Joe has spotted an opportunity in these dark days when many are giving up and leaving the country.

Where many in the diaspora have written their mother land off and don't see why they should come back home, Joe has returned to the motherland. The launch of NBO is proof that individuals have the power to change and impact our circumstances no matter how difficult the environment.

I hope this power of one individual with a plan inspires many millennials to become a force for positive change in Zimbabwe. We all know it's tough out there but I am confident Joe's work ethic will see him make a success of this interesting project.

Digital media is relatively low cost and this could be the genesis of a new media player in Zimbabwe. With his authenticity, Joe has a chance to make NBO a compelling voice. This digital publication has my very best wishes. ■

Trevor Ncube is Chairman of Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) based in Zimbabwe, a company he co-founded 19 years ago. AMH owns four newspaper titles in Zimbabwe, namely NewsDay, Southern Eye, The Zimbabwe Independent and The Standard. Ncube is also controlling shareholder and Executive Deputy Chairman of the Mail & Guardian Media Group (South Africa), publishers of one of Africa's leading weekly newspapers, the Mail & Guardian. M&G Media also owns Mail & Guardian Africa which is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. He is also a chicken farmer.



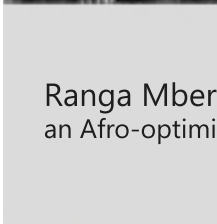
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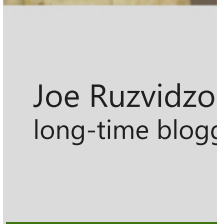
Farai Mudzingwa writes irregularly and irreverently from what's left of Harare.



Telford Vice hasn't had a proper job since he started writing for a living in 1991. No-one has yet paid him enough to stop.



Percy Zvomuya is a writer, he is also a football fan.



Joe Ruzvidzo is a writer, graphic designer and long-time blogger based in Harare.



YOUR NAME HERE: just email two writing samples to editor@nbo.press



FOUR FUNKY WAYS TO PAIR WHISKEY AND ... BACON?

FARAI K. DZVAIRO

A friend I haven't caught up with in ages invited me for quarter to Friday (Thursday night) drinks at a local haunt. Spring has sprung in Perth, so I grabbed the chance to leave work before nightfall and have an evening of something other than yoga and reading.

One of my favourite things about Varnish on King has always been the ambiance. Outdoor bars are the norm here, so the closed-in feel of Varnish makes it unique; if you don't know where the entrance is you're likely to walk right by the unassuming wooden double doors during the week. Once inside, the wooden staircase to the basement level transports you to a different world of dark

different world of dark leather, dim lights and random taxidermied animals (like Justin Beaver, who runs the Varnish Instagram account).

Pulling up to the bar, we were greeted by friendly staff and offered water with fresh mint to start off. Given that whiskey is our bonding beverage of choice and bacon is the ultimate all-day food, my friend and I decided to try their famous "Bacon Flight," which according to the menu is "4 styles of pork, grilled behind the bar and paired with whiskey."

Using a sandwich maker, our bartender placed 4 slices of heaven's gift (bacon) between two sheets of baking paper

and cooked it before our eyes. While the bacon sizzled, the bartender got our order together. I can neither confirm nor deny any allegations of drooling while we waited.

Finally, our lovely bartender Xander gave us the low-down; the best way to fully savour the experience is to take a bite of bacon, swirl it around your mouth to get the flavour profile, then take a sip (not a shot, a sip) of whiskey and enjoy the combination. The soda water shot in the middle of the board served as a palate cleanser for transitioning between whiskeys. I chose to start at the left of my board and work my way across.

Before I continue, I have a

confession; in a previous life I was a whisky snob who was only about the single malt scotch life.

How wrong I was, and how glad I am that I got over my pretentious self and broadened my horizons.



Bacon House smoked hickory (North American style smoked loin).

Whiskey Woodford Reserve Kentucky straight Bourbon.

The Woodford Reserve had a solid flavour with hints of smoke and spice, which complemented the smokiness of the hickory in the bacon. The bacon itself wasn't particularly memorable but the combination with the bourbon made it a winner.

Rating: 3/5



Bacon Flat pancetta (Non-smoked central/southern Italian style. Flavours of coriander seed, fennel & raw sugar).

Whiskey Bulleit Rye.

Firstly, grilled pancetta is king. Because it's so thinly sliced it always comes out crispy and crumbly and yummy. My palate isn't fancy enough to have been able to distinguish all the flavours described in the flavour profile, but it tasted good and nothing else matters! Bulleit Rye is a firm favourite with many bourbon drinkers. The crispness of the pancetta went well with the smoothness of the bourbon but my focus was all on the swine. **Rating: 3/5**



Bacon Dark molasses and vanilla infusion belly bacon (House infused – giving flavours of bitter & sweet caramel).

Whiskey Russell's Reserve 10yo Bourbon.

Belly bacon + molasses + a tease of vanilla = #winning; it is impossible to go wrong with this combination. This bacon reminded me of french toast with maple syrup and bacon (without the carbs). I prefer my drinks on the dry side, so the distinct sweetness of Russell's didn't particularly do it for me. However, the bacon made everything alright. Better. Wonderful, even. **Rating: 4/5**



Bacon Speck (Southern Australian style cured belly bacon, with flavours of juniper & smoked beechwood).

Whiskey George Dickel No.12 Tennessee Whiskey.

The George Dickel was easily my favourite whiskey of the night. Smooth, with a latent sweetness and smokey surprise finish. In fact, I liked it so much that I forgot about the bacon after the second round of bite, swirl & sip, focusing instead on just sip.

Rating: 4/5



If I had to pick a winning combination I'd go with Set 3, and that's because that particular bacon made my night. I'd be keen to try a combination of the vanilla infused bacon and the **George Dickel No.12** just to see if the two would complement each other.

I'm always up to try new things, and am

glad that instead of the usual "surprise me with your creativity oh cute barman" cocktails we explored something new. For the price of two cocktails at an average Perth bar (or one and a third at one of the fancier ones) I got to try new whiskeys, eat bacon at night and catch up with a fun mate. Hello, spring. ■



A venenciadora serving sherry

DON'T MENTION THE WAR

In the hearts and minds of those who frequent “La Venencia”, the Spanish Civil War rages still, writes **Telford Vice**

March 28, 1939 is lodged like a bullet in the brain at No. 7 Calle de Echegaray, deep in Madrid’s “el Barrio de Las Letras” – the literary district.

If you’re from around there, you call this collection of cobbled capillaries “Huertas”. It is a place of tapas bars next to tapas bars next to yet more tapas bars, a tangle of tango tableaux, and more tourists than you could cook in a paella pan the size of a bullring.

Many of them will roam the lanes like Cervantes and Hemingway did 300 years apart, and ramble down the hill to visit Velazquez,

Goya, Titian, Rembrandt, Caravaggio in the Prado.

Above these storied streets, in apartamentos that wear balconies like moustaches, Madrilenos sing and swear and live lives that seem to have escaped literature to glow in the amber light of Spain’s never-ending summer evenings.

None of that matters at No. 7 Calle de Echegaray, where a painted sign above the door reads: “La Venencia”.

A “venencia” is a long-stemmed ladle fitted with a cylindrical cup that is plunged through the bunghole of a barrel to fetch a

draught of what Jerez, some 460km south-west of Madrid, is famous for: sherry as dry in the mouth as the sand on which bulls' blood is spilled for sport.

A "venenciador" lifts the implement above the head using one hand and, in a single motion as fluid as the unspilled cargo, fills a glass held in the other hand. Performed by an experienced practitioner, the wine leaps into the glass with languid certainty. Attempted by an amateur, it ends up everywhere except in the glass.

Again, at No. 7 Calle de Echegaray, none of that matters. What does matter is the Republic and Franco and March 28, 1939: the cursed day Madrid fell to the fascists.

Prosaically, "La Venencia" is a bar. But, in the hearts and minds of those who frequent the place, the Spanish Civil War – and the horror and hardship of the dictatorship that followed and endured for 36 years – rages still.

During Franco's siege of the city, which lasted for all three years of the war, Madrilenos whose blood ran Republican red gathered here to drink and discuss and transport themselves

into a better frame of mind. Hemingway himself was a frequent visitor – getting drunk with the locals was a less arduous and dangerous, and more convivial, way of finding out what was going on at the front than actually going to the front.

Not a lot has changed at "La Venencia" since those difficult days. Taking photographs is not allowed (that's the easiest way to expose yourself to the Fascists, comrade!), tips are not accepted (all the better to prevent comrades from being exploited by the bosses!), glasses are held exclusively by their stems (only uncivilised Fascists cup their hand under the bowl!), and only sherry (besides water) is served.

It comes in five varieties – Manzanilla, Fino, Oloroso, Amontillado and Palo Cortado – each in its unlabelled bottle nestling in a small bath of ice and water having been decanted from nearby casks.

"La Venencia's" walls and ceiling have been stained the colour of tobacco by decades of exactly that burning into the night from between the lips of the furtive and the fearful, and the wooden bar counter is

dark with secrets and ancient with cracks. The floor is the same trampled timber it's always been.

Stand at the bar and order a drink and the barman or woman will chalk it up – yes, using a stub of chalk – opposite you on the counter. With your drink comes a tapa, often a small plate of bright green Madrid olives.

Music? Don't be silly. And don't expect the staff to be friendly. There's a war on, don't you know.

But this time capsule is not all about denial. Like Alexis Tsipras in Greece and Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, Pablo Iglesias in Spain has proved that the politics of the Left – the real left, not the corporatised crap spouted and implemented by people like Tony Blair – is not dead. On December 20, as leader of Podemos, Iglesias could well have been elected Spain's Prime Minister, eventually coming third in a close race.

Many of those propping up the bar at "La Venencia" would have been happy with that. Others, betrayed too many times by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party – which is difficult to distinguish from the ruling rightist Peoples'

Party in bureaucratic bumbling and corrupt capering – would struggle to put faith in the idea that the pony-tailed, slight-shouldered, smiling-eyed Iglesias would have been different.

For them, too much has changed in a world that once rallied to faraway causes because that was the right thing to do; not because they had played enough video games in their middle class misery to see sexiness in beheading unfortunates in orange overalls on a beach somewhere.

Historians list thirteen South Africans among the legions who travelled to Spain to fight Franco. Among them was Cape Town-born, Indian-raised, English-educated Reginald Saxton, a young doctor who pioneered new blood transfusion methods on the battlefield. The Fascist forces included a misguided Catholic named Ignatius Royston Dunachie Campbell; better known as Roy Campbell, one of South Africa's most revered poets.

At "La Venencia" they will raise a glass to Saxton and perhaps to Iglesias. But Campbell can go to hell, even if it doesn't exist. ★



PASTOR

N'ANGA

OR

**TRADITIONAL
HEALER?**

YOU DECIDE

The whole business of *n'angas* and other traditional rituals has simply been transferred into the modern church, **writes Ranga Mberi**

RANGA MBERI

A lot of the Bible-thumping Pentecostal Christians will not admit it, but they really never left the whole *n'anga* scene.

They do not go to actual *n'angas* anymore, but they do.

What we are seeing is how the whole business of *n'angas* and other traditional rituals has simply been transferred into the modern church.

They will tell you all those rituals, all that belief in the great influence of witchcraft, all those “*chuma*” worn around the waist and so forth is well behind them.

The truth, however, is somewhat different. What we have these days is just a continuation of the whole “*kuenda kun'anga*” tradition, disguised as “deliverance sessions.” The smelly bone-throwing, animal-skin wearing *n'anga* has now been replaced by the smooth talking “prophet” in shiny suit and pointy shoes.

Very little of any deliverance session is grounded in actual teachings of the Bible. I know a hard working pastor who does “deliverance”, but insists that this be done only after he preaches to the converts. His church, and any that take this approach, are never going to grow as rapidly as those that spend six hours each Sunday on “deliverance,” without wasting time preaching and stuff.

What people demand today is instant “help.” People are going to church “*ku-noshandirwa*” – for healing sessions. The Word of God? For who?

Once there, they don't want a pastor making them open the Bible. They simply want the demons out.

You know, because every problem we face today is not due to anything but evil spirits. That spirit of unemployment; that spirit of “failing to get married”; that spirit of failing exams.

Christians care less about sitting in the pews and paging through the Bible. These

days, it takes pastors two seconds to get congregants falling and rolling on the floor, but it takes them hours to find the book of Deuteronomy.

What has really changed from your *n'anga* days? Nothing.

Anointing oil? We've been having it! Your *n'angas* used to give you some funny oil (likely snake oil) and told you to smear on your house, your kids, and – for that cheating hubby – on his undies. There you are, still doing the same with pastor's oil.

Remember when your *n'angas* used to order you to wear “*dumwa*” and all sorts of necklaces and beads? For protection, he said. Same thing you're doing now. Recall how that lady in Highfields, according to one news report, claims to have waved her church bracelet at a bunch of robbers. Upon seeing this magic bracelet, they immediately fled. Oh, the joy the testimony brought to the congregants.

The church bracelet is no longer about identifying with your church, but some sort of anointed weapon. Much like the “*chuma*” you used to get from your sekuru.

N'angas have been having all this. Your “water from Israel” being advertised is no different from the “holy water” modern pastors are hawking today.

For *n'angas*, it was always a close relative causing you grief. Never a coincidence that you couldn't get a job, or that you were sick. It was your jealous tete or something of the sort. This is a belief modern pastors love to exploit. This is why, in their interviews with demons, you will always be told: “*Ndini mbuya vake. Mwana uyu haarorwe.*”

If your pastor is giving you necklaces, rings and cloths for your “protection,” your pastor is a *n'anga*.

We, basically, are right where we claim to have left.

According to a 2010 Pew Research in 11 African countries, “many people in the countries surveyed retain beliefs and rituals that are characteristic of traditional African religions.”

“In addition,” Pew found, “roughly a quarter or more of the population in 11 countries say they believe in the protective power of *juju* (charms or amulets), shrines and other sacred objects.”

The Christians that still believe in basing teachings of healing and deliverance on the Bible are in retreat. Those that have simply carried their old beliefs in the dominance of basic spirituality are on the march.

This is why, increasingly, the congregants at churches still holding on to Bible teachings are dwindling, while the “deliverance first” churches are growing.

Gordon Chavunduka, the foremost *n’anga* and scholar, wrote in one of his papers on this. He said: “Firstly, the African general theory of illness is very broad; it includes African theology. In other words, the theory not only attempts to explain illness and disease but also the relations between God and the universe.”

And this bit: “The second reason, related to the previous one, is that many traditional healers are also religious leaders and *vice versa*.”

So, if your pastor is giving you oil to use on your errant hubby, with no basis in the word, you are seeing a *n’anga*.

If your pastor is demanding money for no reason, you are paying “*makwati*” to a *n’anga*.

If your pastor is giving you necklaces, rings and cloths for your “protection,” your pastor is a *n’anga*.

He gave you “special water” or “anointed rocks?” Your pastor is a *n’anga*.

People have serious problems. And they are looking for instant solutions. The era of the preacher is ending. The era of the *n’anga* is back upon us.

It never ended. ■

N’ANGA

Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, a *n’anga* is a traditional healer who uses a combination of herbs, medical or religious advice and spiritual guidance to heal people. In Zimbabwe, *N’angas* are recognized and registered under the ZINATHA (Zimbabwe National Traditional Healer’s Association).

They are believed to have religious powers to tell fortunes, and to change, heal, bless or even kill people. Traditionally *N’angas* were people’s main source of help in all matters of life. They have existed for decades well before the British colonial era. Liberation War leaders are said to have consulted with *N’angas* during the Second Chimurenga.

Even today, *N’angas* are consulted by people for advice and [the] healing of many illnesses. Sometimes *N’angas* refer their patients to western medical practitioners and hospitals in case of emergency or illness they can’t cure with the help of their healing spirit.

Source: Wikipedia



Unidentified men consult a *n’anga*. Source: Unknown

SEX CETERA

*The
Strange Contradiction
of the
Homophobic
Feminist*

JOE RUZVIDZO



The 263Chat on ‘Sexism in Zimbabwe’ reminded me of a woman I know. She’s a “gender activist” and women’s rights campaigner. She’s a working mother and a devout Christian.

She’s also a raging homophobe.

So while she rages for days about equal footing for women, she will rail against the “sin” of homosexuality and condemn “the gays” to suffering, imprisonment, ill-treatment and (the obvious) eternal damnation. Equal rights for her and her kind – but not for all.

She is the ultimate oxymoron – the homophobic feminist.

She forgets that the struggle for equality is the same the world over and across time – peasants, Protestants, blacks, women, gays today, robots tomorrow ... nothing changes. Patterns are repeated, opposition manifests and eventually dissolves, and humanity wins. Every time.

And yet I see and hear what appear to be rational, intelligent people frothing at the mouth when it comes to gays and lesbians. They have no rights, I hear. This is Zimbabwe, it’s against our “culture”. Burn dem.

Speaking of culture, I don’t know if Zimbabwe’s mishmash of ethnic groups have one homogenous “culture”, but I’ll tell you one thing that isn’t and has never been a part of MY culture – bigotry. Anyway.

The fight for women’s equality and gay equality are the same, sister. In the distant past you suffered discrimination that today we find abhorrent; women not only couldn’t vote, they couldn’t own property, divorce an abusive husband, or act as a witness in a court of law. Conversely, ‘sodomy’ in Zimbabwe is actually a criminal offence.

Moving into the early twentieth century, women were still without a vote, and thus a voice. As I type this, GALZ are the target of a raid, and they, too, are unable to speak for themselves in any meaningful way.

But here is where the story of women’s rights and gay rights diverge; while both groups still face discrimination, while neither battle has been “won,” only gay and lesbian individuals are still being subjected to a legally-enforced brand of second-class citizenry.

Where our young women are being told to shoot for the stars – that there is no glass ceiling anymore, that they should fight sexism wherever they find it, that they can be and do anything if they put their minds to it – gay and lesbian individuals are hearing a different message: you’re a disgusting criminal, and you’re worse than pigs and dogs.

Women have to stop thinking about gay and lesbian individuals as a group of “others” and start seeing them as they are – people just like you, living the same sorts of lives as you are, with the same hopes and dreams for themselves. They just do things differently in their bedrooms. How is that anyone else’s business?

God hates fags, you say? It’s unnatural, is it? If no one had ever challenged religious authority, there’d be no democracy, no public schools, women’s rights, improvements to science and medicine, abolition of

If the women’s movement has taught us anything, it’s that there’s no limit to what an individual can do when left to their own devices

slavery and no laws against child abuse or spousal abuse. Besides, shouldn’t you leave the judgement to your Lord himself?

Listen, I’m not a supporter of gay rights – I am a supporter of full, equal rights for EVERYONE (using the qualifier “gay” when talking about rights makes them seem a different sub-set of the whole, as if they have to be treated, legislated or managed differently). I have never been able to understand attacks upon the gay community. There are so many qualities that make up a human being ... by the time I get through with all the things that I detest and admire about people, what they do with their private parts is so low on the list as to be irrelevant.

And to counter the obvious – advocating for gay rights doesn’t make me gay, just as advocating for animal rights doesn’t make me a giraffe.

Look, at some point in our lifetime, gay marriage won't be an issue, and everyone who stood against basic human rights will look as outdated as those guys who said women couldn't vote or hold down a job. Do you want to be that person? Is that the legacy you want to leave your grand-kids? Gay marriage, never in a thousand years, right?

Surely, if the struggles of the women's movement have taught us anything, it's that there's no limit on what an individual can do when left alone to their own devices, with neither societal nor governmental interference in their private lives.

It is never too early to recognise individual freedoms and civil rights, sister. But, as someone working with abused women, you know for a fact that sometimes it is too late.

I know you're fighting your own battle, and you don't have to concern yourself with the rights of gays, since you're living your own story and defending your own rights. But until everyone is free, my sister, nobody is.

They're human beings sister, just like you and me.

Who they choose to fuck has nothing to do with us.

Free your heart. ■

ZIMBABWEAN LAW AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

WHAT IS CRIMINALISED ABOUT GAY MEN?

In Zimbabwe, the Criminal Law and Codification Reform Act, targets certain acts against gay men through the crime of "sodomy." Sodomy is classified as unlawful sexual conduct and defined in the Criminal Law Code as either anal sexual intercourse or any act involving physical contact that would be regarded by a reasonable person to be an indecent act between two consenting adult men. Both men involved will be charged with sodomy. Boys under 14 and mentally incompetent persons cannot be charged with sodomy. Men found guilty of sodomy can be sent to prison for 1 year or be made to pay a level fourteen fine or they can be sentenced both to imprisonment and payment of a fine. The law does not care whether these acts are performed in the privacy of people's homes or in public places. This means the law criminalises consensual sex between gay men as well as the display of affection between them if the display of affection is seen as "indecent physical contact."

WHAT ABOUT LESBIAN WOMEN?

The law does not contain a provision similar to the sodomy provisions against lesbian women in that there is no specific law that explicitly describes and criminalises sex between lesbians. However provisions on public indecency in the Criminal Law Code affect lesbian women. These provisions (Section 77 of the Criminal Law Code) prohibit any person from indecently exposing him or herself or engaging in "indecent conduct" which causes offence to other people. This conduct can be in a public place, or in a private place. The crime attracts up to a level 9 fine or 6 months in prison.

The determination of what constitutes public indecency will however be for the courts to decide. In reaching their conclusion on such issues, the courts would have to pay regard to international standards as well as social and other factors. These factors include whether the conduct is sufficiently serious to warrant punishment and in doing so will address the nature of the conduct; the extent to which the conduct was persisted in, the age and gender of the person who witnessed the conduct, any previous relationship between the parties; and the degree of offence caused to the person who witnessed the conduct.

This means if an old lady sees a lesbian couple kissing in a park or having sex on their balcony or cuddling on their veranda, it does not matter whether the acts were in the privacy of their home or in a public space, if the old lady saw them and considers their conduct and display of affection offensive and indecent, she can report them to the police and they can get arrested for it. Given the general levels of intolerance towards same sex relationships it is highly likely that the police will arrest the lesbian couple. The fear of such arrest limits public displays of affection between lesbian women and prevents the full expression of their sexuality.

SOURCE: Law Hub - <http://lawhub.co.zw/zimbabwean-law-and-sexual-orientation/> - @lawhubzim

DO YOU IMMEDIATELY FIGURE
OUT WHO THE KILLER IS?
DO STRANGERS GIVE YOU FOOD
AND OFFER TO PRAY FOR YOU?
DO U H8 PPL HU TXT LYK DS?
DO YOU FIND YOUR IMAGINARY
FRIENDS MORE INTERESTING?
DO YOU CONSIDER A THESAURUS
A LEGITIMATE PRESENT?
DO YOU CURRENTLY POSSESS
MORE PENS THAN DOLLARS?

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**On Black Pain
& Imagination:
Patrice Lumumba
and Ota Benga**

Lumumba's monument should stand, for time immemorial, in unending defiance to the brood of traitors and assassins. To us, the Africans who live, this defiance should inspire hope and courage, the defining sources of the Imagination which Patrice Lumumba possessed for Africa, writes **Levi Kabwato**

LEVI KABWATO

The monument honouring Patrice Lumumba is inescapable, even in the thick of a humid night, as you enter Kinshasa from the airport highway route. It is an imposing structure, full of life, energy, promise and perhaps more poignantly, profound hurt.

By day, Lumumba towers over city traffic entering and leaving Kinshasa's busiest areas. You can barely miss him. He is hoisted on a solid concrete block. Despite the temperature on this day, flirting with 40 degrees Celsius, he is immaculately dressed in a suit, complete with necktie. His right hand is raised high, palm open, and it appears as if he is permanently waving at those he faces – or those who face him. His thick-framed spectacles accentuate his face and complete the look of a perfectly-dressed gentleman oozing with youth and vitality.

Words emblazoned on the concrete block read HEROS NATIONAL PATRICE EMERY LUMUMBA 1925-1961, immortalising man, name and legacy.

Standing underneath the monument, I might have felt myself tremble and almost in tears. I was enamoured to be in Lumumba's presence, never mind that this was only a tribute to his Memory, nothing more. Yet there I was, remembering most of Lumumba's spoken words; words which I have internalised, memorised and consciously apply to my own activism.

This was on the September day I was leaving the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The day before, my hosts had been gracious enough to drive me around the city in search of Lumumba memorabilia, a task harder than I thought or imagined. I could not find a T-shirt with Lumumba's face printed on it. Not even a piece of cloth. There was, however, lots of cloth bearing religious figures and messages. I could not get books, posters or a plaque bearing Lumumba's memory.

I was taken aback.

The two things I found, at one of the markets, were old bank notes with Lumumba's image, and a painting – Lumumba's portrait on canvas. In its better days, the painting must have been neat and fresh, something to behold. Over time, it had browned with dirt, disfiguring his face and the general content of the artwork. Seeing how desperate I was for anything with Lumumba on it, the vendor charged me USD50 for the old note and USD200 for the painting.

I had expected this. So we haggled for a while until I realised there was no climbing down by either of us. I didn't buy anything and left the market somewhat disappointed.

At Lumumba's height, perched on that concrete block, I could not exactly see the fullness of his face. For some reason, I remembered a scene from one of the documentaries about him that I have watched. In this scene, a Belgian official, a white man, brandishes Lumumba's tooth in front of the camera and says he kept this piece of tooth because Lumumba "had very good teeth". This man, Gerard Soete, was one of the men who oversaw the assassination of Patrice Lumumba.

My interest in seeing Lumumba's full face was triggered by the need to make sure, to confirm, if in this monument that had been erected, he had all his teeth. I laughed at myself for a brief moment for harbouring such 'silly' thoughts. Yet, if this monument was an attempt at recovering and sustaining Memory, then it had to be sure that it not only rehabilitates the mutilation that colonialism wrought, but also reconfigures truthful representation of a hero like Patrice Lumumba.

The Belgian with Lumumba's tooth took me further back to his king, Leopold II. The mutilation of African, Black bodies is one of Leopold's most painful legacies in the Congo. During his time, Leopold – I can't dignify him as king for I do not recognise his throne – ordered that Africans who were not being

exploited enough have parts of their bodies cut off.

The results visibly manifested themselves in mass graves, gorged eyes, chopped limbs, whole villages razed to the ground and the systematic plunder of natural resources in the Congo. For the Belgian with Lumumba's tooth, therefore, such an act is consistent with his own country's tradition of mutilating and destroying Black – African – bodies, ordered and delivered by his king.

Significant attempts to silence this portion of Belgian history are constantly made. Leopold is sanitised as having actually contributed to the growth and development of the Congo. Yet, as the narrator says in the documentary *White King, Red Rubber, Black Death*, "Until Adolf Hitler arrived on the scene, the European standard for cruelty was set by a [white European] king."

It is a kind of cruelty that can be forgotten because it does not fit into the dominant narrative of European civilisation in Africa.

The perpetrator is a White man from the royal family. Today, Belgium is not thought of as having presided over such brutal history in the Congo – the mass murder of children, women and men, displacement of whole villages and in recent times, the assassination of liberation hero, Patrice Lumumba.

In fact, the circumstances of Lumumba's murder mirror the pattern of Leopold's tactics. After having endured days of physical and psychological torture, Lumumba and two of his aides are finally strapped to a tree and shot dead. Their bodies fall into a shallow grave and are retrieved later by Belgian soldiers who chop parts off and finally pour acid on them, to dissolve them.

There is something disturbing about this form of destruction of the Black body; the desire to completely do away with everything it is and stands for, while cheering and jeering in a frenzy of racial pride and superiority.



Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961) speaking with supporters in his effort to regain office as Prime Minister on October 15, 1960. He would be assassinated within three months. / © 2015 Everett Collection



Patrice Emery Lumumba, arrested with two of his colleagues / © Unknown

A few weeks after standing in front of Lumumba's monument, I was at the National Museum of African Art in Washington DC. On this day, a film screening was taking place, to be followed by a discussion. The film, *Ota Benga*, "documents the life of a Congolese man exhibited at the 1904 St Louis World Fair and the Bronx Zoo".

The story of Ota Benga's capture in the Congo follows the standard set by Leopold – violence and death. Ota Benga's village is razed to the ground, his family disappears and he is forcibly brought to the United States of America, where he is passed from one post to another until he finds himself the centre of attention in an exhibition.

At the Bronx Zoo, Ota Benga attracts large crowds of up to 40,000 people. But he is caged, together with the animals in the zoo; he is treated like an animal, not a human being. His height and other features are a source of amusement and with each 'view', his dignity is continuously stripped. Although there is some form of protest against the exhibition of a human being in a zoo, this practice continues for a while longer.

Ota Benga's pain is not recorded. He receives no empathy because he is not seen as a human being but as an artefact, as an object. There is a longing within him to go back home to the Congo but there are stumbling blocks. The one time there's a clear chance for him to do so, World War I is breaking out and he is unable to travel. Eventually – the story goes – he takes his own life, perhaps as a final act of escape and redemption.

This is one of those stories that just leave you numb.

The discussion that ensued was invigorating, moving between themes of colonial anthropology, media revisionism (in latter years, *The New York Times* distanced itself from its previous derogatory reporting of Ota Benga), over-sexualised representations of black bodies in sports and white people's collective fear of Black people, especially Black men.

The latter was quite potent and poignant in terms of what the USA is currently going through with the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Indeed, as Michael E. Dyson, a Black Public Intellectual, remarked: "the people who put Ota Benga in a cage are the same people who are lynching Blacks in America."

They do so because of a collective fear that



Ota Benga in 1904 / © Jessie Tarbox Beals

Blacks will do to them what they (white people) have done to Blacks. This is not a point to be dismissed. The imagined horror of a Black presidency in the USA gave way to some ghastly racism direct at Barack Obama ahead of 2008. Then, the fear was that a Black president would not guard and protect white people. In 2015, it can be successfully argued that Obama has done more for white people than he has for Black people. Michael E. Dyson, again, actually stated that Obama was the modern-day Ota Benga, placed in zoo called Congress to perform for white people.

In all of this, how can Black people educate white people on Black Pain? Indeed, how come white people are never interviewed when a Black person is killed?

The answer to these questions came from an unexpected source, a white male who was in the audience. He rose and spoke from the heart – at least that’s what it felt like.

“As a white man, your sense of thriving is reinforced by the destruction of another psychology,” he said, adding that white people only thrive because someone has to be deprived of something.

He went on: “The psychological burden of Whiteness lies in the subconscious but it is kept alive and visible by a system of values that refuses to confront the fears of confronting oneself.”

Then: “Black people have been problematised in a system that benefits from their Oppression.”

This problematisation of Blackness is the reason why Black people have to explain themselves all the time. Why do Black people always have to give reasons? Why is there such persistence on the need for Black people to explain themselves?

Meanwhile, the likes of Leopold, Gerard Soete and other white men who have inflicted Black Pain do not have to say a word, not even issue an apology. On the contrary, their legacies are upheld and respected as instructive for the future of humanity. This privileged history perpetually undermines the Humanity of Black People. Further, the Sociology and Anthropology that governs most people’s thinking on social, political and economic issues

undermines Black People and denies them Agency.

Therefore, Black People’s Humanity is constantly at stake, denied form, evolution and weight. Within broad perspective, we – Black People – are all Ota Benga, denied even the Right to Anger. When our anger is expressed, it is characterised as irrational, uncouth and violent.

Black People have a Right to assert themselves. We need to do this in order to recover our Memory, Pride and Dignity. In doing so, however, we must be aware that there are consequences, most of which result in Death. Yet, we can hardly afford to remain silent, to not regain our Humanity. This was the main thrust of Lumumba’s leadership in the Congo.



Ota Benga at the Bronx Zoo in 1906. Only five promotional photos exist of Benga's time here, none of them in the "Monkey House"; cameras were not allowed / © Unknown

Ota Benga (second from left) and the Batwa in St. Louis / © Unknown



This is how Belgian diplomat, Jacques Brassine, once described Patrice Lumumba: “He was dangerous. He wasn’t open to the solutions WE sometimes wanted to apply.”

Justifying Lumumba’s murder, Belgian spy, Louis Marliere said: “He [Lumumba] chose the wrong side.” Here, “wrong side” refers to the BLACK people of the Congo. How can it be that a liberation leader is characterised as having chosen the “wrong side” when he is siding with his People, when he is trying to afford his People dignity and decent living.

Confident Black People like Lumumba who could assert not only their BLACKNESS but CAPACITY had to be MURDERED because they provided the anti-thesis to the narrative of Black incompetence. In murdering them, the idea was to silence their Voice and to prevent other Black People from following in their footsteps.

Patrice Lumumba, on the eve of Independence in the Congo confidently declared: “We are certain that we know where we are going.” And he was certain. There is something about the Colonial Wound – the Pain of Colonialism – that can inspire a form of leadership that can alter the course of history. Lumumba was on to something.

On the day to mark the Independence of the Congo, Belgium’s king Baudion delivered a speech: “The Independence of the Congo is the crowning moment of the mission conceived by the genius of King Leopold II, undertaken by him with courageous tenacity and pursued with great perseverance”

Lumumba was not scheduled to speak on this day but as a CONFIDENT, YOUNG BLACK LEADER, he knew he had to respond to the blatant lies Belgium was telling about Independence. So he rose to speak:

“You who have fought for Independence and today are victorious, I salute you in the name of the Congolese government,” he said. “I salute all our friends who fought relentlessly at our side. We’ve been subjected to insults and sarcasms, to the blows we had to endure from morning to night just because we are Africans. We learnt that the Law was never the same, according to whether it was

applied to Whites or Blacks. Who will ever forget the shootings, or the barbarous jail cells awaiting those who refused to submit this regime of injustice and exploitation.”

There is something powerful in this act that young Africans must not only notice but emulate – asserting oneself whilst standing on truth.

Lumumba was only 36 years old when he was murdered. Ota Benga is said to have been 23 years old when he was captured but some historians claim he was much younger, possibly a teenager. Leopold’s victims in the Congo were mostly children.

What is it about the destruction of young black bodies at the hands of white oppressors?

Lumumba’s monument should stand, for time immemorial, in unending defiance to the brood of traitors and assassins. To us, the Africans who live, this defiance should inspire hope and courage, the defining sources of the Imagination Lumumba possessed for Africa when he said, “Africa will write its history, and it will be a history of glory and dignity.” ■



Lumumba raises his arms, injured by shackles, after his release from prison in January 1960 / © Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Rijksfotoarchief

PATRICE EMERY LUMUMBA
FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF CONGO
BORN: 2 JULY 1925
DIED: 17 JANUARY 1961, AGE: 35

Patrice Lumumba's Speech at the Proclamation of Congolese Independence (abridged)

As combatants for independence who today are victorious, I salute you in the name of the Congolese government.

I ask all my friends, all of you who have fought unceasingly at our side, to make this thirtieth of June, 1960, an illustrious date that will be indelibly engraved upon your hearts, a date whose meaning you will teach your children with pride, so that they in turn will tell their children and their children's children the glorious story of our struggle for freedom.

For though this independence of the Congo is today being proclaimed in a spirit of accord with Belgium, a friendly country with which we are dealing as one equal with another, no Congolese worthy of the name can ever forget that we fought to win it a fight waged each and every day, a passionate and idealistic fight, a fight in which there was not one effort, not one privation, not one suffering, not one drop of blood that we ever spared ourselves. We are proud of this struggle amid tears, fire, and blood, down to our very heart of hearts, for it was a noble and just struggle, an indispensable struggle if we were to put an end to the humiliating slavery that had been forced upon us.

The wounds that are the evidence of the fate we endured for eighty years under a colonialist regime are still too fresh and painful for us to be able to erase them from our memory. Back-breaking work has been exacted from us, in return for wages that did not allow us to satisfy our hunger, or to decently clothe or house ourselves, or to raise our children as creatures very dear to us.

We have been the victims of ironic taunts, of insults, of blows that we were forced to endure morning, noon, and night because we were blacks. Who can forget that a black was addressed in the familiar form, not because he was a friend, certainly, but because the polite form of address was to be used only for whites?

We have had our lands despoiled under the terms of what was supposedly the law of the land but was only a recognition of the right of the strongest. We have known that the law was quite different for whites and blacks; it was most accommodating for the former, and cruel and inhuman for the latter. We have known the atrocious sufferings of those banished to remote regions because of their political opinions or religious beliefs; exiles in their own country, their fate was truly worse than death.

We have known that there were magnificent mansions for whites in the cities and ramshackle straw hovels for blacks, that a black was never allowed into the so-called European movie theaters or restaurants or stores; that a black traveled in the hold of boats below the feet of the white in his deluxe cabin. Who can forget, finally, the burst of rifle fire in which so many of our brothers perished, the cells into which the authorities threw those who no longer were willing to submit to a rule where justice meant oppression and exploitation? We have grievously suffered all this, my brothers. But we who have been chosen to govern our beloved country by the vote of your elected representatives, we whose bodies and souls have suffered from colonialist oppression, loudly proclaim: all this is over and done with now.

The Republic of the Congo has been proclaimed and our country is now in the hands of its own children.

We are going to begin another struggle together, my brothers, my sisters, a sublime struggle that will bring our country peace, prosperity, and grandeur. We are going to institute social justice together and ensure everyone just remuneration for his labor. We are going to show the world what the black man can do when, he works in freedom, and we are going to make the Congo the focal point for the development of all of Africa. We are going to see to it that the soil of our country really benefits its children. We are going to review all the old laws and make new ones that will be just and noble. We are going to put an end to the suppression of free thought and see to it that all citizens enjoy to the fullest all the fundamental freedoms laid down in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

We are going to do away with any and every sort of discrimination and give each one the rightful place that his human dignity, his labor, and his devotion to the country will have earned him. We are going to bring peace to the country, not the peace of rifles and bayonets, but the peace that comes from men's hearts and their good will.

And in order to achieve all this, dear compatriots, rest assured that we will be able to count not only on our tremendous strength and our immense riches, but also on the assistance of many foreign countries, whose collaboration we will always accept if it is sincere and does not seek to force any policy of any sort whatsoever on us.

In this regard, Belgium has finally realized what direction history was moving in and has not attempted to oppose our independence. She is ready to grant us her aid and her friendship, and a treaty to this effect has just been signed between our two equal and independent countries. I am certain that this cooperation will be beneficial to both countries. We for our part, though we shall continue to be vigilant, will respect all commitments freely made.

Thus the new Congo, our beloved republic that my government is going to create, will be a rich, free, and prosperous country, with regard to both its domestic relations and its foreign relations. But in order for us to reach this goal without delay, I ask all of you, Congolese legislators and citizens alike, to aid me with all the strength at your command.

I ask all of you to forget the trivial quarrels that are draining our strength and threaten to earn us the contempt of those in other countries. I ask the parliamentary minority to aid my government by constructive opposition and to stay strictly within legal and democratic paths.

I ask all of you not to shrink from making any sacrifice necessary to ensure the success of our great undertaking.

I ask you, finally, to respect unconditionally the life and property of your fellow citizens and foreigners who have settled in our country. If the behavior of these foreigners leaves something to be desired, our justice will be swift and they will be expelled from the territory of the republic; if, on the other hand, they conduct themselves properly, they must be left in peace, for they too will be working for the prosperity of our country.

The independence of the Congo represents a decisive step toward the liberation of the entire African continent.





ENCOUNTERS: JONAH SITHOLE AND THE CHIMURENGA SOUND

PERCY ZVOMUYA



Jonah Sithole / © Unknown

I am in the habit of moaning about encounters that never happened [1]: how Jimi Hendrix never played with Miles Davis; how Dambudzo Marechera never met JM Coetzee. But we should be grateful for appointments that occurred, for rendezvous that weren't disrupted by tropical storms.

Take Chimurenga music, for instance, what would it be like if its chief exponent Thomas Mapfumo (Mukanya from now on; the musician is one of a few people who have earned the right to be rid of forenames and surnames and be called by their clan names) hadn't met guitarist Jonah Sithole? It's possible there would have been no Chimurenga music, certainly not as we know the rebel sonics now.

Sithole was to Mukanya what Nigerian drummer Tony Allen was to AfroBeat

founder Anikulapo Kuti: brothers and bedfellows, companions and comrades. Sithole was at the nucleus of the music, right at the centre of the smithy at which the sound was forged, the man whose ears were attuned to the genre's slightest susurrations. An inventive presence, always updating the music, he deserves to share the title of co-creator with Mukanya. Yet theirs was a frictional fraternity better summed up using that biblical adage "iron sharpens iron".

But whoever tells the story, both are keen to acknowledge the contributions of the other. There is an interview on Youtube, in which Sithole, on a 1996 tour of Amsterdam, speaks with Dutch aficionados of African music.

It was a year before his death. He was just 42.

Let's get the biographical details out of the way. Sithole was born in 1952, in Masvingo, near the majestic

stone walls of Zimbabwe.

1952 was a leap year.

Sithole and his family moved to Zvishavane, a mining town nearby. Over the centuries, out of Zvishavana's red earth, asbestos and beryl, diamonds and gold, have been forcibly removed. He then moved to Bulawayo where he was soon expelled from school while still in junior secondary. What to say about Bulawayo, already a bustling city when Rhodes and his column raised the Union Jack on the Kopje, whose claim to capital city status was stolen through the connivance of Rhodes, the same Rhodes whom the kids have recently felled?

Sithole taught himself to play the bass, his brother's guitar. His brother was a miner and part of a mine band. "I was just listening to [and seeing] what he [his guitar playing brother] was doing." From around the age of 12, whenever his brother wasn't around the homestead,



he would “steal” his brother’s instrument to try out melodies floating in his head. (I can’t find any information which suggests that he could play the mbira but it’s an instrument he would certainly have known and of whose rhythms he would have been intimately aware).

The young Sithole then trekked from Bulawayo to the steel-making town of Que Que. He was looking for his musician brother. When he got to Que Que he was told his brother had left for Salisbury. His brother’s musician friends invited Sithole to join their band, Jairosi Jiri Kwela Kings. After playing in the group for about six months, Sithole left, joining his brother in Salisbury.

At its inception, Salisbury was by most accounts a shitty place. Some would say not much has changed. “It was an untidy place: the buildings looked as if they had been shaken out of a pepper-pot,” one account says.

On arrival he joined Lipopo Jazz, an exciting Congolese band ruling the intensely competitive Salisbury live music scene led by Jackson Phiri. Sithole wasn’t immediately welcome in the band. He’d play dance and popular western tunes, preparing the audience for the main Congolese fare. Then one day Lipopo’s guitarist didn’t arrive, so they turned to Sithole. He couldn’t play rhumba but they said to him, “we’ll teach you how to play rhumba.” The responsibility

was delegated to the band’s Zambian guitarist, one Passmore.

It didn’t take him long to get the music right. Not just rhumba but other genres as well. So accomplished did he become that in the 1996 interview, conducted while on a tour of the Netherlands with Mukanya, Sithole said: “I am not boasting, but nobody can teach me new tricks.”

When Sithole first met Mukanya in Harare 1975, he was about 21; Mukanya was already 30. But in musical years, he was already approaching ancestorhood. Mukanya himself told me that “Jonah knew a lot of music.”

After playing in a number of bands (Great Sounds, Pepsi Combo, Vibrations, Drifters and Storm) he finally started his life-long, on-now-and-off-the-next-moment collaborations with Mukanya.

Around the mid 1970s, Mukanya was looking for a gig as the resident band at Jamaica Inn, a hotel near Salisbury. There was a small problem. Mukanya had no musicians and there was competition from six other bands for the same position. In the event, they got the gig. “We were a hit with him, one time.”

But they weren’t playing Chimurenga music then, that epoch would come later. They were doing cover versions of popular rock and soul tunes. At Sithole’s insistence, according to the guitarist’s version, they started doing renditions of folk music. “We were not playing mbira music then; it was traditional [folk] music, with songs like Chikende,

While Jonah was fluent in many guitar styles, including rumba and afro-jazz, he is best known for his chimurenga guitar style, where he excelled in the “art of combining three- and four-beat rhythms in lyrical, flowing melodic lines.”

Jonah set himself apart from other mbira-guitarists by the emotional expressiveness of his playing, which he achieved by using the mbira or vocalists to develop his guitar melodies rather than by merely accompanying the mbira or “filling in the gaps.”

His album *Sabhuku* is filled with tracks that highlight his style (*Sabhuku*, *Kusasana*, *Kana Ndaguta*, *Ereniya*).

With the Blacks Unlimited, Jonah’s evolution can be tracked by listening to the albums *Gwindingwi Rine Shumba* (1980), *Chimurenga For Justice* (1985), *Zimbabwe-Mozambique* (1987), *Varombo Kuvarombo* (Corruption, 1989), *Chimurenga: African Spirit Music* (1995) and *Roots Chimurenga* (1996).

Various singles compilations also feature Jonah Sithole’s work from the mid-seventies until 1986.

SOURCE: Wikipedia



Thomas Mapfumo, Banning Eyre and Jonah Sithole, Harare 1988 / © Barlow

Banning Eyre is Mapfumo's biographer, and wrote *Lion Songs: Thomas Mapfumo and the Music that Made Zimbabwe*.

"Thomas Mapfumo, the musical Lion of Zimbabwe, has been fortunate in finding Banning Eyre, a worthy Boswell to his Johnson." - Peter Godwin

Chiruzevha chapera.”

But Sithole's signature stamp on Chimurenga music would eventually arrive in 1977. For some time he had been trying to get the sound of the mbira on the guitar. “[Initially] I thought it couldn't be done ... The difficulty with the mbira is that it is different from the keyboard, where there are straightforward pitch keys. [On the mbira] there are flat and sharp pitches, but it's needed; that's how it should be. If you have a good ear you'll have to imitate all that. Most of the guitarists were lazy and thought they couldn't do it ... it was a challenge which I took up.” “Sabhuku” was the first track on which the experiment worked.

It was an achievement both for him and for the music. The two men had left the provinces to come and make it in the city. They had never entirely discarded the rural sensibility: the aesthetic of the work song, the intrepid hunter and his tireless dogs or the witch of a woman who had a python for a son (With the benefit of hindsight, we can classify some of the mystical, other-worldly stuff they did as Afrofuturism, but that's a

topic for another day). But they didn't just want to bring the country into the city, after all it was a parched, rocky land they had fled to look for opportunities in the fabled city.

They wanted to infuse a new sensibility, that of the segregated city, of the sharp dressers, of the factory and of the war against the white minority regime that had begun in earnest. So while the music contained the moonlit rustic landscapes and nostalgia for wild fruits yet they were able to bring in the new realities and the colonial imprint of the white man, who now traversed the sacred earth as the new lord.

Explaining the decision to use the template of the mbira instead of other African instruments, Sithole said: “the way we were singing then, as we tried to understand our own culture, I thought if we are going to be more traditional I have to look somewhere where we can find real [traditional] sounds to incorporate into this thing [guitar]. I decided the mbira [was going] to be the instrument. We have marimba, chipendani (mouth bow), the drum. But we had to look for an instrument with force to experiment

with” The mbira, described by guitarist Andy Brown, as the most spiritual instrument of the Shona people, seemed the perfect instrument for this experiment.

Sithole's virtuoso stroking of the guitar as the mbira would find fullest expression on Zimbabwe / Mozambique (1987) and Kuvarombo Kuvarombo (1989). The 1987 release is a dark and brooding offering whose inspiration seems to be the embittered ghost of Mozambique's founding president, Samora Machel, whose plane had just crashed to his death.

So successful was Sithole at playing the mbira guitar that when he left to form a band called The Deep Horizons, Mapfumo had to recruit actual mbira players. Sithole was so crucial to the Chimurenga sound that even when he wasn't in the band, he would be contracted to play whenever Mukanya was in the recording studio.

A man supremely confident of his own talents, Sithole pointed out: “there was no way to separate my guitar from his [Mukanya] own thing.”

And that's the truth of the encounter that happened, for which we are grateful. ■



Ninja and Yolandi of Die Antwoord / © Amanda Demme

The Eye of the Needle

Tyler B Murphy holds a weapon loaded with truth and lies whose power is felt hemispheres away, writes Telford Vice

TELFORD VICE

T Tyler B Murphy holds a weapon loaded with truth and lies whose power is felt hemispheres away. He wields it daily in a shop in Cape Town's slightly crunchy, never quite sweet Buitenkant Street.

The weapon is a modified version of what Thomas Alva Edison patented in 1876 as the stencil-pen, a device intended to perforate paper and so help duplicate documents. By 1891 the gizmo had morphed into what is now called the tattoo machine.

Murphy is an artist. His canvas is live human skin. Like bibles placed by the Gideons, what he puts there is not to be taken away. Except by death and decomposition.

Like many before he first put a needle into the patches of skin most readily available to him: his own thighs.

"They're called toilet tattoos because you think you're never going to see them but every morning when you sit down, there they are," he said. "That's where you practice because it's pretty much the only place you can reach comfortably.

"It's horrible – up to the point where you tattoo somebody else and you realise, 'OK. This isn't completely

impossible'. Until then it's sensory confusion. You've learnt from drawing and from watching tattoos getting done what they should look like. But you're getting weird information back from your leg.

"You're getting information from your eye about how it should look. But the overriding sensation from your pain receptors is that it's too deep, it's too sore, it's terrible. So you do these scratchy, crappy lines and you wipe and there's nothing there. So you go, 'OK, I'm going in'.

"You get used to a certain kind of feeling – you know that's a line; that's in. And then you get to a point where it's less painful. So you go looking for that pain and you wipe and you've destroyed the skin because you're not looking at what you're doing – you're feeling what you're doing. You can't do that because from one inch to the next your skin reacts differently. You're sitting there stressed out and digging away at your legs. It's a nightmare.

"Eventually, when you start tattooing your friends and you're just going by the information you're getting from your eyes and your hands and you're not connected to the feeling, you know you can do it."

Murphy's thighs and his friends have been safe since 2001, when he first earned steady money as a tattoo artist. He now owns Sins of Style, one of Cape Town's most highly regarded studios, and counts Ninja

and Yolandi Visser of Die Antwoord among his walking works.

His road to the indelibility of ink passed through the fragility of paint in precarious places, or graffiti. He left that largely underground, little understood world after one too many tangles with rivals.

"I knew it was time to get out when I took a bottle across my skull. It was a battle between doing graffiti fulltime or tattooing. Tattooing won because of its way of sustaining graffiti, and graffiti became more illegal."

But there is still no discernible difference between paint and pain for Murphy.

"People used to ask, 'But is it art?' about graffiti and tattooing. Somehow they must have qualified because no-one ever asks anymore.

"Graffiti involves trespassing, climbing over fences and breaking into places, and there's a lot of internal politics that results in violence and people getting hurt as a normal thing. With tattooing, there's a lot of pain and a commitment forever. There's a lot of shit you've got to go through to do it.

"If these become the criteria for what art is people like portrait painters are going to have to start bleeding and fighting each other and climbing over fences.

"Actually, don't call us art. You can have your art that has maybe five rules. We'll take our 50 rules and we'll stay on the outside, lowbrow and horrible. We're happy to be there. If the standards



© Sins of Style Facebook

were reversed other artists wouldn't be able to keep up. Forget about us again.

"But there's a balance where people getting cool tattoos and are open-minded, and instead of tattoo artists coming from criminal fraternities and bike gangs they're coming from art schools and a much happier background."

Even so, Murphy is nostalgic for the days when society could be divided into the inked and the uninked. Or the profane as seen by those who regarded themselves as sacred: "I miss that in a way; being able to see who's who."

But there is also room under the skin for humour. And fate. And individualism. "You can't take yourself

too seriously with a tattoo. You're entering into an agreement with nature and it's not going to keep to the rules. It's going to do what it wants. Your skin's going to age the way it wants to.

"It's an indication of how you're reaching for permanence. And all it really does is reflect how things change. You get a gang tattoo or

something you're really into – motorbikes or something – and later you don't even care about that stuff. Or it's a case of, 'This is exactly what I am and what I'm going to stay as.'

"It's a timeline: damn, remember when I used to be exactly like that and now I'm not. You have seasons where you don't even really see your tattoos and you don't even think about them or connect to them. You forget, essentially, what your culture is.

"People not from a strong religious background or a strong cultural connection to anything – those are the guys I'm seeing getting tattoos. They're recreating their history of what's happening now. They're more interested in their own development and their own path than what has happened before.

"It's a reminder to be what you were when you were at your best, which is probably what you were when you were tough and brave and had a bit of spare cash. It's a good time to shout your name and stay who you are."

So, the hipsters haven't taken over the tattoo parlour?

"The people who use the word hipster the most are sports fans who drink Castle Lite and have boring lives and don't do anything. People who are hip and doing cool shit aren't labelling it, they're just moving forward and doing stuff.

"It kinda goes with your mood and how close to a midlife crisis you are. I know a guy who swapped a new back piece for a new child.

The negotiation happened as a conversation with his wife on a Sunday.

"She said, 'I think we should have another child ...'. Quietly, he said, 'I'm thinking of doing a back piece'. She nodded. He nodded ...

"As you get older your spouse starts to play a role in what you're getting tattooed, which kinda sucks. Or it has the opposite effect – 'I don't give a shit what she says, I'm getting whatever I want tattooed wherever because I'm the same motherfucker that she married. I just didn't know about tattoos then. It's in my blood. I'm that dude'.

"Someone had open heart surgery and he had this big scar down his chest. He was proud of the fact he lived through it, so he had a tattoo done that made it look like a big zip."

Which does not square with what Ethel Laka does in what she called the "quaint space" of her eponymous studio in Auckland Park in Johannesburg.

"I'm going for the sterile apartment look where you can have a good espresso and have great work done," Laka said.

"I'm tattooing accountants, not the Mad Max crowd. I'm seeing clients who are normal people who just want great tattoos and nothing else: mom and daughter, and then the dad comes."

But she understands that, even for her, perhaps especially for her, it's not all straight and narrow.

"When I was growing up in the 1980s, when you saw the guys with tattoos you ran.

They had a bad rep – they were the gangsters.

"Even now I can hear people hushing their voices and saying, 'You know, she tattoos! She's a girl who's not white and she tattoos!'

"You can see the shock in their eyes. But thankfully it's a visual thing. Once they see what I can do I don't need to say much."

But the incredulity sometimes extends to first-time clients.

"When they come in they're expecting the white guy. But then they realise they've got no choice – 'She's drawn the design, she's calling me to the chair, she's got gloves on ...'

"Often they say, 'You know, it's not usual for a ...' I know what's coming but you've got to see the fun in it; this is South Africa."

It seemed impolite to ask Laka whether she had toilet tattoos. Happily, she took the question out of the equation.

"While I was training (under renowned Joburg artist Kevin Brown) I was given a little spot to do at a time while they monitored me; I would do a tiny symbol or a little blue letter.

"I've heard the stories of people having to wash scars as part of their training but it wasn't like that for me. We had a lot of respect for each other. I worked with a bunch of wonderful guys, big white men who are open-minded and who taught me a lot."

After two years on her own, "it's going too well, I'm scared I'm going to wake up and this is all in my head".

A wall in Murphy's studio

QUICK SHOTS

THINGS. REVIEWED. FAST.

boasts a large landscape painted by his father. Other walls are covered in cubist cartoons created by his son. Laka, too, had art under her own skin before she started putting it into others': her uncle is Don Laka, the jazz musician.

As much separates Murphy and Laka as unites them. They are of different races and genders, they have taken contrasting routes to get to where they are, and it's difficult to imagine someone as demure and decent as Laka climbing a fence with a view to breaking into a building and spraypainting a wall, however artfully. It is just as hard to think of Murphy – who has submitted himself to being tattooed by gangsters, prison style – indulging too many middle class tendencies.

But, as we spoke, a well-scrubbed, designer dressed young couple in the waiting area of Murphy's studio who wanted their infant son's name etched on them had hit a snag. They hadn't quite decided on a second name. So the needle had to wait while they made up their minds.

A call to Laka to set up her interview sparked an alarming response: "Can't really talk now. I've got blood on my gloves."

All in a day's work for those who sell the power of truth and lies. ■



MUSIC VIDEO



NDINEWE HOPE MASIKE

Hope is having a bad hair day listening to electric guitars in a cage, but is freed by "me" to wear funky hairpieces, makeup and haute couture at a dance party on a yellow planet.

SINGLE



TONGOGARA JNR BROWN

If they were to introduce a new category at the National Arts Merit Awards for "Most Ungovernable Project" this song would win it hands down no question.

FILM



JAMES BOND: SPECTRE

The movie poster features an actual NSA surveillance photo of Daniel Craig watching his chances of playing Bond again shattering before his very eyes, with good reason.

COMPUTER GAME



ASSASIN'S CREED: UNITY

If you have a sytem powerful enough for this and like open adventure games, rather buy FarCry 4 instead or continue shooting British ships in Black Flag than buy this dud game.

LITERATURE IN THE SHADOW OF MUGABE'S GALLOWS

RANGA MBERI

Rifling through a bookstore at an airport, I asked the bookstore guy where to find the “Africa” section.

You know the “Africa” section, right? There is the safari stuff, then the section with piles of books by white ex-soldiers; odes to their old days in one failed southern-African military enterprise or the other. This is that book genre which seems to have a common cover; the one with the rugged white soldier on the cover, in his RF camouflage, FN rifle at the ready, ready to kill him a few blacks.

And then, you find yourself standing mouth agape, in awe at the sheer number of “Mugabe books” there are. Meredith, Godwin, Holland, Wiener, Moorcroft, Norman, Blair. There’s one by Kevin Woods, “In the shadow of Mugabe’s gallows.”

Woods was “jailed for twenty years by Robert Mugabe,” the description says. And, we’re told, “for over five years of his detention he was held in the shadow of Mugabe’s gallows.”

Poor guy, I think to myself. All that punishment for the tiny offence of spying for apartheid South Africa, bombing Zimbabweans to bits, and plotting to kill Mugabe? This Mugabe guy is out of hand!

You see, it has to have that “Mugabe” menace to sell. “Mugabe’s gallows,” or “sentenced to jail by Mugabe” and stuff. Who’d buy it, if it was about some random spy with a shaggy beard?

And so the “Mugabe book” is a genre all on its own, mostly with a similar narrative: Mugabe – from liberator to tyrant, or some such.

Then there is the most common sub-genre of the “Mugabe” book. This is the “I used to have a farm and life was wonderful and I even had black friends growing up but then Mugabe took my farm and now things are bad” book. You find this one everywhere you look in the “Africa” section of bookstores worldwide.

I saw a YouTube video promoting Peter Godwin’s book, “The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe” (I know, I know, allow people their hope). Publishers, said the narrator, asked them to promote the book. They had an idea. In a bookstore, they set up a sculpture depicting Mugabe’s head; each time someone listens to a recording of the author reading from the book, the head disintegrates.

OUR OWN ‘NATIONALISTS’ ARE APPARENTLY TOO BUSY AT THE FEEDING TROUGH TO BE BOTHERED BY SUCH MUNDANE TASKS AS PUTTING OUT THEIR OWN TAKES ON KEY MOMENTS

The gory display worked, they boast: “The books sold out in twenty-four hours, a 214% increase on pre-display.”

Now, I thought, where would all these “Mugabe book” writers be without Bob the Tyrant? What would they have written about? Flower species of the Nyanga? The mating habits of the Kariba bream? How to skin a rabbit in three easy steps? Would those books be “sold out in twenty-four hours” too? Unlikely.

You can’t totally fault them though. They can only write their experiences, however limited their narrative is, however inspired by lost privilege they are. And our own ‘nationalists’ are apparently too busy at the feeding trough to be bothered by such mundane tasks as putting out their own takes on key moments in our history. More likely, it must

be said, putting down their own truths in a book will see them dismissed promptly from said feeding trough.

So, wisely, they just do not bother.

And, so, in the gap, the “I used to have a farm” Mugabe book genre hogs the “Africa” section. Feeding stereotypes has always been good business.

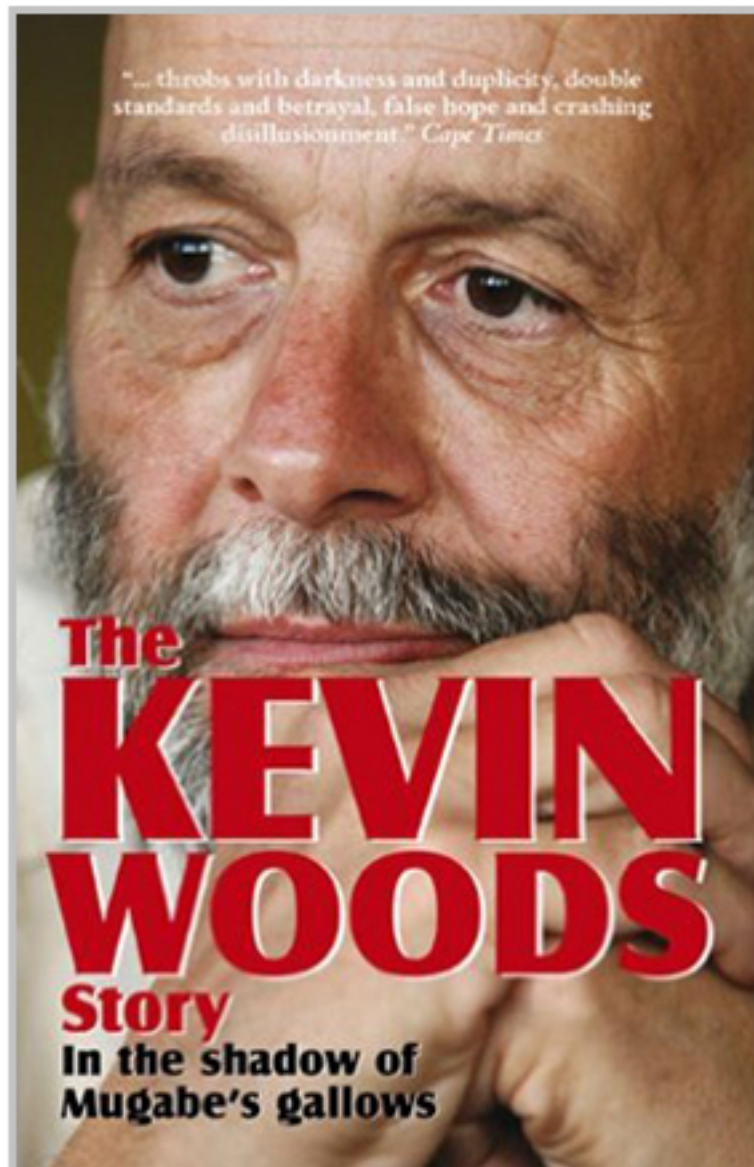
So, who really wants him to go? The many millions of poorer victims of Zanu-PF’s violence and misrule certainly do.

But I bet, as poor old Rita Makarau read out that final vote tally that Saturday back in July 2013, secret fists went up in celebration.

Because, surely, where would this big money industry be if he exited the stage? People would have to find something else to write.

Shady businessmen would suddenly have to find real business to do.

Who wants that? ■





ISHMAEL? THAT'S HIM OVER THERE ...

TELFORD VICE

Don't call me Ishmael. Not while I'm dangling from a cable too high above the deck of the Dongfeng, which a gasp earlier had been level enough for both my feet to be in cosy contact. A lurch to starboard changed all that, and here I am – all strung up with no place to go except across the steeply heeling boat and into the death grey churn of the Atlantic beyond.

Not two metres from me, a man called Wolf visits the kind of violence on a grinder that would get him arrested in Boksburg. At the helm, Charles Caudrielier stands as tall and grandly French as his name decrees, his eyes slit in concentration, his 1950s movie star's chin pointed at the prow resolutely. Were I to donner across the deck and splash into the sea, he would not notice. Even if he did notice, he would acknowledge my catastrophe with the merest Gallic shrug and, as they say in Google Maps, "continue straight".

The bastardly wind refuses to decide which way to blow, but blow like bloody hell it does. The cold



has turned my hands to numb pudge. I do not know how I'm managing to cling to that cable, or if I am injuring myself in the process. All I know is that I must hang on ...

An age earlier, the sun had beamed down on a picture postcard Cape Town morning. The Mountain was all craggy contours and green gorgeousness. The sea slapped softly against the dock. The very air shimmered with bright wonder.

Knut Frostad, the chief executive of the Volvo Ocean Race, competed with the aroma of espresso and the crunch of croissants as he talked us, our feet firmly on the floor and our hands not having to hold anything but cups and plates, through the day's programme of in-port racing – part marketing for the race proper, part tiebreaker if and when the race proper becomes too close to call.

Frostad is a veteran of four editions of the race, an Olympic windsurfer, a motivational speaker and utterly, entirely Norwegian. All of which is apparent in his cut-glass cheerfulness.

“Don't hold onto any ropes when you're out there,” he says with a smile he could wrap around a mainsail. “They carry a lot of load and they could fly into the sea with your hands still holding onto them.”

And if there is nothing else but the wind to hold onto? What then? That, though, is not Frostad's concern. Unnerving you with his Clockwork Orange smile is.

“If you think it's hard to be married ... this is hard. You have to perform 24 hours a day.”

Another neon grin, and then: “The only thing you know for sure is that you cannot predict anything about this race. We even have to prepare for pirates.”

Previously, when the boats approached the coast of Somalia, they turned off their tracking signal to prevent detection and proceeded to a secret location where they were plucked out of the ocean and loaded onto a cargo ship – which took them to another secret spot, safely out of the pirates' path, and plopped them back into the water. That done, they continued



racing. All of which happened under armed protection.

This year, “We will be pushing further east so that we are not too close to Somalia.”

Wolf could beat the crap out of any pirate. He is a fury of energy as he bounces from grinder to bow and back, mostly in tune with the barked orders of the navigator, Pascal Bidegorry, a brusque Basque who bristles at his nickname – the Grumpy Smurf.

Brawny and brainy, Wolf, a maths and science whizz, became enchanted with sailing as a university student. Two years ago, he scribbled a Post-it note and stuck it to his bedroom wall. It read, “Volvo Ocean Race, Americas Cup”.

Now, after trials involving hundreds of aspirants, months of gruelling training, 2,500 nautical miles of practice in the Pacific and another 2,500 crossing the Atlantic, Wolf is one of six Chinese members of the 12-strong

Dongfeng crew, only eight of whom are on the boat during any of the nine legs and nine months of the race that add up to 38,739 nautical miles.

Wolf is not his real name, which is Jiru Yang. But, like his compatriots, he has picked a moniker that fits more easily into the mouths of people like the Grumpy Smurf.

Speaking of mouths, Horace, the youngest member of the crew, lost 6kg during the twenty-five days Dongfeng took to complete the first leg from Alicante in Spain to Cape Town. Freeze dried food is no-one’s idea of a good meal, and least of all a growing Chinese lad’s. “We’re hoping he gets hungry enough to eat more,” a member of the shore crew said.

For the first time, all seven boats are identical. No more than 1mm of difference is permitted in every aspect of their design. That’s a lesson learnt from the past, when, as Frostad said, “If they were light enough, they



could be faster – until they broke.”

Or, in the words of the head of the boat-yard, Nick Bice, whose team is entrusted with keeping the vessels seaworthy, “The race should not be defined by failure.”

Nor by death. Five lives have been lost since the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race was established in 1973. Was number six twisting in the wind from a cable on the Dongfeng?

Happily, no. The longest seconds of my life oozed past. The deck, a moment ago as far out of reach as Table Mountain must have seemed for Nelson Mandela from Robben Island for all those years, kissed my feet. Calm descended as we glided to port on wet wings.

“Want something to eat?” someone said with a warm smile as he thrust a bag of energy bars between us. It was Wolf.


Call him Ishmael. ■

TEAM DONGFENG

Charles Caudrelier, Eric Peron, Kevin Escofier, Chen Jin Ho, Martin Stromberg, Pascal Bidegorry, Thomas Rouxel, Yang Jiru, Liu Ming, Cheng Ying Kit, Liu Xue, Kong Chencheng, Yann Riou, Damian Foxall, Sam Greenfield, Sidney Gavignet.

The Volvo Ocean Race is held every three years, and the next competition is in 2017-2018.

The Dongfeng Race Team placed third in the 2014-15 overall standings, despite suffering a broken mast near Cape Horn in Leg 5.



**ZIMBABWE
FROM
A TO Z**

FARAI MUDZINGWA



IS FOR AMAI

Higher than “Queen”, “Tsar”, or any colonial and western title, this is the most eminent and coveted designation in the land.



IS FOR INDEPENDENCE.

That revolutionary moment when we as a new country, ended our reliance on colonial governments for civil services, and instead, started relying on NGOs.



IS FOR BABA JUKWA.

The worst speller on the internet launched the biggest man-hunt since the search for both Chidumo and Masendeke, combined.



IS FOR JOHNSO.

Our sharp former minister of media, information, twisting truths and spinning falls into something else. Johnso is now on the facebooks and the twitters.



IS FOR CHARLATANS.

Also known as prophets. Give me fuckloads of your money and I will entertain you and promise you good shit every Sunday.



IS FOR KAUKONDE.

Gender-based violence was visited upon this hapless dwarf. His unfortunate televised dressing down by Her Eminence also makes “K” stand for “Kikikiki”. Kikikiki is also the Keynesian term for the state of our economy.



IS FOR DANCEHALL.

From “the ghetto”? Have a mouth? Have a monotonous ‘dum-dum-tish, dum-dum-tish...’ beat on your phone? Record a zim dancehall song my man.



IS FOR LONGCHEN PLAZA.

When the Chinese undertake their economic sodomy, they love to mark their conquests by building garish, pink, dragony phallic symbols. This “plaza” and its siblings along Kingsmead Road and Glenara Road and Mazowe Road and so on and so forth are phallic symbols with syphyllitic tendencies.



IS FOR ENERGY MURAMBADORO.

There are few more spectacular examples of the damage the English language has done to our collective psyche as a country and how we name our children.



IS DEFINITELY FOR MAZOWE.

“Mazowe api? Iwe uri kureva Mazowe api? Mazowe-zowe here kana kuti mamwe Mazowe?”. Enough said.



IS FOR FACTION.

Faction rhymes with Fiction, which is what the sane individual will scream in disbelief, when filled in on the goings on in the Zany Ruling Party. F is also for Finger. Our print media has dedicated journalists who dutifully report all incidences of Fingering.



IS FOR NGO.

The new missionaries. The benevolent benefactors. The totally non-partisan entities sent by Jesu Kristo, down from the very Heavens, riding on the wings of angels, to save the snorty African kid with the swollen tummy and the buzzing fly from himself, his conditions and the uncivilized savagery he finds himself in! While here, I will have a “house suitable for NGO”, a 4x4, hazard leave, return flights, embassy parties, fuck you remuneration, unlimited access HIFA tickets, my pick of the intelligent natives and obedient local staff, for my troubles, thank you very kindly.



OH MY, G SPOILS US FOR OPTIONS.

G is for Gamatox (see “F” above). G is also for Generator, without one you are well and truly fucked. G is primarily for Grace, combine this with our word for “A” and grown ass politicians shit their pants.



IS FOR HERALD NEWSPAPER.

This publication is what happens when a war veteran has unprotected sex with a Student’s Companion.



IS FOR OLIVER MTUKUDZI.

He had to leave Zim, record and be marketed in Joburg, before the bougie set in Zim could claim him as “our icon”. South African afro-jazz heads will tell you he is from “like Limpopo province or somewhere there”. Which reminds me that O is also for Oskido.



IS FOR PATRICK CHINAMASA.

Our Minister of Finance’s English accent is a revolutionary movement all on its own. If the British had heard this bloke speak their language, they would have abandoned their colonial quest in despair in the 1950s. The position of Minister of Finance in Zimbabwe is like being called Mayor of the moon. This poor civil service wages clerk had to carry the Budget Briefcase into the house of parliament and waffle for 2 straight hours ... and you thought your job was hard ... well, the job you would have if those things existed in these parts.



IS FOR ST JOHNS COLLEGE.

Not to be confused for “the maroon one” – how dare you. This bastion of rhodesian resistance to “those blacks” is impressive in its resolve. Smith giggles in his grave everytime a darkie applies for a place. As its piece de resistance, this school has a rugby first team which would spontaneously combust if it had more than one black player. It’s like a feeder team for the South African Springboks.



IS FOR TSVANGIRAI.

Despite the aesthetic challenges to his face, this bloke could be in his third term as president of this country. Him and his party have won both the presidential and parliamentary elections many times over but always lose the plot when the Zany Party tightens the screws on him. His loins also trouble him greatly; a fire rages wild within them which is kindled and stoked by chubby light-skinned women.



IS FOR UZUMBA MARAMBA-PFUNGWE.

I have no idea where the fuck this joint is – or if it really exists. But EVERY Zimbo knows its name. UMP is the Florida of Zim politics. It is the swing state, whatever the fuck that means. One minute Zany PF is behind by 3 546 768 votes, Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe votes come in, with 9 750 registered voters, by the time the votes are counted and Morgiza has disembarked from a chubby light-skinned floozy, Zany PF is now ahead by 15 million votes.



IS FOR VICTORIA FALLS.

Top on the list when any Zimbo brags about Zim. BUT, that statue of bleeding David Livingstone is the centre piece of the falls experience ka! The BEST cabinet minister of 2014 pretends it doesn’t exist. This comrade also ignores that the Falls experience caters for old Europeans with colonial explorer fantasies – and their women with dreadlocked native fantasies. Ha!found in rivers; others still suddenly

I’ve heard stories of how a mythical liquid used to flow in pipes and gush out of taps in homes, schools and related structures.



IS FOR QUIET DIPLOMACY.

I love Thabo Mbeki. I am his number one fan. He is the greatest president we shall never have. Zuma has made South Africans appreciate him with each scandal that passes. He fucked up on Zim though, we weren’t his responsibility or anything, ah but he fucked us up good with that quiet nonsense.



IS FOR ROCK DIESEL.

Zimbabwe has always had a fuckload of PhDs in its line-up of cabinet ministers. On one fine sunny day a few years ago, the most educated ones took off their shoes and brains and sat down on the bare ground, clapping and chanting, to allow a spirit medium to extract BP High Performance Diesel from a confused granite boulder.



IS FOR WATER.

I have heard stories of how this mythical liquid used to flow in pipes and gush out of taps in homes, schools and related structures. My grandfather, Thor bless his soul, told me anecdotes of how he would stand under a spinneret, turn a little knob, and a dizzying rush of clean water would shoot out and he would bathe himself in this manner. I shall share these stories with my grandchildren and their children so they never forget where we came from as a people.



IS FOR "X".

This simple letter has been the cause of much chagrin and gnashing of teeth in our sunny country. Lots and lots of Xs were marked onto pieces of paper on July 31st 2013. Some of them vanished and appeared in a different section of the paper; some took off mysteriously with their papers and were found in rivers; others still suddenly appeared already marked on papers belonging to dead people. X is the dodgiest letter in the Zim alphabet.



IS FOR YEMARASTA.

Hayipotse.

Yakati twi, semureza weZimbabwe.

Apa musoro wakamira kunge we gumkum.

Zvakadaro, bhora vachimhanya naro ana dread,

ku book cafe, alliance francais, nedzimwe nzvimbo

dzakangodaro-daro.

Pamberi nemusangano!



IS FOR ZESA.

Zesa is the back-up power supply of the country. It usually comes to the rescue when your candles, generators and inverters are running on low. In the spirit of SADC, and the Frontline States, Pan-Africanism and so on and so forth, ZESA has now taken ESKOM under its wing and is providing expert tutelage on becoming a truly African service provider. ■



ELEANOR MADZIVA

Once there was an esteemed leader in a small country in the south of the African continent. This leader loved his people so very much that it almost caused him physical pain (although that could just have been the old age arthritis).

And he so badly wanted to protect his Africans from the nefarious influences and machinations of the Western world with its irresponsible talk of accountability, democracy, transparency and legitimacy (the profanities that these westerners indulge in). In this vein he often hurled toe-curling insults at the leaders of the west, whose donor funds were keeping his people in food and sustaining the hobbled economy.

This largesse on the part of the demon West, however, did not stop him from constantly biting at the hand that was feeding his subjects, seeing as he himself wasn't all that hungry, the ports to China, Singapore and Malaysia still being open to him (his court jesters ministers in fact tended towards being rather corpulent, the sad consequence of diverting

much of the food aid for their own personal consumption).

The terrible pale-faced leaders had barred him from entering their cold, damp, muddy lumps of land, so looking east was the only way he could get his retail therapy fix. And keep the very very young Mrs Esteemed Leader off his back. She, so young in fact, that it was all he could do to prevent some simple monogamous minds from mistaking her for his rather pretty geriatric nurse (the term gold digger not existing in his vocabulary).

Then one day a plague was visited upon the land. A plague so devastating that it laid waste to the land and decimated entire families within a few short weeks and threatened to deny him the ability to continue ruling.

For who can continue ruling without subjects to hold dominion over (although one could argue it would be distinctly easier without the great unwashed making incessant unreasonable demands).

The leader was at a loss as to how to combat the plague for the entire health service had somehow over time become about as useful as a

one-legged horse at Ascot (personal responsibility not being on the cards, none of the successive sycophants in the health ministry would assume any blame).

But being a wise and astute leader he called his coterie of yes-men and brown-nosers to sit counsel with him. Many theories were expounded, ruminating on why that blighting scourge had been rained upon their heads. But the one which found most purchase centred on the fact that the gods must have been displeased by the esteemed leader allowing the unrevolutionary and untested johnny-come-latelies of the opposition to have a go at holding the reins of power.

They argued that after all, the whining turncoats of the opposition had not been duly appointed by the gods as the esteemed leader himself had been. The esteemed leader felt in his octogenarian bones that he had been anointed to rule for life (one of the few things he could actually still feel, everything else from the neck down was gone).

To this end, the esteemed leader decided to grab the bull by its

horns and its balls and come out guns blazing to eradicate this scourge. His plan, though simple and uncomplicated, was brilliant in the breathtaking depth of genius that it entailed. And his strategy was premised on three four-letter words: deny, deny, deny (its previous success for a president accused of lewd acts with a subordinate in a white-coloured house, a president who smoked but did not inhale and a subordinate who blew but did not swallow, had assured him of the efficacy of this strategy).

Armed with only his bare-faced audacity and his geriatric undropped ball of steel (rumour having it that the war was not kind to his family jewels) the esteemed leader announced his new coping mechanism to a despairing outside world. And it is for this reason that a whole generation of orphans was spawned with names like Constantdenial, Plague, Nomedicine, Mortalityrate and Neverdie.

The moral of the story: don't let darkies name babies Governmentofnationalunity or Censustaker in time of crisis or major social upheaval. ■



A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM

INDIANA JONAS

and the
KINGDOM OF
THE CRYSTAL SKULL

\$500 REWARD

Ran away, or decoyed from the subscriber, living near Beltsville, Prince George's County, Md. on

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5th, 1857,

MULATTO WOMAN, MARIA!

From 30 to 35 years of age, and very stout.

NEGRO BOY, DALL!

Dark Mulatto, 13 years of age, stout and well grown.

Negro Boy, Lem

11 years of age, Black, has a scar on the side of his breast, caused by a burn.

NEGRO BOY, BILL

Generally called "Shag," 8 years of age.

NEGRO BOY, BEN,

2 years of age. Also,

NEGRO MAN, ADAM

About 30 years of age, 5 feet 4 or 5 inches high, stoutly built, full suit of hair. He ran away on Saturday, the 22d of August, and I think has returned and induced his Wife and Children off. I will give \$500 reward for them, no matter where taken, if lodged in Jail, or secured so that I may get them again, or, I will give

\$300 REWARD for ADAM

If taken separate, and a proportional reward for either of the others, if taken separate, in any case they must be secured, so I may get them again.

Baltimore, September 7th, 1857.

ISAAC SCAGGS.