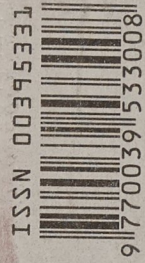


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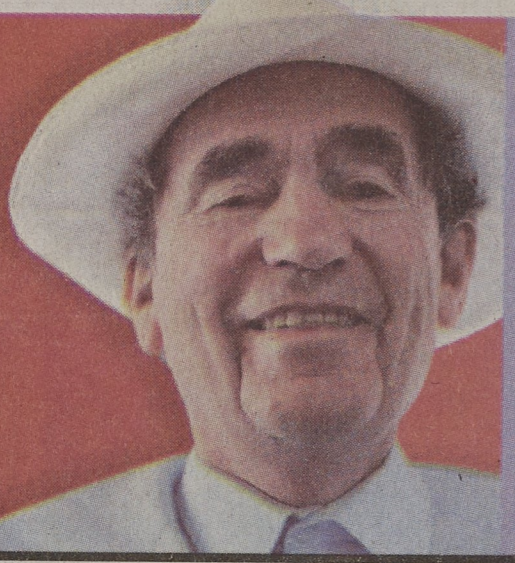
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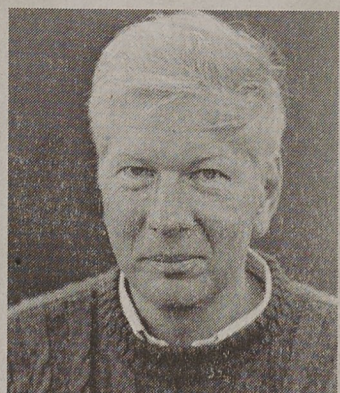
Race row over baboon essay

Deluge of complaints, so SA writer's article is pulled from London review

ROWAN PHILP

A RACE row has exploded on the web pages of one of the world's most prestigious literary reviews, with a South African author accused of comparing African immigrants to baboons. This week, the London Review of Books issued an apology after 73 prominent academics demanded the removal of both an online article by writer RW Johnson, and of Johnson himself, due to his alleged "racist" opinions. Known as South Africa's foremost "prophet of doom", Johnson, 67, writes for the London Sunday Times and the Review, and is a former director of the Helen Suzman Foundation, which is dedicated to fighting racism. In a report entitled "After the

World Cup", Johnson described in the first paragraph how rot-tweilers attacked invading baboons in Cape Town — then told how "local black shopkeepers" attacked African migrants. Having described the baboons as "looking for food", he continued: "Meanwhile in the squatter camps, there is rising tension as the threat mounts of murderous violence against foreign migrants once the World Cup finishes on 11 July. The migrants — Zimbabweans, Malawians, Congolese, Angolans, Somalis and others — are often refugees and they too are here essentially searching for food." Patrick Bond, professor of development studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, said the link between blacks and baboons in the article was "as explicit as



GLOOMY: RW Johnson has been accused of 'meanness of spirit'

you can get", and that Johnson's negative writing on South Africa reflected a "meanness of spirit". But Johnson denied racism, saying the campaign to stop him writing for the Review was "the sort of demand one associates with the authors of the fatwa against Salman Rushdie". Johnson — who is sheltering

two Zimbabwean refugees at his home — explained that he had linked threats faced by both baboons and black immigrants in his neighbourhood because he "realised the common thread was of innocent interlopers just trying to survive, but it all ending in violence anyway". "If that juxtaposition causes some people to have racist thoughts, it's regrettable, but I had no racist thoughts or associations myself." Intellectuals like playwright Kwame Kwei-Armah, Professor Achille Mbembe from the University of the Witwatersrand and Professor Paul Gilroy of the London School of Economics, told the editor of the review: "We find it baffling that you continue to publish work by RW Johnson... Whilst it might be unfair to pick on a man for his inability to be funny, we believe that it would be wholly wrong to stay silent when he resorts to peddling highly offensive, age-old racist stereotypes." Ironically, it was the letter of

complaint — and not Johnson's article — that was initially banned, with editor Mary-Kay Wilmers saying she did not wish to be the cause of anyone seeking a link between blacks and baboons in the article. After a further deluge of protest, Wilmers purged the ar-

imagine that anyone who knows me, or my writing or, indeed, my family circumstances — quite a few members of my family are black — would think that I am a racist in any sense at all." John Battersby, UK country manager of the SA International Marketing Council, said Johnson had "considerable influence" in the UK due to his credentials as an academic and anti-apartheid activist, but that his "negative approach" had "damaged South Africa's image internationally". Johnson's most recent book, *South Africa's Brave New World*, was criticised for its relentless negativity, and was ridiculed for claims that the former minister of defence, Joe

Modise, had murdered Chris Hani, and that Robert Mugabe knew about the 9/11 attacks in the US before they happened. However, Frans Cronje, deputy director of the SA Institute for Race Relations, suggested there were "other agendas". "I think Bill Johnson makes an important contribution to South Africa — he says things that others are not prepared to say, and they are very often true," said Cronje. "Obviously, in this case, he slipped up. He needs to be more careful. But I think there is a long-running spat between commentators on the Left and Bill on the Right, and this is their opportunity to take him down." Author Rian Malan said: "These people hate (Johnson) mostly because he's been mostly right on so many issues for so many years, and they so wrong. Yes, he's prone to brute-force generalisations... but that's what free speech is for."

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Clintons 'nervous wrecks'

PLANNING a wedding can do strange things to people. In the case of the much-hyped nuptials of Chelsea Clinton and Marc Mezvinsky, her investment banker groom-to-be, it appears to be turning the bride's parents — one a former US president, the other the US secretary of state — into nervous wrecks.

Hillary Clinton, secretary of state and mother of the bride, admitted as much when it was reported that the wedding, which is shrouded in secrecy and speculation, had cost \$2-million. "You should assume that if he makes it down the aisle in one piece, it's going to be a major accomplishment," Hillary said of her husband, Bill, adding that they were both "going to be emotional". The interfaith ceremony — Mezvinsky is Jewish — is believed to be due to take place on July 31 in upstate New York, where one cafe is already selling a Chelsea wrap and Secretary of Steak sandwich. The guest list is arousing much intrigue. Former US vice-president Al Gore, mired in a sex scandal, is not expected to attend. It is rumoured that US President Barack Obama, and celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg, Barbra Streisand and Ted Turner, the CNN boss, have been invited. Sir John Major, the former UK Tory prime minister, has been named as a possible attendee, but not Tony Blair. Chelsea, however, is determined to keep her plans secret. Two journalists were arrested for taking photographs at the purported venue this week. — © The Times, London



IN GOOD COMPANY: Retired Judge Albie Sachs, left, and Imraan Coovadia were the top two winners at the Sunday Times Literary Awards. Sachs received the Alan Paton Award for his non-fiction effort *The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law*, while Coovadia's *High Low In-between* took the fiction prize. Picture: KEVIN SUTHERLAND

Sachs wins his second Alan Paton award

SIMPIWE PILISO

RETIRED Constitutional Court judge and activist Albie Sachs's memoir, *The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law*, won top honours at this year's prestigious Sunday Times Literary Awards. It was the former civil rights lawyer's second accolade after winning the 1991 Alan Paton Award for *The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter*. Imraan Coovadia's third novel, *High Low In-between*, took the 10th Sunday Times Fiction Prize. Sachs, who lost an arm to a bomb placed by apartheid security agents while in exile in Maputo, took the Alan Paton award for non-fiction ahead of competition which included Kevin Bloom's *Ways of Staying* and James Ngculu's *The Honour To Serve*. The gala ceremony was held at Summer Place in Hyde Park, northern Johannesburg, last night. Guests included Achmat Dangor, head of the Nelson Mandela Foundation; Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer; Ivan Vladislavic, a previous winner of both the Sunday Times fiction and Alan Paton awards; and Gerald Kraak, winner of the European Union literary award.

Master just wants to plough

BIËNNE HUISMAN

PRETTY Nel-Mare Oosthuizen has been propelled from a dusty Northern Cape farm into the international spotlight by her husband Louis's runaway victory on the golf course. The 28-year-old brunette was photographed kissing Louis Oosthuizen minutes after he shocked the international golfing fraternity with his British Open win at St Andrews last Sunday. Nel-Mare and Jana, the couple's seven-month-old daughter, joined him in Stockholm this week for the Scandinavian Masters. Bloggers commenting on the young full-time mother and her baby's fashionable attire, have dubbed them the "Oosthuizen girls". Nel-Mare confided that it was all rather overwhelming. "There are a lot of things going on that I am not used to: all the attention and media. I am very happy, and at the same time,

tired," she said. She grew up on a farm called Groenedal, 125km from the dusty town of Prieska, before completing a BCom degree at Stellenbosch University. Nel-Mare married Louis at the NG Church in Mossel Bay in 2007. The pair had known each other from a young age, and she had partnered him to his matric dance. Almari Alberts, Nel-Mare's sister-in-law, described them as "the most special couple". "Louis and Nel-Mare's parents were family friends, and they visited each other often. So the two of them knew each other from an early age. Louis was always taken with her," she said. The couple both hail from remote South African farms, where friends and families celebrated the British Open win with their eyes glued to television screens. Louis, 27, was raised by sheep-farming parents Piet and

Minnie near Albertinia in the Southern Cape; while Nel-Mare spent most of her younger years on a farm bordering the Orange River in the Northern Cape. While the sporting world is abuzz with his surprise success, Louis simply cannot wait to "plough" his farm — next to that of his parents — with the new tractor he bought with his R9.9-million winnings. Louis wrote on his blog that the 6330 John Deere tractor would be delivered to his farm this week. "I'll have a kiddie seat on it for my daughter Jana," he told Swedish reporters on Wednesday, on the eve of the Scandinavian Masters. Nel-Mare, also known to friends as "Nelsie", said she hoped to drive the new tractor once the family was home. She added that buying the John Deere was a dream come true for her husband. "I think I will also get to drive it, I hope... You know, a while



WINNING COUPLE: Louis Oosthuizen with his wife Nel-Mare and daughter Jana at St Andrews win. Picture: GALLO/GETTY IMAGES

back he said he wanted to buy a tractor and I told him, no, we don't need it. But I said to him he may buy one after his next win. So now, I really can't say anything. I know it is a dream for

him, and he deserves to spoil himself." Nel-Mare said she spoiled her husband — "but not too much, otherwise he might get used to it".

Now there's a new string to township jive's bow

SASHNI PATHER

BEETHOVEN and Bach have taken a back seat to mbaqanga. The traditional township jive music, with rural Zulu roots, has been adapted by the 50-strong Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO). The organ, guitar and drums of the mbaqanga have been replaced with the cello, harp and violin for a ground-breaking new Soul Brothers CD. Soul Brothers, who have helped define mbaqanga for over 30 years, are part of the "musical experiment". "This is uncharted territory, and the orchestra performs the music extremely well, but also creates a fresh, new listening experience," said executive producer Sifiso Falala. He said the idea came to him when he found himself yearning for a new sound. "Since 2008, there has been a

death of new South African sounds. Our music sounds too American and has a life span of only a few weeks. We are losing the ability to connect with ourselves. This is a new way to offer our African-ness to the world." Managing director of the JPO Shadrack Bokaba said: "We are constantly looking for innovative ways to be more relevant. We have a young orchestra who were very keen to try something different. "Previous collaborations included the late Lucky Dube, but never mbaqanga, which is the most defining type of music for the majority of people in this country. This initiative is about preserving our culture." Soul Brothers member Moses Ngenwenya said: "We are really excited about this project because it will help the music reach a greater audience." The CD will be released on August 2.

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