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228-19

It is Saturday 23rd January, 1999.

David Hi,

What will we do with the year 2000 or will it become 2001. Just listening to these fundis about the mellinium (sp) I am more confused. On Saturdays Thoko comes to give my home a weekly spit and polish. By the time she is finished the house is fresh. I enjoy it but she puts me through my paces. I do the laundry (wash) and she irons - thats one job I can do without. If push comes to shove I would buy clothes that just needs washing and no ironing. I try to fashion my no ironing wardrobe not very successfully. Yes I work harder on Saturdays than any other day.

I was trying to explain to Thoko at breakfast that you fly above the clouds. I flew to Pretoria on Thursday to a legal aid board meeting. I was inordinately tired and she asked about the flight. I recalled taking a photo of the clouds when I flew a previous time. Looking through the album I spotted this photo Liz had sent. I remembered that when she wanted to photograph me I took one of her. I saw Luis and am not sure whether I sent this photo or another one.

But today I noticed the trees behind us and yes they are your own BAOBABS. I remembered there was a line of them and was not sure that I had photographed them. I did not then know of your furlough in Zimbabwe. I think it was the day we went to Mundo Latino that we returned to watch your rock paintings video. I think it was much later that I realised that we shared Zimbabwe I think it was you telling me that you lived in Mike's home. I have a picture of that house after we cleared it out. Possibly one with everything in a mess. I spent days clearing up the mess. You probably could not imagine what we did after the 28th April 1990 and the time of your tenancy. When were you there ? How long ? Why did I not ask you these things in Cuba?

I know the answer to that question. Well you only told me in a letter (to be read after take off if I were a disciplined comrade) that you would be "loving you for the rest of my life". And now I want to know so many things about the fellow who has undertaken a monumental task, a lifetime undertaking, but then we know what that undertaking means in the light of past experience. Also the fact that such a statement was made on my exit from Cuba is extremely telling

I must be careful of the word slimeball ! I have been warned against its use on account of its appropriateness. So there.

Today Alan asked me if the Cuban connexion was in the past. Why ?

I cant take these Cuban SH taking over our girls. What the heck ? Ive not heard from him since early December - Ah thats it - it is over, he says.

Is it ?

Is it ?

Ive wished it too. You know the flu - the time when it would be over. But if the truth be known thats a difficult task. I want to talk to you. Want to hear your voice. Want to hold your hand. Then I ask will I ever ? Hold you ? Its such a non starter. Its not going to happen. Why do I hanker after the impossible ? Am I a sadist ? Punishing myself like this ?

What is this thing called love ?

What did you say, " on duty pharmacist " Did I really treat you as such. We dont know the phenomenon in our neck of the woods. We have 24 hr service and each pharmacist working a 8 hour stretch. Mark you hospital pharmacists maybe exploited, with regard to time but private enterprise who are making very handsome profits - our mark up is 200%. Mainly paid by medical insurance. Monthly contributions are in the region of R500.00 and more. My neice is a pharmacist and on her pay she has bought a house in the northern suburbs.

All I wanted to do was to introduce you to your own baobabs. Did I tell you I found Baobab seeds. They look like an enlarged furry scrotum. Some people cook and eat the seeds and its great monkey food. Perhaps you can enquire where your baobabs come from. YOU DID NOT PLANT THEM !

Did I tell you that Miguel sent me a card (CHE) for xmas/new year. It took 3 weeks to arrive. Just when I gave up on your postal services ? Has anything else arrived ?

Bonaventura phoned to say his children will bring my parcels to you. Two for you and one for Santiago de Cuba. They leave on the 12/2. So earlier promises of January are out. Did you get the stuff from Zimbabwe ?

The email is a wash out for me. Carol Hall left for Australia. Deena, a church worker is on retreat. So if you responded to my email of the 12/1 Ive not had it. We shall have to forget this until I have my own email. It is in the pipeline. Gonda was threatening to email you and she might. I am going to use the post office in the meantime. Ive sent you by registered mail and I hope it works.

I will never forget Luis who found me at the airport. Did I really come to Cuba ? Are Luis, Miguel, Walterio and you real ?

Are you all there ? Take care. My passport says I was in Cuba so that part is real. How is Norma ? Will she come to SA ? Is Domingo's Mum OK ? I lost my dear friend Robin Gibson to cancer on the 27/12/98. It is like loosing a third child and daily I bleed.

Must go now - awful talking to a blank wall. Love you though.

Phyllie