

Sta Fe, Sunday 9 May 1999

Dear Phillee:

I finally remembered that black ink is kinder for your eyes. It's 5:45 P.m. of Mother's Day (a big thing here in Cuba, more than Worker's Day) and Mom lies on a couch under the mango tree, asleep after a hectic day of kissing and visits of grandsons and phone calls. It's fairly quiet, except for the neighbour's loud music and Mom's snoring, so I profit to write my weekly letter.

Last week I didn't write, but posted a book in a small parcel, and I also sent you a long E-Mail message. It's the second I've sent with no reply, so again I'm worried you're sick or tired, or sick and tired, or your Modem fucked up again, or you're pressing the wrong buttons or - most probably - you're a bit hysterical writing your bloody dissertation or whatever is called in SA what you say when you get a honorary doctorate. But do think there will be people here in Cuba also nervous with you. Please keep us posted.

I haven't been going to work every day since the water pump broke down at CEAMO. I hope they'll have it fixed tomorrow, after 10 days with no water. Then we'll be able to work and lunch and breathe while working.

In my last E-Mail I sent you details of your parcel that was half eaten by a mouse and then they wanted to charge me 15 pesos for customs, which I refused to pay, so now (in the best possible scenario) you'll get the package back. I saw it contained a half eaten candy bar intended for Mom, a tape and clippings, but I didn't open it (I saw all that through the hole the mouse made. Now I wonder what the tape and clippings contained and will probably never know. Why did I over react? It's already a miracle that a parcel gets to Cuba, and I get to see it. Why was I so principled? Why refusing to pay a lousy 15 pesos after queuing up 45 minutes? I blew it. End of the story: let's keep our mail downgraded to letters & clippings.

I was still depressed about the mouse-vandalized parcel when, yesterday, I get two new envelopes from you: lots of letters, clippings & photocopies plus a photo of your grandsons. Thank you!!

On Saturday morning I finally reached Miguel's house. He definitely quit his job, and his spine was giving him problems. But he wasn't home, so I guess he can't be that sick, so I'll try again this week. I also spoke with Amparo on the phone: she sends you all her love.

AT LAST! Entralgo's been formally appointed director of CEAMO, to be an-

nounced next Tuesday, just before our XX<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jubilee. Norma's busy preparing her wedding, and also hosting the visit of a former student of mine, who studied African Culture with Norma in Mexico. Domingo will soon be drafted to work in the Central Com.'s foreign affairs dpt. for a couple of years. Carmelina is busy informing on her last trip to Tunis and Algiers, and preparing another one for Mexico. Zelmays is busy preparing her doctoral dissertation and pissing everybody off. Me?? I'm trying to keep a low profile while I carefully sew all the loose ends of the August excursion to dark South Africa. Plans are now at this stage:

- a) Seems that there will be charter flights on August & September. Will try to assure two seats.
- b) Entralgo and Dalman support my doctorate project, & agree the topic should be RECONCILIATION. Will be trying to convince Serial K (technically, & a stumbling block) on his return home from a tour next week.
- c) Once Serial K approves, and flight seats assured, and UDW can have me reading documentation at its library (I hope schools in SA don't close in August, like in Cuba) I should assure a modest per diem, that should hopefully suffice for meals for both Walt & I.
- d) My bosses will know that, in my spare time, I'll be telling Walt what to film. We'll convince Walt's boss that we have to reduce the scope of the filming project (since Mundo Latino cannot put any \$ into it), drop Zimbabwe & only film the San and perhaps (but not indispensable) a few caves in the Drakensberg, nearest to Durban, and also some interviews about Cuban health cooperation. Walt's boss can agree, but cannot disburse money for the project. So (here comes the hitch) we have to tell him that Walt's invited with all expenses paid to SA. (Of course, we'll pay our meals for both with my per diem.)
- e) With what I already filmed in Zimbabwe, plus a few views of the San, we can edit, back in Cuba, a 57 minute documentary (We also drop the idea of a 5 part serial).

¿Did you see the film "Sex, Lies and Video Tapes"? Well, that's what we have up to now. Meanwhile, Walt and I are working hard on this project, and even harder on the book on Congo-Cuban culture, of which we expect to have the manuscript in July. Please tell us how your own book project is coming along. And best of luck for your honorary doctorate ceremony. But, of course, it will have passed by the time you receive this. Anyway, Love

David