

To: ceamo@ceniai.inf.cu
From: Antoinette Conning <aconning@pixie.udw.ac.za>
Subject: Time : 12.50
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

19th March 1999

David,

I went to bed at 11.30pm and found it impossible to sleep and returned to deal with your letters (2) which arrived today.

A. Letter of the 20th February 1999.

This letter is a repeat of so many letters beginning from yours to Gonda on the 16th February with gory details of your illness, that left me nauseous for a week. This was repeated to Nerissa Rahdhani at UDW. It appears that you have all my letters except the e-mail of 5th March 1999.

Since then I've sent letters etc. on the 8th, 11th and 17th March. Yesterday when I had yours I posted you one. Here, that picture you drew SUCKS. I objected to the fact that you did not give me lips - you gave me a line. Whats this about fine silk saris. I don't believe you. I am a horse, have very little femininity, except that I am a woman. My Dad called me Bill - he wanted a son and got me. At 71 I am too old to change. I think I told you that. Check the size of my mouth in the pic I sent. My dentist says he made a good job of my dentures after the Cuban muck up! Can you believe this?

You asked a number of questions here, but then you cancelled them all in letter 2. I am not happy about 2. YOU ARE NOT GIVING OVER TO YOUR SUPERIOR. Is he whom you call serial killer? You will be here in August. There will be no arguments on that score.

This means you have to make preliminary enquiries of Nerissa Ramdhani about your doctoral research on the subject of your choice. She e-mailed you last week. So respond to her, tell her you are in the hands of the serial killer etc. Further you have to make enquiries from Junaid as to what assistance he can render on the film. Both are expecting to hear from you. It cost me two lunches - so its your turn now. Don't give over. I think I am beginning to know you. I hope I am wrong.

B. Letter 28th February 1999

1. Thank you for the material on Che. I know that Che loved Pablo Neruda. I met that in his books. Your enquiries are much appreciated. Thank you. You will be surprised at the insight it has given me of you. Again thank you.
2. I gave Saraccino 3 letters - you, Walterio & Miguel. But all 3 were care of you. Diana was returning to Cuba and I sent it with her. I sent Miguel a Zimbabwean hat to keep the sun away when he works in the garden. It was such a beautiful hat.
3. My e-mail should be here soon. Please respond to this per Anto. Please. Will e-mail once I am connected. PROMISE.
4. Hey, I had nothing to do with your videos - only saw them for an hour. Was impressed with your approach - what that is now I don't know. Tell me again. Please.
5. Busfare UDW daily not more than R5.00
Busfare Johannesburg to Durban about R300.00
Busfare to Harare about R1000.00

If you know in advance when you will be going to Harare we could get cheap flights. Why pray are you thinking of hiring a car, if you are making the above enquiries?

6. Looks like you could administer the advice for Zelmys for yourself. How you can neglect your eyes is beyond me. Do you want to loose sight of this beautiful earth? Get a prescription when you come and we will get you glasses here. That is an order comrade!

I had a call from my friend George in Liverpool. We have decided not to share our aches and pains but talked about football. I am a Manchester United fan. He has two sons. He lost his wife Norah and lives alone. When I visited them in 1982 they had a beautiful rose garden. He got rid of his lawn and roses as he cannot garden anymore.

Yesterday I talked with Liz. My friend Roy is going to live in their London flat with a friend. Peter wanted to know if the friend was male or female. What does it matter? I asked. This was important enough to pay R75.00 for the call.

About John Gay. If you send me a letter with your questions I will forward to introduce you and then you can write to one another. They are computer literate. Will send you their e-mail. But introduce yourself first. Hey he is anti-communist and a lay preacher. His wife Judy is a preacher. Religion is heavy here. Heck they helped us so much during the struggle. I live with them when I am in Lesotho. When I was kicked out of Lesotho (24hrs) they took care of my dog Sasha and sent it onto Harare when I settled there. Bought my first bed to settle in Harare. Housed many comrades during security times.

I look forward to August when I shall see both Walterio and yourself and to singing Dylan and Louis. I've told you the extent of our assistance - Sukhthi, Gonda and mine - read earlier letters. Now make it happen. I shall pick you up in Johannesburg. So don't loose sleep on that score. You took care of me between two hurricanes, shewed me your beautiful humming bird. I owe you mate.

Love

Phyllie 2.35am

Hullo - 9.00am Thursday 18th March - about to phone Anto to tell her fax of the above is on the way when she tells me that you have e-mailed her. Her son Reon is bringing it over.

1.00pm, he delivers. What a hot day! Thank you Anto. I thought I was going to die walking back from Davenport (Mall). I lay down to read it.

1. Thank goodness that Julio's material has got to him. In your letter you said you were awaiting him to pick it up. Please get Norma to give you Julio's address.

2. So glad UNEAC got their material. I have sent them some more.

3. Norma's bag was a canvas bag with ROBBER ISLAND marked over it. But if that is lost. Is the travelling bag BLACK - like the one I had in Cuba? That was for Miquel to carry on his back when he rides his bike.

4. Isn't Miguel a pet? Is his bike fixed now? I miss him too. I too have no one to sustain a conversation with. What has happened to his garden in this cold winter. I never imagined Cuba would be as cold as you describe. Is this usual?

5. Tell Domingo the flamboyants (that's how he pronounced that word - like it was luscious milk tart) are in seed - long ones like 3/4 of a metre long. The flowers, red have gone, but the seeds are of the life and beauty to come. The loss, the pain never goes away. I hug him warmly.

6. Bugger Clara!

7. Easter Bunny has a problem. I am the problem. I have been informed today by the University of Durban Westville that a Honorary Doctorate is going to be given me and Nelson Mandela on the 14th May, 1999. I asked if I were expected to attend. Can you come earlier?? I know Sukhthi will want to be with me on the 14th May. They may decide to come in May rather than in April. I'll call her tonight and find out.

8. Louis asks when does God talk to you? That will fix her. Her husband wanted some spirituality in their lives. So answer him honestly I say. It's like a comrade who was asked by his young daughter how babies were made. Father heavy party fella says - 'Oh Dad puts the seed into mum and it grows for 9 months. He thought he had done it correctly. Baby D says, next time you put the seed into Mum let me see. I think it put him off babies for life.

9. You a godfather? Godfather like in the films? Tell all.

10. Don't let your doctoral research and video be determined by the serial killer. Nerissa has e-mailed you. Talk with her.

11. Sent you Baartman clippings. Do you want the video?

12. Congratulations to Mum 79. She is in good health. That is a great blessing. I like saying - she is in good health - and I don't mean it biblically. I am sending Mother Josephine and Sister Julian's letters - to let you enjoy their Lesotho - my bare footed friends.

Love

Phyllie