

Some even suggested that he teach at the school instead of seeking a desk job with the public service. He flatly refused and told them in the present day education establishment teachers had to do a formal teacher's training course. The days of appointing people merely to fill in vacancies were gone.

One of the most vital features of village life that he would never be able to compromise with, he found, was the power of the village puripuri men. He found out that the people's respect for them was held firmly by them along with their fear of their supernatural powers. He observed that people did not go about alone at night. They were a bastardized group of cowardly, mother-fuckers. Every-night when people were asleep these human wolves hunted in people's backyards. They seemed to have all the God-given right to prowl at night.

He got fed up with having to be told day and night to watch out for so and so man or woman, not to walk in some forbidden bushes and so on. Why shouldn't he be left alone to walk to where he pleased? Why should he be denied all this? He concluded that these human germs must be done away with. But how?

One day he sneaked into the bush before his parents and the horde of kids that followed him everywhere, could see him. Darkness still hung like the early morning mist in the highlands. He had walked a long distance from the village and came to rest beside a creek in the bush. He didn't know why he did this. He listened to the birds and bush animals waking up while some others went back to sleep for that day. He eyed all the marvels of nature. The being who made these things, including himself, whoever he may be could have accomplished such unbelievable proof of living art. He only knew that the creator had toiled for six days to mould all these living things.

He slapped a mosquito that had come to fill itself from his body before sulking back into the bush. As he did so he heard talking coming from the creek above him. He was squatting and wanted to run. Maybe they were ghosts bidding goodbye to each other;

The bush opposite to where he sat, had once been an ancient burial place. He peeped through the bushes and saw two figures sitting on an old log, their feet in the fast flowing creek. What on earth were there ghostly figures doing hiding away in the creek, especially in the darkest part. He heard them mention several names, all from the nearby villages and two from his own village; one of whom was his uncle. He wondered why they mentioned these people's names.

"Give it to him while he is drinking beer!" he heard one say to the other about his uncle. "That should teach them for trying to be smart and better off than our clan."

"I am scared. This man is my tambu, you know that."

"You will never be a warrior; No be tsi to tsunna ghem penali," he rebuked the other. "Anyway you know what will happen if you fail to fulfill your commitment. Just remember that."

He saw the other one nod and they parted. One followed the creek upstream while the other went downstream.

When the other had passed downstream, he left. He recognised him. He took short cuts to try to waylay the other person. He saw him climbing the bank to a little used bush track. Interesting! His own maternal uncle's brother in-law, plotting to have him disposed of because one of his relatives has had an education in Australia. He wanted to run after him and knock him flat. No! He stopped and allowed him to go ahead. He took a very wide detour and arrived home at the men's washing location in the river. He bathed and came up to his father who was worried stiff about him. He asked him where he had been.

"Down at the river washing. Listen in Australia I woke up at night and we started school in semi-darkness. I can do that here can't I, even if I am not allowed to move about as I please can't I?" He said this firmly and hoped his father would stop trying to argue with him. His father kept quiet after that.

While he was resting, the man he saw in the bush came over to his father's *aurui*. He greeted him and lowered his bulk onto the

limun bed and lay down. He asked him whether he was sick. He was not, he told him, he was tired on account of having risen so early to try and locate his pigs that had jumped the fence again. He managed to relocate some but two boars had got lost in the *kopona*.

"A likely story Mr. Accomplice. Your bloody time will come and you will be smoked alive like a possum," Michael thought.

When the men had gone (perhaps to plan his next move), he asked his father if he ever trusted everyone who came to his *aurui*. His father digested his question and asked why he asked the question.

"Just asking. Olsem maus bilong san kamap i save tok, askim na tol bek," he laughed in order to avoid his father's suspicions.

His father told him that he was often scared of everything especially dirty stinking poison men and women. His father had complete faith in his *kemaros*. They were the only ones to whom he had complete high regard for, including the grille one who had just left the *aurui*. He trusted him as he would trust his own hands. Michael quietly laughed to himself when he heard his father say this. Well maybe this man was an innocent and humble lamb. But what bastard would plot the death of his brother-in-law? He wanted to tell his father that his grilly friend was a rattle snake clothed in a humble puppy's silvery coat.

He quizzed his father about the *waasii*; how much he believed in it and how much truth he obtained from it. The *waasii*, or *mela*, was not something to be talked about. It was not a play thing to be discussed. His father warned him that the *mela* could get angry if talked about like this. Michael insisted that his father break a betel nut for his *mela* and ask it to investigate the activities of certain close friends of his fathers. His father agreed to do what Michael had asked.

The next morning when he woke up, he was surprised to see his father out early in the *aurui* warming himself from the small fire that was burning. He sat next to him and said,

"Well, did you see anything?"

"Yes," his father replied.

"Is that why you are up early?" he asked his father.

"Yes, that is why."

"I was shown two men very close to me discussing something very bad. They plotted to poison my own tambu. They usually meet at Mamotghunu. A bottle of beer will be offered to him when he is fully drunk and he will drink it. He will live only to say, 'Kotsunna noh te viwaa'. Then I was shown a young man. He heard everything and he wants to kill these two men before they kill his uncle. This young man does not like poison men and could be in danger unless I help him. I didn't see his face, but he seems very close to me."

"Is that all?" Michael asked his father.

"Yes that is all," his father answered.

"No you left out something."

"What something?"

"Something you must remember."

"No there was nothing else!" his father insisted.

"But there is something else. It is the reason for the plot."

"How can you say that! Did you also have a dream?"

"No. I never had a dream. But I have a first hand information on the whole situation. I heard everything. I saw those in the plot and the other victims they named and I also know these two people. I saw them at Manamagalusu yesterday morning and I followed one home."

"Is that why you were up so early?"

"Yes."

"Why did you go?"

"I don't know. I was surprised myself when I realised that I was there."

"Tell me who these people are so that I may kill them."

"I will not disclose any names, nor will you kill anyone. You must go and talk to the chief and ask him to see his *mela*. Tell him what you have seen, but do not tell him anything I said. Tomorrow you must ask him and tell me what he tells you and then maybe I'll tell you about these people and the reason why

they wish to kill my uncle."

Next morning his father told him what the chief had dreamed. The chief's dream revealed something else. Michael's education was not the only reason for their plot, but something more complex, involving land disputes, sedentary rights, marital connections and the involvement of a national parliamentarian. He told his father the names of the two principle plotters and the reason behind the plot. His father almost collapsed when he mentioned the two names, both of whom were his half brothers; by Papua New Guinea customs. He begun by paying a special visit to his half brother. He spat herbs all over himself to make himself immune against any supernatural influence that the spirit of the poison may have on him. Everything, including the *kulaga* (mimis) given him as advance payment was handed over to his father. The accomplice apparently became ill afterward and told everything to the people during his delirium.

Michael and the young men, went over to the next village and tied up the chief plotter. He was dragged to the river and dumped in the deep where he almost drowned. After that he was scrubbed with sand and a single bar of sunlight soap. Someone suggested soaking him in zixo. Their victim was one of those who went on for years without washing. Michael helped tie him up like a possum onto a tree swarming with red ants. The man was interrogated. When he refused to disclose any information, the chief village court magistrate told the people to smoke him for half an hour. That did not do anything either. He still remained silent. The magistrate ordered his hands to be tied and forced him to sit on a 2 x 4 rough sawn timber — parrot perch technique. Soon he started to scream as the timber began to cut into the parting of his buttocks. The magistrate told the interrogators to leave him alone. He moaned there until he pissed. He lay there where he fell and cried. But still he refused to talk. Later he was forced into a 44 gallon drum and water was poured into the drum. A huge fire was lit under the drum. He struggled to get out as the water began to warm up. As bubbles began to

collect onto the sides of the drum, more wood was fed under it. He shouted and screamed as the water neared boiling point. He was fished out and while he sat on the chair, swore at the magistrate and told him to screw his mother. This angered the magistrate and so he thrashed the accused until he fell unconscious. People ran away thinking that he had died. When he came back to life, he was given a square meal, allowed some sleep and when he was just enjoying it, the chief magistrate ordered him thrown into the river again. The accused shouted at them to kill him and be done with it. The people merely laughed at his and kicked him about like a football. The interrogation would have continued had not the femals cried out to stop it. When they stopped, Michael helped carry the man back to the communal aurui, which served as a court house and meeting place.

Next morning, the interrogation continued. The accused was ordered to do military exercises, jogging and twenty push-ups, including forty sit-ups. Michael wanted to laugh when he saw this, yet he held back. The self appointed magistrates was the most unorthodox law enforcer he had ever seen. He wondered what the Human Rights people would say about the magistrate's unprecedented practices. Actually the whole situation was a good show piece. Every other witness had given evidence. Michael was called up and he narrated what he had seen and heard. Everyone was overwhelming in their support of the decision carried out by the magistrate, an amateur clown himself, who had thought up the whole show, simply to give the people a good laugh.

The last programme was not one which one could laugh at. The accused was ordered to clean an old public pit toilet. After that he broke down and confessed and disclosed the names of the others in the plot. These people were made to pay very heavy fines, ranging from two thousand kina to seven thousand. The chief poison man was fined eight thousand kina. This included his relatives whom the magistrate said were equally guilty. After all such major undertaking does not happen, or is not planned, without the

knowledge of the

Before Michael didn't know of a t conducted a court had witnessed an officers came to hi patrols. At this problems on the dealt with by the normally spent hi government station tration buildings a rice, tapioka, tea several sick of to

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"Okay, okay y lapun. Kam on! I yu."

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"Hah. Mi steal

knowledge of the other members of the clan.

Before Michael went away to Australia he didn't know of a time when a Toberakian had conducted a court case. The few times that he had witnessed any court was when patrol officers came to his village during their annual patrols. At this time, they solved minor problems on the spot. Serious offenses were dealt with by the district officer. The accused normally spent his time helping to clean the government station, helped erect administration buildings and ate pretty well (brown rice, tapioka, tea, meat) and was issued several sticks of tobacco-kalabus.

Michael received a letter from the mixed-race girl. She was not pregnant, but she longed to see him again. She asked when he would be coming back to the capital. He was not particularly interested in the letter. He had expected to receive one from the department of Colonial Public Administration. Almost two months had passed by and by this time he should have received something. He might as well give up. His father noticed that he had begun to isolate himself. Something was missing somewhere. He refused to discuss his problem with him. If it was something to do with a woman, his father told him he would find him one. Michael laughed at this and told his father to forget it. He could not marry yet because he had no financial background. His father said that could be solved. He refused the offer and flatly told his father that he should be spending his own money and not his father's.

The official, who had been mocked, was indeed a poor loser. He couldn't take it any longer, he took his shirt off, revealing a massive pot-bellied stomach, and challenged the lad who made the remark to meet him in mortal combat.

"Okay, okay yu save man. Kam traim lapun. Kam on! Kam on! Mi nosulik long yu."

The official commenced to advance toward the youngster, a cocky, solidly built, mean-looking bugger. He pushed and kicked everything that was in front of him, shadow punching as he advanced.

"Hah. Mi steal man ah? Kam soim mi

hammas mi stealim long saisaiti? Huh! Kam, kam!"

Meanwhile the youngster who had stood his ground, moved up toward the official who was already sweating.

"Yes yupela ol fakim, stealing bastards. Every single one of you. From the directors down to the general casual labourers."

"Kam lukim buk bilong mipela! Lukim em! Giaman man!"

The official turned to the crowd that had gathered around them without a hope of getting their support.

"Mi no need long shekim buk. Lukim tasol ol ordinary drivers na sampela kuskus. Wanem kain samting oli gat?"

With that he floored the official who had been busy doing an Ali-shuffle. He was engulfed in the dust where he fell; the district was having its unusual dry season then.

"Oi ko dzangea nau no! Yu bin stilim mi taim mino rere yet."

He swung very widely, but missed by more than a kilometre. His own weight carried him and soon he was sprawled in the dust again, much to the annoyance of the man's relatives. Int he distance someone shouted, "One down". A cry of "they are fighting", soon brought Makule instantly to the battleground. He had been busy participating in the singing when the incident started. A group of women clutching their breasts had run up to him and told him that some sparkmen were murdering the Kusikusi.

"Wanem samtin yah?" he asked.

"Nogat. Muhammid Ali tasol KO long Sonny Liston long second round Yah," someone said jokingly.

"Man yupela olosem wanem pilai nabaut? Yupela nogat rispekt ol bikpela pikul bilong yumi?" An old man sneered at the joker revealing toothless gums and retreated to safer ground.

"Husat i kilim tambu, nau tasol yu kam arasait?" Someone who was always picking a fight shouted. "Yu kam! Kam out na traim mi." He wailed and shouted as he danced about waiting and waiting, but no one came.

"Plis ologeta na meri, harim mi," shouted Makule through the microphone. Michael

thought he could easily swallow the microphone as he opened his mouth wide to speak. "Stopim faith na go bek long ananit long liwai. Mi siaman mi tok. go bek!"

Makule's command was like a miracle. Everyone moved back to the shade of the trees. The singing continued. The defeated official got up promising to get even with the lad who had floored him.

"No komana to kupu mino kambe!"

He showed him a clenched fist. That was the one thing that the ordinary people were not familiar with.

They had been led to think that all was going well; that their savings were increasing tenfold and the establishment of depots in every corner of the district was the sign of the expansion of the Co-operative Society. That day was another occasion of celebration. The Co-operative bought free cordial and scattered it about the area in huge 44 gallon containers. It had even provided transport for the people for that occasion.

The speech given during the opening by Makule, was nothing more than a self congratulation to himself and his board of directors and the management team for a job well done. Michael was fortunate to record Makul's speech. Here is part of it.

"The job of managing a large co-operative society as the Toberaki Co-operative Society is not often easy. Often times the directors and the management must deal with numerous problems, like low cocoa prices — they have to re-adjust the prices of wet beans to cater to the lowering prices. Often they have to allow a substantial amount of funds to help cocoa growers at difficult times. This has resulted in the establishment of a stabilisation fund formed by the society. We pay more for cocoa beans than private buyers do. In this we are not trying to kill the people but to help them gain more in these troubled times. Our aim is to help the people and not to exploit them.

Another more pressing problem is the management of the society. Pay increases are the order of the day. We have to keep up with the times. The government in Konebotu decides how much to pay workers in the rural centres. We have to abide by that. We cannot

sack all or some of our workers for they in turn would claim more money as compensation for the amount of work they do. This does not mean that we would be spending more! No! In fact we would be spending what we spending now with the twenty odd casuals and clerks, including the manager. So one can see that having to retain the number we have now is still within our means. It also means lighter work for our men. After all we are not machines and what's more, we Papua New Guineans are an unhealthy lot, and if we are overworked we would be limiting our life-span by more than twenty years."

This brought a chorus of approval from the crowd. One grizzly old man shouted out loud that in his youthful days, life was taken for granted. Work today, rest tomorrow, go fishing the next day and hunting the other days. The reason why he had reached a life old age was because he had taken life very easily never running too much, no sex and he ate plenty of possums.

"That's pure laziness," someone shouted. "No wonder this district is still under-developed."

"Yes yah! Sampela district i gat skiskrapa pinis."

"Yu salap! Hsat it pilai wantaem yu?"

"Silence, Let the chairman speak," a self appointed MC shouted.

"We are besieged by vague, unconstructive allegations of corruption. Stealing, wantokism, nepotism, making the society a family business and other nonsenses like that. Oftentimes we wanted to resign and let those big mouths take over the running of the society. But we just can't. We know we have a duty to carry out. We have here as office workers, some of the best educated men in PNG. They may belong to the same clan but they are the best. They may be my relatives, but aren't they yours too? Today we saw a most savage attack on one of our top men in the society. He was beaten and kicked in the dust by none other than his own uncle. He was accused of being a thief — a swindler. I ask you in this the christian way to treat your relatives who have feverishly worked to get

the society where it

At this, several Many people had t Makule. Someone for their ancestors t

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"We may not be are," continued M may not have degr or whatever piece what good is that good only for the company? What de for the work and n co-operative that br and degrees?

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The same war-m as soon as Makule bottle of coke to qu away his sorrow.

"Givim sisala ma me na biambai mi l

Everyone thought they all burst out wasn't in the mood enough to devour Makule continued.

"The establishmen another scheme by down on the hardsh transport their coco the central headquar more cocoa coming belief that people enough to transpo headquarters. The s more easier for those here.

You have been led society is taking out back. Such distruc trying to sew mistru satan when he tricke that fruit that has fou

the society where it is today?"

At this, several women began to wail. Many people had their eyes misting, including Makule. Someone called out for their blood, for their ancestors to kill them.

"Nae limowai petali," someone shouted.

"We may not be as highly educated as you are," continued Makule between sobs, "we may not have degrees, diplomas, certificates or whatever piece of paper you have, but what good is that degree or diploma if it is good only for the towns and the mining company? What do you give back in return for the work and money raised through this co-operative that brought you your education and degrees?"

If this degree is too high for the village level business development than to hell with it! Our men here, although they lack your expertise, they know their work well. Leave us alone and let us do our work and celebrate our achievement in peace."

The same war-monger was on the warpath as soon as Makule had stopped to drink a bottle of coke to quench his thirst and wash away his sorrow.

"Givim sisala man, husat i tok bilas long me na biambai mi kakaim i no tang."

Everyone thought this was so funny that they all burst out laughing. The man who wasn't in the mood for joking looked angry enough to devour any challengers alive. Makule continued.

"The establishment of the new sub-depot is another scheme by the society to help cut down on the hardship of some who have to transport their cocoa from long distances to the central headquarters. This will also mean more cocoa coming from here as it was our belief that people in this area harvested enough to transport by shoulder to the headquarters. The sub-depot will make life more easier for those of you who come from here.

You have been led astray to think that this society is taking out more than it is putting back. Such destructive elements who are trying to sew mistrust amongst you are like satan when he tricked Adam and Eve to eat that fruit that has four corners. Beware of that

man in the sheep's skin, for he may be a wolf. Your money is safe. It has been invested in a fixed account. You have a very highly motivated, dedicated and efficient staff who won't let you down. God i bilasim yupila na luk aut skin bilong yu." Everyone absent mindedly replied 'amen'.

No sooner had Makule finished when the self appointed MC took up his hobby horse, criticising and praising those whom he thought were good to his eyes. He began praising the staff of the society. The kusikusi who was floored in the afternoon was the topic of his speech. He said he was a workaholic who took his responsibilities very seriously. It was because of him along that the society was running as smoothly as the laba river; before the company turned it into a sewer.

Makule as chairman of the Board of Directors was instrumental in creating that situation. He chose the best instrument toward that situation. He chose that best men, like the kusikusi. He asked those young bloods, whom he said were trying to destroy a duly established all national run society, established by officers of the Colonial Primary Industry Division, where their poor parents were going to sell their crops if they were going to intimidate and wreck this society. This he asked with naked accusation. His voice trembled and he shook with uncontrollable rage.

"We are the roots, the branches, the leaves that give you shelter like a marimari tree that gives you shelter from the heat of the sun. Yet despite this you turn around and spit in our faces and stab us in our backs." He stopped to empty a glass of iced cordial into his guts.

"Yesi yah! Ol fakim pangun mani. Only fit to drink beer and chase after women and go disco dancing!"

Everyone turned around to look at the speaker. It was none other than a pot bellied ex-con man who had resigned from the mine's catering services to contest the National Elections.

"What the hell you people of Papua New Guinea! What the, you Castro, Kadafi and all rotten revolutionaries smelling balls and cocks

of them. Fuck the stinking sweetesh Samoa banana. Up the Ayatollah's Shiite seet."

This rather roudy comic style English, belted out by the intending MP brought out a chorus of laughter. The man had spoken out in support of the previous speaker. Yet he spoke nothing worth listening to, but a dustbin full of rotten, unintelligible, verbal garbage said by a big mouth who thinks with his mouth. He had bellowed out words that were neither intelligent nor dirty.

"Come forth we meet good, you lousy rooster," he shouted.

"That's a full house," someone shouted humourously but more as a compliment. "Himself in person," but stopped as if he had the wrong word. The same person laughed and hooted to be joined by a boisterous bunch of young boys.

"Yu fukim san of a sea kok. Husat i pilai wantaim yu? YU de tink mi de pilai boi long yu?" he screamed, saliva dripping out of his mouth.

Apparently the man disliked being called full house. The name carried a bitter taste to his mouth. The saying was a common joke amongst mine workers which referred to fat females. A result of too much eating of kaukau, rice and other fattening food as a nutritionist would say. Previously the man appreciated the name believing it was a fantastic change in place of his kanaka name, the one that his uncles had named him when he had shot out into the outside world after being in hiding for nine months. Michael couldn't help laughing to himself. His fellow Toberakians appeared to represent a tribe of clowns and jesters. One is always running into one of them every now and then. There was bound to be one or two in some other joints, but his own Toberakia breed and cultivated them.

When he thought about the whole episode he couldn't help feeling sorry for the men who were getting abused. Makule represented a class of men who belonged to the past but were unwilling to accept the fact that they were running a society which required professional men with appropriate training to manage it and not any old 'abc — 123'

scholars. There were Toberakians with university degrees looking for huge salaries, yet none of them were willing to help out the society. There were question and answers to be found. But one question which he could not forget was, why university trained accountants could not come and manage the society. Just about any Tom, Dick and Harry who was claiming to be an accountant worked for the society. None had any training, and yet they claimed to be accountants. They did not need to think any deeper than their shoe soles. The glamorous magnetising sweetness of city life has had a lot to do with the transmigration of the graduates from universities to town and city established firms. The education system, a museum relic from the NSW bureau of archives, was primarily geared to provide an education system for the country's first lot of white collar chair-bound monkeys. This as still inforce even after independence. The national policy which had deemed to restructure education that would train pupils on traditional values, had been exchanged for education on a broader scale for possible entrance into a highly industrialised field. In fact it was rumoured that the expatriate apparatus had a deliberate plan to create master elites; highly trained, motivated and vicious nationals, modelled on the British and other European class systems to run the government and the private sector. A highly confidential directive, which miraculously found it's way into a radical national's hand, had the following to say about how to restructure the PNG social system.

"That the best way to avoid an ethnical struggle for domination or control over the major decisions and policy making of the civil service and private enterprise was to train a selected group of people from many outspoken and well established ethnical groups. The theory would be a deterrent of possible in-fighting for possible control, domination and manipulation of key decision making posts. Having representation from specifically selected groups would not only mean a balance of weight in the civil service." It would be assumed that this policy would

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keep all grumbling down to minimum. However such theories had a rather late implementation and hence, even though it would have been the most successful colonial doctrine ever invented, it fell drastically short of its aims. The civil service and private enterprise, to a certain extent, is virtually dominated by three select ethnical groups from level three positions down to the most humble class three janitors; that is classes and limitless levels in the civil service where you have secretary, assistant secretary, assistant deputy secretary and all that string of ridiculous bureaucratic network of positions within a position.

A grass root society as such, like the Tona Society was therefore regarded by many ignorant education Toberakians as one which does not offer much social status, even though the pay may be good enough, glamour, and other entertainment such as cocktail parties, overseas travel that a city job would offer (including free luxury cars, telephones, housing subsidised electricity and enormous over time pay).

He found that Makule was a driving force for some form of development in the Toberaki district. Yet despite Makule's push for the materialising of his aims, the society was not responding as well from the kicks it was getting in grotesque pronouncements and injection of taxes levied on growers and disguised as handling charges; the Society was slipping further into bankruptcy.

Although the involvement of someone with sound financial managerial expertise and experience would seem a very welcomed decision, Makule, as director of the Board, had repeatedly rejected a number of Toberakian applicants whom he said knew nothing and were bloody good at reading comics tasol. In fact he, Makule, was ill advised by the manager of Tona Co-operative Society. The manager had remarked that on many occasions he had seen big departmental heads tucked away in their spacious carpeted offices reading the latest on Tarzan, Phantom and other verbal lies sold by newsagents and book shops throughout the country's urban centres. That, however, was in many instances a gross misunderstanding by the manager,

who would have mistaken a clerk as a departmental head. Makule, nevertheless, was not at all the innocent misinformed lapun who made decisions without proper advice. Makule practiced and exercised a virtually monopolistic policy in the running of the society, the community government and the school and other organizations of which he was a chairman. His own kind were the best brains, mathematicians, managers and workers; others were useless stupid kanakas.

The following is an outline of Makule's major appointments of relatives and personal friends to positions in the schools, boards of governors, the community government and the Tona Co-operative Society. Makule was a self-retired teacher of Toberaki District School. He was the one who persuaded the land owners to have the school built on their land. In fact he retired after the Catholic church had started retiring permit standard one teacher, like himself, who had the good old standard two education.

From that day on, he was voted chairman of the Board of Governors and was returned to office year after year and at the same time, managed to appoint all his relatives as members of the Parents and Citizens Associations to the very vital positions of treasurer and organizers in committees. He even managed to have his son appointed to the school upon his graduation as master of the school, thereby paved the way for his other two sisters, a first cousin brother and his own two in-laws. Soon the whole school staff was dominated by persons who were either close relatives of Makule or persons who held close family connexions to Makule. The school was later christened St. Joseph's Memorial School, after Makule's christian name. Makule's full name was Joseph, Paul de La Cruse Makule. In later years some young people were caught humourously calling the school St. Joseph of McCule School. They were charged under some ordinances by the village court magistrate who was none other than Makule's own younger brother. How silly of Makule to be upset, after all Makule was himself entitled to some recognition for his commitment to the school.

The post-independence years came just at the time when Makule was thirsting for other more influential positions other than being the chairman of a little known bush school. Makule conspicuously became a determined disciple for the theme of decentralisation. He became a full member of all the political parties. He would not lose time to hear the local MP for the provincial Assembly nor the National Parliament. He possessed, even does today, a copy of the national preamble and the constitution. He would spend long nights studying the constitution under an ancient pressure lamp salvaged from an old missionary's junk yard. He never understood in the slightest the difficult legal language, although if asked would admit to knowing the whole context of the constitution; every subsection, from commercial foreign relations agreement to the depths of the traditional and English laws.

Makule's election, the election was rigged, into the vacant seat of the Chairman of the Community Government came at a most fortunate time. The former chairman had been stripped of his position and jailed following his conviction by the court for alleged misappropriation of the provincial government's money. Sources close to Makule's victorious election to the chairmanship, boasted that they had been instrumental in the downfall of a corrupt, tyrantical and despotic chairman. Their allegations may have born some resemblance tot he truth, but whatever the real story may have been was never known.

It was rumoured that Makule had at times advised the chairman about financial matters without the knowledge of the finance committee. It also became a common practice for the members of the Community Government Finance Committee to merely sit down while the Finance Committee's chairman handed down the proposed and final draft of the budget. No questions asked; no queries. Whatever plan Makule would propose would be accepted without question; word for word as Makule had drafted it whether tree tops, grassroots or in whatever level of government.

Makule's main task, as he said, was the restruction of the management and administrative arms of the Community Government. During his maiden speech as the new chairman, he announced as his primary aim, the new chairman to re-organize the administration and policy making management of the Community Government. An excerpt of part of his speech on that fateful day is as follows.

"Lon makim gavamani i ran gud, emi impotent long husat i man i wok emi masi man a i savi lon waka na ino bullsit man natu i no stilman. Mi bilip yumi mas lukluk gud tru long husat man i wok long yumi. Ino ol kusikusi tasol, nogat yumi yet tu o memba bilong Kumuniti gavamani. Sapos emi yet ol lida ino bihainim stretpela pasim yumi imas resain. Kain toktok bilong mi ino maus nating, nogat! Olo bikpela lida long Konebotu i autim sisala krai. Yumi gat ol pablik seven husat ino waka strait. Planti i le man, lusim wok or lus nating long wok na wokim narapela samting, olsem waka bisinis, politik na tu go egensin gavamani. Sampela kusikusi na draiva na reba i mas aut, na nupela man kisim ples bilong ol, so baimbai gavamani i waka efisain ego in. Mi yet baimbai wokim plen bilong dispela senis, bikos emi impotent mi mas kerim aut responsibiliti bilong mi. Dispela plen mi tingim em long lain praim ministra yet i wok long autim ol nalapela ministra of waka man, husat i no stret long ai bilong em, or i egenisin cabinet na daunim point bilong koalison patina long gavamana."

Following Makule's inaugural speech, he introduced what he called 'nupela rot'. His plan for the restruction of the community government, was the firing of the Community Government Secretary, the typist and the driver, all of whom he accused of being parties in broad daylight to the corruptive rule of the dismissed chairman of the Community Government. In their place he appointed his district nephew to the position of Community Government Secretary; and unwed half cast mother of two fathered by a former catholic priest and two drivers who were both rekknown for drunkenness and womanizing and

who had just con term at Kuvikia murdering an inn who had refused t vehicle. Yet despit to the hiring of u finally had his wa

"They are a re at the assembly. " history. Nogat mi na bihainim orde court that these t death of the poor

Makule was ve when he mention was only a put-up had it that Makul account of an ear eldest son to the g drop out. Makul primary school : standard three; a class of fifty stu boasted openly th sophisticated wor planning of the m Toberakians. Th knowledge of th saying that he wa prized daughter b three drop out. l charges on the n him being a f however, like th and told the warr could not be a p had not planned heart he was quit mix race Toberak began as the Secretary, but se employee of the and Makule as w

Many evening bar at Makule's Her presence me for Makule's b bastard from th the occasional ex drinking den wi

who had just completed serving a six year term at Kuvikia convict settlement for murdering an innocent girl aged seventeen who had refused to accompany them in their vehicle. Yet despite other members' objections to the hiring of these two criminals, Makule finally had his way.

"They are a refined lot," Makule shouted at the assembly. "I do not consider their past history. Nogat mi lukim kain we man i wok na bihainim order. It was never proven in court that these two were responsible for the death of the poor girl," he said.

Makule was very apologetic and shed tears when he mentioned the murder case. But it was only a put-up show. Unconfirmed stories had it that Makule had plotted the murder on account of an earlier mismarriage case of his eldest son to the girl's elder sister; a university drop out. Makule's son had gone through primary school and managed to complete standard three; always at the bottom of his class of fifty students. Makule's son had boasted openly that he would marry a very sophisticated woman at the time of the initial planning of the marriage; which was typical of Toberakians. The girl's father upon his knowledge of the marriage plans, refused saying that he was just not going to dump his prized daughter because of any dirty standard three drop out. Makule's son wanted to lay charges on the man for what he said about him being a filthy drop out. Makule, however, like the good pharisee, intervened and told the warring parties that the marriage could not be a possibility because the Lord had not planned it that way. But deep in his heart he was quite annoyed. The half caste, a mix race Toberakian who had a Kurat father, began as the Community Government Secretary, but soon was serving both as an employee of the Community Government and Makule as well.

Many evenings she would be found at the bar at Makule's elder brother's drinking den. Her presence meant bigger crowds and profit for Makule's brother, from every young bastard from the nearby villages, including the occasional expatriate who frequented this drinking den with the hope of winning the

mix race woman's hand for a few hours. She was extremely charitable, like the good woman of Konedobu, and never let a man down; even an ugly one. In fact the whole of Toberaki district was inhabited by ugly people; the mixed race people were an exception. Her mother was perhaps an exception also, yet somehow not far removed from her monkey faced relations.

The mix race's two bastard sons were given special allowances, which Makule pushed, and succeeded in being accepted by the members. When some members objected and protested that this was unfair to the other children of such nature, Makule shouted and banged his fist on the table (he had to have his hand mended by the village bone doctor the following day), shouting that this particular case was different. The mother was a worker within a government institution, therefore she could not manage to support them adequately because she did not have anyone else to help her. That comment was unheard of in Toberaki; mind you the whole of the Toberaki district was crawling with numerous bastardized children. The case was investigated by a brilliant Toberakian scholar who came up with an interesting story.

The Toberaki, or na'h Toberaki, were once a colourful people, being descendents of Micronesia and Polynesia, through their 3,000 years migration across the Pacific from some locations in Africa or Asia. They insisted that they were created there in Toberaki on Mount Motoroso by Pagelu and eventually settled in what is known as Toberaki today. They were fairer and strikingly handsome, standing up to six feet and above. Their females were equal giants. They were the Amazons of the Pacific. Their tragic inter-marriages with the inland people — Gona Gona tribe — the indigenous people of the island, contributed to their ugly melanesian complexion, for the Gona-Gaona's were themselves a tribe not far past eh Homo Erectus from the Neanderthalensis era. Today all Toberaki (until recently) were a tribe of ugly ogres. The large scale eradication programme was a master plan devised to get anyone, regardless of race or whatever, to

mate with the Toberaki with the prime aim of producing fair looking Toberaki in preference to the old Matage. One old school got this idea after having read some articles written about Hilter and the Third Reich — particularly the Aryan race. Some other groups tried but failed, but the Na'h Toberaki were particularly successful. Their efforts were uncontrolled, while Hilter's was more controlled and selective.

In the weeks following Makule's rise to the chairmanship of the Community Government, the government turned to an almost one man government deriving all its functions from some confounded business books. All works programmes were controlled by Makule. Makule personally negotiated the awards of contracts for any new minor and major work programme. Never did he ever award a contract to an honest company. There were a number of construction companies with one or two run by able and trained personnel. Many were countless groups of retired PWD labourers and operators who got themselves together calling themselves Earth Mowers, or Sand Busters and other stupid names like that.

Many were broke but were refusing to liquidate their companies. Their machines, a cluster of rusty 1950 models mostly salvaged junk from the old PWD junk yard, could hardly be called machines. Doors had fallen off or were missing. Most machines had no driver's seat, so drivers were forced to stand up all day. There was no roof to protect the operators from the boiling sun and there were brekaages every day. Most of the time the companies were fixing broken down machines. Yet Makule insisted that they be paid. He had to because he got a K250,00 commission for every contract awarded. A normal work day ended for his drivers at 4.06 p.m. After 4.06, Community Government drivers got fresh instructions from Makule or the secretary, directed by Makule. These orders included transportation of cartons of beer to some friend's villages to the many black market outlets or transportation of Community Government members to taverns and parties or singings. There was festivity all

the year around; Sunday to Sunday. There were hire girls, constant rock music; hence members were always away from their offices.

All this one could see as a continuation of the previous chairman's actions. And although Makule denounced this practice, he said over the NBC that he discreetly supported it, frequented parties and girls' vocational centres.

Makule's personal relationship with the mix race girl was noted by his wife, a super firebrand who gave no hoots to anyone; least of all Makule. The secretary had accompanied Makule on every official town and study trip. Makule, without knowing or perhaps knowingly, had been passing gifts to her; mostly things she could not afford. Once he came back from a very controversial study trip to some ghettos in the Orient and brought back a gold plated wrist watch. The next day this mix race woman wore it and she became the centre of attraction amongst the villages.

Makule's wife, Kokopau, had seen the new wrist watch, called Lani watsih, glittering around the secretary's wrist. A pair of tin earrings that dazzled like a twinkling star, also became a cause of attraction. On that fateful day Kokopau caught Makule and the secretary red-handed. Monpagau had reported to Kokopau earlier that Makule and the Lapu Kasi secretary had often stayed in the office alone and were indulging in immoral activities. The secretary appeared to really enjoy Makule's company. Such relationships, concluded Monpagau and a bunch of village gossip professionals, can only mean one thing; *Waisomana*.

Monpagau was Makule's traditionally marked wife, but was ditched when Makule got hooked to Kokopau after he made her pregnant while she was a gorgeous laundry girl at the Momorego Marist Sisters' convent. What can be more tempting and intimate than the hani watsi?

"Has she got the money to buy it?" asked Mampagau.

Never! So she paid for it with her rotten *tenge*. Kokopau had spent that night crying her guts out. Makule had gone and slept somewhere delivering some bullshit speeches

to some ignorant therefore that I pamuk meri, so and even things

That was the estimated his K thought that she wife who prepared clothes and lo children; including of grandchildren Kokopau. They children and gr satisfying accom bearing children after having th had, had great completely trust above suspicion, his dearly beloved remain a forgiving cat she had cre Government Of them from a n secondhand bin uncle had conveyed minute she had under the table exposed lap, w that touch of a stimulating from Kokopau was s meant for her al secret folds; th touching her se stepped in and working hard. I out to grab t followed was a r bar room brawl Kokopau tore a secretary's sharp and Makule, in separate the two kneed by Koko playing three le investigate and embraced, bloo and two females

"Kotsun and

to some ignorant people. She concluded therefore that Makule must be with that pamuk meri, so vowed the next day to go out and even things up.

That was the one thing that Makule underestimated his Kokopau for. He had often thought that she was a peace loving, motherly wife who prepared his food, washed his clothes and looked after his numerous children; including an equally countless herd of grandchildren. Such were Makule and Kokopau. They were the happiest lot, bearing children and grandchildren was their most satisfying accomplishment. Kokopau stopped bearing children after having a hysterectomy after having three miscarriages. Kokopau had, had great trust in Makule whom she completely trusted (like everyone else) to be above suspicion, and he Makule believed that his dearly beloved Kokopau would eternally remain a forgiving and timid woman. Like a cat she had crept toward the Community Government Office, after having spied on them from a nearby bush using a pair of secondhand binoculars which her ex-army uncle had conveniently lent her. For a full minute she had watched Makule's hand pass under the table to rest on the secretary's exposed lap, who sighed deeply savouring that touch of a pair of old hands what were stimulating from years of experience. Now Kokopau was seeing that hand, his hands meant for her alone, exploring the secretary's secret folds; the hand which had stopped touching her several months ago. Kokopau stepped in and asked if they were really working hard. Instantly her hands stretched out to grab the secretary's dress. What followed was a mad scuffle; something like a bar room brawl in an old wild west film. Kokopau tore at the secretary's dress. The secretary's sharp nails grated Kokopau's face, and Makule, in between, tried desperately to separate the two women, and had his testicles kneed by Kokopau. Two security men busy playing three leaves in the bush, came to investigate and saw three figures tightly embraced, blood dripping all over the floor and two females tightly glued to each other.

"Kotsun and nauno ghe. Ghabana no kere

ghoom!" wailed Kokopau as she tried to get up. Makule's foot pressed on her lap against the wooded floor.

"Kalabusim em! Pasim hand bilong em," shouted Makule.

"Yes Kalabusim mi! Bihain yu bihain narapela hass. Wanem hap i nupela na yanpela?"

"Sah salap!" shouted Makule at Kokopau, greatly embarrassed.

"Olgeta hap mi lukim pinins. Tagholem, kapam mi likim pinis. Nah yu laik bihainim narapela meri? Hamas bubu yu gat?"

"Fakim salap! Yu sit bit meri," shouted Makule as she tried to beat her up. His attempts were quite in vain. Kokopau had darted away and in the process, threw all her clothes off all over the room. She jumped up and down in the nude holding her breasts to prevent them from prancing up and down, and called out to all the people to come and see their saintly Makule whom she had caught pushing his hands into the secretary's buttocks.

"Kone pukeana witam nah keta kaputai hofa kasi," cried Kokopau at the top of her voice. Amongst the large crowd, women who were mostly gossips, gathered around the high building, each straining to catch a word. Some women had joined Kokopau and flung curse after curse at the secretary whom they accused of betraying their saintly Makule. She was accused of selling her body, being a village pamuk, a community shithouse, a devil incarnate, Eve from the garden of Eden, a prostitute as in Australia or Manila, a Kings Cross meri and a pamuk house as in the German New guinea. Many of these women were wives of former plantation labourers. The two security men who were performing a half-hearted job had stopped to view the people and the live Buddha-like figure of Kokopau sitting in the nude with her legs wide open. A loud shout of command from Makule caught them unaware, resulting in one of them leaping into Kokopau's lap (much to the delight of the younger men). Makule had immediately retreated to an inner room following Kokopau's unceremonious bundling into the Community Government

vehicle. He tried to forget the incident; treat it as sheer nonsense perpetrated by sheer jealousy; an uneducated woman creating a sensation because she could not see beyond her limited sphere of knowledge of the western system which was a boss-secretary relationship. This happened in some town offices-tanim plate business — and Makule had hoped that he could indulge in the same relationship. No matter how hard he tried, he could not get this incident off his mind. The episode seemed to stick in his brain like a beenbean; a tumour. It was thence the start of Makule's immaculate life. He became a harmless, conscientious provider, a good husband who never beat his wife or lied like other husbands whose everyday activity was to flog their wives until they urinated. They would then drag them to bed and make love to them in front of the village population. What shame.

The shouting had died down. Under a cluster of coconut trees, the village gossips were amassed, relating the whole episode and adding more here and there for more evening gatherings in the villages. A shout from the women brought Makule out. He immediately ordered them to disperse or get fined K100 each. (This remark is not hot gas. People can be charged K100 for any old child-like mischief.)

"Wah koviamaana hafu kasi, ghaman mananamia no nausu kam," shouted one as they dispersed.

"Piss off," a young man shouted at them. They moved away making signs for him to follow them into the bushes.

The days following the brawl in the Community Government office passed away very slowly. All conversations seemed to centre around Kokopa, the half caste and Makule's fight. Michael took advantage of the occasion by studying Makule very closely. He wondered what Makule would do now that Kokopau had discovered him passing his hands under the table to smooth the secretary's badly scared legs.

Makule's adolescence days were not meritorious to say the least. Makule was born a grandson of a war-monger. His

grandmother was a pretty Naghalvan captive girl who was later married to Makule's grandfather, making her his fourth wife; and the prettiest too. Their relationship had started on the day when Makule's grandfather was busy pounding sago. She came up and stood above him on the sago trunk with her legs widely spread apart revealing that exotic 'maghanna' from the Naghalu Island. She had a well developed figure; more developed than a cultured pearl. Her beauty combined with Makule's grandfather's ugliness, was clearly on Makule's ruggedly handsome face. His own father married a 'Monopokini', which makes Makule a member of a higher class of Toberaki. Makule, at one stage, was an undisputed leader of a youth gang before the Kipoes, Goipex, Jackals and petty criminals of Moresby raided village gardens, fish traps, pigpens and ambushed young women. His reign of terror came to an end when he was sent to school at the Boritone Catholic Education Centre.

The sad fact was that no one knew anything about the whereabouts of the gang. Neither did they know who the members were. Makule's grandfather, who openly supported this crazy situation, died without knowing that one of his own blood was a leader of the group. In fact he was the main driving force behind the revitalisation of inter-tribal fights. He resented having to live to his old age without an occasional head-hunting expedition. He would tell Makule during the long dark evenings that in the old days, fighting was an everyday ritual.

"Yu kamap man stret long kam bek wantaim hamas head," he told him.

At the end of two months everyone had completely forgotten about the Makule-Kokopau episode. Makule had succeeded in his drive for the reconstruction of the Community Government. The tona Co-operative Society which was established as a community business before the introduction of decentralisation, became the business arm of the Toberaki Community Government. Individuals who had more than one share (every shareholder had fifty or more shares), were asked to forfeit one share. From this the

government owned ordinary shares, the Co-operative Society. It was a part of what was... Individuals who refused to often refused to appoint price... any slight over price... their stores down.

Makule owned a... operated by some... stores were affiliated... Association. His store... in the whole district... never-ending supply... sunlong rice, twisted... item that was on the... to mention bottle... the only stores that... was shifted out of the... sold at black market... shop assistants were... having gone through... School. Although the... profits, his keeper... money. This may be... free gifts which each... on pay days.

When Michael... village, he could not... huge cranes lifting... were hoisted into... and semi-trailers brought... Matabosi, once a... was fast becoming... community. A threat... the whole community... he could not help... which he thought... show. But Makule... around supervising... here and there, despite... insistence that the... the plans.

"What rot! What waste," Michael... busybees perched... building nailing... position.

Such spending.

government owned more than 10,000 ordinary shares, thus owning half of the Co-operative Society. Every trade store was made a part of what was termed 'Gut Pasim Stoa'. Individuals who refused to be members were often refused renewal of licenses, or self-appointed price controllers would look for any slight over pricing of goods and close their stores down.

Makule owned a chain of trade stores each operated by some close relative. His trade stores were affiliated with the Pasim Stoa Association. His stores were the best stocked in the whole district. They seemed to have a never-ending supply of tinned fish, trukai and sunlong rice, twisted tobacco and every other item that was on the village shopping list; not to mention bottle shops. Makule's shops were the only stores that sold beer. The same beer was shifted out of the back door at night and sold at black market dens in the villages. His shop assistants were qualified store keepers, having gone through the Wewak Stoa Kipa School. Although the trade stores made huge profits, his keepers were not paid good money. This may be due to the mountain of free gifts which each man was allowed to get on pay days.

When Michael first visited Makule's village, he could not believe his eyes. He saw huge cranes lifting heavy steel frames which were hoisted into position and transporters and semi-trailers bringing in more of the stuff. Matabosi, once a quiet out back village, was fast becoming a mini-metropolitan community. A three story building dominated the whole community. When he first saw it, he could not help laughing at the silly building which he thought was quite useless; just sheer show. But Makule seemed to enjoy it, running around supervising and making adjustments here and there, despite the chief architect's insistence that the builders ought to stick to the plans.

"What rot! What extravagance. Such a waste," Michael thought as he watched the busybees perched on the skeleton of the building nailing and screwing frames into position.

Such spending could not be the result of

the good profit made from the stores. Many prominent public figures had swindled money to better themselves. The Community Government lost K5,000,00 every year and for the past six years, the total amount lost had amounted to K30,000,00. Once he whispered his thought to one man whom he thought would be bright enough to see such spending as extraordinary. The same bastard merely dismissed the idea, saying that Makule was beyond question, and that was that.

"Haus emi wokim emi kamap long hat wok bilong em!"

"Yessah! Tasol yu no ting emi plenti moni tumas?" Michael questioned.

"Em nau! Husat inap long em? Mi statim stoa bilong mi long yia 1955. Tude emi 20 toea stoa yet. Na propeti mi no laik autim long yu, no gud yu lapim mi."

"Yes emi tru. Tasol yu tink mino i kam we?"

"Wanem yu askim kwesten olsem? Bikos yu no gat moni olsem? Mi tink yu 'J' no?"

"You bloody fool you. You think I would be jealous?" He grabbed him by his beard and twisted his hand. He looked at him straight in the eye and kicked him into the drain.

"Kota tsuna tagowawaino ghem palingi, ma pakako petam?" shouted the man as he climbed out. Michael helped him out and withdrew to a safer distance.

"Datsim nanah no kot a togha?" he sneered at him.

The defeated man looked at him, then looked up at the tree tops hoping to find some protection. After some minutes he looked down and faced Michael and asked why he had asked the question.

"Mi ting ting . . ." the man stopped there.

"Stupid, short sighted fool," Michael thought and added, "narrow minded cunt!"

But upon reflection of the person in front of him, he mused that no one should expect an illiterate bugger like Kito, even though he may claim to be educated at Ringuna in the good old days of the 50s, to know more than his eyebrows. He may be an honest shopkeeper, selling his goods for a mere profit of 1 toea for every item sold, yet he would not be one to suspect snakes like Makule and his

fellow cheats to be swindling public money into their own pockets.

"Yes mi tink tu. Emi kisim moni we?" began the man after a few moments of deep thinking. He still watched him offering no comment, allowing him to search deep into his brain.

Such people were too timid, were unwilling to get involved, had too much self pity and were too charitable even to upset a venomous snake like Makule or Mosiama even when their sins were as clear as daylight.

"Kat a legha gham, na dzoko. Yupela i gat save. Yu save kandere mi no save man hia gat pilanti moni. Sixpela yia i go emi rabis man. Nau hamas stoa, ka an na lukim traipela haus yah. Emi tru emi pilanti moni. Tasol, kandere mi wanpela man nating me peret long autim toktok no gud kot i kisimme." They parted.

When Michael was alone again, he began to think about Makule again. The building of the house was a clear show of naked corruption; redirection of money into private assets. Plato, Socrates and other ancient philosophers would turn in their graves if they could see such a waste of public money by a few privileged leaders, who were often nobodies who had no conception of modern parliamentary systems and economics. They continually contradicted their promises and policies. A lot of them found that being a parliamentarian meant a four year honeymoon full of orgies and tourist visits to foreign countries and big maus wara occasions in the parliament house. He wondered about the hundreds of politicians and civil service, big noises from Konedobu whom he had seen visiting Australia ending in Kings Cross every night they spent in Sydney.

Makule and his gang of so-called members were in the process of finalising their study trip to Australia; probably Sydney. Michael had been asked to help them plan the trip. He refused because he had lied to them, saying that he had never been there. The whole trip would cost K30,000.00 covering travelling flights, hotel and entertainment. They would host a banquet at some country town. They left two days later, all six bloody fools, despite the premier's plea to cancel the trip as it was a

waste of money. In the end they had their way after arguing that the money did not come from the Provincial Government's budget allocation. He wondered how many buggers had taken public funded holiday trips, disguised as study trips. Makule and his company trip was the first one undertaken at Community Government level. They would probably come back loaded with expensive presents and exotic dresses. One even mentioned having his portrait done. He wanted one of himself that would be remembered like the face of the Madonna.

Michael knew what was most important about the trips; especially government trips. It was no secret that the first places our official headed for were hot bath saunas, manned by human assistants who sat on top of them, massaged them, washed them and had sex with them. Then to cocktail parties, where free female entertainers and sexual partners were handed out as if they were a packet of cigarettes or some worthless present. They had bedrooms that were air conditioned. Several years ago while he was on his way down south, Michael slept at a modest guest house, paid for by Ansett, and couldn't sleep the whole night. A group of fifteen local government members were on their way to Manila for some conference. All night they talked of nothing else but what each one of them would do to those Philippine meris as soon as one approached them. Legalised prostitution is something which is missing in PNG. One wonders why the government has not given the go ahead to brothels or places like Kings Cross, so that all the frustrated meris could get employment and all the dry-men could be serviced.

The absence of the Community Government members paved a way for what one would call a coup d'etat. Michael led a strong group of village chiefs to the Community Government office and took the secretary and the three security men hostage. The financial statement and the bank reconciliation sheets showed nothing when inspected. All bank cheque leaves were readily signed. A draft account showed a balance of less than K2,000. Small amounts had been

paid out to various furniture which. Invoices showed guest houses a members had sta search for excite He was often av time political agricultural proje down. Crops wi maintenance wl holders of hortie Asian back str lounging under green bottles.

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"Do not sho two men hol tightened their cried out in pair

"Show us Michael a long l on a paper.

"Watpo?"

"No watpo's. the table." He n the acting chair

paid out to various companies for office furniture which was nowhere to be seen. Invoices showed bills from hotels, motels, guest houses and private homes where members had stayed during their island wide search for excitement. Makule topped it all. He was often away attending meetings (part time political campaigns) and visiting agricultural projects; many of which were run down. Crops withered from lack of proper maintenance while men claiming to be holders of horticulture certificates from some Asian back street college spent the day lounging under the shade of trees nursing green bottles.

The Tona Co-operative Society was instructed to make available K15,000, for entertainment expenses. The manager of the society who signed the cheques accompanied the Makule delegation. He had been planning to make an overseas visit too, but could not do so until he was offered free tickets by Makule; probably in return for allocating the amount required for entertainment. The man assisting the manager would eventually step into the manager's shoes. He had no more than the old ABC education, and yet saw fit to call himself an acting manager.

"This is a stick up buster," Michael told him as he pushed the acting manager to one side. He was grabbed by two toughs.

"Wanem menim bilong dispela. Husat i askim yupela long kam insait?"

"No questions swindler," Michael relied. "We are the auditors! This co-operative is under investigation, including you for financial mismanagement."

"Husat salim yupela?" the acting chairman shouted at him.

"Do not shout or you'll annoy me." The two men holding the acting chairman tightened their grip on his hands so that he cried out in pain.

"Show us these things." He showed Michael a long list of documents he had listed on a paper.

"Watpo?"

"No watpo's. Just take it out and put it on the table." He motioned to the men to release the acting chairman and beckoned him to fill

the documents on the table.

"What right have you got too demand these things? You are not the managing chairman. You will be brought to court for disrupting company persons. We will contact our lawyers."

"You have no lawyers. This is your lawyer and your account," Michael said pointing to two young men holding brief cases.

"You the lawyers? Well arrest these trouble makers."

"We didnot come to hold any court proceedings. We came to make investigations and you will assist us my friend," replied the lawyer.

"We are waiting! Where are these things?" Michael asked the man again. "Come on, the society is losing money because of your stubbornness."

The gathering crowd outside confirmed the acting manager's queries that the men were not alone. The whole district's population were out there waiting. After removing the basketful of betel nut, he placed the list of things on the table and read the account numbers twice and ticked it against the list.

"Emol hia. Tasol sapos yupela lukim pinis mistake mi laik tok aut olsem mi nogat nem long em. Mi wanpela man nating husat i stretim ol wok tasol taim ol bigman igo daun." He sat on a chair in front of the lawyer and the account as they began to examine the books. The assistant manager pulled out a dirty hand towel and wiped the sweat off his face.

"Cheque books?" Michael asked him.

"Emi stap," the acting manager said pointing to the receipt books.

"Em risit buk ino sek buk," someone said through the louvres. It was the old time store owner he had confronted. Poor bugger, he seemed to have rotten luck and never seemed to be making any profit at all. Michael winked at him.

"Nogat yah. Liklik hap tasol. Klosim halimim wantok long lukluk gut," the store owner said feeling somewhat elated as hundreds of pairs of eyes rested on him in admiration.

The acting manager dug into his pocket

and fished out the safe key. He opened the safe and got out cheque books and in doing so several bottles of rum, bacardi and dry gin came tumbling down, one half empty. The crowd outside gasped in astonishment. Many far want of the bottles, others through sheer fright.

"They store very valuable assets," the accountant joked. "A stimulant," he added. Meanwhile outside, the crowd had become restless, many wanted to know what had gone missing; how much money had been misappropriated. Some demanded the bottles of spirits (including the acting manager). They had all come to witness and observe the situation. News had been circulating that thousands of kina had gone missing and that the Society was in a state of collapse and many growers had not been able to seal their cocoa because the Society had run out of money.

Society had been used by workers as personal vehicles to carry their relatives to town and for pressure trips. Wet cocoa bean buyers were using up money to buy grog for themselves and their male relatives. Several vehicles had been hired to be seen no more. Money from the hire of the Society vehicles was going into personal pass books rather than into Society savings account. In fact it was known that the Society was financially broke. Wet cocoa beans had fermented and had then been sold. The growers were paid for the amount with the money made from the sale of dry beans. To pay its workers, the Society had had to borrow money from local trad estores; none from Makule's own stores. And now that the stores were going broke themselves, the Society was forced to borrow elsewhere.

The study group had looked forward to the flight back from Townsville and the afternoon connecting flight to Aropa. They could not wait to show off their new suits and shiny leather brief cases to their fellow islanders and every other humble Toberakian. A police car was on either side. It was a hot afternoon, hotter than usual. The sun struggled to shine through an early afternoon over cast sky over the Mount Takuan after a

whole month of non-stop raining; unusual for the district. Sweating in their woolen overcoats and bright red ties that choked their necks (they looked like strangled possums), they filed out in goose steps and surveyed the crowd for a familiar face, or looked for one of two individuals who would have come to meet them. The lawyer greeted them and escorted them to the police van.

"Hey, just a minute. We are government officials," protested Makule.

"Yes, we know," answered a police officer who stepped forward and showed him their warrant of arrest.

"Tasol what for? Mipela i no komitim trabel. Mi refuse long go insait long car inap mi lukim lawyer bilong mi," protested Makule who spoke for the other members.

"Husat lawyer bilong yu?" asked the police.

"Em hia," said Makule pointing at the legal officer who had escorted them to the car.

"Sorry I am a company lawyer, not your private lawyer," said the lawyer. I am self appointed to assist my people from tyrants. In fact Mr. Makule, you and your gang have looted the Tona Society and the Community Government. You are thieves. At this moment accountants are going through your books. Up to now they have found nothing good; nothing but unpaid bills, debts and bottles of spirits in the metal safes."

"Our books are in order. We have competent bookkeepers. We are above suspicion. How can you find fault in a person of my stature? We shall approach the Ombudsman Commission to investigate you."

"That is your democratic right sir. But for now please enter the van. You will have someone waiting for you at headquarters."

Two police loaded their luggage and hustled them into the van. A defeated lot. Their dream of being welcomed by a crowd of well wishers had been shattered, by one moth-eaten bastard. Who was he or she?

The provincial radio station reported the arrest by police early in the afternoon. I said.

"Long apinum tede tasol polis long Arawa i bin kisim sixpela big man bilong Toberaki Community Government i go long run gut

taim oli kam ara balus bihain taim long Australia na bilong ol konkon Inspekta Maramb oli kisim ol bihain Magistrate Toi Marambus i no stap long rum gu husat i bin stap lo ol lain hia oli bilong kampani - oli bin go long ra husat i go pas lo bilong Toberaki tok olsem emi no Emi ting ol sampe skul long Austral polis long ol tokt Makule i tok er ombudsman ke dispela samting Premia em tok er na bai lukluk lon

The news of bushfire. Many own version of t out aloud, that sentenced to fo traipela mekim s

"Husat i askin

"Tokim bilon nius?" replied the

"Fakim. Blar nupela long em."

"Nogat train laughed the lunat

Many people of his house. Th home was with l Many wanted to jail, who was Michael's father l do something to

"This is no neighbour as thy

"Yes," thou neighbour and t already. Such forgiveness whe

taim oli kam arasait long Air Niugini F 28 balus bihain taim oli kam bek long stadi trip long Australia na South East Asia, hap ples bilong ol konkon man. Man i makim polis sif Inspekta Marambus i tok ol lain big man hia oli kisim ol bihain oli kisim kot oda long sif Magistrate Toimonapu. Sif Inspekta Marambus i no tok aut watpo ol lain hia i stap long rum gut nau. Tasol wanpela man husat i bin stap long ples balus i tok emi ting ol lain hia oli brukim sampela lo long ol bilong kampani — natu plenti moni i lus taim oli bin go long raun bilong ol. Makule, man husat i go pas long ol lain hia natu siaman bilong Toberaki Community Government i tok olsem emi no save tru watpo oli kalabus. Emi ting ol sampela lain yangpela man husat i skul long Australia na PNG yet it giamanim polis long ol toktok natu long kisim kot oda. Makule i tok em bambai i tok save long ombudsman komisen long investigatim dispela samting nogut i kamap long ol. Premia em tok emi no save long samting hia na bai lukluk long em kwik taim stret."

The news of their arrest spread like bushfire. Many village gossipers had their own version of the news. One man shouted out aloud, that the six men had been sentenced to four years in jail, 'wantaim traipela mekim save'.

"Husat i askim yu?" asked Makule's wife.

"Tokim bilong wanem, yu harim long nius?" replied the man.

"Fakim. Blary tamoto tasol, yupela i nupela long em."

"Nogat traim bel bilong pusi tasol," laughed the lunatic.

Many people had come together in front of his house. The lawyer who had travelled home was with him as they faced the crowd. Many wanted to know why the men were in jail, who was responsible and so forth. Michael's father begged him and the lawyer to do something to withdraw the court order.

"This is not christian-like. Love thy neighbour as thy self," grunted his father.

"Yes," thought Michael, "love thy neighbour and be a fool as a fool you are already. Such stupid people, asking for forgiveness when they know perfectly well

that the rogues in the stinking jail are thieves who have amassed wealth to better themselves; have swindled public money to fund personal financial institutions for themselves; used public money to finance luxurious overseas travels disguised as an official government study trip; practised nepotism which had caused rampant corruption within the society and the Community Government bringing about total financial chaos."

Should they be forgiven? Such attitudes were typical of Toberakians. A kind of careless attitude; no one bothered to speak out and victimise the offenders.

"Yupela i bagarapim ol sixpela man. Plis yu mus stopim. Nogut putim trabel long yumi."

Another villager came forward to repeat the same thing, followed by another and another and then a chief followed by a former parliamentarian. Women, standing together in groups, voiced the same words vomited by their husbands. A loner back in the darkness shouted, "Down with Makule! Up with the boys."

People turned around in bewilderment as if they couldn't believe their ears.

"Yes down with the thieving bastards! Up with the boys." This man meant Michael and the lawyer when he referred to the 'boys'. "Marx, Engel, Mao and the Melanesian Alliance."

"Husat i bik maus olsem?" shouted the chief.

"Mi chief, Pokini, mi!" replied one former shop owner who went bankrupt when Makule built his own trade store beside his, forcing him to close down because every customer would not buy from him. People stood about frozen-faced looking like Lot's petrified wife as she turned to take a last look at Sodom and Gomorrah. This former shop owner walked up, knocking people down and kicking those who failed to move away quickly. No one said a word as the man mounted the steps. In their own minds they were charging him with being a communist or a socialist or one of those characters who believed in a classless society.

Michael was totally mystified by the people's lack of cohesion. Large sums of money which belonged to them had been swindled and they merely gasped yet were unprepared to raise a single hand. Michael reasoned that the people had not evolved to a high stage as one would expect. They were more interested in going to Arawa, Kieta, Panguna to view the Provincial Government's multi-million administration complex, fast cars, taverns and the supermarket to inhale foul air coming out from hundreds of unwashed bodies. Some had aims to better themselves, others were parasites, spare batteries; especially those who were wind blows (window shoppers). He imagined them standing about gazing at the juicy roasting chickens like hungry dogs, coming out of the massive glass door around buildings hoping to bump into a stray wantok or relative who would be kind enough to present them with a coin, an kina or so, or just buy them a small piece of fish or a bun. All looking sad as ever once the miserable junk, called food, had been eaten and washed down with a bottle of locally made junk. He remembered the time he met a dirty wantok whom he accidentally stepped on at the street corner. He was dying of hunger so he bought him a loaf of bread and a coke. Having emptied the drink into his throat he then swallowed the whole loaf. He had to give him another bottle to drown the bread that got caught in his throat even though the man had a barrel-like throat. Tell these people that thousands of kina had been swindled, or had gone into managers and directors pockets, and they will only reply, "Ausua! Na bai yumi mekim wanem? Emi wokim pinia."

Others are bound to make a joke of it. That night there were people who thought it would be a good time to relate the downfall of the Society and laugh about the good they had got out of it; beers, free rides, huge amounts of rice, all at the former Society's worker's houses who were now successful business men. When Michael could not bear to listen to such boastful individuals, he got up from where he was sitting and told the speakers to shut up.

"Yu tokim mipela pinis long wanem kain rabis yu pulimapim long maus bilong yu! So shut up." That shut them up; but only momentarily. One man moved back behind the crowd and soon had a small audience around him. Michael got to address the people.

"Ol wantok! Harim gut. Bigpela rong i kamap long Sosaiti na yet yumi no seksek liklik long em. Yumo ol wanem kain man, na yumi sindaun na peret nating. Yupela i lukim ol Makule na ol lain bilong em oli sindaun long kalabus na nau inap tunait ol hamas man i kam tok long lusim pasim kt na withdrawim kot oda? Plenti long yumi oli wok long sutim toktok long mipela olsem mipela lawyer hia, mi yet, accountant na ol yangpela long Panguna i kotim ol. Mipela i requesting tasol ol kot long holim pasim ol man hia na stretem ol plenti samting i kamap rong long Sosaiti. Inap nau oli no tok save na answering ol kwestsen na collaborate long ol painim ol polis. Balans bilong Sosaiti i nil. Ino gat liklik wan siling istap. Ino gat ol statement long tok save hamas moni i kam insait, na hamas i go aut. Sosaiti i no wokim wanpela draft budget na spending procedure. Yupela olgeta inap tude yupela yet ino kisim liklik sea moni i kam."

Askim yupela yet sea moni igo long we? Nau tasol mipela i painim olsem ol man husat i stap rum guard oli bin kisim lastpela K15,000:00 bilong Sosaiti long baim rot, na kaikai wantim olsem bilong ol stadi grup membas. Plenti ol man husat i wok bipo long Sosaiti oli gat ol gutpela haus, bisnis, stoa, cocoa, ka na kaikiam bisnis olsem. Ol man hia oli kisim ol bisnis statim wantem that cash, nogat dinau long beng olsem. Total emi bilong beng yet. Hamas yet Sosaiti i save baim ol? Em ol liklik samting olsem, tasol yupela i save long em tasol yupela yet ino laik toktok. Yupela ol meri, pikinini or wanem?"

It was true. When he sought to speak to them he knew he would be speaking to a group lacking drive and motivation. They were simple people who were only interested in minding their own business, hunting pigs and possums with their friends. They lacked the drive, courage and pride that the Ghoas,

Naghovisis and Na one could not under weak. In days gone in the battle ground opposition, but with economics and all showed no interest in ignorance. They were away with broad daylight their ignorance. Thieves get away with robberies. Such was a certain Toberakian warehouse in the di whole thing was a g shop owner may h money. In anot Toberakian thought thought about it developed. Here gathered there but the situation. Although time talking to th confused as ever. H were made out of ro shells.

One man down gathered a group and them that although the young boys were understand what t about.

"Last week tasol y kisim makamata lor sasaiti emi pundaun inap long paundaun Moni i kam i go nog

"Tru, emi pun someone queried.

Full House, who him leaped up in exa

"Yu blarey hippo laik smallpela pikinini pamuk Makule em sasaiti i ran gut no yang bois here i go sasaiti i pundaun wa Husat i tokim yu M bilipim toktok bilong Nutestamen? Husat

Naghovisis and Na Naghalus have. However one could not under estimate them as being weak. In days gone by they were the masters in the battle grounds and could annihilate any opposition, but when it came to modern economics and all that western gambit they showed no interest at all. Such was their ignorance. They were willing to let thieves get away with broad daylight robberies. Such was their ignorance. They were willing to let thieves get away with broad daylight robberies. Such was the case which concerned a certain Toberakian who broke into a liquor warehouse in the district. Others thought the whole thing was a great joke even though the shop owner may have lost K1,000 in beer money. In another instance, another Toberakian thought about it and the more he thought about it the more his anger developed. Here were ignorant people gathered there but not even conscious about the situation. Although he had spent a long time talking to them, they were still as confused as ever. He wondered if their heads were made out of rocks or empty dry coconut shells.

One man down the back of the crowd had gathered a group around him and was telling them that although he sympathised with what the young boys were doing, he couldn't just understand what the whole problem was about.

"Last week tasol yumi salim koko, na yumi kisim makamata long sasaiti. Na nau oli tok sasaiti emi pundaun! Mi no bilip sasaiti emi inap long paundaun. Sasaiti em beng yah. Moni i kam i go nogat wari long em."

"Tru, emi pundaun olsem wanem?" someone queried.

Full House, who was sharing a bench with him leaped up in exasperation.

"Yu blarey hippopotamus! Toktok for yu laik smallpela pikinini emi pulim susu yet. Em pamuk Makule emi gaiman na emi speak sasaiti i ran gut no moa. Husat tokim yu ol yang bois here i go bullshit nabaut, tokim sasaiti i pundaun wantaem no faks na figures? Husat i tokim yu Makule i God na yu go bilipim toktok bilong em olsem emi kam long Nutestamen? Husat tokim yu? Wat taim yu

kisim ples hia na bilip laik Makule saint no more. Tokim yu Makule emi mani for pekato. Sin, sin, sin ol de! Husat i keputsu long ofis bilong gavmani? Emi no Makule? Makule na ol arapela satan em oli mani i indalsu long tok oli kolim long wantok system, faivratisim, na nepotism. Mi tokim brata bilong mi hia i sekim ol buks, wantaim lawyer na accountants long Alawa yet."

"Hey yu! Tanna soa noko gineawainau haipopo-tamusu? Mi no savi long tok bilong yu. Nau tokim mi. Wanem minim Hippopotamus?" demanded the man whom Full House had shouted down.

"Noko sukulu tagoano bena moa nomo rabisya?" continued the man.

"Yu laik save? You wants to understanding your baptismal name mi just givim yu?"

Full House was himself again. What's more, Full House was not in the position to antagonise any potential voters, yet he was equally angry and wanted to tell the other man off.

"Hippotomaus emi traipela pik, i save i stap long Africa. traipela tru na maus bilong em inap long autim tiket bilong wanpela haus."

This was another man. A retired teacher. He thought that the whole Toberakian population were full of 'kusai' men, each wanting to hit on something that would make them a man in Toberaki society. Toberakians admire people who interpret, or who can simplify such western jaw-breaking introduced words. The man's explanation was correct to some extent but perhaps a little too exaggerated. Toberakians are reknowned for adding on extras, plenty of tomatoes to add extra sugar to the business.

"Oh sago! Nau mi hippopotamus ah? Taim papamama bilong mi i wokim mi oli bin kolim mi hippoptamus ah?" he spat out trying to put Full House down. "Yu rabisim mi na yu yet, yu laik kamap memba. Mi lap long yu. Wanem man i save hait long ol dadameku na lukluk steal long meri waswas? Yu bagarapim mi, oke bambai yu pe kamensesin long bagarapim nem bilong me," he counted out how much Full House would have to pay.

It would be four arm lengths of Moh'moh'ru, Kulili, sesalina, Bolukia and K600 in hard cash. People gasped for breath. Full House's relatives screamed and cried, especially the female members who by tradition meet all expenses. Full House tried to make amends, but the old man would not hear of it.

"Mi no inap long senisim tingting bilong mi. Yu bin rabisim mi long hai bilong olgeta man. Mi no luk paipai mi kaikai tlaui bilong mi gen."

The answer given was the famous reply any man would give in any Toberaki dispute. Demands made during disputes were treated with the utmost importance. They were sacred because they were witnessed by dead ancestors. (One would think that spirits appeared to witness real life happenings only during troubled times. One could wonder where they were most other times.) Therefore the claimant would not even attempt to take back his words. To do so would mean that he was soft, had no guts, was a female (*meri stret*). One would see such an act as eating one's own vomit. What comes out of the mouth is rubbish, like exhaust gas, spit and vomit.

"Ol manmeri, yumi i wok long pait nabaut bilong wanem? Samting tru yumi wok long abrusim. Maksi long askim tumas tu. We nau bai yupela i kisim mani, taim sosaititi i pundaun?" he told them.

What he said seemed to quieten them down a bit, but the man nicknamed Hippopotamus still demanded to be paid four armlengths of *mimis*. The fact that he gathered them together like his faithful followers, did not mean that he had won their hearts, nor did they accept and understand the explanation he gave. Like their forefathers and their predecessors, what was said went through one ear and out the other; like pouring water into a bucket with a hole punched through its bottom. He remembered his primary school teacher who used this term often, before crucifying his victim. Yet it was no small talk. These people, like psychiatric patients at Loloki, were as one would say, a pain in the trousers.

He gave up after closing the meeting at 7.00 a.m. the next day. Everytime he and the lawyer answered one question, another person would ask the same question. That went on and on till morning. He closed the meeting despite the people's reluctance to stop when the meeting was just warming up. To them it was a great success and educational as well; for Toberakians do not measure success by the number of items on the agenda that were discussed or the criteria by which an issue was resolved, but by the length of time it took to discuss the matter; say a night, two days and nights continuously even if some of the participants knock a few teeth out or smash their jaws by falling on some hard material for lack of sleep and starvation.

Full House proposed an adjournment of the meeting till the next day. He was instrumental in raising certain parts and resolving several arguments which nearly resulted in brawls but was not much help in restraining himself from countless incidents that occurred between himself and a score of people in opposition; most notably Hippopotamus, who was a thorn in his flesh all night.

They visited Makule and his colleagues in the Kuviria Concentration camp. The room which housed six bulky figures was bare of furniture except for timber beds, a rice straw mat, a blanket and a pillow that was blackened by overuse by hundreds of inmates. The timber beds were a breeding ground for bed bugs that fed on the prisoners blood in the night. A galvanised tin bucket lay in waiting at one corner of the room. In the night, fellow inmates squatted into it in full view of other prisoners. He felt sorry for Makule and his fellow members. They looked pale and appeared to have had no food since kingdom come. He wanted to tell the prison superintendent that he would drop the charge and let the men go free. But on second thought he decided against his first action. He remembered the old Toberakian saying. Never would he ever become a softy. Not for men like Makule who had been telling people that the Society was better than it was, while the Society was in actuality on the decline.

On the final day of judge handed down his and his five colleagues K30,000,00 of indiv deposited into his pers nepotism by appointir responsible positions, government funds to stores, misusing public grog to his black mark another man with the womanizing duing off more too numerous to Makule pleaded guilty. He denied indulging which he described alegations, he said, we informed Kokopau wh and one he would lo miserable life, dating fi and kissed her under t the sisters' convent.

The following is ar which he made when Honour Taghuluwai, court magistrate. He his final words.

"Your Honour Taghuluwai, I stand I accused person. In the people I am no longe am like pig's droppin, accusers have been downfall. That is jus masters would say. masters today! We ar for my Toberaki distric emancipate all Tober ages to the jet age. I higher living standard food, education, health and freedom! My effc unfruitful. It did not h educated elite. They because they didn't w his name in newsp believed I was a bu overseas trips like pi government members nothing. The few trad

On the final day of the trial, the presiding judge handed down his final ruling. Makule and his five colleagues were guilty of stealing K30,000,00 of individual share profits deposited into his personal account, practising nepotism by appointing his own relatives to responsible positions, redirecting provincial government funds to purchase goods for his stores, misusing public vehicles to transport grog to his black market dens, impersonating another man with the intention of stealing, womanizing during official hours and many more too numerous to list down. To all this, Makule pleaded guilty except for one thing. He denied indulging in immoral activities which he described as nonsense. The allegations, he said, were perpetrated by an ill informed Kokopau who was his beloved wife, and one he would love all the days of his miserable life, dating from the day he met her and kissed her under the mango tree bedside the sisters' convent.

The following is an excerpt of his speech which he made when asked to do so by his Honour Taghuluwai, a senior provincial court magistrate. He was not asked to limit his final words.

"Your Honour Senior Magistrate Taghuluwai, I stand here before you as an accused person. In the eyes of my Toberaki people I am no longer a respected person. I am like pig's droppings. The court and my accusers have been responsible for my downfall. That is just too bad as all the masters would say. There are no more masters today! We are all misters. My aims for my Toberaki district was to transform and emancipate all Toberakians from the dark ages to the jet age. I wanted to give them a higher living standard, good houses, clothes, food, education, health, social welfare, money and freedom! My efforts were unfortunately unfruitful. It did not have the backing of the educated elite. They conspired against me because they didn't want an old man to have his name in newspaper headlines. They believed I was a bushman. I rarely took overseas trips like provincial and national government members and ministers I own nothing. The few trade stores I am reputed to

own, are not mine. In fact the Community Government owned 98.5% of it. I am a penniless man. Today I have nothing. I don't even have a penny to my name today. What I have is the clothes on my skin. I don't even have a family or home. I am like a voice in the desert wilderness crying out, living on honey and locusts.

My condemnation is like my crucifixion. I am being betrayed by my own people. Hence it came to pass that I Makule should be held responsible for all the wrongs that have been committed. I wish my colleagues to be exempt from sentencing for it would be better for one to suffer than for many, after all, these men have young children to look after while I don't. I will serve my jail term to the best of my ability as the government deems." With that he sat down, his head held high. He was still the Makule, the supreme one who was unwilling to accept defeat even in court.

Finally the magistrate sentenced him to five years, wantaim traipela mekim save. Like a true leader of aristocratic blood, he bowed his head at the magistrate and was led out. His six colleagues were each five one year and two months; the last week on probation providing they had served their sentences continuously.

Makule had indeed been one of the few Toberakians to insist on economic development for his people. When he found the people were slow to act, he had led the way and people just followed in goose step style. He was a man who would go down in history. He was different from the big mauswara Petero Malakono, a defeated MP who spent days talking and pursuing meris at Arawa and was hardly noticed in the rural areas. Makule had spear-headed the striving for economic development. But he had lacked managerial skills and over all, was weak in overcoming wantokism. He tolerated it thinking it would be phased out. He couldn't help getting tempted to use the money that materialised because of his efforts. Makule represented numerous other nationals who became corrupt at the sight of large sums of money at their disposal; wrong use and exercise of authority. If Makule did not lack administrative skills then he was weak in

overcoming the general Melanesian 'take it easy attitude', or as the idiom is expressed in pidgin, 'wokim gut bilong wanem isi tasol.'

In the villages people asked if the society would continue with Makule jailed. Michael also wondered about this. Had he done the wrong thing? Was he fair to Makule? He felt that he was victimizing himself, a reaction that was a reversal to the feeling of guilt. He thought hard to find a solution. He was instrumental in exposing Makule and his band of swindlers. Now he had a much bigger problem. If the society could not continue its function the people would blame him. Michael reasoned that for every action taken there must be an alternate plan. Like guerrillas, rebels, hijackers and others. There is always an aim. But Michael did not have an aim, he merely wanted to expose Makule and leave it at that. The deeper he thought the more he became confused. He wanted to run away to Moresby or Lae, or some far off town, he disregarded this too. Once a person runs, 'he always keeps on running and running. But he did not want to run away. Running away meant leaving home, relatives and parents. No, this was not the solution. Then he remembered the best tactic. Meet the problems head on — take up the challenge. Get the society moving again. He did not have the training but he was confident he would have the support of the business development. He contracted people he knew; lawyers, accountants and people of authority. He even negotiated for the society to be co-managed by the Society and the Development Corporation. The Society had made losses because it had operated independently.

Things began to roll again, but not without problems. Makule's son said that he was watching him. Michael told Full House about the words he received from Makule's son. Full House who was the chairman of the Toberaki School had him booted in the pants during a singing. Several weeks later he and his sisters were removed from the school and demoted to base level. The purpose of his demotion was never known but later it was learnt that he too had misappropriated school funds of personal use.

Makule was released after five and a half years. He came back a changed man. He appeared to have lost a lot of weight and he had aged a lot too. He joined the one time greats but was no longer looked upon as a king or chief.

PASINDIAS

Arawa, or Kekereka as it was called by its original owners, is a super-structured township that grew overnight out of a coconut plantation. Some say the coconuts grew into houses, hedges and people. Kekereka is the original name. It got its name from two small hills that look like huge kaukau mounds, which were knocked flat by Thies Brothers in its initial clean up for the development of the mine township. In days gone by, Kekereka was a site of an unusual stone gong that drummed out to surrounding villagers all the latest in adulterous achievements. On a lesser degree it once housed the famous Bacdei Camp. Today the site has been turned into a less dignified sewerage treatment facility. Maybe much more important than perhaps the supermarket or the nearby Poraka Tavern — the drinking and dying joint of the town. Arawa is like Cabinda in Angola, enclosed from all sides by the menacing back drops of the Rumba ridges, the Kurakum heights and the Arawa slopes; part of the rocky tentacle of the main Crown Prince Range that forms the spinal cord of the Big Buka. (Its tail end upholds small Buka; without it the island would sink into its many porous holes in its limestone foundation). The Bovo river, polluted by thousands of ignorant squatters and careless town residents with junk purchased from stores, empties itself into the equally polluted Pacific Ocean like a python (or Jonah's whale) disgorging a bluish, slimy, undigested animal matter that it had swallowed several weeks earlier on. Two peninsulas create a natural protection against possible tornados, cor cyclones that would miss the Philippines and Indonesia. To the north east is Tunuru, sheltering the Marist Catholic Mission and down south is Pagama silhouetted against the Kieta ridge, is

Bakawori Island and William Tal merged ridge is a tower that overlooks and Kieta towns still use the age old by night soil embarrassment from

Michael was perched on top of focussed on the cl out its next meal nights drinking s Fitness Group w weight lifting, w sipping) got him a heights. He was when he was inte told him that the f on its way to tov road filled with h small fault and Kingdom come ov

The town is as put together. It w separated bits. It c and Arawa Tech together against t area appeared t African native k some in hospitable seven housed the personnel in Australian mine well; without it t kilns with all that water systems and amenities of mode the foreign design available spot are atmosphere and n entering these bui without having to planners highly p with superficial venture that wou even building th compounds, from Moroni right do road (Jolly Roger

Bakawori Island (or PukPuk Island) Pidia and William Takaku's Eberia partly submerged ridge is crowned by BCL's receiver tower that overlooks the Premier's mansion and Kieta township. Some residential areas still use the age old buckets as toilets; removed by night soil men at night to avoid embarrassment from disgusted spectators.

Michael was like a *Manuka*, an eagle perched on top of a high *Kumurere* tree, eyes focussed on the chicken yard below, picking out its next meal of the day. The previous nights drinking spree at NAFIG, (Natioal Fitness Group where members specialist in weight lifting, weight building and grog sipping) got him and friends to the Karakum heights. He was studying the town pattern when he was interrupted by his friend who told him that the four wheel drive vehicle was on its way to town. They rolled down the road filled with holes, craters and turns. One small fault and everyone would sail into Kingdom come over the precipice.

The town is as big as Gerehu and Morata put together. It was made up of three main separated bits. It consisted of section four, five and Arawa Technical College bunched up together against the steep Arawa ridge. The area appeared to represent some South African native kraals clustered together in some in hospitable homeland. Section six and seven housed the middle managerial level personnel in typical air-conditioned Australian mine accommodation. Just as well; without it the houses would turn into kilns with all that fibro, the lining inside, hot water systems and countless items of so called amenities of modern comfort. To think about the foreign design living erected on every available spot around town, closing out the atmosphere and repelling the sea breeze from entering these buildings, one would conclude without having to think any harder, that the planners highly paid consultants were mad with superficial ambition for creating a venture that wouldn't last a lifetime. They are even building these houses in resettlement compounds, from Marau, Iaba, Mananau, Moroni right down along the mine access road (Jolly Roger Road).

In sections eight to thirteen (the inner town to avoid counting the length of sections), houses vary from match boxes, IMQs to high covenant designs mounted on high steel pipe posts. Here doors open to neighbours verandahs, domestic arguments, from drunkenness to womanizing and job dissatisfaction to tribal warfare is heard by everyone. Here too temporary camps (an additional room to house extra friends and relatives, or an outer shack where grandparents lay curled around a smoldering log as they would back in the village huts) is readily erected on tiny lawns burning out the good grass. In this section privacy is non-existent. Government houses built next to company quality houses makes a laughing stock of the government. officials are too ashamed to be found living in a shack that one would mistakenly take for a domestic servant's house. Toilets and laundry tubs were outside. Women were forced to change in front of guests in the thin mini Army bungalows. Section seventeen between Tupukas and ATC hill houses the high government and company officials who live in mini palaces. Big high rise companies and BDC apartments casts shadows over the main town driveway, called Secession Drive. Behind Kekereka Sewerage plant is the other section of the town. BCL Company houses sandwich together with police, personal IMQs, and are bathed day and night in the disgusting smell of the sewerage plant; its outlet is beyond the reef. The town industrial section past the firebrigade (whose officers are rarely called to action) ends with the fast expanding North Solomons Building Suppliers. Down the cliff hidden by the overgrowth of snake beans are tiny create box-buildings housing squatters, misers and transit passengers. That's Arawa the metropolis of the country's southern province; the richest too and slowly one that is turning into aliquor cultured society.

A young man dressed in a well pressed pair of jeans, an 'ol stoa bilong sun kamap T shirt', a faded blue jacket and a pair of well polished leather boots (issued by BCL) was seated on the bench beside a girl dressed in a tight T

shirt, showing her bustline, tucked inside a blue floral dress that lifted easily at the slightest burst of the cool sea breeze. Her toenails were painted red, and fitted neatly into a pair of thongs (if the thongs belonged to her) with her name boldly printed on the edge with village slogans written on the other. The girl lifted her foot. Some more writing could be seen under the soles of her thongs; 'Buin Ice Cool 1978', 'Buin Swit Moa' and 'Buin lonely beach'.

Michael saw it and shook his head. One of those semi-literates, perhaps a grade eight dropout, or an ordinary home scholar. He asked himself how many of them were honeymooning in the town. An ice block seller came pushing a contraption running on a pair of fabricated bicycle wheels. The young man fished out a sparkling 50t, and handed it to the ice block man. He gave him two ice blocks in return; a red and a purple one. He dropped the 10t change into his side pocket and the coins rattled against others inside (maybe two toea). The girl beside him lifted her eyebrows and smiled shyly at her man. Others looked at them. The girl hid her face and turned to face the Rumba Ridge possibly hoping for a hole to open up and swallow her. The man sat still sucking the ice block; he seemed unconcerned.

"Alkaine. Nommai yero ngavangum. Nommai nom monovamon?" said the girl.

"Woom so nammai?" asked the man.

"So yaki tiko ma paloom! Hoko ming sisih."

The man peeped under the back seat to get a good look.

"Kuraisa toku monomon yah. Mara mahkata koli monotolo mom."

"Akai hoko alapotoiyeh toom. Hoko nommai mumiaku likuum."

"Ni mumiaku monomin," replied the man arrogantly.

They would have said something else but the bus arrived at that time. Michael knew that he wore his polaroid sun glasses and continued to study a couple. Some passengers got off with several children, pots and cups knocked against each other inside the cardboard boxes, pillows and rice, straw

mats and suitcases came tumbling down. Other passengers helped the family retrieve their belongings from under the bus. Some passengers bound for Kieta appeared restless; especially the couple. The father of the family kept apologising for holding the passengers up.

"Sorry for the hold up mate!" he said.

"Kieta?"

"Yes," growled back the driver. His immense bulk could hardly fit the driver's seat. Passengers hopped on. The couple sat at the back.

"Woi lukluk tumas bilong wanem?" said the man as the bus began to move.

"Lo nom monolamom. Woom norah!" Michael replied.

The man and the girl looked at each other as if they could not believe their ears. Michael thought that the two had thought he could not understand. In fact they did not and they could not believe their ears when he replied in Siwai. The girl looked back and pulled her tongue at him.

"Mirahu meen. Nawangoli monolopenom."

The bus sped away; the girl still staring.

Smith Hardy tapped Michael on his back. Smith Hardy was his first cousin who was on night shift at the mine. He had been living with him while he was waiting for his flight to Lae. Twice he had been off-loaded; once to make way for a national parliamentarian. He wasn't the least upset though. He welcomed the delays after all the course would not start until after the end of the month. There was still three weeks to go and enough time to enjoy life.

"Emi lukim yu ah?" Smith Hardy said jokingly.

"Lukim dog? Emi bagarapim mi yah." Michael replied.

"Tasol mi tokim bambai mi lukim em gen! Giamanim tasol. Yu save kain bilong ol Bacdei boys (Bacdei is an abbreviation for Bannone, Census Division invented by a self christian, son of the wild west rascal on the site where the sewerage complex is situated).

"Who are they by the way?" Michael asked Smith Hardy.

"Pasindias," he

"Vagrants," Mi

"Yes! Vagrant

at every street c

though I don't ge

"You don't?"

"Not anymore two months! I co mouths so I toss one of them kept teased her and t she'll live in a bigg section 6."

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he only went to liv and sneaked bac were working. I and one day they had just finished Since then no on my house.

"Except me," l

"Yu narapela c

"Wanen nem b long bus."

"Em Joseph B Arawa. Em tu y wok na spare ba bilong em."

"Na meri bilor

"Wanpela p Kalekodo."

"Em pinis long

"Husat tokin bilong standard man bilong mari

The girl was old. Eager to ma that was popular and chinese st accompanied by the introduction days everyone k keys, the five k which one does r

Taim mi skul

Mariti pinisi,

Hatu woko tu

Pikinini kaala

"Pasindias," he answered with one word.

"Vagrants," Michael corrected in English.

"Yes! Vagrant bludgers. You run into them at every street corner. I hate the bastards though I don't get any of them in my house."

"You don't?"

"Not anymore. Three stayed with me for two months! I couldn't manage to feed five mouths so I tossed them out. What's more, one of them kept on annoying my babysitter, teased her and told her he'd marry her and she'll live in a bigger, air conditioned house in section 6."

"What happened afterwards?"

"I bounced him out of the house! However he only went to live in another wantok's house and sneaked back during the day when we were working. I reported him to the police and one day they came and arrested him. He had just finished his two months at Kuvilia. Since then no one has attempted to come to my house."

"Except me," Michael jokingly.

"Yu narapela catagoli," Smith Hardy said.

"Wanen nem bilong бага yah hia tasol i go long bus."

"Em Joseph Bulankete! Sevis man tru long Arawa. Em tu yia nau istap nating, nogat wok na spare battery nabaut long ol wantok bilong em."

"Na meri bilong husat? Bilong em ah?"

"Wanpela pasindias tu. Em bilong Kalekodo."

"Em pinis long high school?"

"Husat tokim yu olsem? Em dropout bilong standard six tasol yah! Kam painim man bilong maritim."

The girl was no more than fifteen years old. Eager to marry. He remembered a song that was popular in the 1950s that plantation and chinese storekeeper labourers sang accompanied by a ukulele (that was before the introduction of guitars). In those peaceful days everyone knew how to play the three keys, the five keys or something like that, which one does not know in musical terms.

Taim mi skul meri, mi wantaim mariti,
Mariti pinisi, hatu woko tumasii — iih
Hatu woko tumasi long kukimu kaikaiih
Pikinini kaalaai mino save silipi gut.

He remembered how true it reflected the burden of women in those years with husbands marrying and running off to plantations, leaving the poor girls to bring up the kids all by themselves. Although it may be thirty years since this happened, the same thing continued to the present day. Young men and women meet for the first time and marry the next day. Later women are left in the house almost every night. Men come drunk, bash up the women including the children, run away with any good time girls leaving the woman to suffer alone. He thought about this girl heading for tragedy. Being married to a tramp, a no-hoper, a parasite. They are the ones who marry for the sake of marrying. He wondered how many of these Bulankete types were roaming around the towns as aimless wanderers.

One evening he was late purchasing their supplies for the next day. Smith Hardy always had his fridge full. That day the fridge was a quarter empty, so he had to walk to the supermarket to buy the beer and hoped to hail a passing taxi. A pretty Mungkas meri was dallying with none other than Bulankete. The public toilet used carelessly by villagers travelling to town was the ideal place. Michael couldn't believe how someone could stand the smell. The road beside it was busy with the afternoon traffic. Motorists stopped to stare at them causing traffic jams. Bulankete stole away when he saw a small crowd gathering, many wanted to use the rest house before the council workers locked it up for the night. Some of the users had no facilities at home themselves. The *gogolo* is literally littered with much every morning that is disposed of by squatters who are hard to kick out, even though the council makes a random raid on them. Local land owners pelt them with stones and threaten to bring them to court. This only encourages them to build better shelters.

"They are stone heads," commented one council official.

Arawa's record as a town that grew overnight, did not escape its share of tin box settlements on the hills above the rich men's palaces opposite Tupukasi School, Piruana

Falls, Pagoma inlets and the beaches bothering the Arawa Golf club, (built on Niniku's land, not paid for. One wonders why he didn't kick them out) and BDC's merry airport. Nationals continuously walk up the hills carrying cartons of empty bottles. Every morning they descend down the hill, men, women, children and domesticated pets. Each afternoon at 5.30 p.m. they march up to their encampments. There is a mixture of tradition and western entertainment. That goes on all night (they help to keep the doctor awake for emergency calls).

Arawa is rarely a dry environment. Rainfall averages 30mm every afternoon. Because the town is overtaken with buildings clustered together, one marvels at the green scenery of the hillside. Overnight miracles however transform the green hillside to brownish patches of cleared land for gardening; not that it yields much. In some ways it would help if the midnight *menehunes* could extend their gardens toward the town's only water reservoir. The tank is crowned by a winking red light that warns Bougainville planes to steer clear of it.

Michael told Smith Hardy about Bulankete and the public toilet. (Smith Hardy is not his real name. He was named Kuiala Vevelewana Mea Kulaga; that was too long, so he adopted a short, rather civilised name. He found the name in some torn newspaper.)

The next day they met Bulankete and a group of younger men window shopping. He wanted to talk to him. He walked up to him, stopped, opened his newspaper and began to read one eye on Bulankete. Bulankete edged nearer and nearer until he was close.

"Oh lukaut wantok nogut yu bamim mi," said Smith Hardy who had deliberately edged toward him.

"Oh yu tasol Smith! Yu mekim wanem? Day off or night shift?"

"Night shift," answered Smith Hardy.

"Na yu wok we?" he asked Bulankete.

"Mi de off long three des. Mi wok long Bodian olsem personal officer. Neks wek mi go long Canberra long go long further training long 'financial control' course. Bihainim pinis bilong kos bambai mi kam

kisim wok olsem financial controller long Bodian."

"Oh yes," Smith Hardy said as he nodded his head in approval (or disapproval).

"Hamas yia yu wok long Bodian?"

"Six yias, bihain tasol mi graduate i kam long Unitech."

"Ahaa!"

Bulankete excused himself and moved toward the snack bar that sold rotten sausages and locally grown kaukau.

"Accountant indeed," thought Smith Hardy as he watched him enter the snack bar. "the man must be mad, telling all those lies."

Because they were once classmates at primary school, he felt distressed listening to the man's lies. The man had managed to enter the only Catholic Secondary School. His elder brother, who was then the school's chairman to the Board of Governors, had chosen him ahead of other students who scored better passes. At school he had ranked last at the bottom of his grade; failed every subject including religious studies. Halfway through the second year at secondary school, he was terminated for allegedly stealing a bag of kaukau and a carton of tinned meat which he ferried across the harbour to his wantoks in the night on the school's own outrigger canoe. His wantoks who toiled all day at the Chinese's stores lived in a disused kalabus house on the hill overlooking Kieta Harbour. Back home following his expulsion from high school, Bulankete tried to settle at home as a respectful, educated son of Kalekodoans. That short spell at home turned out to be disastrous. He ended up at Kuveria, sentenced to six months with hard labour for seducing a fourteen year old primary school girl. Such was the brief profile of one of countless numbers of professional and amateur con-men who had invaded Arawa township from the four corners of the country.

The supermarket was full to capacity. Young, old, half crippled people from all walks of life were to be seen mingling with everyone else. Blue uniformed security men could be seen amongst the crowd, eyes wide open, ever ready to pounce at the slightest

chance of trouble. People were carrying their clothing and accessories, their counterparts at the market had their hands full of goods and packing goods and the take-away section was outstretched to assistants, demanding chickens, soft drinks, sophisticated, a counted several inside an old truck. Young boys passing i kam'. The old plastic bag to his with age and smoke.

The bookshelf supermarket was of the latest copies of business men advertising this and a few looked up to Kolia's "My Religion Emma" and Mr pictorial records of highlands. The w had gradually turned handling, despite that people should they wanted to buy.

Michael walked supermarket's air not keep the atmosphere people had been elderly men had to collapsed from exhaustion crowd swarming and had been called to supermarket seemed monopoly over Smaller trade stores customers while they swallow them all. kina everyday; e section, the take away In there were hungry their ritual was the only department store

The names that flies of Bulawas,

chance of trouble. Cashiers sat bored in the clothing and accessories section, while their counterparts at the opposite end of the store had their hands full punching figures, packing goods and counting out change. In the take-away section hundreds of hands were outstretched toward perspiring shop assistants, demanding packets of chips, roast chickens, soft drinks, and for the more sophisticated, a hamburger. An old man counted several layers of twenty kina bills inside an old trukai rice plastic packet. Several young boys passing by sang out together 'hap i kam'. The old man swiftly returned the plastic bag to his prized bag that was black with age and smoke and zipped it up.

The bookshelf in the mid-section of the supermarket was surrounded by avid seekers of the latest copies of Phantom (the highland business men get a huge bonus from advertising this super bullshit) and Tarzan. A few looked up locally produced novels like Kolia's "My Reluctant Missionary", "Queen Emma" and Mr. Sinclair's colourful and pictorial records of his kiaping days in the highlands. The white covering of the book had gradually turned to black from continues handling, despite the management's insistence that people should stop handling books unless they wanted to buy them.

Michael walked out into the sunlight. The supermarket's air-conditioning system could not keep the atmosphere any fresher. Many people had been going in and out. Two elderly men had to be carried out; both had collapsed from exhaustion. He watched the crowd swarming all over the ambulance that had been called to take the men away. The supermarket seemed to have a complete monopoly over the business community. Smaller trade stores beside it hardly had any customers while the supermarket seemed to swallow them all. It must make thousands of kina everyday; especially in the grocery section, the take away food and coffee shop. In there were hundreds of vagrants. Part of their ritual was the hourly visit to the towns only department stores.

The names that fit vagrants well are Blue flies of Bulawas, Batteries, Spare Batteries,

Puunko. (Blues flies are found around pit toilets, over dead frogs and some people's houses.) The supermarket, Sun Kamap Department Store, was one of the sites at which Blue flies hung about, or pause before they moved to other less important sites in the town. When one had gone through the supermarket one could say that he had seen Arawa apart from smaller establishments like Mambu Kona (that name leaves people wondering at its meaning), several fish and chip joints struggling to make a profit against local real estate groups who have told them to get out, and the only newsagent which is frequented by the idealistic intellectuals and the pasindais.

Past this area was the police station standing out beside the Bovo river like a French Foreign Legion port somewhere in the Arabian desert, surrounded by piles of twisted metal pieces, cars and human bones caught among the twisted vehicles that crash head on just opposite the police station. Most people, including pasindais steer clear of the building for good reasons.

Arawa is void of many South Seas pleasure houses and similar joints like hotels, motels, restaurants and china town. Although the place is littered with typical Asian imported untidiness, people still prefer it to more respectable homes. One classical example was an imitation sky-line theatre built amongst a growth of mangrove trees which was called Manguru Tiatar. It screened films to viewers piled on top of trade store junk and empty coconut shells drunk by customers who bought them from the nearby fresh food market.

Kiata, pronounced Kieta by Europeans with their unusually curved lips, boasted the only hotel and nearby Barbarian Football Club (the only club with a club hosue). It was once owned by an expatriate until a local chap bought it and renamed it Siromba Hotel. The previous owner was glad to part with it after so many closures by the Health Department. In days gone by the hotel had three separate bars, the public bar reserved for locals, the two inner bars for the Mastas. The colour barrier had been done away with,

except for a few diehard plantation owners who tended to over react a bit at times thinking that the province is still in the good old 1950s.

Arovo on Pik Island is an overseas resort, built for the influx of millionaires who never came. Since then the resort has changed hands.

One can say that Arovo is truly an ideal site for a casino. It is away from the bustle of the town. That does not stop action seekers from reaching it by the resort provided glass bottom ferries that ply the waters between Kieta wharf and Pik Island. The Tasmanian workers have a hard time fishing out the idiots who take to the sea after emptying the resorts freezers and the cool room. The joint is frequented by high salary earners, middle aged tourists and anyone else wishing to spend a little more than the nominal fee at bottle shops.

Nationals end up there seeking pleasure that is not available in the mainland. A few female seeking bachelors do go there with the hope of eyeing off a pretty Micronesian wench. Though there is hardly any there. Maybe it would be an idea if the government would get a handful of them and give them employment. At least it would mean a difference of taste for the drunken men who are tired of seeing men behind the counter in every drinking den. Hotel owners would get a sixable revenue from their presence, and the government, an uplift to their failing tourist industry.

Toniva, built on St. Joseph's Rigu's kaukau and cowpea gardens is a striving little place. Davara Motel, ples bilong ol pilots, stewards and hosties, is built beside the old Kieta Toimonapu road. Guests who occupy rooms facing the sea enjoy the cool breeze from the open sea. Opposite it, a line of Chinese shops. It is not often that one sees a Chinese buying and installing close monitored circuits. So it is not unusual for one to see several of the owner's work boys perched on raised platforms gazing down on every customer like pet parrots. The usual overdisplay techniques seen in every Kongkong store is not missing. Dust and human stink sticks deep into items of clothing, food and

whatever is put on display. The owners, eternally suspicious of every customer, offered no smile except a grimace more as a show of complete mistrust than a welcoming sign an invitation for customers as they come into the shop. An arrogant 'you laikim wanem?' and one has two minds about buying from an unfriendly shop owner.

Kieta or Toniva is still Arawa. Toniva was on a section of Kieta built during the pre-Pangun Mining days. One of the most populated areas second to Arawa. Toniva is built into three main sections with the fourth coming up rapidly in the form of a shanty town on Poainanga Hill. Makaki is the site of the first Marist Mission on Bougainville until they moved down-hill to Ringuna to feed the mosquitoes and shoot fishes in the lagoon. The remains of the first permanently built church and the old cementry overlooks Malchholm and Company. Self built houses and North Solomons Enterprises, Pukpuk Island opposite the point, a swimmers paradise called Hukim Channel. The government housing lies to the south with several creeks that breed the blood suckers meandering around some buildings like Jehovah's Witnesses castle, Toniva pre-school and the league oval. Radio Maus bilong Sun Kamap receiver and relay stations some industrial Elcom housing and Works and Supply. Plant and transport and more IMQ buildings sit on old Rigu garden. Squatter settlements on St. Michael's Hill and Poonanga have completely turned the once green hill to a brownish, landslide scare mountain as in some Middle East region deserts. Poainanga Hill slopes down to Pam, the industrial sector of Toniva. Ela Motors, New Guinea Motors and lots of other foreign owned companies hug the foothills. The road continues south over a crazy bridge designed by PWD and constructed by Hornibrooks Construction Company make one want to find the designer and crucify him for approving the construction of a crazy bridge that has left a lot of people maimed for the rest of their miserable lives.

Kieta is an unplanned town, divided into five different segments like an earth worm.

The cultural and Yatch club are Kieta Hospital government resi the rocky slope government con Arawa township of activity. The staged behind t had a free view remains of the d task was removi and dumping th be washed back the town resi centre, Burns F each other, sepa Wales Bank w solitary tradesto south east acro Catholic Mission

The villagers four wheel drive was a young younger boy ba older man (midg

"Where to?" a vehicle. Not kno had engaged a prized vehicle. T his vehicle ran, many trips; thus Toberakians say

"Sekisin seve replied the young Viliko).

"Na pappa bil asked the midg calling him by somewhat an in-clan.

"Viva! Mi bil replied the man.

The vehicle smashed an on driver honked fu attention. The pa simultaneously, causing the roof was noticed by t

The cultural and university centres and Kieta Yatch club are all in the vicinity of the old Kieta Hospital, and the Happy Valley government residential area are plastered on the rocky slopes of Kieta ridge joined by the government compound. In the years before Arawa township, this section was the centre of activity. The annual Choral Festival was staged behind the police station. Prisoners had a free view from what is now rusting remains of the days when the prisoners main task was removing buckets from households and dumping them into the harbour later to be washed back to the beaches frequented by the town residents. In the main business centre, Burns Philip and Steamships faced each other, separated only by the New South Wales Bank with Angco warehouse, one solitary tradestore and Kieta wharf. To the south east across Ringuna Lagoon is the Catholic Mission Centre.

The villagers jumped off the brand new four wheel drive Toyota Land Cruiser. One was a young man aged 19 years and a younger boy barely fourteen years and an older man (midget) of an uncertain age.

"Where to?" asked the proud owner of the vehicle. Not knowing how to drive himself he had engaged a younger relative to run his prized vehicle. The man would, for as long as his vehicle ran, accompany the driver on many trips; thus becoming the assistant, or as Toberakians say, "Molule director."

"Sekisin seven namobe sekisin paipi," replied the younger man. (who shall be called Viliko).

"Na pappa bilong Naiko?" the truck owner asked the middle aged man. He avoided calling him by name because he was somewhat an in-law, having married into his clan.

"Viva! Mi bilong bihainim yupela tasol," replied the man.

The vehicle backed out and nearly smashed an oncoming Mini Moke whose driver honked furiously to attract the driver's attention. The passengers at the back sang out simultaneously, some banging on the cabin causing the roof to have a little dent which was noticed by the owner.

"Hei nogut yupela pakalapim ka yah. Wanem yumi savi baim long one kina tasol."

Several old empty Trukai rice bags of kaukau, maybe yams and bananas, were unloaded at each section. With these bags came the visitors with their leather bags. The relatives' children ran out singing their uncle's name. Out through the door their mother almost carried the potatoes out. Her batlike laplap was wrapped around her armpits concealing a supposedly well-developed bosom. A wide smile swept her lips apart when she recognized her brother from the village. Behind her, four sleepy-eyed couples trooped; hard faced, suspicious of the new arrival.

Greetings were exchanged and friends and foes were introduced. The formalities hardly over, the wife retreated to the kitchen to continue her daily ritual. Thickly-sliced bread fresh from the bakery and buttered, filled a large aluminium dish. She took care to add four desert spoons full of sugar into each mug of over sweetened coffee the size of a southern cross tank knowing full well that in her village people, including herself, love sweet coffee; the more sugar the better. She placed the coffee in front of the new arrivals whose eyes twinkled with delight as more buttered bread was loaded onto the large table. The men eyed the huge pile of buttered bread, not knowing what to do. In fact they expected to be given a fork and a knife to eat with as white men do. The woman reminded them to get on with it before it got cold. One would think she wanted them out of the way; at least some of them thought she did.

"Ghinaveeh nah! Well eat it yet. Soa teh nana yeh? Ah brete . . ."

"Yes bread. Simion's father brought it this morning," replied the woman watching from the back eager to hear the news from the village.

"And where are they?" asked the midget between mouthfuls of coffee and bread.

"Simion's father is on the afternoon shift. Em bambai kam bek long nait. Ating 3 o'clock."

"Mano mate nana meke be mo wuka," said another one.

"Noteno. Wuka tebayeh. Bongi mea naam," said the woman.

"We have risen again. How can one grab something to eat when we have to catch our masterful tambu?"

"Bread tanita tau wah. Rais tetamtone palingina bongi tantaua mo ais bokis."

"Don't let it worry you daughter. We are okay. Maybe Maiko's father would like some. Don't you ol tambus?"

"Just a little more coffee to finish off the Buleli."

"I must say we are saved again. We have eaten and drunk. Something we miss at home. Buleli! Comes palava. White men know too much. They make all sorts of things; food, cars, planes and ships. I wonder if kaukau can be preserved as such?" asked the truck owner.

"Oh yes it can! They are already making them. You can buy from the stores now. They call it potato chips!" answered the woman who was always everready with answers. The younger child came rushing with a packet of potato crisps and placed them on his mother's hands. The woman opened the packet and handed two crisps to the man who took them and examined them before throwing them into his widely opened mouth.

"Yes it is like dried bread fruit. Like the type they make in the Green Islands," said the other who had been to Nissan; probably stopped over on his way back from the plantations.

The party, minus the woman's brother, left for another destination after downing several more mugs of coffee. The man was left with his sister and a bunch of semi-westernised nephews (through their father supposedly) who climbed all over him. The three young girls cleaned the floor and the tables of bread crumbs before retiring to the back door where they seemed to spend most of their time. He was shown a room where he would be staying for as long as he wished or as long as his tambu did not get fed up with him. The two girls shared the other room. The children shared the other one and the master bedroom was for the couple. The third girl around was a relative of the woman who was staying with

one of her relatives in the poorer part of the town. The two girls were her husband's nieces, who were baby-sitting. (The children were of school age.) The woman did not have a job, although she once attended the Kangu Vocational Centre where she learnt mothercraft, sewing, cooking and basic typing. The couple regularly attended cocktail parties so they needed someone to mind the children while they were away for as long as the husband could stand up, then she would have to drive the vehicle home.

The man was especially asked to come and guard the house as she would be away most days working as a typist at a locally owned building firm. She took further typing courses at the Kekeleka Secretarial College. The man had always wanted to come to Arawa and his sister invited him. It wasn't that he would be missed in the village, after all he was not very resourceful and was a useless lay-about. Coming to town was like his second rebirth. Being born again to a civilised world full of fun, entertainment and riches that cropped up out of the street. He was a very able man and cleaned outside of the house, grew flowers, mowed the lawns, washed the car and learnt how to drive it while the two girls looked after the interior of the house. The girls washed his clothes, ironed them and returned them to his room. When he got his driver's licence he became the family chauffer and drove the family car. He drove the family's eldest daughter to school and the mother to work and in the afternoon he collected them. His tambu had complete trust in him, but only after he had a sound dressing down from the wife, a bossy, no nonsense woman. He stole her from the Kihiki Vocational School, much to the annoyance of the manageress, and up to date, had not been paid for. Her price tag was K700. Having her brother staying with them was one way to pay for her; or so the husband would say to friends and relatives.

CIVIL GIRL

Josephina was an ex-Buin ice-cool student. (Rather a grade eight leaver.) An extraordinarily attractive girl who was a favourite

of the boys and exceptionally popular. She took a great liking to English. On November 28, her favourite teacher was frustrated. He spent money whenever

A truck rolled hailed the driver tied around her truck at the sup white house to greased her into distinctly related this to pay ba sustained at high messenger girl letters to a cert several governm

Josephine was old village boy be. A handsome a whiteman if into one. She shared her one b her. Josephina to the town an She was in the s buzzing around male who would turn her miseral episode.

Michael saw reading a mag magazines sold town. He had approached her distance away f him with big br met and he was He continued t stealing a look eyes.

"Hello," he men approachi

He had to a thought. Josep dropped her ey them up again

of the boys at school dances. She was exceptionally polite toward the staff. One took a great liking to her and made her top student in English. The day she left the school, November 28, 1979, the girl wept and her favourite teacher was equally sad and frustrated. He still writes to her and gives her money whenever she crosses his path.

A truck rolled by and stopped when she hailed the driver. She hopped on, a headscarf tied around her head. She jumped off the truck at the supermarket and went into the white house to locate another girl who had greased her into coming to town. The girl was distinctly related to her. But she was doing this to pay back old debts that she had sustained at high school. Josephina was her messenger girl who carried her numerous letters to a certain Buka Island student and several government officials.

Josephine wanted a husband but not any old village boy no matter how rich he might be. A handsome Bukan, a red skin or perhaps a whiteman if she was lucky enough to run into one. She joined her benefactor and shared her one bedroom government flat with her. Josephina soon became very accustomed to the town and the town's other wonders. She was in the shops every afternoon like a fly buzzing around in search of some charitable male who would be in the position to give and turn her miserable night life into a memorable episode.

Michael saw her sitting under the shade reading a magazine, one of those playboy magazines sold by news agencies around town. He had already known about her. He approached her, walked past her and sat some distance away from her. She looked across at him with big bright searching eyes. Their eyes met and he was stuck by her immense beauty. He continued to read his paper occasionally stealing a look at her from the corners of his eyes.

"Hello," he said as he saw several young men approaching.

He had to act quickly before he lost her he thought. Josephina looked across to him, dropped her eyes on the magazine and picked them up again to rest on him.

"Can you tell me the time please?" he said. She looked at him again, checked her watch and turned her eyelids upward.

"3.50," she said not uttering any further words. He searched for words to continue the conversation. He had relied on his handsomeness to kill her with. But he was losing fast. Josephina did not give a hoot about any face. Maybe it was money and entertainment that she wanted, not adoration from any man. He kept looking at the sun and the road. The girl noticed. Now what?

"Are you expecting someone?" Josephina asked.

"Well yes. I have to pick him up here at 4.00 p.m." he lied.

"Will you?" she asked.

"Yes. My car is over there."

"Which one?"

"The blue toyota Starlet four doors."

"Nuipela laga?"

"Well eh, yes."

They continued in silence until the girl rose to walk away.

"Where do you work?" he asked absent-mindedly.

"I am staying with my sister for a short time," she replied. As she sat down again.

"And where do you work yourself?" she asked him.

"I am a trainee liaison officer."

"A what officer?" she asked rather confused.

"A kiap," he explained as he realised that the girl did not understand. She had only a grade eight education.

"Kiap ah!"

"Yes anyway I will be going now. Would you care for a lift?"

"Where to?"

"Section five, lot 101," he said.

"Wouldn't mind."

He drove her to her sister's flat, one tiny building separated by a brick wall in between. The flat was one room with a smaller built-in room which served as a kitchen and one bedroom that closed both the toilet and shower room. He remembered the times when the town water supply ran dry. The toilet would start to stink. He left her standing there

asking him to see her again the next day.

"Hey, where have you been you old rascal? Been trying to pick up some street girls again I bet."

"Sure had one. Unfortunately she slipped out of my grasp," he replied.

"Who was it? Some old humkens?"

"Old Josephina, what do you reckon?"

"That rag! Every other bachelor and married man alike have gone to bed with her."

"Not interested in her, only wanted to help her."

"Helpim! Don't make me laugh. No good yu tanim plet. She's a killer. Look at what she did to that Tsunarian Catholic Deacon?"

"Not at all!" he replied after downing a full bottle of cold brown beer. "She was charming. Wants me to see her again tomorrow."

"Goodness! Don't tell me you are mad on her. You'll be a laughing stock of the town. Youknow where she spends the day? Buzzing about the business center like a blue lung waiting for the latest filth to feed on. I would say every other resident of Indian Camp Five and Ten have dragged her into some bushes."

He laughed out loud very hilariously, but not at the remarks Smith Hardy had just made. It was only the other day that Smith had been talking about how he wanted to drag her to bed. Yet now he was referring to her as a common man's thing. Maybe he was jealous.

"Nanoo kota tsunu gelogho nana meke baah," said Smith Hardy after a long spell.

Michael left Smith Hardy to shower still laughing. Smith Hardy probably thought he had cracked the funniest joke. He picked her up the next morning and they drove around town and saw more of the village/town parasites. She pointed to several of her wantoks who waved to her with orchestrated delightfulness. He took her to an exclusive restaurant where he sipped beer while she drank fruit drinks. She asked him to buy her a middy. He hesitated until she told him that she did drink beer. They drank and talked. At first he talked the most until she took over. She told him that she had been to a big

community school where she had come top out of a class of sixty students in the grade Six School Certificate Exam. Her father was an DPI, OIC at a sub-district DPI station. She went to Buin High School and had done particularly well in English. She was the champion student in her class. Her favourite teacher was her English teacher (which may be why she was the top student). She wouldn't have been a dropout if an over-jealous female teacher had not reported her as being a constant visitor to the English teacher's house. The allegations were never proved, but she became a school leaver all the same. Her plan was to go to a national high school and later on to university to study medicine.

He told her that she could still fulfill her dreams without having to attend high school. He told her about the College of External Studies. He was once a secondary school teacher and he helped a number of students like herself; one of whom was just completing a BA at the university.

"But mi mas needim teacher long halivim mi," she said.

"Yes, you would."

"Yes, but husat?"

"Oh plenti man tumas i stap wet nabaut."

"Na you? You bai wok we? Yu no anap long skulim mi."

"Sorry, it would be impossible! I had to go back to school. But I can suggest one man who used to be a teacher himself. Smith Hardy."

"Smith Hardy? That Tsunarian rascal and pamuk," she screamed in exasperation.

"You know Smith Hardy?"

"Yes, I know the bastard. He tricked men into going with him to his house once and forced me to . . ."

"I suppose I should know what he would have done to you!"

"Yes, and then I found out that he was married. His wife has been after me ever since."

"Well, then you may have to find someone else. I don't think I would know of anybody else."

He told her she should still try the correspondence course if she should want to

return home. They over the country influx of new graduates. Her mother was a she was just not a didn't want to go the village, to dirt pissed at the c wailing children boys who always old torn out shee thought her dis amusing. He deci how she would re

"But it would perhaps adventure boys, especially a pretty girl like you

"You think me

"Well you know you are prettier."

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"Not at all. romantic, especially hits, radio cassette. Other than that t can look after females like yours

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"What if he w have agreed to m

"Huh! Husat

"What if it wa

She turned ar pocked her tongu

"Mara lok hui

He laughed. very keen, smile

return home. There were teachers crawling all over the countryside now displaced by an influx of new graduates and overseas recruits. Her mother was a teacher, she told him. But she was just not prepared to return home. She didn't want to go back to the filth and flies of the village, to dirty old men and women who pissed at the corner of their huts, noisy wailing children and least of all the village boys who always wrote love letters to her in old torn out sheets from exercise books. He thought her dislike of village boys was amusing. He decided to pursue it just to see how she would react to it.

"But it would be very romantic and perhaps adventurous playing up with village boys, especially if they were mad about a pretty girl like you."

"You think me pretty?"

"Well you know every girl is pretty. But you are prettier."

"Humm toki maiyomom."

"Not at all. Village boys are quite romantic, especially with all these new super hits, radio cassettes and all this civilization. Other than that they are hard working. Many can look after the most highly educated females like yourself."

"Don't make fun of me. You think me educated olsem yu?"

"Oh no, husat pilai?"

"Mi les long ples yia. Ol man i diti tru, ol pig i raun nabaut long village, plenti poison na olo man na meri long ples, ol bloody bludgars. Toktok bilong ol em long marit tasol. Taim mi pinis long skul, oli bin tok gutpela man bambai emi marit na kamapim ol bubu. Ino tulait oli makim wanpela man pinis. Bloody lapun man wait gras na bipo i marit long ol Chimbu na igat tenpela pikinini. Hsat laikim em bloody dump."

"What if he was a young man? Would you have agreed to marry him?" he asked her.

"Huh! Husat pai laikim rabis man yah?"

"What if it was me?"

She turned around and looked at him and poked her tongue out at him.

"Mara lok hunah," she said.

He laughed. The barman who had been very keen, smiled too. Michael told him to

bring two brownies. He brought them to their table and said "olsem wanem wantok?"

"Bagarap!" he told him. The barman went back and continued to watch them from the counter.

"Em tasol na yu karim mi i kam hia, long askim mi long maritim yu?" she asked him.

"Nogat! Mi pilai pilai tasol."

"Hey shame on you! Watpo yu askim olsem?"

He grinned. He knew the girl was not angry. She in fact really wanted him to propose to her; or did she? But what the devil, after only a few beers and they had hardly known each other for no more than a few hours. The girl must be mad. Maybe she didn't really want him to marry him. Marriage for a night in bed would be more to her liking and possibly he could become her benefactor for the rest of his stay. It was his plan to merely discover her reasons for being in town and not to discuss marriage. He rose and told her that he would be going home immediately. She rose reluctantly.

On the way home, she told him how she wanted to make her home in town. She was thinking of doing a typing course at the secretarial college and, hopefully, find employment in the civil service; maybe BMS. They were always sacking workers and employing new ones, only to sack them again.

"What about the community government? They could do with your qualification and service"

"Community government is for old men and women and uneducated boys and girls," she told him.

"You could do some typing for your father as he is an OIC. He must need a typist from time to time to type business letters for him."

"Never! He was one of those people who were forcing me to marry that 'makaki' ogre from the Iru Community. Em i kan kisim narapela meri. I am not going, thank you. Oh what a bore!"

"You would prefer town then would you?"

"Yes! Town life swit moa. Dancing, boys, shops, music na ol ka, parties and all that sort of stuff."

"Well, I am sure you will be successful but

remember home is there. One day you'll have to go back. Ples yia, ples home sweet home."

"Will you see me again?" she asked him as he got into the vehicle.

"Maybe," he replied.

"Bastard kiap, bloody grisman."

He left her at her sister's flat.

"Who are they?" Michael asked Smith Hardy's sister who was married to another of his wantoks. The couple were moving out yet for their usual daily hike in the town.

"Olo pasindia ia," she whispered to him.

She told him that they came to stay with their son but their son who is a pisspot does not come home, could not afford to feed them so they came over to stay with them. They have been holidaying with them for more than a month now. Their son hardly came to see them least still to leave some food to help feed them. Since they sought refuge in their house, they had been saying that they should be out on the first vehicle that comes from the village. Since then, hundreds of vehicles had called in at their house and still the couple had not made any attempt to return home. He thought hard to find an answer as to why couples like them find it enjoyable in town and spend their miserable lives sitting about doing nothing while their knives and axes neede them in their gardens.

These were people who were continuing the age old custom of leaving their homeland to enjoy their son's achievements (in their son's case, it was grog, women and gambling). In days gone by people were known to leave home and go to another relatives village and stay with him. They ate his food and helped in his daily activities. Town life is different. Such people could not perform the tasks done by their (frustrated) hosts. Because of this they are left to exploit their offspring. In Toberaki no one would term such people as parasites. An idiom in the Toberaki language.

"Ebah ke mongonoina moa tamana tawana meke bah masava?"

"What can one say about the father's father? Who would dare disputé his right to son's property?"

A son who turns away his parents from his house commits a most shameful act of

selfishness. A father's presence is not questionable. His presence is a show of pride in partial recognition of his fathers' parents services. Though this may be a continuation of cultural heritage, wise men from village communities would see it as a misconception of the 'nu taim'. Such outdated village based practice is not practical in the modern sense. How true. One can still feel proud that the local community has still its own wise men. Poor fellows. Their minds are all muddled up. Perhaps they have seen other couples and so decided that they too should follow in monkey fashion.

The oldies often came into town with no conception of town life, housing, expectations. They often came to town thinking that everything would be just the same as their own village. You cook your food over burnign wood, fetch your water from the nearest creek, wash, excrete, chew betel, spray the grounds and blow the kaul before hitting the limbum floor bed at night. Kakeruks cock-a-doodle-di-dole-dah in the morning and wake you up. You heat previous meals left over from the day before and swallow some more betel nut before deciding whether to go gardening, hutning, fishing or spend the day resting and probably, if luck strikes, some relatives might drop in with some food. Most old timers would tire of the maddening experience of the town life. Frequent visits from time to time slowed down as they grew older with the eventual resignation of the sons or daughters from employment.

And what about those lazy bums who run away from the village after dropping out of community school only to become permanent, or semi-permanent, vagrants of urban centres; not those one day transits who purposely, or unintentionally, miss their trucks in the afternoon in order to get drunk at the Poraka Tavern. You see them combing every joint of the town as if they owned the place. They go around in mobs, representing dogs during the mating season. They are always on the móve, non-stop looking, searching, hoping for a miracle to happen, for manna to drop from above. Where tourism is

limited to a few expa up from down south tourists of the town.

What is their p beginning they are life, like town push o any other form of p enforced village misf uneducated (western wandering, moder majority of them co that they have only by the rays of Wes' traditional Kongae waries or ostriches establishment. In th committed numerou teenage girls, beat fathers or drunk a forcing the owner to grog was sold out an handed by some sr loses his license with would have raided g of their time, played waiting for the wo food.

Manamakota ho Chinese business-ma by an angry pan impregnated and ref a chimpanze fit Manamakota opei episode among hi tourists. Michael fir where Manamakota wantoks who had a with him had tosse claws of the High twined him into hu not been for a police nick of time. They d except during tradi them on foot patrol

And talking abou of peace, one would these blue boys ar those boots and but back or groin. He re the school he was a

limited to a few expatriate dependents coming up from down south to suntan, the latter are tourists of the town.

What is their purpose in town? In the beginning they are the pushouts of the village life, like town push outs, school push outs and any other form of push outs. They are self-enforced village misfits. They are normally the uneducated (western and local), the bums, the wandering, modern day nomads. The majority of them come from backward areas that they have only been recently penetrated by the rays of Westernisation. They are the traditional Kongaes (tiny imitation cassowaries or ostriches) who don't have any establishment. In the village they may have committed numerous crimes, seduced young teenage girls, beat up their mothers and fathers or drunk at any local bottle shop forcing the owner to remain open until all the grog was sold out and the owner is caught red handed by some snoopy co-ordinators and loses his license with a term at Kuvelia. They would have raided gardens and for most part of their time, played cards, cassettees and slept waiting for the women folk to bring in the food.

Manamakota hopped onto a speeding Chinese business-man's Isuzu carrier, chased by an angry parent of a girl he had impregnated and refused to marry, calling her a chimpanzee fit only for a monkey. Manamakota openly boasted about the episode among his group of permanent tourists. Michael first met him at the Tavern where Manamakota was getting pissed. His wantoks who had already lost their patience with him had tossed him out, right into the claws of the Highlanders who would have twined him into human mince meat, had it not been for a police patrol that arrived in the nick of time. They don't often come that way except during trading hours. You hardly see them on foot patrol.

And talking about the police, the blue boys of peace, one would not believe his eyes when these blue boys are in a pretty bad mood; those boots and buttons on some poor man's back or groin. He remembered the time when the school he was at was involved in a fight

with the blue boys who didn't appreciate the idea of losing to a schoolboy's side.

Manamakota picked up his battered carcase and headed back toward the counter eager to drown more beer. His wantoks got him some more beer when he demanded it, not wishing to be bothered. Michael couldn't pretend he had any confidence in the rat. He suspected Manamakota must have some connection with the recent brutal raping of several young women. It was done in typical cowboy fashion. The intruder had entered through the trap door (so the police said after a very thorough investigation), was masked and had gloves on and held a small pocket knife which he used to threaten the girl with. He forced her to open the door and let him out and dragged her to the nearby bushes where several other men repeatedly raped her. In her struggle she purposely bit off a chunk of one of her rapist's cheek.

Manamakota had set a record back home before his departure to the safety of the town. Since then he had been seeking social and economic asylum at every wantok's house in the town. He was a reknown hunter who rose with other animals at dark. He had climbed into every household and every convent, including a string of nursing colleges. Once he was cornered inside a pig pen by his own brother-in-law, he told his in-law that he was looking for a lost pig. Only an amateur would have believed him. Feeding the pigs was his in-law's sister who had recently graduated from Tarlena Mid-wifery Training Centre.

Palawaite and Manakam were married by the most Rev. Fr. Hurbert Shielkar. They stayed together and lived happily ever after for a few years, during which time Palawaite did nothing but fix vehicles, push lawn mowers while Manakam spent her days wearing her husband's most prized Seiko wrist watch, combed her hair, looked for lice and boiled the trukai rice given out by the Catholic Mission trade stores to Catholic mission laymen. All through life Palawaite had longed to stay in town. His dreams had been shattered from time to time by his father-in-law who insisted that Palawaite make his foundations in the village in the

form of coconut and cocoa trees like any other married man. Palawaite, whose interest was rooted in greasy engines and the filth of town life, made a small token by planting a few trees which were quickly overgrown by plants, parasitic crawling grass and human beings. The years and months preceding his cash cropping days and the advent of his resurrection into Arawa, was a time when Palawaite hopped from one workshop to another. In not time his backyard was littered with every vehicle part from every workshop junk yard that he had worked (mostly slept) at. He was forced to build a temporary Woku Sharpa to house his rusting toys. Days spent crawling among the engines, sweating like a pig, occasionally smearing himself in bitch refuse left by wretched animals who had welcomed the comforts of the junk yard, soon followed. He crawled out and in again not bothering to wash. This resulted in first degree ulcers and a complicated skin disorder. He would walk to work caked in dog shit and socialise at parties and enter offices looking for jobs. His in-law, a company executive, lived in section five. He took his holidays every July. At that time they would change place with Palawaite. It became an annual event. In July Palawaite, Manakam and their five offspring would load up their battered Toyota land cruiser and head towards the town. Michael saw them shopping at the supermarket. They all left together and stayed at Palawaite's brother-in-law's house; a C.6 type house.

Home to Palawaite was the village and town. If it was town life which he preferred, it wouldn't be Hutzena and its few Chinese stores, or Buin with its rascal and politically minded grass roots, it would be Arawa, Kieta, Tonwa and Panguna. Home was all the hardships, the never ending wailing of the women over deaths, the expensive memorial feasts amounting to tens of thousands of kina, sweat in the gardens, frustration resulting from never ending land disputes, sorcery, mosquitoes, leaky saksak roofs and the everlasting rainy season. Therefore, Palawaite and Manakam (who had rapidly adapted herself to Palawaite's hunger for a better life)

saw village life as a form of retreat; a place where the rich and affluent townsman and women retreated from time to time and visited old folks, relatives, dogs and chickens who belonged there on plots of land allocated to them by their elders.

Mrs. Maria Barosi was the utterly loyal wife of Joe Barosi; a senior foreman of the National Works and Supply Department who had painfully crawled up the bureaucratic ladder for twenty eight years under a hypocritical, homosexual Australian manager for which he was paid a miserable salary one tenth of what his Australian and Pommy counterparts were getting. He was the father of three thoroughbred children and lived in a modest AR-23 high covenant government house.

Maria Barosi, whose maiden name was Maria Isinna Mekerepu, was the eldest daughter of Chief Goli Wadzumare Tabolo, a former tribal war commander and cannibal. He devoured his last human twenty years ago in some Rotokasi mountain village. Maria attended the Girls Catholic Regional Vocational Training Institute and represented the country in Fiji for the South Pacific Women's traditional craft seminar; a course she had specialised in during her two years at the institute. Joe Barosi sent her mountains of gifts during this time, including twenty kina bills, piles of letters sprayed with whole cans of deodorant, anti perspirant sprays. She in return sent him equal numbers of letters powered with Johnson baby powder and Mum 67. She had now become inactive, overweight and possibly a diabetic victim and a consumer of rich European food and liquor.

When Joe was promoted to the position of Assistant Area Supervisor, Maria promoted herself to the position of overall manager of the house; a position equal to her husband. She demanded the assistance of several of Joe's sisters. The two sisters were airlifted to town. The girls' arrival meant her retirement from the kitchen, laundry areas and other chores which she had performed rather sloppily. Every morning she dictated the day's work to the girls and sat back to supervise and watch TV with a cigarette clipped

between two fingers. Of gin squash in the a.m. every day, she and dial her husband what he would like kai, curried chicken husband, a vegetable usual; steamed green Orchy. Maria, who best cook about the phone at husband matchstick of a man to him as one who eating; not like his eat a drumful of crush on him. Joe's recognised by the Maria had a good lived to eat.

During the school would take their class for a week to which familiarisation with to her annoyance, home. They called everyone else, dirt children had refused the lack of proper. They resented using it was quite close mosquitoes. This employ two village and shower block the village. Her own town. Having got accused of immoral resumed their position. Maria was rekindled advocator of traditional relatives and in-laws visited while her course, had been in as part of her project with her traditional became the talk true daughter and traditions. Her husband every other visit allow them to stay. She still continues

between two fingers of one hand and a glass of gin squash in the other. At precisely 10.00 a.m. every day, she would pick up the phone and dial her husband's number and ask him what he would like to have for lunch; cold kai, curried chicken or an omelette. Her husband, a vegetarian, would ask for the usual; steamed greens, a roasted kaukau and Orchy. Maria, who prided herself as being the best cook about the joint, would scream in the phone at husband. He was a bewildering matchstick of a man to her. She often referred to him as one who did not know the act of eating; not like his younger brother who could eat a drumful of kaukau. She once had a crush on him. Joe's lack of appetite was easily recognised by their friends. In comparison, Maria had a good appetite. She was one who lived to eat.

During the school term holidays, Maria would take their children home to the village for a week to what she said was an annual familiarisation with the kanaka society. Much to her annoyance, the children disliked going home. They called their grandparents and everyone else, dirty kanakas. In the past the children had refused to eat at all because of the lack of proper flush toilets in the village. They resented using the pit latrine, although it was quite clean; except for a few mosquitoes. This prompted their father to employ two village carpenters to build a toilet and shower block; the only one of its type in the village. Her own nieces were next to the town. Having got rid of her in-laws, who she accused of incompetency, her own nieces resumed their position as relative labourers. Maria was reknown for being a stern advocator of traditional obligations. Various relatives and in-laws, including bachelors who visited while her husband was away on course, had been invited to stay at their house as part of her programme of keeping in line with her traditional practices. At home this became the talk of the village. She was the true daughter and observer of Toberakian traditions. Her house became the house of every other visiting Toberakian. She didn't allow them to stay longer than several hours. She still continued to sack relatives from her

house and had them quickly replaced by other relatives. When her twin sister and brother became school leavers at grade eight level, she had them brought to town to do correspondence courses under her tuition, forgetting that she only managed to reach grade six at 'D' level in the 60s.

Kebariko was bailed out of Kuka police sub-station lock-up cell at 4.30 p.m. for one hundred kina by Mosighana, Kiare, Kesina and Pararoke. She was arrested, so the sleepy-eyed corporal said, for assault, possession of a dangerous weapon, resisting arrest and kneeling the police sergeant in the groin. Her five hours in the jail, amidst human faces that the police never bothered to clean and teasing young constables, was her most humiliating and frustrating experience. Not only did she resent being kept there, but she believed she should have been outside where she would be free to hunt and leash up that thief, Lisabeta, who had stolen her man, Okaru, whom she had been in love with from their childhood days.

Kebariko was born to Yusefo Waitodoli and Agotha Madana, both now past their fifties. Their two eldest daughters and one young boy who was the youngest in the family, had married into other clans and were living away from Mawatatagana. She had a very good pass at standard six while she attended Matopemako Primary School and was selected to attend secondary school. Her father would not allow her to attend. He had lost two of his eldest daughters to two dogs who were good at nothing except producing kid after kid. His refusal to allow Kebariko to go to secondary school was his way of avoiding the same mistake the third time.

Kebariko settled down at home, and prepared herself for the day that she would wed Okaru. Kebariko however did not know that another woman was madly in love with Okaru too. Lisabeta, a new graduate from the wardstrip teacher's college, had met him at the YC hall and since that time had been exchanging letters and gifts. Okaru had been working for the copper mine company for eight years and was a foreman. He had been a regular visitor to Borepakai Community

School where Lisabeta was teaching.

Kabariko had thought it was rather unusual for Okaru to forfeit his weekly visit. Even his usual gifts, which he sent her through friends or delivered personally to her father's house had ceased. Their father had asked her on several occasions how their relationship was progressing; whether she was still receiving gifts from her future husband or not. Kebarkio, not wishing to upset her father (after all, her father had organised their proposed marriage after seeing them play man and wife while they were children) had often lied, saying that she was still getting gifts as usual. Okaru's recent absence in the village had been because he was on a month's course in Port Kembla Australia.

"Your husband is going up and up. How many times has he gone overseas for courses? Ten times as far as we can remember. He is always home on weekends to see you. This is what I like about him. I am so happy to have an in-law like him. He is so considerate. I will not demand the eight hundred kina bride price. He has given so much already that it would be unfair to ask him to pay the bridge price."

Kebariko's heart felt lighter at her father's words. Yet she felt concerned about Okaru's long absences. One day Okaru's father came to see how Kebarikio was. She complained that Okaru had stopped coming home on weekends.

"It had been weeks since he last came home to see Kebarikio. What could have happened?"

"Oh let him be. He has alot of work which keeps him busy," replied Kebarikio's mother from within the smoke filled cook house where she was butchering a small piglet that her bushand had caught in one of his numerous pig trays that dotted the surrounding bushes.

"No, my sister. This is no good for a man to stop visiting his future wife."

Oh did they say he is somewhere in Australia?"

"Yes, school, school. There seemed to be no end to his education. How many times do these young people go to school? Fifteen years

in school, and they still continue. I remember the time when we boys went to school for five years and could take on any job. Now you have to train for this and that job. Man! These people will just die being in school all their lives. Tell you my sister, I did four years at Momarego and I became a teacher. I did not have to attend course after course to become a serviceman."

Kebariko listened with intent eagerness, savouring her in-law's pronouncements like a sweet sea breeze splashing into her worried face. Her parents assured her that all was well, and that she should not worry about her future husband's long absence. Such long absences, theysaid, were understandable. She should feel content with the old saying that no news is good news.

When Severina whispered to Kebarikio one evening after devotions, that Okaru had been seen for the last four weeks around Borepankai Community School, she could not believe her ears.

"You are telling lies!" Kebarikio replied.

"True to my brothers. A man who will feast on the village toilet will tell lies," replied Severina, who was very keen to convince her that her man was a two timing bastard. It should be understood that Okaru once seduced Severina under a Kalukai tre and had given her one hundred kina to keep her mouth shut with a promise not to ask him to marry her. He had since tried to revive their brief friendship under the Kalukai tree. She had even written to him and advised him to drop Kebarikio, but having seen him with her own eyes courting Lisabeta, she decided to gang up with Kebarikio and take her revenge on him.

"But how do you know?"

"My sister, how can you doubt me? I saw him with my own eyes last Saturday at the YC dance, and he seemed to be very keen on one pretty school teacher. I saw him waltzing and holding on very tightly to her. Her name is Lisabeta. She is a member of a Matange clan and thus is our relative, but why should he treat you like this when you are already hooked together. What's more, when a man and a woman waltz together, that can only

mean one thing."

"Did you really

"Yes, I went to Helena, Maiana and You know what? with the men except

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Lisabeta went each week. Wedne favourite days; Fridays. Kosipeu, Community Scho to go to town fo purposes at 1.30 p Kebarikio watched

mean one thing."

"Did you really see him?"

"Yes, I went to the dance with many girls. Helena, Maiana and others and we saw him. You know what? She even refused to dance with the men except Okaru."

"True tumas, oh mama! Nateba tasawa naghe."

That night Kebariko spent a sleepless night. When her mother asked her what was wrong with her, she could only tell her that she wasn't feeling well. She refused to eat and spent the day in her room.

"Oh come on! Girls don't just cry for nothing! Could it be the strain of having to wait for your husband that is becoming too much?"

"Go and talk to the gods outside," she screamed at her mother.

"Oh ghela, kota dala katsu ghe," shouted her mother as she retreated to her bed at the corner of the cook house.

Kebariko paced. The next morning while her parents slept, she hailed the Toyota driven by Inkale, a reknown womanizer. Her destination was Arawa where she was sure to find accommodation with her cousin Matarina. Severina was there too. She had gone ahead to town to pave the way for Kebariko like a prophet of the old testament.

Borepankai Community School was built on the bank of the laba River. Regular PMV buses and private vehicles screamed up and down the compensation expressway. The road centre was divided by elaborate skull and cross bones; a reminder of the grisly human tragedy that was fast becoming an accepted way of life every weekend. The mining company had been indicating crash sites with the old Jolly Roger trade mark as a deterrent to drivers. Somehow it had the opposite effect.

Lisabeta went to town every second day each week. Wednesdays and Fridays were her favourite days; although she preferred Fridays. Kosipeu, headmaster of Borepankai Community School often allowed his teachers to go to town for banking and sight-seeing purposes at 1.30 p.m. every Friday fortnight. Kebariko watched her come out of the bank

and enter the department store. She had been waiting for this moment for the past three weeks. She had seen her all that time and had waited for the most opportune time. That day she was extraordinarily angry. She had rug Okaru, suggesting that he come down and meet her at her cousin's house so that they could go down together to the supermarket where she hoped he would buy her a blue floral dress and a tight 'T' shirt she had seen worn by young girls in the town. However, his plans were quite the opposite. She wanted to show him off to Lisabeta Severina and any other female admirer. Okaru had suggested that they meet on Saturday instead as he was quite busy working his last night shift before his five days off.

Severina who seemed to know more about Okaru than Kebariko (that had often puzzled her) told her after her phone call that Okaru was in fact starting his five days off that day and was preparing for the nights dance at Borepankai Community School organized by the school's parents and citizens association. The popular Pyrocks band, of which Okaru was the base guitarist and singer, was invited to provide music until three o'clock in the morning, or at whatever time the organiser wished to stop the band.

"So you see my sister," concluded Severina, "he has refused to come down because he would rather be at Borepankia School to show off in front of that pamuk Lisabetta."

Kebariko did not doubt Severina. She had always been right in whatever she had told her about Okaru.

"You seemed to know a lot more than I do!" Kebariko said.

"Of course I do! Who else would be here willing to break this sad news to you my sister? Don't burden yourself with any educated man. They are all the same. They play around with girls, chuck them out and run away with the next one. They are all the same. You see Teresa now nursing two children? A university man played hide and seek with her. And there's Mokemoke, Rupuneu, Tamatama, Takolia and Machoela. The whole string of them