

pamuked by educated men."

Kebariko entered the supermarket when it was choked full of customers and usual *matagages* who could not afford the prices yet came in all the same just to be part of the crowd. She paid for a bottle of Nukana lemonade, which she drank, her eyes never leaving Lisabeta who was at the other end of the take-away counter waiting for a whole roasted chicken to be wrapped by a stocky shop assistant. Sweat fell down the assistant's forehead like Rouna Falls in Sogeri. She edged toward her, cursing at one or two youths who steeped on her foot, and asked Lisabeta what she was buying. Her hands gripped a pair of scissors she had bought specially for this occasion. She slashed Lisabeta's pretty mambu kona 'T' shirt and equally pretty floral dress. In one lightning movement, Kebariko had transformed her into a dazzling peeled ripe banana, her skin was no longer protected against her luxury. A savage right cross floored Lisabeta who was too ashamed to fight back. Kebariko would have sheared her like a merino sheep had it not been for an embarrassed laghulawa who wrestled the scissors away from her hands and covered Lisabeta with a laplap offered by another woman.

The police officer who came to investigate as Kebariko was unceremoniously bundled into the blue van, asked what the flight was all about.

"Tapiok tasol," replied a moustached midget who looked more like a premature walrus from somewhere like Alaska or one of those artificial sea parks.

"Wanem tapiok?" asked the police officer not in the least amused.

"Bilong man tasol," replied another with an eye that twinkled as he rolled it in its worn out socket. He reminded the police man of a cat in the darkness.

When Michael heard about it, he wasn't in the least surprised. he practice was common everywhere. In some centers the fresh food market is a location for sex oriented western type showdowns; especially on Saturdays. One such center averaged ten a day. The most entertaining one he had ever seen was on the

mainland. Two woman had wounded the disputed lucky man to be loved by two into a natural human rope for a tug-of-war. Someone suggested that they split the man in half (in reference to King Solomon). Neither of them wanted only half of him. He concluded that it would require a cleverer man than Solomon to solve the conflict. Once there had been a morathon fight between two others along the whole length of the town from dawn to dusk.

Two policemen had to separate Kebariko and Lisabeta at the cell. The police officer gathering information had to shout above the scream Kebariko to tell her to keep quiet. Lisabeta who had a large group of supporters and friends was released and Kebariko remained locked up until she was bailed out in the afternoon.

Okaru, feeling aghast at Kebariko's attack on Lisabeta, vowed not to marry her. As of today he is still seeing Lisabeta at Borepaukai community School. Kebariko was acquitted of the charge but the Magistrate strongly warned her to stay out of the town area, and placed her on a six month good behaviour bond.

"Well, you'll be on your way. You'll stop worrying about Arawa. I heard you'll be heading for the city. Good luck. I've learnt they have beggars and criminals there," said Smith Hardy.

"Good luck, buster. Meet me at Christmas," Michael told Smith Hardy as he pushed his way out of the gate.

The plane had hardly stopped climbing when he sighted the town gleaming below him. He leaned over to have one last look at a place he had learnt so much about in a short time. He withdrew from the window as the air hostess asked him what he would like. Tea, coffee or orchy and a cream bun. Michael chose the last. He looked at the miserable glass of orchy and buttered bun on the plastic tray. Pay them one hundred and twenty kina and they serve one miserable meal. At the college they served sausages in thick gravy, oxtails, chicken and lettuce or pumpkin leaves. He gulped down the meagre meal in one mouthful and dozed off to sleep and dreamed about a town that turned into a

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The mythical creative poet, or materialised into Louis Stevenson Tutaitala; a tel recorded the ball

Once the land in Dwelled by the g Slept to the lulla Tupu

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Who'd bargained At his back stood In boots and bay The man bought Axe and a knife

Then down the down

Woke the kings Their casts they To vanish in flai Then the queens fled

In mountain cav From above the in flames

Men in white th arse and Spine died of heat and

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A skinny moror Like a monkey As he paid each A tabaak and a While he smoke Served to him b



ghetto at every tick of the clock. Far away over the hills a voice sang to his beloved to remain home while he roamed the horizon returning to her after buying a saucepan, a cuckoo clock and a ring.

The mythical singer had turned into a creative poet, or rather his songs and ballads materialised into poems of impasse. A Robert Louis Stevenson of Melanesia; an imitation Tutaitala; a teller of tall tales. Below is recorded the ballads of this mythical poet.

Once the land in idleness grew  
Dwelt by the ghosts of kingdom gone  
Slept to the lullaby of the rustling Bov and Tupu  
Bathed by the breeze of the sea  
Such peacefulness it lingered in their hearts  
In the lands of the Kekerekan 'et sequentes'.

Then from a-far a stranger he came  
His ship a cargo of immense riches it brought  
Who'd bargained for the land at Kokareka  
At his back stood the colonial guard  
In boots and bayonet he saw  
The man bought the land with a  
Axe and a knife, he'd seal the deal.

Then down the temples they chopped them down

Woke the kings and queens they did  
Their casts they laid a-hugging the soil  
To vanish in flames of fire and hell  
Then the queens and kings and cons they fled

In mountain caves they hid.

From above they dried as the land it burned in flames

Men in white they kicked who booted the arse and Spine of blacks who'd toiled and died of heat and hunger

In their place — cocoa young they grew  
To replace the bush long departed  
With nothing more or less.

A skinny moron he came  
Like a monkey he walked  
As he paid each a slave  
A tabaak and a pound of rice  
While he smoked a cigar and sipped a gin  
Served to him by his mangi mata boi.

A monster he came and flattered  
Ko'has, Kokau down they went  
Like the repeat of twenty years before  
Then arrived a swarm of mortals  
Native labourers they white garment too  
They swarmed the bush like ngats of Kekerkas swamp.

Up the town it enveloped the bush  
And no more do we see  
Mr Moretson's trees and plantation hands  
So just as every town of development  
Will it swallow  
Any sizable piece of land.

Enter the men of all walks of life  
Every Dick and Harry and pussy  
To London to Arawa to pick  
Gold bars from streets as Dick once did  
For the town it was the Mecca of NSP  
The pilgrims of rural life it called.

So they poured  
In from the rural and urban homes  
To share the cake  
Baked by Aussies and given  
By Kone and Waigani  
In the garden of Adam and all mankind.

They came  
Ate the apple, the cake, the sausage  
The Js, Ms and the Lions  
Problems they craddled  
Of the flight to town  
By all of man and womenkind.

### GOSSIP

The thick hot and black Highlands grown coffee tumbling down Michael's freezing throat brought back his true sense of reality. He sighed with a big aaa . . . ah, which made a few customers stare at him, thinking he was made. An elderly white female, smelling heavily of exotic perfume, looked at him and smiled. Her male partner nodded and said "good coffee isn't it?"

"Sure! The best Arabica grown in the southern hemisphere."

"Sure!" replied the gentleman and resumed studying a Talair travel brochure. The woman busied herself checking through their itinerary.



"Tourists," said Michael to himself, "probably enjoying a long awaited holiday they spent years saving up for."

A white expatriate left a colleague of his and his colleague, Jonathon, sat on the chair with a bent back and a long neck that made him look like a whooping crane asleep by a mosquito infested swamp.

"Brrrrr . . . blistering cold isn't it?" he said as he sat down on the chair opposite Jonathon. He turned around on the revolving chair to face the main street.

"Couldn't sleep last night even with two extra blankets."

"Blankets alone are not enough. You need something else to keep you really warm."

"Like what for instance?"

"Human blankets for you. Women — kekenis na momo."

"Be gone Lucifer. Laus pinis Lucifer," said the other in mock outrage.

"Don't tell me you have decided to become a holy father.?"

"Not a bit of it. Only that I wouldn't want to be near any of those famous units. What with all those four letter words."

"Forget it St. Jonathon," he said trying to change the subject and be funny at the same time.

Michael ordered another mug of black coffee when the other had finished. High above a single engine Commanche Piper screamed as it took off from the airport bound for some outlying outstations. They would be lucky to return safely home with the amount of crashes that occurred every second week.

Jonathon was absorbed in some very deep thoughts. A truck full of painted tribesmen rolled by amidst hooting and shouting by the warriors. Jonathon did not look up as the people on board the truck behaved like bulls at mating season.

"Who was that fellow?" he asked Jonathon.

"Who?" said Jonathon.

"That character who was sitting over here."

"Oh, that's Jones! One of those migratory yoyos you come across being blown about from destination to destination by the wind."

"Oh, one of those countless touring sandpipers that arrive from across the ocean with the advent of Christmas," he said trying to return the joke.

"A consultant engaged by the government, currently being bank-rolled by the Minerals and Energy Department."

"Hope he is a genuine one. We are fed up being populated by foreign misfits, opportunists and criminals on the run."

"Very inquisitive fellow. He had been asking about things which have no connection to his job."

"Typical whiteman. This is the group of nonsensical misinformed individuals who come here to pick up a bit of gossip from any rascal, go home and write a whole length of verbal bullshit."

"Maybe he's a spy, CIA, KGB or any of the other super power espionage personnell who are always snooping around dusty slums, garbage yards and paper bins searching for any clues which may be a threat to their country's security. Wonder what our own intelligence network will be like?"

"Or possible revolutionaries trying to export their revolutionary idealogies."

"How about intellectuals?"

"What about the whole lot of them?"

"Plenty man! One sees what they write about our country, especially third world countries. Utter rubbish eh? Vastly exaggerated and distorted accounts of natives and their so-called traditional, social and economic structures."

He remembered a score of foreign academics who had carried out various anthropological research. Many of their pre-World War II colleagues lived here and broke as many taboos and customs that there was to be broken. Back home they published the results of their research and in no time the books were on the shelves of their colleges and universities; used as references by student and in later decades, by their own children.

A lot of effort was spent in writing that material. They hoped to benefit from it either through fame, money or possibly by the remote chance, as a laureate for the Nobel Prize for literature. Like all businesses, one

has to be a little attention and profit

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has to be a little more cunning to attract attention and profit.

"And do you think they often exaggerate?"

"Sure man! Sure! As sure as I am about my grandfather who was murdered by them. You know there's an article in the Australian Geographical Magazine about a trip taken by some of these jokers into Buin to visit Yamamoto's crash site. The writer describes a village, Hari, as a river two hundred metres when flooded; Japanese tanks and anti aircraft guns positioned by PWD workers, which he said were left there by the Japanese during their hasty retreat toward Buin, Aku villagers as isolated from whiteman and even Panguna mine growing coffee and all that crap! This is all ridiculous. It proves that this character did not bother to investigate the facts before writing his article. I come from there and when I read this article I couldn't help laughing at the fool who saw fit to write a full length article about my people in an elite magazine like GEO. I wondered how they would feel if I were to write an article about their own country giving all the most derogatory description of the people's lifestyles. And what's more, the way Australia creates its own race problem by welcoming Asian boat people who in twenty years time will be in the same boat as the other suckers in USA and England with their own race problems."

"Very interesting. Why don't you become a special analyst for white activities in the Pacific, then we could read about all your beliefs on white corruption and opportunism."

"And how about you? We could become partners; like Paddy Phenece reporting from London BBC. We could call ourselves M and J report from the Pacific."

"That will be the day," laughed Jonathon as he watched a girl he always tried luck on (but seemed to be luckless) go past without even looking at him.

"Failed again?" he said.

"Fooled again," added Jonathon. "Somehow I wonder why I bother. They prefer whitemen and money-men to us. To me I mean. Yes, they think they are too good

for us," sighed Jonathon.

"Why don't you try expatriates for a change? High time more of us married their women for a change. After all they seem to be claiming all our best educated and pretty women. I would suppose their females would love to have a black partner in bed. take the red head at the book shop for instance. I am told she treasures Melanesian men more than her own males."

He waited for Jonathon to speak. He did not. Instead he got up and told him to follow him. He asked him where they were heading for. He did not reply. Jonathon kept walking up the street toward the music store. There were always young semi-hippies hanging around there listening to the latest albums, records and cassette that they could not afford to buy. Maybe there would be a sucker there who could be lured into Jonathon's place. Especially rascal tomboys who hung about the main business centers, taverns and colleges.

He said hello to the red head as they walked past the book shop after seeing no young rascal girls and boys at the music shop. She looked up and poked her tongue at him. He winked back. They continued walking up the street. He nudged Jonathon in the ribs and told him to look back when they had gone a fair distance from the shop. The red head was there looking at them, her hands folded across her abundant bosom. She tilted her head to one side allowing her hair to partly fall over, then quite suddenly she expertly shook her head and allowed her hair to fall back behind her neck. Jonathon attempted to push away but he stopped him. The red head quickly waved and tip-toed inside after saying something which they couldn't hear. They arranged to ring her.

"Is that her?" asked Jonathon.

"As if you didn't know!" he replied.

"Honestly I didn't know her." Jonathon paused. "And what is the meaning of calling her sweetie?"

"Is there any law against that?"

"No but . . .," Jonathon stopped there.

"I can see that you are still scared."

"Scared? My foot, who dares to say I am



scared of any woman?"

"No wonder they call you a male chauvinist pig."

"Forget it!"

He left it at that, rather unwilling to take up the challenge right up to the book shop, or even to the steps of the expatriate commissioner's house, whose two grown up daughters seemed to be on a prolonged holiday. They had been terminated from a Catholic college by the principal for saying defamatory remarks about white males in the territories and colonies. Their allegations may not have been false. After all, many legally married whites regularly leave their white wives in favour of Melanesian and Polynesian and Micronesian women who are often virgins when they are married to these men who could easily be their grandfathers.

Island women were more fatty and aggressive than white females who were all bones and skin, soft and weak. They were like logs and quite useless in bed anyway. They are funny and cowards. They live in a society made complex by machines and other synthetic mechanical gibberish that they call civilisation.

Michael was startled by a short laugh from Jonathon. (It could have been a croak, as Jonathon's laugh is often mistaken for a croak. Jonathon said nothing.

"I just couldn't help thinking about these bunch of yoyos. They are really funny, more or less crazy and unpredictable."

"Correction, predictable," Michael offered.

"Predictable?" Jonathon asked in surprise.

"Yes, predictable and blooming crazy too," said Jonathon.

This group makes up the community of foreigners most of whom are plantation men, contract officers, missionaries, a few spies and from time to time, transit passengers, tourists staying over night while on their way east to the more romantic Polynesian Isles or back south and west exhausted by the tropical sun, sunburnt and possibly broke.

They are predictable; as predictable as only one who has lived with them part-time would know. One sees them buying cartons of grog at any one time and there is no doubt that the

occasion is either going to be a party, a housie housie evening, Harriers and Harriets after-run booze up; the buyer a grog man and occasionally a blackmarket supplier. One is disturbed by drunken natives who delight in having a weekend or all night orgy when there is beer. The next morning he's at the police station laying charges. If someone else says or does something which is supposedly defamatory then the other person is sued an exorbitant amount of money. Every other thing has an opposite of itself.

A plump beer bellied joker, so fat he could be mistaken for a ripe and round pumpkin, was often about a certain college male dormitory whenever he visited the district. He was sure to offer any male student a few bottles of grog, if the student wanted it after having lied about who his friends were. If he is a departmental head, he will lie about who he is going to promote, especially if his quarry is one of his so called workmates and is a wantok of whoever he happens to run into every night.

It is not often good manners to discuss other people, or so Papuans would say to those who are deeply rooted in traditional so called customs. They call it 'pasim bilong Tubuna'. But for someone whose ancestors, friends and perhaps relatives have had so much rubbish written about them the chance to write a few lines about them is a pleasure; a literary pleasure. The individual could easily be anyone quite predictable; his voice, his persuasiveness and his demanding tactics; a rarity only found in this type of group although Papua New Guinean's present school age generation are learning fast. In Papua New Guinea that sort of character could easily be identified as a maus wara, or a grisman.

"What sort of moon are you?" one can ask him. In which cases the other would not answer rather rigidly. It wouldn't be surprising for him to reply, "What the fuck, or cunt are you talking about, you dirty old nigger, or you impoverished kanaka." And as for some very inquisitive Papua New Guineans, that sort of remark does not pose as a deterrent against further enquiries.

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If you are not by any chance a homosexual or someone in that category, that sort of question is rarely asked; although naughty European kids are fond of asking such questions with the hope of satisfying their curiosity. I am rather interested in being in the company of educated locals who enjoy a few beers and talk about women and men who follow a shady life style. They call them peculiar human beings for they indulge in unnatural practices.

If he is not a homosexual then he could be a hermit, a guru or a self exiled person from the rest of any social structure. An outcast not an outlaw. robin Hood, Bily the Kid, Ned Kelly and hopefully one of Papua New Guinean's own Robin Hoods, or Chuevarra style criminals who are yet to be born are fit to be branded outcasts. Or maybe a semi wit.

A missionary is one who has had to give up his worldly possessions and his relatives in order to follow Jesus' steps and spread the good news to the so called heathens. He seems less important now than his predecessors who barricaded themselves in mimi forts; called monasteries and convents. They owned limitless acres of land in which they grew coconuts, kaukaus, bananas mainly to be fed to the workers and the lay native helpers. The missionaries became very wealthy through their ownership of large estates, workers, property and fleets of coastal vessels and one-engine aircraft.

Some in their late thirties live alone in their crumbling refectories which are luxurious in comparison to the mission workers' houses. They look at their flock with suspicion; especially the younger generation who are educated. A few of the older generation of Papua New Guineans still adore these missionaries as semi-gods; after all they are to them. The majority of older Papua New Guineans have stopped attending church services, while the young prefer liquor and drugs to church, some of whom have even joined more recently formed new christian youth groups like the 'One Way' or a two way bastion for youths new christian worship. Soon these missionaries will have their positions localised by one of the local's own

priests; would have been done a long time ago if the local priests did not leave their priestly duties to enter the civil service and marry long time girl friends.

Years ago a German missionary it is said, was a terror in the minds and lives of the then new converts. He dished out punishment to anyone, young, old, lame and idiots alike. One native went to confession and was thrashed to the dust during the solemn holy mass. He was again thrashed on the center aisle in front of all the worshippers before concecration. This German missionary could be likened to Saladdin with his Muslim warlike followers spreading their church all over west Asia and, unsuccessfully, in Europe with the sword still being brandished by Ayattollahs in the Muslim world.

Today the German dare not repeat this. He has learnt through the past and present that such tactics have become out of date; belong to the history of the past when white men assumed themselves to be semi gods, even though many of them were sinners. Today this tactic would easily be countered with equal resistance from the educated younger generation. Possible revival of this would mean the ned of christianity. A number of people, both young and old no longer go to church except at Christmas and Easter feast days when young men turn out drunk in dirty overalls to see women and young girls from secondary schools and university girls who hope to attract a potential husband, or merely to show off.

This German missionary has a cook; a graduate from some mission station; an old time manki masta from some plantation or town. He is the cook, laundry man and occasionally a shop keeper. Gone are the days when the nuns prepared all his meals although they still do in some mission stations. No more streams of visitors, presents — all that has been reduced to a mere trickle of a handful of catechists and teachers from out lying community schools. People come to cash their government cheques and to purchase tinned food and rice. On some of those occasions they are summoned for never ending meetings. The only other time people



come in large numbers is during film shows which the priest show free of charge.

The priest is battling against the odds. The odds being hot heads or rebels within his respective parish. Having been induced into some education, they prefer to show off. Then there is the class of materialistic-minded people who prefer big cars, big houses fat wages and urban life. In the village he has to deal with the ordinary villagers who are left in a dilemma, confused by both politicians and missionaries; of course the latter is more influential. Maybe in his own thoughts he would prefer to have the old days brought back when the church was the absolute authority, but those days are gone never to be revived.

The remnants of the old colonial days would-be-settlers can be seen driving in fancy shiny limousines, meeting at exclusive yacht clubs, cruising in double engine fibre glass speed boats and have Papua New Guinean servants. One need not write about them because they back the economic backbone of the country. Without them the country would drown under its massive overseas borrowings. They would prefer to be left alone to run their plantations, continue to recruit labourers from highland provinces, pay them peanuts compared to the salaries paid to other employees; a miserable contract pay is handed to them and then they are loaded into cargo vessels and it is left at that. This sort of operation has been satisfactory for them since Queen Emma's days. They are the last remnants of a bunch of die-hards. The last thing they would prefer to do is to sell out to natives at very low prices and then to look for a plot of land somewhere in Australia; possibly in the last unexplored areas of the Northern Territory where land is still up for grabs; hopefully without Garrwully Ynupingus's knowledge.

One sees them dashing about dry faced with a murmur on their lips nipping off into exclusive farmer's or plantation tycoon's clubs where they play havoc with the English language being rural people themselves. There are very few of them now around. Most have gone away after having sold their plantations

to eager beaver Nationals who think in figurative terms, run down the plantation and blame their failure on witchcraft or non-government participation. The few who remain are tight lipped. They tend to retreat back to their own homesteads with a one way ticket (renewed every year) should an Idi Amin type ruler take over and try to boot them out. With the withdrawal of Highland labour they are often faced with problems beyond their control. The local population is often a proud lot who are unwilling to take over a job they regard as rubbish. This makes it more difficult. In Fiji they are often faced with options of employing Indians but must comply with the newly independent labour laws which naturally bar the import of cheap labour, especially Asians with an alarming rate of population growth, criminal activity. Fijians are today out-numbered. In turn Australia will be next having welcomed with open hands thousands of them.

They invest all their profit in their own country leaving little in the form of payment to labourers which must account for only a few percent compared to the millions going out every month. Their community involvement involved show pageants, annual cowboy style rides into towns on a horse back to literally stop traffic flow. Other than this nothing more is heard about them except on news broadcasts telling how many thousands of kina so and so sold his/her plantation for to some local villagers after which several cows and pigs and scores of chickens were devoured. Many cartons or kegs of SP brownies were also usually drank.

In days gone by they were a powerful mob who owned many things. They still do even to the extent of owning town like Kieta until the 1970s. One still sees the last remnants of their hey days in the area of plantation owned stores, planter's association, wholesale stores and clubs. Today with the decline of cocoa and other cash crop prices, they are embarking on other money making ventures that utilized waste coconut, like piggeries and poultry farms.

One ruffian who owned such a plantation practically barricaded himself in with barbed

wire, mixed Alsatian. That character lived in a lord who still preferred German, a Malakian foremen and a Papua New Guinean agriculturalists. The wailed at 1.30 moonlight nights o'clock midnight morning. The v breakfast. One for worked there outrageous. It was of brown rice, tin Work resumed im 12 o'clock. The v meagre lunch. The disliked feeding la all. The weary three-thirty.

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His house was because one ignored an uncountable wantoks. He sent and Supply for broken doors; leaking refrigerator leaking water tap two before the W was frustrated quickly. He recalled already told him Civil Service and the practice was i days when his and The two weeks compared to what would have to wait years and was not acted on a



in wire, mixed Alsatian dogs and security men. That character lived in the dark ages, a landlord who still practiced serfdom. He had a German, a Malayan and a Rhodesian as foremen and overseers. He didn't trust Papua New Guineans, even Vudal trained agriculturalists. There the bell for the next day wailed at 1.30 a.m. every morning. On moonlight nights work commenced at 12.00 o'clock midnight until seven the next morning. The workers then ate a hasty breakfast. One former contractor who once worked there described the food as outrageous. It was a typical plantation menu of brown rice, tinned fish and wheat cakes. Work resumed immediately and continued till 12 o'clock. The workers stopped work for a meagre lunch. The owner of the plantation disliked feeding lazy bones who didn't work at all. The weary men lay down to rest at three-thirty.

This man did not know the meaning of rest, holidays or feast days. Life to him was a continuous labour no matter what. In rain, thunder, tornado, hailstone and famine, work must continue. Of course today with all the government liberal laws, much of what he would gladly impose on his workers whom he regards as his beasts of burden cannot be practiced.

His house was not up to standard possibly because one ignorant National lived in it with an uncountable number of dependents and wantoks. He sent a requisition form to Works and Supply for immediate maintenance of broken doors, rotten steps, torn flywire, leaking refrigerator, broken light bulbs and leaking water taps. He waited for a week or two before the Work's carpenters arrived. He was frustrated because they didn't come quickly. He recalled what someone had already told him about slackness within the Civil Service and grumbled. He forgot that the practice was inherited from the colonial days when his ancestors were the rulers then. The two weeks' wait was a short time compared to what his National colleagues would have to wait for action. Often one had to wait years and quite often the requisition was not acted on at all. So one could ask why

this man grumbled. He had to wait two weeks only and the government policy concerning services favours him anyway.

The fact that he was here for as long as the Civil Service continued to review his contract meant that he could apply for a renewal of his contract after every two years. The money was good, the conditions were excellent and they even had an association that spoke out for them. He just didn't want to accept anything. He asked for special conditions. He preferred an urban posting so that he could be close to the urban life; booze and what not.

These type of people are not new around the region. Their ancestors or even their fathers have walked through the very soil he was treading on. His predecessors came and set down policies and guide-lines. Some have died trying to force the pax Britannia or something of that sort onto the stubborn natives. Now some thirty years later the youngsters are around following the footsteps of their predecessors hoping to reap the fruits of their sweat. They aim for the top, decide to retire back to some rural joint to die or try their hand at something else which they are often miserable at. Of course, the majority in this group are temporary workers although they tend to remain permanent by renewing their contracts or indulging in something like marrying local girls, even though some have their own wives and children. One finds many of them around main urban areas. A few genuine ones may be found in rural areas. A certain provincial government is dominated by them. One sees them driving about in four wheel drive vehicles with the provincial emblem boldly painted on both cabin doors.

It is not often that one sees them socializing with natives. When one does it is usually for some unknown reason. They are either very devoted to the National cause or are genuine human beings who understand human characteristics. A certain Asian group in the nation have been seen to mingle with Nationals, but such associations end as soon as the wives and children arrive. Nearly, if not all, are always married — like Papua New Guineans; although today one sees Uni female graduates who remain spinsters till



Kingdom come. These Asians expect Nationals to join them in very expensive clubs or money-oriented sports. The Nationals frequent such places for a little while. They learn that even though they are welcomed with open arms to these places, they soon experience those typical sidelooks and gestures.

One thing that is puzzling is their continuous need for more material comfort. One would think that they are only here to make money. Rather their claim for more money is not substantiated by the amount of work that they do. Their predecessors sweated for twenty-four hours a day. They merely do a seven hour shift, knock off anytime they want and then piss off to nearby pubs or their own houses and drown their miseries in beer. They then expect the inexperienced National to set the way. And when the poor fish bumbles up the whole system, they fall back on their bum and say, "See they can't do the job. They'll never do it. Just see Africa. And what do you expect from the Melanesians."

A recent mortal of this group, who has since returned to his homeland, was once asked where he worked before his adventurous journey to PNG. His answer was of the nature of, "Well, I worked at many large government departments and held a position of . . . ." His explanation of the type of position was rather unclear and hence was lost in the annals of time. He was an awful educator. Most of the time he was worrying about his pay. When he was asked to attend a seminar, he wanted to know if he would be accommodated in a hotel, and whether the department would pay him special allowances for attending the seminar. He gave up after being told that he would not be paid any allowance and he would have to sleep at the teachers' college and take his meals at the college mess like everyone else regardless of colour, qualification and whatever other properties one may have.

Of course there is no denying that Nationals cry for money too, but their cry is attributed to the realisation that the other group are paid hundreds for doing the same jobs, working the same length of time,

perhaps shorter, and are paid airfares to Australia at Christmas. Some are not even qualified and would be unemployed back where they hail from. One poor loser had gone back home dispirited. He gave away toys and other undesirable goods to Nationals the day before his departure hoping to collect money in return for them the following morning. The men who could not afford to pay the amount, or sly men, jokingly told him to leave them his address so that they could send the money later.

So much for the crooks and avaricious lot. One who was rather different from the rest, whose name is still whispered by those who knew him, left not so long ago leaving behind him equipment and valuables worth a fortune to the school. Whether he was a refined gentleman or simply acted out of pity will never be known. But he was one who was wholeheartedly devoted to his job and has left a great mark in the country in terms of knowledge passed onto subordinates. He had respect for Papua New Guineans and a genuine sense of humour.

Mr. Mao (Mr Minus Academic Opportunity) came at the budding age of fifteen armed with a form 2 certificate, worked at odd jobs, but steadily rose in influence and liklik save. His big leap came at a most opportune time when the territory needed teachers to lift it from the dust of World War II and the German's capitalistic colonialism. He was a typical primer three product as locals would call him, having done a six weeks course in general teaching procedures before taking up his position which he jealously holds today. His compatriots who did the same course in general teaching have now risen in status to more envied positions in the hierarchy. Several hundred Nationals who did the same course are scattered about in remote community schools, many of them the department is gladly getting rid of. Often these people exchange letters with him.

Mao is reputedly a rabble rouser, a stirrer. When a certain department was taken advantage of by Mao, they couldn't prove a thing about him. This department was

reluctant to ins  
him as they w  
trouble. Well, th  
knew that when  
trouble he woul  
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The last wom



reluctant to instigate any action against him as they would have been in bigger trouble. Well, that is corruption itself. Mao knew that whenever he felt like brewing more trouble he would always triumph over any group he picked on. Therefore it was the typical geographical map that Mao drew as he moved or transferred from one location to another stirring trouble, using so called friends to rebel against so called unjust policies, helping to overthrow OIC and winning more enemies.

Mao reached the highest post in the civil service that could be given to anyone of Mao's type. Any further elevation to another higher position would not have been in-appropriate as there were hundreds already at the top. And if any such man or woman in that category were to be elevated, they would have been subjected to criticism by a large proportion of highly educated Nationals. Of course, appointment of primor six or fivers to secretary level, or level 9 or 10 is not uncommon. today the top nest is kept warm by this lot who are reluctant to leave and are very easy. There was a lot of talk and laughter in the dimly lit and air-conditioned bar-room. The room was full, perhaps accommodating more than the capacity required for it. Male bartenders and waiters wearing see-through lavalava were busy attending to the drinker's requirements. the drinkers were a combination of youths of seventeen and older men in their late forties. They were all well dressed; a requirement of the hotel. The younger men wore tight fitting pants that clearly showed the outline of their buttocks, tight body shirts with two buttons undone showing hairy chests or bare muscular shoulders. There were hardly any girls or women. If there were any, they had either left earlier or were lost in the sea of human biengs.

Behind Michael someone worked their mouth in imitation of an eating hog. He turned around to face a middle-aged, over nourished character who was smacking his tongue like a rokrok catching a blue fly buzzine around quickly to pick up his thoughts where he had left them.

The last woman had left through the back

door. the room was nearly choked full with more coming in. A lone female bartender, although pretty, had caught only a few men's eyes. The majority ignored her. One of the male servants brought in some more grog as he placed the beer on the low table, someone patted his bottom calling it yumyim juicy. He gave a female type side glance and retreated to the counter to take more orders, his bottom swinging to the rhythm of this movement. He reminded him of many women he had seen. His thoughts didn't catch on at all. Some of the drinkers left the room holding hands like dumdums. The most peculiar lot of people he'd ever seen in his life. Everyone of them acted very queer. During the half hour he was there he witnessed the queerest group of characters. They blew kisses at each other, hugged, patted each other on their buttocks and everyone he'd seen had his eyes glued to each other's arose. Who were these old characters? How the hell did they know each other? How did they drink so quickly and depart just as rapidly as they had gulped down their beer. They left hand in hand like boy and girlfriends. The male steward showed clear feminine characteristics in the way he talked, walked and accepted money. This was all a mystery to Michael.

On the way out he met another colleague returning to his room. He told him that he'd met the most peculiar bunch of males in his entire life down at the hotel lounge.

"You were down there?" the other asked.

"Yes, I was there," he replied.

"That joint is expensive isn't it? A kina for a bottle."

"Sure expensive."

"And your peculiar group of characters . . . who were they?"

"Couldn't make out who they were."

"Ol samting no gut. Ol tumbuna bilong oli bin painim ol long Gomorrah na Sodom."

"Those characters?" he asked.

"Sort of! Beastly characters. Ordinary people steer clear of that joint."

Actually it was not the first time he had encountered such characters. They seemed to be all over the place. In days before the so — called discoveries of the present days' third



world countries, homosexuality was unknown in most societies except for selected societies where this practice was associated with some local customs. Today it is taken for granted as though it is a custom accepted by the society. They have their own groups. They monopolise certain functions in society, become so influential that very soon they will be a force to be reckoned with.

What a mad, mad world this is where mankind is going against nature and changing sex from one to the other. It is laughable really when one imagines how many hospitals are cutting out valuable organs and stitching them back on thousands of the opposite sex who so wish for such sex changes. Soon they will change into other four legged animals too.

Malcom Smith was known for his generosity and hospitality to anyone; including strangers. His government house soon became a refuge for teenagers who trooped in every other day. Many of his young charges were Nationals. Malcolm Smith became a naturalised Papua New Guinean. He adopted a kanaka name, changed his diet to pumpkin tips, kaukau, tinned fish and whatever was sold in the many local fresh food markets, and adopted the national dress of laplap, T shirt with broadly printed slogans, thongs, sleeveless shirts and rolled up trousers and occasionally a grass skirt or arse tanget and an S shaped penis gourd with the thing coiled inside or whatever they wear in the area where the man was adopted.

Malcom, as Michael knew, was a devoted Catholic who never missed a Sunday service but he couldn't believe that he could be a person so peculiar. At parties where there were females he told jokes and did what males do but when it came to choosing someone to take home, he preferred to choose men. Every other night different monkeys were seen crawling into his house. He had ten different photoalbums. The men were his friends, just friends or work mates. The females were his girlfriends; past and present. One wonders why Mr Malcolm had never married after having so many girlfriends.

It is only a typical modern bluebeard who is more inclined to have a harlem of women and never marry them. For Malcolm his pleasure was having young boys around him. He was known to hang about educational centres at weekends and bus stops looking for youthful strangers. When he was unsuccessful, he had his own call boys; mostly elderly men.

Malcom was an individual. Unlike others he was a friendly man who had worked here so long he qualified for National Citizenship. He was happy as he was, so long as he had a number of young boys.

But let's look at another group, perhaps a more professional lot. They are top level people working in an area reached only by elevators or helicopters but quite approachable. On the streets or in any other location that might be of interest to such groups, where the grass roots can easily get to them. In the first instance the group have been exposed to discussion for reasons which they themselves are to be blamed for. The fact they are here with their supposed social organisation which they are openly practicing in a society yet void of such a social system is bound to be discussed even though critics will argue that it is not anyone's business. However, this society has yet to digest the whole range of foreign ideology introduced here before attempting to welcome more. To understand the situation better, one needs to go back to history. Not so long foreigners came and introduced their social organization which was vastly different from the native social system. They enforced their system with the gun and other means still in full swing in many third world countries. In today's world without much of the arm business the superior race has invented other methods of enforcing new ideologies.

In the past, the colonial country used its mighty power to keep their system going. Today it is more political and economic ransom (in tied aid) and the UN and many international organizations to veto or lobby for support.

Foreign assistance personnel today are more open to corruption than before. When

there is no money perhaps more effort. A certain person because he knows somewhere in the given favourable because he knows possible for him rendered.

A certain delinquents. His young people. He devoted with such certain individuals he drives about rascals. This certainly he is not driving everything within driving, some inside or lie on top of him. He is always about this certain individual this certain individual called friend's and beats them or prison in his house.

When asked, reply, "Oh brata t

His so-called answer any question that individual welcomes anyone invitation to call invites himself to

He is about about like a bullet

## ON LEAVE

Four wheel drive stopped briefly packed with vehicles sitting on top of trucks that carried several tonnes of returning with goods, some people. They would start they had driven a long arm of the land

A villager leader



there is no money there are other methods perhaps more effective and difficult to prove. A certain person is elevated to a position because he knows someone higher up somewhere in the bureaucracy, or a student is given favourable consideration for jobs because he knows someone who made it possible for him in return for services rendered.

A certain person is popular with delinquents. His house is often choked full of young people. He appears to be extremely devoted with such a group's well being. This certain individual has a Mini colt bus which he drives about choked full of gloomy-eyed rascals. This certain individual's hands when he is not driving area always touching everything within its reach. When he is not driving, some individual rascals sit on his lap, or lie on top of him on water filled mattresses. He is always about checking on those whom this certain individual feels all his own. When this certain individual disapproves of his so-called friend's activities, he cautions them, beats them or practically keeps them prisoner in his house.

When asked, "Em ol husat?" he would reply, "Ol brata tasol."

His so-called brothers look suspicious, answer any question with a sense of guilt, but that individual is everlastingly cheerful, welcomes anyone with open hands, an invitation to call in again another time and invites himself to other people's houses.

He is about every other day snooping about like a bulava fly.

#### ON LEAVE

Four wheel drive Toyotas pulled out and in or stopped briefly outside the supermarket packed with villagers and urban workers sitting on top of their cargo. Two giant Hino trucks that came that morning to unload several tonnes of cocoa and coconut were returning with several tonnes of trade store goods, some people and some cartons of grog. They would start consuming these as soon as they had driven a fair distance away from the long arm of the law.

A villager leaped from one of the trucks

and landed on the tarmac dust falling out of his bag. He smiled showing black teeth; a sign of a good chewer. He quickened his steps, perhaps to enter the solitude of the supermarket and moreover, escape the crowd who had reached home again.

Typical villagers. He would soon be past them. Innocent fellows. Happy to be in town for a day at least; although they looked silly when they stayed on a little longer without an axe, a bush knife and a fire stick to torch smoking pipes.

He turned around to face a teenager speaking in Bonnoni.

"See tenae tsi mana kam lemond na tsi wahgurai kam ye buleri."

Feeling sorry for him, he ordered him a half full bottle of Nikana lemonade. The boy accepted without voicing his gratitude. He downed the whole contents ending with a "Naguwanta ghee."

"Tenku tru wantok," said the boy.

"Nogat wari barata," Michael replied.

The boy had eaten a whole loaf of bread after he had drunk the pepsi drink which he would drink later. Typical villager. It was not the first time he had come across one like this delinquent. He was presumably overcome with thirst. Michael waited for another hour during which time, several trucks were booked by the police for overloading faulty brakes and indicators and a whole lot of other faults.

At last the Toyota heading for his home village pulled along side the parking lot. He joined two young men he had never know before. The owner of the Toyota sat in front with his wife and their two children. The family was heading home for their annual six weeks vocation. He found a box and sat on it resting his feet on a pile of trukai rice bags. All the space at the back was filled with boxes and cartons labelled Mark Toromoi, Mrs Toromoi, Tokunoi village. He overheard the wife asking the husband if they had bought a box of paper plates and cups.

"Nogat ia."

She got out to buy some at the supermarket. He wondered why they needed to buy these. Maybe they would hold a party



in their honour like everyone else does.

Meanwhile their children kept their dad busy answering questions about home, what house they would live in, whether there was video to see, a store, a cinema, all the familiar sites they were accustomed to in the urban society. One asked if their grandfather had an icebox to cool his water and occasionally a few beers. The mother returned and rebuked them, stopping them from asking any more questions about her father. They were to spend the holidays in her home village. They were given a cone of icecream each to shut their mouths.

"Their last icecream for six weeks," Michael thought.

He was told by the two men that they would get off somewhere along the highway. The truck owner was a senior official in a private company. He was taking his family for a holiday in his wife's village. They take turns going to their respective homes every year.

"Kago hia em bilong kaikai long taim bilong pati?" Michael asked boyishly.

"Nogat, em kaikai bilong ol long taim bilon holide."

"Na pepa plats, em bilong pati no?" he asked.

"Ol pikinini bilong oli olsem ol masta stret. Ol i no inap long simelin stret kaukau."

"Na oli save kaikaim wanem?" he asked pretending he didn't know.

"Garden blo ol em ol supermarkets na stoas bilong ol waitman. Ol weekends oli save tulait long hotel we oli save babakiu."

"Tru tumas!" he said. The old man shook their heads together.

The two young men commenced to drink their beer as soon as the vehicle had gone past the last police check point. It was not usual to see the police pass this point anyway unless they are drunk themselves or on a routine patrol that occurred only once in a month. The truck made several stops on the way to buy more soft drinks for the children who had finished the half dozen bought at the supermarket. At one stop they passed a community government Toyota busy transporting village drunks to black market

outlets. They offered the owners of the vehicle he was travelling on some beer. One commented that they would be seeing him as soon as they had finished.

The man's wife refused the next lot of bottles they offered her husband. She stopped them with a snarl. Even her children seemed to follow her. One commented, "Dirty drunken rascals, don't you think mommy? Offering dirty beer to daddy."

"Sure sweetheart, your daddy should not drink in public places like this. It spoils his status," said the wife as she closed the door of the car.

"Let's go darlings," she commanded.

Michael heard this and laughed to himself. How often does she said darling to her husband or her children? He remembered Papua New Guineans rarely say 'darling' to their loved ones. He wondered if she was trying to show off.

The vehicle sped along the dusty road. Not many pot holes and the road was properly graded. Area authority road maintenance gangs camped along the main road. Several old time graders that needed servicing helped the road gang. He thought about how such development can come with the new type of economy and politics. Some years ago there was no sign of any road. Three years later a road had been constructed through the rugged terrain and marshland of the western flood lands.

Michael's co-passengers at the back got off along the highway. He continued on until the vehicle one again stopped by the road side. The wife and the children went to a certain house and started talking to the occupants of the house that looked more like a copra dryer. Another vehicle bound for his village drove past and stopped further on. It reversed and its occupants asked if there was any trouble. "There was none," the driver called out.

He excused himself when he realised that the wife was going to stay a little longer at the copra shed. Typical homecomers he visualised. Eager to meet so-called relatives and show off a bit. The wife was dressed in see-through floral dress and a tight pullover. Her nails were polished and her feet were

covered in leather matching dresses, eyebrows and silver in the family worn sandals. The house after dark. They congregated at the table swarmed all over the grandfather bellowing still hugging the children to stop them. His wife it was a moment for the children, who sped away from their mother their bubus.

"Tanna wadot the grandfather. yah," he continued.

"Na yu, sisis t growled his wife corner of the aurum.

"Sori kam lukin manawait, i laik laitim. Hamas kat

The relatives t was all great fun. the kind of happy groups like the vacation. All this joy.

Michael remembered occasion of the grandparents hug joy. The children retired to bed under nets. Mark Toromoi's brother-in-law to Toromoi's father they say in the village of bottles most of into his mouth. He have some music.

He observed t being taken into Toromoi's own operation. The ceremony. Everyone hopefully longed t of the numerous g this cargo was un-



covered in leather sandals. The girls wore matching dresses, polished toe-nails, plucked eyebrows and silvery ear-rings. The only boy in the family wore a rugby jersey, shorts and sandshoes. The holidaying family arrived well after dark. Their relatives who had congregated at the woman's father's aurui swarmed all over the children. Their grandfather bellowed at the women who were still hugging the children; more in an effort to stop them. His wife rebuked him, adding that it was a moment of great rejoicing when children, who spent all the months of the year away from their native village, came home to their bubus.

"Tanna wadotsi katsulia gham," shouted the grandfather. "Yupela ino save waswasi yah," he continued.

"Na yu, sisisi tu? Olsem siwai bilong pia!" growled his wife from somewhere in the corner of the aurui.

"Sori kam lukim mi. Sikin bilong mi olsem manawait, i laik olsem san i kanava olsem laitim. Hamas katen sop mi save usim?"

The relatives burst out laughing. All this was all great fun. It showed such happiness, the kind of happiness that came when such groups like the Toromois come home for vacation. All this play acting was all a great joy.

Michael remembered once on the first occasion of the Toromoi's leave, the grandparents hugged each other and cried for joy. The children had been washed and fed, retired to bed under brand new mosquito nets. Mark Toromoi despatched his youngest brother-in-law to call him over to the aurui. Toromoi's father-in-law was already out as they say in the village; having drunk a number of bottles most of which he merely emptied into his mouth. He was now demanding to have some music so he could dance.

He observed the contents of the boxes being taken into the Toromois's house. Mrs Toromoi's own uncle supervised the operation. The whole operation was a ceremony. Everyone else was watching and hopefully longed to be given a present of one of the numerous goods. He wondered why all this cargo was unloaded in public. Maybe to

show off their wealth or else there was no other way to do it. Maybe they wanted to do it at night to avoid the whole village seeing it. The bottle of beer between Michael's hands was empty. Toromoi handed him another one. He finished it and was about to leave when he was stopped to have his late night dinner. What now? Boiled frozen chicken with boiled rice, some potato chips bought at snack bars, pieces of sliced onions served on paper plates.

In the days following their arrival village gossipers mounted their usual campaign. Visitors and relatives, alike complained about how the wife Toromoi's refused to use her parents utensils and plates. Her mother would comment that the plates were really theirs. She just looked after them. The wife preferred paper plates and cups including plastic forks and knives. These were thrown out every day at the back of the house, where village children salvaged them for their own use if the wife's younger sisters forgot to burn them.

The gossipers were given extra news to talk about when the wife was seen wearing tight fitting shorts which they called rascal straight and sleeveless shirts. For days she left her youngest child under the care of her younger sister while she went out fishing and gardening. She mostly sat under the shade trees and watched her mother and her other sisters toil in the sun. In the afternoon she helped carry the garden produce and when she arrived at home she would sigh and comment how hard village life was. By then the younger children would be hoarse from crying. It would take her another hour to clean up and by that time the child would be famished. Meanwhile the husband would be out with men indulging in men's work. Most often he would work for a few hours and then the rest of the day he would be ordering young boys to do this, that and that, as was common with the men. In the village it was the girls in their families they ordered about.

"Do this! Make a cup of coffee. Cook this! Clean this!"

So then it was orders, orders and directions while they sat down. This is a society of



shame. Women are ordered about from dawn to dusk. Wonder what Hahine would do about it?

Mrs Toromoi was exceptional. Her younger sister, a highly educated civil servant, could be ordered about by their over-avaricious father to do the odd jobs about the house. Michael couldn't figure out why the father was the greediest cow he'd ever known. He wanted this and that, and more of that. When things were not given to him he would get it himself and then it would be very difficult to get it back from him.

The same Mrs Toromoi was seen about the village asking silly questions about how things were done. Like how to build a traditional house using bush materials as if she was born in another continent or had lived all her life in the town. Once she found Michael splitting bamboo into strips. She asked whether he knew what to do and a string of other awkward questions. He wanted to tell her to jump in a bomb hole.

The family's language was a mixture of English and Pidgin or it was purely English; especially the mother and the children. The husband was an easy going one. He was a typical villager when he was at home despite the fact that he was continuously scolded by his wife for trying to villagenise himself too easily. Their leave was cut short because the children caught measles, cold and generally missed their urban house full equipped with all sorts of western gadgets. On the day they headed back home to the city, they threw a party in their honour. The next morning they boarded their four wheel drive minus most of their belongings; except for a handful of prized possessions. The four wheel drive vehicle would not be left behind. The uncles wanted it left behind so that they could use it to operate a PMV business. Just as well. How many of the broken down four wheel drive vehicles are left idle behind village houses suggesting that many so called PMV businesses have gone bankrupt? And for the other goods left behind? No sooner had the Toromois hidden their back when individuals called it to enquire about a certain dress or whatever she or he had seen that could be used by his or her

own child.

Back on the main highway the vehicle sped toward the town. The family glad to be heading home and to civilization. Michael thought about this miserable four weeks they called leave. Really it was an outing in the bush. One could do this by just driving around the island's 500 km road rather than by going home where one feels quite useless anyway. If he was like the Toromois, he conceded, he wouldn't bother going home at all. He knew what the villagers would say about Toromoi, especially his wife.

"Too masterful. Cannot do any physical work. Look at the way she walks, dresses and cares for their ten months old child. And for Toromoi himself, remember how he swung the axe? The blisters in his hands! The children how they cried for food and icecream. They are not fit to be in the village. Wonder what will happen to them when they reach retiring age? Where will they retire to?"

He refused to be labelled a useless town man. He didn't want to be one walking about in the company of young boys who hung about to marvel at his bilas, his education, his position and what other characteristics that were missing from the village people which he possessed.

During the first four weeks at home he had witnessed the usual performance. The villagers had already had first hand information about who would soon be appearing at home; either on leave or merely passing through to other destinations. The relatives were about and around the lucky parents house, asking questions or merely confirming that so and so was absolutely coming home. For the parents, things that would interest the person returning home are readied. Perhaps the father would go hunting while the mother would go fishing for shimps in the already overfished rivers, or a favourite banana or yam is put aside. The mother had long ago christianised this after person coming home. He or she alone would eat it. A member of a village who goes to town may be reminded again to find out if the person was coming home and when he could be expected.

People on their way home attract those

that are unfortunate become parasites village leeches who soon melted away would not be able Panguna thousand not unusual as himself.

One interesting (rather experienced) those people who faced and ever village. To avoid locked themselves got bored or just rest when a cro name, asking all bought, whether when they would again. All that so would be asked necessarily help, them up to me wants to talk to

Michael had himself. His part virtually keep him soon as someone would dispatch: Some were bog advice. He never advice. He remembered paramount chief experiences to him writing it out in Archives of Ku about his experience. When he asked story that he "Yes,". Michael writing about. The man left p day. He never returning home spent most of the hardly sees them knife heading to tolerate working home in their and brought up



that are unfortunate to get into town. They become parasites. There were a few of these village leeches who stuck around Michael, but soon melted away when they found out he would not be able to offer them luxuries that Panguna thousandaires were offering. It is not unusual as he was a public servant himself.

One interesting characteristic he found out (rather experienced), was that everyone of those people who came home appeared dry faced and ever suspicious of those in the village. To avoid the expectant villagers they locked themselves in their houses. Soon they got bored or just could not bear to sleep or rest when a crowd was about calling their name, asking about what goods they had bought, whether they still drank beer and when they would return to take up their jobs again. All that sort of talk Michael knew they would be asked again. Parents don't necessarily help, for they continuously wake them up to meet so and so relatives who wants to talk to them.

Michael had had the same experience himself. His parents woke him up or had to virtually keep him under surveillance so that as soon as someone came to ask for him they would dispatch a messenger boy to call him. Some were bogus men who came to seek advice. He never felt that they appreciated his advice. He remembered an old man, a once paramount chief who came over to narrate his experiences to him with the hope of Michael writing it out into a book to be entitled. The Archives of Kulaka. The lunatic told him about his experiences in two sentences only. When he asked him if that was the complete story that he wanted written, he replied, "Yes.". Michael told him it was not worth writing about. He needed more information. The man left promising to return the next day. He never showed up. The people returning home that he'd seen in the village, spent most of their time in the village. One hardly sees them houldering an axe or a bush knife heading toward the garden. Nor do they tolerate working so hard in the garden. At home in their villave where they were born and brought up they are reluctant visitors.

They fear the unknown for good reason. The constant land disputes, petty childish disputes would flare up into inter-family rivalry and the everlasting threat of poison men, magic men and bogusmen. This situation is not helped by either the parents or relations who tend to open any conversation with a word of advice on the subject of treachery.

But this is contrary to the point. People returning home are reluctant to accept the village life which they consider dirty and full of bludgers. Although their leave is meant to be spent in full traditional fashion, they often come home with half of the life they are used to in the urban centers. Radio cassettes blare out the latest local hits which attracts numerous children who peep through holes in the wall (if there are no holes in the wall, they make their own). Occasionally some are young girls. The older and more mature generation make it their usual pastime to wander about and most often come to hear the music which one or two hope is being accompanied by the consumption of beer. A few would marvel and comment, "Humm young people are having their fun."

A crowd likes to find reasons why people like Toromoi brought cartons of paper plates and cups. They assumed it was because he was too manawait to use any dirty villagers' eating utensils. Michael thought that it was amusing that Mrs Toromoi, a typical town and village show-off, thought that she was a real somebody. Behind her back women were gossiping from dawn to dusk about her artificial character.

And what about the young and able? Day in and out one sees them walk in and out of their village houses to the river to wash their boredom or merely to get fresh air. At night they turn up and go out looking for the lift style unavailable at the village during the day. At most, they are to be found prowling about the neighbouring villager's hinterland making a nuisance of themselves. Next morning the chief of the village would come with a crowd of village court officials at which the trouble-makers would leave the village to avoid keen prosecution and be forced to pay huge sums of money.



During the miserable month that he spent at home, which was marred by uncountable cases of misfortune, he witnessed what he termed the misery of home coming for some other people coming home. Several useless people came home empty-handed, instead of giving something to their parents who were quite old and never asked for any gifts from their sons. For the length of time they stayed at home they drank most of the time. When they ran out of money, they used up all their parent's little money that they had saved up from the sale of cocoa. Every morning parents from neighbouring villages came howling into their village demanding compensation for the acts these idiots committed during the early hours of the morning. One claimed K1,000 to pay for his daughter recently returned from the Girls Catholic College who had been seduced by Koraiko. Mr Vivitsi Logo shouted until his voice became hoarse during the hour long court session, upon which he handed down his final judgement after having thoroughly and solemnly examined himself. He told the crowd that the fact that he had to conduct the court meant more to what he had said. Whatever that meant he wasn't sure.

"Yupela ol manki, yupela ino kam long koapim ol meri, husat ol susa bilong yupela yet. Yu nogat respect long leadership bilong ples man na moraliti bilong ples hia. Ples daun i sin tumas moa bipo long ago. Meri i kem lapun na ino wanpela man i bagarapim em. Nogat. Nau yet yumi lukim satan i wokabaut long tulait long hia blo yumi long person bilong ol yangpela man."

Another very amusing episode, Michael found out later, was the typical Melanesian bullshit, the Kusai men, or as said in Pidgin, 'ol man bilong sutim nus'. Many elevated themselves to various senior positions in their respective work sites. Typical forklift operators claimed to be CC7 or something of that nature. One man had to bullshit his way out to convince his wife that he must return to Panguna. He was a casual office cleaner but claimed to be an assistant manager in the section where he worked.

When Michael heard about this, he

couldn't help laughing. This man was notorious. He would say anything just to be away from the village where he should be to help look after the six children he produced. As soon as his wife was pregnant again, he would quickly produce a bogus letter advising him to return to take up his job. The letter was signed by the manager. He met another such Kusai man on the road barely able to carry himself. He had hopped off a four wheel drive vehicle fully clothed in brand new jeans cut up, BCL apprentice overalls and an equally brand new pair of leather safety boots. He hid behind expensive polaroid sun glasses, that he took off only at night and Benson and Hedges packets filled his shirt pockets. A parish priest commented about this person's dress.

The man gave a quick side glance and hurried away hopefully to avoid more comments from the priest and perhaps a village leader, who said that they only thing that youngsters were good at was travelling in cars all dressed up and chasing women.

Michael told a gathering of village people that the miseries of young people coming home on leave should not be looked at as a mere chance of reunion but a time to evaluate individuals coming home.

"Na yu tink wanem long ol manki oli long holide?"

"Bekim bilong toktok bilong yu em i toktok yupela ino ken tingtin tumas. Ol manmeri i kam long leave long ples, i gat riat bilong ol long spending leave bilong ol long we oli laik, nabatu, oli stap long ples oli mas bihainim lo bilong ples na community."

"Na wanem long ol les man husat isave i kam na stap nating long haus long eightpela wiks?"

"Ol kain man olsem oli man olsem, igat sik, les or wanem. Yumi no nap long sulikim ol long wok olsem oli bigpela an pinis. Tasol sapos oli stap long ples oli maobeta sapos oli litmapim knife na go wok."

"Oli olsem tru," all chorused together.

The chief had organised this meeting in order to involve the young educated people to discuss the problem of layabouts who came home to spend their holidays. He said that

even though all the their annoyance, t criticising him as so their respective house

"Why talk about protective parent v enjoying their comp which is only but a leave ends, will we l have to return to the Please whoever talk boys and girls, eve married with hairs foolish indeed. We are and what they d to take up an axe and me that is something and they do theirs."

(One could presu endure to comment i what is Caesar's an hence, that which ru urban) One would conciliatory line l calculated strategy. goers are reluctant ruralcommunity is ignore this to the po that this bunch are would supposedly sa the villagers in to persistence of the d and impasse over th bred tension and frus who flock to towns v the village, unless the the fountain of youth for a long time. The the moment is the fo that is not a fountain money worth in a co the basic principle of in Papua New Guin not important just y by what will happen really comes. But isn

"Worri bilong o would comment..I then. Everything is a

Going home on le



even though all the people were chorusing their annoyance, they would commence criticising him as soon as they returned to their respective houses.

"Why talk about these youngsters," some protective parent would comment. We are enjoying their company and their presence, which is only but a short spell. When their leave ends, will we hold them all? They will have to return to their jobs and their school. Please whoever talks about these innocent boys and girls, even though they may be married with hairs that are greying, are foolish indeed. We are content with what they are and what they do. If they are not willing to take up an axe and a bush knife and follow me that is something bilong ol. I do my duty and they do theirs."

(One could presume that the man would endure to comment in retrospect. Give Caesar what is Caesar's and Jesus what is Gods. hence, that which rural is rural and urban is urban) One would suppose this to be a conciliatory line but definately not a calculated strategy. The fact that holiday goers are reluctant to be part of the rural community is obvious. Many tend to ignore this to the point of ignoring the facts that this bunch are a group of misfits. One would supposedly say the same thing about the villagers in towns. Nonetheless, the persistence of the dropout and unemployed and impasse over the national budget have bred tension and frustration. The same misfits who flock to towns will one day flock back to the village, unless they continue to drink from the fountain of youth and thus remain young for a long time. The only fountain as such at the moment is the fountain of leverages. And that is not a fountain of youth at all. What is money worth in a community where energy is the basic principle of livelihood? But of course in Papua New Guinea something like this is not important just yet. One is not distressed by what will happen in the future until the day really comes. But isn't that too late.

"Worri bilong ol," an old village man would comment. "I won't be around to see it then. Everything is a repetition of itself.

Going home on leave is only a routine and

those in their early twenties or thirties will keep on repeating this routine for some more time. Paper plates, liquor and see-through dresses will continue to appear in the villages until the day when the holidaying person goes home forever.

## OL LUS MAN

"Ol lain hia oli kamap stret. Lukim narapela Toyota gen ikamap tude tasol. Ghata soa tsi dalai. Kaah kavali gheli nana!" The following was not said by a jealous individual rather by an admirer on the unusual success of the unlicensed PMV business of the Lililope group.

Mosikantasih had long been a sideler watching the so called business groups and development that had, and still is, taken place in the form of four wheel drive vehicles. Secretly Mosikantasih hoped that he could be blessed with such success if only he could force his seven children to get off their trousers and find some work and buy a four wheel drive vehicle or even a bigger Isuzu truck. Social status was then being measured by the amount of cars a person had. He didn't consider the two Yamaha 200 motorbikes owned by his sons as important.

"How many cars do the Lililope group have, did you say?" Michael asked Mosikantasih.

"Two! Brand new ones too. The latest one is less than several hours old. The first one only nine months old and still as new."

"Samtin tru laga?" he said humourously.

"And what do you think? You can joke but are you like them? Kata winigho nali bameke!"

"You seem to be confident about their success. Are you?"

"And so what?" replied Mosikantasih.

"How about the broken down vehicles along the road eh?"

"What about them?"

"They were once like the Lililope's too weren't they? Everyone, including you, looked upon them as if they were something from outer space. You referred to them as Bannonian Kongkongs."

"Those were two wheel drive vehicles only.



But Lililope group two, and group three will all be four wheel drives."

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched," Michael told Mosikantasih.

"Eh, what did you say?" he asked; apparently he didn't understand a word he said.

"I said don't grab your tool before you've caught the bird."

Mosikantasih laughed boisterously, thinking that what he had said was the funniest joke he had ever heard in his whole life.

The completion of the Trans Arawa Buin Town Highway paved a way for economic development that had never been seen in the Toberaki district. The introduction of the brown gold, cocoa, has also been an eye opener. Many thousands of hectares of rich rain forest had been cleared to plant cocoa trees. Each planter longed for the day when he would harvest his first cocoa pods. Thus it had become a highly competitive business, one in which all sorts of troubles occurred. Land disputes and the like cropped up. While the villages were left unattended. People began to spend most of their time in their cocoa plots which they called plantations. Government business days were referred to as a day of the past. So much for that. The people who were luckier accumulated more from the sale of cocoa. Which were of course hidden inside the earth wrapped in plastic bags.

The first man, whose name has been lost in the passing of time came limping home with a secondhand machine which he soon put to use, both as a passenger motor vehicle and an unlicensed hire vehicle. That day became a precedent for the Toberaki district. The first day Kupon drove back in style in his brand new Toyota four wheel drive land cruiser, the whole district turned out to marvel at a machine long ago thought to be a machine only mastas could afford. Now a pure blue blooded Toberakian had knocked down one at a flick of a finger. And so it was not unusual for admirers to comment, "What can we say? Let's just say we have changed. The days of the white man was long gone."

For the first six months of the car's

operation, Kupon was to become the mobile chairman, manager, board member and other crap linked with any business operation and of course a full time student driver. As soon as he knew how to turn the steering wheel the first time he did he drove into a coconut tree and shifted the gear to first and second. He became the driver from the village to the Sikoreva Pass where his licensed driver would take over until their return and Kupon would again take control for the return drive home. Kupon had saved up k4,000.00 and had to borrow the other k2,000.00 from the PNGBC. On the doors of the driver's cabin Kupon had the name of his business group written out by a specialist sign writer. It read, "Kupon and Associates, PMV (Parasites Motor Vehicle), and truck Hire Ltd, PO Box 101 Panguna, Toberaki. Manager, J C Kupon."

When he was asked how he managed to buy such an expensive machine, he chuckled and said, "Oh Lapun i bin sex up liklik tasol." That of course was a great achievement of such a man as Kupon. The other villagers didn't know that he had to borrow k2,000.00 from the bank. People who asked were made to believe that Kupon had all the money and paid it off on the spot. Michael asked Kupon, like everyone else, to tell him once again how he bought it, Kupon told him again the same bullshit he had already told every other fool.

Kupon had gone to Ela Motors with a so called mechanic he picked up from the Public Works Department workshop after he had promised to buy a carton of beer. He helped him test drive at least twenty different vehicles, all brand new and recently arrived from Japan or the Philippines. He decided on a red one after his mechanic had pronounced it to be in very perfect condition. Kupon wanted a red one, something different from the usual vehicle every other idiot was buying in that particular joint.

The Australian salesman (he could have been a Pom or a Yankee) opened his eyes in amazement as Kupon counted out K6,000.00 in twenty kina bills from a brand new leather briefcase. Five pass books could be seen. Kupon, a typical bullshitter, had taken these

out and examined counted the sum. Kupon was but empty pass books arms resting on his world, eyes darting other rubbish. The salesman returned of Toyota phantoms distributed to the brand new machine home. His entry in similar fashion a triumphant entry Pommy land.

The expatriate ever he had trouble the service would the company. After to pay. Of course would have to pay the salesman wished that if ever he was the company, Else over stocked and for him to buy another one. Having less than six months prices, Kupon thousand kina from close relatives to with the addition associates and PMVs and hire district.

For the first time good business, and Kieta, charging one trip. Drivers drive those who of course black mortals who enjoy after mid-morning his bed by his sleeping peacefully night shift drive vehicles straight early morning fog.

Armed with spikes and a group



out and examined them as the salesman counted the sums of money with one eye Kupon was busy examining his mostly empty pass books. Kupon waited impatiently, arms resting on his hips feeling on top of the world, eyes darting here and there viewing other rubbish displayed around the room. The salesman returned K200, and a bundle of Toyota pamphlets to Kupon which he distributed to the crowd that came to view his brand new machine the first day he drove it home. His entry into the village was done in similar fashion as Charles De Gaulle in his triumphant entry of Paris after a short exile in Pommy land.

The expatriate salesman told Kupon that if ever he had trouble for the first six months, the service would be done free of charge by the company. After that, Kupon would have to pay. Of course he didn't tell him that he would have to pay for spare parts. Meanwhile the salesman wished him luck and told him that if ever he wanted to purchase spare parts, the company, Ela Motors, was everlastingly over stocked and new vehicles were ever ready for him to buy if he ever wishes to buy another one. Having repaid the bank loan in less than six months owing to excellent cocoa prices, Kupon collected another four thousand kina from a number of friends and close relatives to purchase another vehicle with the additional vehicle, Kupon and associates and a complete monopoly of PMVs and hire service in the Toberaki district.

For the first four months the trucks did good business, made daily rounds to Arawa and Kieta, charging as much as sixty kina for one trip. Drivers were on 24 hour stand-by to drive those who had urgen commitments and of course black market goers and other mortals who enjoyed night time driving. Soon after mid-morning Kupon was roused from his bed by his hysterical wife who had been sleeping peacefully under heavy sedation. His night shift driver had driven one of the vehicles straight into a pool of mud in the early morning fog.

Armed with a Koleman lamp, a spade, spikes and a group of relatives he boarded the

other vehicle and sped to rescue the other vehicle.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa . . . !" he began as soon as he had arrived at the site.

"Ko saveano?" he asked the driver smeared with mud.

"Kar emi bin slip igo long sait," replied the driver.

"Emi stat long slip we?"

"Long hap!" replied the driver. Which means in Papua New Guinea from the direction pointed at, but otherwise could have meant from other directions, south, east, west, north or from outer space. Such an event, like dumping the vehicle in the pool of mud, was big news in the village. So when Kupon and his helpers came back trooping after the rescue vehicle the news had spread throughout the village and the whole of the Toberaki district.

"Yupela kamautim pinis?"

"Yes! Ol ples. Ka hia i kalap igo insait tru long ples wara yah. Mipela i swim insait tru olsem ol pig." And true enough they looked like pigs just out of the mud. Not that it mattered. Some of the people never washed anyway.

The previous night a group who were not satisfied with the twelve cartons they had demolished during the day, called in to Kupon after paying K12 left for a black market den in the Baitsi district. Kupon was not to know until later that his prized vehicle was to be driven by all sorts of people to other black market dens as far as Siwai, Konga in the south east and Sikoreva in the east.

The driver himself was encouraged to drive to these places. He helped empty the bottles bought at the black market; his payment in disguise which he accepted even though Kupon's rule prohibited the consumption of alcohol on the vehicle; either by passengers or the driver. In the event of the drinking spree that night the driver was to complain (autim wari) about his miserable pay of K40.00 a fortnight. His passengers that night agreed and sympathised with him and urged him on and on to drown himself in alcohol and forget his miseries.

"Here take this and choose yourself one," Kupon told each one as he handed them a



pamphlet each. Teenagers fought each other for possession of the pamphlets. After examining the pamphlets, each one made his own choice.

"Na tsimona podea mani, tsi kene ghe be!" (If I had enough money I would get this one).

Kupon smiled through the end of his mouth when he heard these remarks. He knew they didn't have any money, neither did their parents, now and possibly never would have. He wanted to show off.

"Yu tink yu inap? Ol samting ol dia tumasi!"

One of the boys complimented him on his success. "You are really anytime. How much do you exactly have in the bank?"

"We don't talk about money in public," Kupon said. And as if to answer the youngsters question he pulled out two passbooks, a cheque book and a fat wallet. The boys gasped in astonishment at the sight of so much money.

Kupon had collected more pamphlets after having taken delivery of yet another vehicle; a second hand one. He'd had four, four wheel drive vehicles.

On his way home he had called in at Panguna and successfully persuaded his elder son to quit working for BCL and return home to help run his fleet of Toyotas as a mechanic and driver. Somehow Kupon had begun to experience how costly it was to run and operate a fleet of four vehicles. The driver was asked to resign. His son Pita Sanial became the chief driver, mechanic and driving instructor. He taught his younger brother and cousins to drive. This move to employ relatives was to cut expenses as the relatives did not receive any pay. The vehicle and business were theirs, so why get paid? He had not been paid as chairman and general manager.

When Kupon had enough of his new business fever, he no longer accompanied the drivers. He had failed to pass his driving test four times; one time he nearly crashed into a speeding police inspector's car with the police sergeant sitting beside him. The sergeant ruled that he was unsuccessful in his test. From then on he never bothered to attempt any more tests. Instead he sent his drivers on their daily

runs to town.

Kupon was paid for the hire of his vehicles at home. He kept the money in an old army steelcase of which he kept no account. Once in three months he would go to town to deposit the money into the PNGBC. Then after a while, he got fed up and authorised his driver sons to do the banking. Business was brisk and he made a good profit. But that was only temporary. Soon he started buying all the luxuries displayed by some semi-affluent villagers like the ex-member of the old legislative council. A semi-modern permanent house with showers, flush toilets and kitchen located in separate buildings outside the main building. A small portable generator produce enough electricity to power his hifi stereo, electric fridge, fans and lit up the house. He was envied.

A tradestore sprung up beside his palace selling mostly non nutritious foodstuff that was instrumental in accelerating the rapid rate of malnutrition and Kwashicour.

Although Kupon could earn money, he was not a good spender, rather, not in the sense one would call spending. When he commence buying things he felt the urge to buy more and more until he had all that he needed. His sons and heir (maski ol share holders) apparently advised him to buy things that were of interest to them. At one stage they almost knocked off a K7,000.00 electric band set, only to be vetoed by Kupon who was concerned that having a band would leave his trucks driverless.

A countdown on the fall of Kupon and Lilililope Trucking Company is recorded here under:—

May 1978, Kupon built a permanent house worth K8,000.00.

June 1978, Kupon fitted out his house with portable electric generator, hifi stereo set and other electric gadgets worth K2,000.00.

December 1978, Kupon's sons burnt one vehicle over a conflict of who should succeed Kupon as chairman when he eventually died or retired.

February 1979, one vehicle has a broken sharp clank and center bolt was found missing. No money to pay for repair cost so

the vehicle was parked

August 1979, Kupon's elder son, girlfriend in Nagnag took the car to his as a personal vehicle.

One remaining vehicle by the hundreds by and promised to pay a single toea had been

January 1980, Kupon business man who took him any hire fee. This man changed many claimed the vehicle as

Pita Sanial traded for a sedan. He took

June 1st 1980, Kupon debts and was broke producing cocoa. C and he didn't make a

December 1980, holiday. He hitchhiked arrived home he vehicles.

"Pundaun pinis,"

"I thought you anytime?"

Mosikantasih rep astray to think "M an old man who does one, two three. Mi b yet taim mi lukim ol

"Em i pundaun Michael asked although caused it to go broke

"Pundaun tasol, c save pundaun. Ol p kainkain moni, na sp yumi."

Michael agreed that at that. And what had joined the order was once not part house, the only generation ever had.

After the collapse group, his parents at purchase a car, so the PMV service. He d



the vehicle was parked in the garage.

August 1979, two vehicles were left. Kupon's elder son, Pita Sanial found a girlfriend in Nagnago and married her. He took the car to his wife's village and used it as a personal vehicle.

One remaining vehicle was owned money by the hundreds by people who had used it and promised to pay later. After one year not a single toea had been paid.

January 1980, Kupon hired his vehicle to a business man who used it and did not pay him any hire fee. This business the way he did, man changed many vital parts in the car and claimed the vehicle as his own.

Pita Sanial traded the Toyota land cruiser for a sedan. He took a job at Panguna.

June 1st 1980, Kupon repaid his bank debts and was broke. He tried his hand at producing cocoa. Cocoa prices were down and he didn't make a profit.

December 1980, Michael was home on holiday. He hitch-hiked home. When he arrived home he asked about Kupon's vehicles.

"Pundaun pinis," replied Mosikantasih.

"I thought you once said that they were anytime?"

Mosikantasih replied that he had been led astray to think "My one, forgive me. I am an old man who doesn't know any book and one, two three. Mi biliv olesm man hia i moa yet taim mi lukim ol pulanti kar."

"Em i pundaun olesm wanem stret?" Michael asked although he knew so well what caused it to go broke.

"Pundaun tasol, olesm ol kainkain bisinis i save pundaun. Ol papa bilong bisinis yet i kainkain moni, na spak. Tasol no wari bilong yumi."

Michael agreed that it could be better if left at that. And what had become of Kupon? He had joined the ordinary villagers whom he was once not part of. He still retained his house, the only genuine investment he had ever had.

After the collapse of the Lililiope business group, his parents and relatives asked him to purchase a car, so that they could use it as a PMV service. He doubted that they knew

how to manage such a venture. He refused, saying that he thought the business would be a failure like Kupon's. Another character back driving a brand new Toyota four wheel drive, made several runs to Arawa and the fifth time he smashed the vehicle and that was the end of it. Michael visualised that the same thing could happen if he gave his vehicle to his relatives. He didn't want to risk his hard earned money.

Two long warring clans each bought a four wheel drive vehicle; rather a member of their clan bought it for him. No sooner had the vehicle coated itself with Muruan dust when each clan started calling the vehicle a member of their clan by its clan name. There was the kesina and the Pararoke. He thought it was the funniest joke he had ever heard. Both ceased calling these vehicles by these names when both vehicles became the thirty-eight and ninth vehicle to have a major breakdown and thus put to an end the brief motorised competition between the two clans. The sorry state of affairs is that many Muruans still continue to purchase four wheel drive vehicle and each one ends up in the same manner.

"Ol bisnis i save pundaun long han bilon ol husait i papa long ol."

Mikaile had worked feverishly as an accounts clerk at Barap inarg. His dedication to his work was not enough. He ran foul with his boss's private secretary. His boss sacked him and charged him with womanizing and thus he was removed in order to maintain efficiency in the office. Mikaile accepted the sacking. But the real reason for his sacking was for the exact opposite reason. The boss himself had an eye on the pretty typist and was very annoyed when he learnt that one of his lowly clerks had managed to persuade her to share his bed with him for a night.

Mikaile returned home driving a brand new red four wheel drive Toyota land cruiser. Asked why he had left his job, he answered that he had called it quits for a while and had an eye on a trucking business. His father, Waibiri, who had often wished his son would buy a car which he could manage, was overjoyed. His joy was temporary as he soon learnt that his son had plans to run the vehicle



himself void of any old time bludgers like him. Despite being denied the status of managing director, Waibiri assumed the less prestigious position of adviser and public relations man for his sons' Toyota. Of course the vehicle was not referred to the people as Mikaile's but as Waibiri's son's Toyota. The name thus presumed in a way that Waibiri was a party to the purchase of the vehicle. Hence the vehicle was not only Waibiri and his relatives' Toyota, but was Waibiri's wife and her relatives' Toyota also.

The relatives who numbered 200, would tell Mikaile that the profit he made was his. They would be satisfied with a free lift or service free of charge from him in times when they would need it. One day when Mikaile had been home for more than a month or two and he had made a huge profit, one or two stragglers, through his parent relatives, Mikaile drove to Arawa on a hire run by one so called business man. Eight passengers hopped in. Each paid K10 each to the hirer. The business man hired the vehicle for K70 and went about his business. By 11 o'clock he had completed his purchases, and by 11.30 he was in the Arawa supermarket's inner coffee shop swallowing grilled steak, potato chips and an orchy drink. Mikaile around with the customers, looked at the goods with prices so high they would probably stay there until its manager auctioned it. The business man finished his meal and came out and told Mikaile that he wanted to visit the Poraka Tavern for a couple of jugs. The tavern opened for three hours at midday. It was two hours before closing time (2.00 p.m.)

The business man and the eight spare battery passengers emptied fifteen jugs. They headed straight to the supermarket's bottle shop again at Panguna. Another visit to the Panguna supermarket and the bottle shop. Two more cartons were loaded into the Toyota. Mikaile sped to Sikoneva hill where they killed two cartons. By rule Mikaile never drank while on duty. This particular day he broke the golden rule. He got one too many bottles, yet managed to drive well until he arrived home. Having drunk and arrived

home before dark was unusual. He went straight to bed. A relative had paid a visit to his father and had to return home that very day. He had complained about an aching knee and other odd pains somewhere else. He had suggested to Waibiri that he should bring him home in his car. Waibiri had agreed and had tried in vain to persuade Mikaile to drive to Parina to return a man whom he said was his uncle. Mikaile's mother had also come to reason with him to drive the man home. The man had continuously commented that it would be too much to ask for if the driver was spak.

"Ah why not. He must wake up and drive you home," said Waibiri.

"Find someone else to drive and make sure I have the money first before the passenger boards the Toyota," Mikaile said before he dropped back to sleep.

A driver, who was notorious for crashing cars, was asked to drive. On board the Toyota sat Waibiri, some relatives and ten sea urchins. Mikaile wouldn't know that his car would not return until the next day. Waibiri took possession of the money, paid for the hire in the morning. He used some to knock off a few cartons, the rest he presented to his relatives. Mikaile was told the next day about the money. He demanded the money but was told that his father had used it to present it to the relatives who had dropped in purposely to ask for financial assistance. And since they did not have any cash they used up the hire money.

To aggravate the situation further, Mikaile commented on his Toyota being sued to transport individuals whom he did not now, and now it seems must turn up and be entertained by him because he had a Toyota and was earning money. To all this his parents seemed to have all the answers and advice.

Mikaile never got the hire money refunded. He knew from the start that he would never get the refund. He told his father blatantly that next time the rogue came back to pay him another visit, he should make sure he had enough money to give him and also find himself another Toyota to transport him.

He was not interested in what his father had to say. He wanted to tell him the use of his Toyota and the amount due.

"I will pay you back," Waibiri said.

"Isn't the man you are talking about a young man are you? He is a father like that? We don't want to be involved with his mother who was in an argument, but he told me that days later Mikaile paid for new clutch shoes that night it was driven back."

Mikaile taught his son to drive the Toyota. Through his driving test and passed. His father, Waibiri, was another of his blood relatives in business. Mikaile found his vehicles weary and old. BCL and was re-engineered.

The day he returned to work he assumed the position of the Toyota, while his father was the associate manager, treasurer and all fees. He came every Thursday. His father assumed the position of collector. The routine was infrequently. As time came in at all. He withdrew from his expenses.

The old man Panguna to deliver a month. The usual would certainly turn out. Many trips not reconcile with financial book account. The excuses to give. It was a man had not been the fees collected. Where the money had been guilty, sought an explanation. Benson and Hed-



He was not interested in hearing what his father had to say. In fact his father only wanted to tell him that the man demanded the use of his Toyota and would pay back the amount due.

"I will pay you back how much I owe you," Waibiri said.

"Isn't the man your father too? What kind of young man are you to talk about your father like that? We are ordinary people who don't want to be involved in any trouble," said his mother who wanted to continue the argument, but he told her to keep quiet. Two days later Mikaile paid for the service and the new clutch shoes that had been burnt out the night it was driven by the wrecker.

Mikaile taught his younger brother how to drive the Toyota. Two months later he sat for his driving test and passed with flying colours. His father, Waibiri, was overjoyed to see another of his blood take control of the family business. Mikaile found the job of driving vehicles weary and boring. He re-applied to BCL and was re-employed as a R170 Euclid operator.

The day he returned to Panguna, his father assumed the position of general manager of the Toyota, while his younger brother became the associate manager. Mikaile became the treasurer and all fees collected were given to him every Thursday of each week. But the father assumed the position himself of money collector. The routine failed as the fees came in infrequently. As time rolled by little money came in at all. Mikaile was forced to withdraw from his own account to pay expenses.

The old man took a special trip to Panguna to deliver money collected once a month. The usual cold war between them would certainly turn into an almost all out war. Many trips recorded in the log book did not reconcile with figures in the so called cash book account. The old man had a lot of excuses to give. It was obvious that the old man had not been keeping proper control on the fees collected. Mikaile wanted to know where the money had gone. The father feeling guilty, sought an excuse to buy a packet of Benson and Hedges apparently to find

solitude inside the supermarket and to be amongst other mortals who had similar problems.

Mikaile's younger brother confided in him that the old man had been keeping the money and he had been having an awful lot of visitors (no-hopers) from his own tribal area down south. Often they came on foot and were driven back at half price. Sometimes they would send word to him for the Toyota to pick them up at certain spots; often at black market outlets. Mikaile took his father and his brother to his room where he further cross-examined Waibiri.

"Well you know what it is like in our village. When you refuse something, they start gossiping about you. And I don't want people to talk about me behind my back."

"I don't care who they are and what they say. You should have refused to do any favours for them, especially sending the Toyota to fetch them in black market areas."

Waibiri almost exploded when he heard this. He inhaled deeply, almost swallowing the cigarette as he did so. He attempted to protect himself by arguing that the people who visited him were his relatives.

"Why shouldn't I help them?"

"You can help them provided you use your own money and your truck. But this vehicle and the money is not yours alone. It is ours. You cannot throw it around like this. The vehicle has not even used the money it earns to pay for the maintenance."

"Okay, I won't have to do it now. You and your brother and mother can run it. I am finished."

"That's all right. You don't have to do anything now. The less the number of people running it the better."

Waibiri left immediately announcing that he had to catch another vehicle since they were so cross about the vehicle. He placed a bundle of notes on the settee as he rose. The younger brother called out, "All of it". He emptied the contents of his smoke covered travelling bag. He looked in all his immediate personal possessions.

"There you can have all the money. Now I am so poor as if I don't have any sons,"



Waibiri walked out choking with tears.

A relative met Waibiri along the corridor. He asked him whether Mikaile was inside.

"They are inside," he said and kept on walking down the corridor out into the street.

Mikaile deposited the amount in the bank and went in search of Waibiri. He found him amongst a group of people waiting by the PMV pick up point. He told him the vehicle was waiting for him. Waibiri refused to talk. Soon a Toyota bound for the village came to the stop. Waibiri and some men got in and soon were out of sight travelling fast to avoid the early ridges of the Emperor Ranges. Some passengers got Waibiri drunk on the trip back home. When he arrived home he immediately started an argument with his wife.

"You and your sons treat me like a pig. I suffer so much to run your business and what do I get? Nothing! Nothing but ingratitude! You treat me like shit!"

"But I don't know what you are talking about?" his wife was trying to say.

"Yes, you do. You and your sons, you all know what you wanted. You were using me all along."

"Iih . . . aiye ghe!" screamed his wife. "I am not the one who told you to look after the money. Not even the two boys. Not even Mikaile. You got yourself the job. And now when they ask you for the money you cannot give it to them. Maaah meke telah! You have strings of visitors and you load them with cargo when they leave. Maybe that's the money you spent on your visitors."

"You are accusing me of stealing eh? Listen I've never stolen, neither did my father, nor his father and all my ancestors."

"I am not saying you stole. But seeing we don't earn as much, I just wonder where you got the money. I am a poor nothing. I don't even have any money. If you have so much why don't I get my share?"

"Why should I?" sneered back Waibiri. A large crowd had gathered to witness the episode.

"Why shouldn't you? It's my son's money you were spending. You rabisman! You were a poor man when you married me. I wouldn't have anything to wear if it were not for my

sons. Yu olgeta moni bilong yu i save go long ol bisnis bilong yu. Nogat shem?"

"You are lying to me. I am going to kill you for that!" shouted Waibiri as he advanced towards the wife.

"Pala aiah!" said his younger son. Waibiri did not see his son arrive.

"So you and your mother have decided to fight me together. I was not wrong when I said that what I get from you is ingratitude. Now let me say it in front of the crowd here. You will pay me for doing this to me. Me! I am a man of property in my own area. Here I am your slave. Well a slave is paid for, so I want you to pay me now. Now!" he danced about.

Two village leaders approached him and tried to reason with him. He wouldn't listen. It was like banging one's head against a brick wall. He would have danced himself lame had not his wife's sister paid him two hundred kina. His wife, including his son refused to pay. His wife asked him what amount he wanted. He was told that if he wanted money he should tell them first about where he kept them and he should only claim for the money he earned with his own hands.

"Since you married me, you have done nothing but spend, spend and spend. My money . . . not yours! My own money earned by me! Now that I am old it's my sons' money. You have no shame."

They slowed down only when the village chief thundred at them to stop. Waibiri left immediately saying that if they wanted him back they would have to pay him another K2,000. If not it was the end. He had chosen to go back and live amongst his poor relations. He was equally given a parting message by his big mouthed wife in which he was told that he was welcome to return to his relatives.

"We'll see how long you will stay among your bitchy relatives."

Many onlookers amongst the crowd agreed he would be back in no time. Five days later Waibiri returned triumphantly in a brand new, shiny red coloured four wheel drive Toyota land cruiser (like general McCarther on his triumphant return to the

Philippines). The upset Waibiri then promising not to return smiling and joyous to the driver's cabin. and how is your same crowd who later witness his return. hand saying, "I t good." Upon which he had not. The vil grown old and war

Another man c saying that the vill he was glad that said that Waibiri and he wouldn't ha if he was not spark

"Beer meke bah together ending w aaaaaaaaa . . ."

The Toyota that after a lengthy stay empty two large corned beef, five o else there was to Toyota was one vehicles. His neph from Port Moresby manager. Some sai said he was a mere

Waibiri was re Mikaile bought an old ones. Business despite the fact that almost caused it pocketed some of individuals and gr where the 'Why Bi to hold and make like seasonal rivers got to that part. C best. When they wi

Here is a story c of unknown reputa fall of Kupon's truc

Em i tokim ol Let's kelekt mani n No let's baim ka



Philippines). The rejected, sorrowful and upset Waibiri that left five days earlier, promising not to return, was transformed to a smiling and joyous person. He hopped out of the driver's cabin calling out good morning and how is your health to his tambus. The same crowd who farewelled him were there to witness his return. His *kemaro* pumped his hand saying, "I thought you'd left us for good." Upon which Waibiri assured him that he had not. The village was his home. He had grown old and wanted to stay there.

Another man came and shook his hands saying that the village surely missed him and he was glad that he had returned. Another said that Waibiri was a pillar of the village and he wouldn't have done what he had done if he was not sparkled.

"Beer meke bah, beer." chorused the men together ending with a prolonged, " . . . .  
aaaaaaaaa . . . . "

The Toyota that brought Waibiri back left after a lengthy stay. The visitors managed to empty two large pots of rice, a carton of corned beef, five of San, buais and whatever else there was to be consumed. The new Toyota was one of Waibiri's nephew's vehicles. His nephew had recently returned from Port Moresby where he was an assistant manager. Some said he was a lawyer. Others said he was a mere tea boy.

Waibiri was reconciled with his family. Mikaile bought another Toyota to assist the old ones. Business was good and successful, despite the fact that Mikaile's younger brother almost caused it to go broke when he pocketed some of the hire money. Many individuals and groups are still trying to get where the 'Why Billys' were. Some managed to hold and make some money but went out like seasonal rivers in the deserts. Others never got to that part. Others are still trying their best. When they will get there is unknown.

Here is a story composed by a story teller of unknown reputation on the occasion of the fall of Kupon's trucking and PMV company.

Em i tokim ol  
Let's kelekt mani na bungim  
No let's baim ka

No save long we for using.

Moni kolekim em planti  
We for spending ino klia  
So oli bengim liklik  
Sampela igo long poket  
Sampela igo long baim bia  
Na tu kina long sevis meri  
Long bus arere blo daun  
Oli kolim Tukina bus or relif resev.

Ol yanpela bois ol deceitful lot  
Sam de oli kolektim mani  
Na da de oli givim fri raid  
Long ol pasindia  
Boss for grup askim mani we  
Oli basta oli tok oli no ranim hai.

Boss man i kros for we ol manki  
i ranim ka na no kisim mani  
Ol bois ol kol demselves kaubois  
Oli telim em, "Oke, yu kros yu driabim ka."

Bossman em no save draiv  
Em bus kanaka so em tink  
Oke maski noken wokim olsem neks taim  
Nogud bisnis i lusim mani  
En no save bisnis klostu bruk  
Boss man diwai hed.

Ol bois oli diwai hed tu  
So tu plisim boss man  
Oli say, "Oh wanpela boi, he wantaim  
Ka tumora for hai i go Arawa."

Bossman i askim mani i stap  
Bois oli tok not yet, but boi will pay tumora  
Boss man he says ke mek su you getting mani  
off him

Bois oli tok no waris boss  
They lie bikos they krukukud lot  
Have planti of Satan maind long hed.

Neks de bois oli live early  
Long go for haia ples  
Haia man i pe K100.00  
Bois spid wit him tu Arawa  
Bisnis i pinis oli spin around taun  
Lukim priti gels na go long bus long painim  
K2.00 meri na mek luv long hai  
Neks de go tu Nius Agency and bai  
Australian pilai boi magasin na  
Luk si ol photo for meri no gat klos.

Taim for goin home, bois they knock off



Tu katons bia with K20.00 from haia mani  
 Man husat hias ka, he buris tu katens tu  
 They spak ol we home, the haia man i  
 dropped at his home  
 Bois they sut of end pick up gelfrens and  
 make  
 Luv tu bipo they draiv home  
 Boss man he askim for mani, he givim only  
 K80.00  
 Man he asks, "We ada K20.00?"  
 Deceitful bois they say we drink it, Bossman  
 hi says it's  
 no gud, but he stap there bikos hi knows if he  
 Tok moa, bois will say oke yu draive  
 Ka for yu.  
 So dis praktis kintinus. Bois de kip wokim  
 But di stil mani ol taim end givim hap tu  
 bossman  
 Who is kros oltaim but is held at ramson bai  
 krukud bois  
 Dis boie de were no hopas until de stat  
 Daraivim da den de hev mani frens  
 Espesili gelfrens  
 Whom de spend so mas mani on.  
 So yu si, tarak bisnis ino saksesful  
 Bikos de is korpasim bai meni of its membas  
 De bossman he pokets sam of da mani tu  
 Dan de is da draiva who givim onli hap of  
 da mani  
 Tu do bossman.  
 Meni pipel tude bilip wans yu stat mek mani  
 Yu mek mani altaim  
 But de oli tink in figurativ tems laik  
 Expenses, sas as maintenance, veigis end ada.  
 So if yu ara not careful and yu stat bisnis  
 olsem  
 Yu olso end ap in de sam bout, laik did  
 puua so  
 Called binis grups, who spends as if mani kam  
 Tamblin daun da watfol.  
 Maybe sainis ara gud. But if i wan wans tu  
 bi laik  
 Siana or Kongkong man he mas sanism  
 pasim  
 And his kalakta. But Saina or Kongkong'  
 man he veri  
 Narapela kain no moa. Hi no givim mani  
 nabaut,  
 Na samtaim he live in filti haus he no wari

long pipia  
 Yet he meks mani.  
 Nada grup hemi Juwis man or Jedgea man,  
 Lain for Abel  
 So Baibel i tok, Hutu gud but he konsertiv  
 tumas  
 Yet he meks mani so yu ken sus long tupela  
 Kongkong or Judea man.  
 But rimemba not until yu stop depositim da  
 mani in  
 yur wantoks and riletivs pokets and da  
 numerous  
 Pubs end bilak maget hols.  
 Mi tell yu we yu will saksesful moa yet  
 But I no wan tell yu moa kos adawais  
 yu profit  
 From mai expert adawais.  
 Hia mi pen of about adawais for all Lus man  
 bisnis men.

#### THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN

Michael passed a couple sitting on a concrete  
 bench facing the opposite direction. The wife  
 was busy knitting, assunably to avoid seeing  
 her youthful husband eyeing a group of  
 teenage girls frolicking by the filthy pond. The  
 pond was built to add attraction to the town  
 shopping mall. Since it was opened by the  
 Honourable Premier it had become a resting  
 place for local tourists, lunch-goers and buai  
 chewers who liked to spit into the clear water  
 and passers-by who threw waste into it. The  
 fish had either died out through lack of food  
 or had been fished out by no hopers at night.  
 Now it was merely ditch water.

"Very interesting aren't they? You are  
 marvelling at their figures. You'd hope to  
 explore those hidden cleveages' and their  
 rotten private parts as if you didn't feast on  
 them already. I'll bet they come from the  
 rotten People's Town where you seem be all  
 the time. Oh you make me sick! Why do I  
 bother?"

The women left the husband. Her children  
 did not follow. No wonder.

"Typical woman," commented Michael.  
 He nodded and kept on walking. He thought  
 the man looked silly or ashamed more likely.  
 Yes typical, two timing-bastard. Michael put

on his pair of e  
 avoid the lum  
 corrugated roof  
 and more or less  
 the other beings  
 glued to them.  
 who returned fro  
 who wore glasses  
 in the rain, thun  
 them on.

The rain tree  
 stopped under its  
 him as the tree v  
 chose to sit unde  
 natural and the  
 blowing. He did  
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 expensive for his  
 was sweating. H  
 idiot peeping int  
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 to the outer fri  
 Soon it would co  
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A group of u  
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 the crowd watch  
 brought up kids  
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 At night they wo  
 wherever that m  
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 made funny face  
 about his funny

"He is real co



on his pair of expensive polaroid glasses to avoid the luminous reflection from the corrugated roofing sheets and glass windows; and more or less to avoid being different from the other beings who appeared to have them glued to them. He remembered the people who returned from the plantations years back who wore glasses almost anywhere they went; in the rain, thunder or hail. A few slept with them on.

The rain tree offered cool shade. Michael stopped under its shade. A large crowd joined him as the tree was a dominant feature. They chose to sit under the tree because it was more natural and the cool sea breeze was now blowing. He didn't fancy the air conditioned shops although it was cooler inside. He felt stupid eyeing goods that he knew were too expensive for his government salary. Soon he was sweating. He moved on and watched an idiot peeping into the rubbish bin. A swarm of blue flies buzzed around him. He wasn't bothered. The idiot looked about and noticed him, moved away and disappeared into the public toilet opposite the bank. The building needed maintenance and perhaps relocation to the outer fringes of the shopping area. Soon it would collapse and no one, not even the town council, would bother to clear it away.

A group of untidy kids darted about the green lawn kicking all the rubbish lying in front on them. They were not bothered about the crowd watching them. They were badly brought up kids; maybe sea urchins from the shanty towns out for their final daylight walk. At night they would crawl back to their holes; wherever that may be. Some of them would probably join a night gang of thieves and rapists, or their own parents to haunt the urban fringe and the blackmarket dens. One more kick and one of them fell down; his shorts tore between the parting of his buttocks. The crowd laughed. The boy sat up and moved on looking about like a bat orbiting a rotten pawpaw, hopefully trying to tell the crowd to wait for him at night. He made funny faces. Someone made a comment about his funny faces.

"He is real cowboy, Kaulong stret!"

Flip, flop, flip, flop. A tight lipped female came across the green onto the footpath. Her bottom swayed from side to side; the high heeled shoes she wore were too high for her. A whistle, a munching sound, another whistle and "half i kam". She gave a side look and continued walking. A sophisticated one; one for Mao, Lenin or Kruschev. No . . . Elvis.

"I orait yu go. Kaikai bilong ol wait man." The commentor was lost in the sea of human beings. The girl pulled her head high and rubbed her eyebrows. A whiteman passed.

"Hi."

"Hi."

Someone came up from behind and greeted him.

"Hello! What are you doing here?"

"Sigalet?"

"No thanks, don't smoke."

"Good on you! mi? Mi kensa man." He lit his cigarette and threw the match stick on the grass. The rubbish bin was only a metre away.

"Plant meri eh?"

"Planti."

"You seen them?"

"Yep. Students on holidays."

"Some village ones too?"

"Yes."

"Yes and the bushes are full."

"Full?"

"Yes i pulap, na i pulap an ilaik bruk, na i kapsait."

They laughed out boisterously.

"Oh sori oh, if only . . . . ." one of the men said. Some passers by shook their head.

They saw a group wearing bottom hugging trousers, tight T shirts gazing out into the hopeless street. Another group emerged from the women's wear. Tight T shirt hugging the boobs and floral dresses. They appeared to have no stomach at all. The group of men became brighter the more they watched. They talked raucously. The group disappeared into yet another store. A lone figure came by; brave and proud. Some men walked onto the concrete path and blocked the way. She came to a halt. She looked at them in the eyes and sighed with deliberate ebullience. She tried to take a detour. They moved in to stop her.

"Why are you doing that?" said she her



eyes misting. The crowd moved in. She screamed and dashed to get to safety and fell into one of the mobsters' hands. He grabbed her. Two strong hands lifted the man off the ground and threw him amongst his friends who were amazed by the sight of the woman's rescuers. He walked away.

"Oh, good. Tukina bilong bus i pula."

"Em man bilong tukina bus. Lukim em." The man laughed and walked away. Someone shouted, "Bung kakaruk!"

Some Tarara girls walked past and told the men that they were homosexuals. That they should go home and try luck on their wantok girls. The men couldn't talk back; the girl's wantoks were standing not too far away. They were all professional brawlers. Michael saw the sulking group and laughed. They looked like frightened puppies ready to urinate. Soon they were engulfed by the sea of moving masses that populate the Arcade and vanish like low tide in the evening when the city retires for the night.

On the outskirts of the town an unofficial suburb was bustling with development and excitement (most development took place after dark). There were no architects, engineers or surveyors to plan it. But it was planned. There were streets, sections, parking lots, business areas, cinema tuckshops and liquor outlets. Most residents owned a bottle shop for this was the major money earner in the town. Business opened at 6.00 p.m. or as soon as the time factor came to a halt in the other and remained open until the next day or as long as the bucks kept on coming in. This was some kind of an independent joint, sort of tax free, void of the numerous sales tax charged in the government town.

Lupalama, a wantok of Michael owned this town. Lupalama called it the People's Town. A welcome sign read, "Welkam tu tax free People's Town". It was boldly mounted at the entrance of the junction leading into the town. Lupalama controlled the town like Lucifer controls Hell or the Mafia in Chicago, or the millions of crooks who control Florida. Lupalama was a grandfather and a supreme boss.

There was no sewerage system or any other

waste disposal system. The river which flowed into the government town took care of all that. The residents and frequent visitors of Lupalama People's Town were privileged to use the river. Men of social status (inherited, pirated or gained by the main process of election), confessed that they despised the Lupalama People's Town. They treated the People's Town in a condescending manner. The people were also suspicious of them except during election times. But they were by no means transient to their condemnation to the place. Many frequented the town, a few being honoured with posts of honorary president of the People's Town or the advisory committee and chamber of commerce.

Baulu is a constant visitor to People's Town and also a prominent figure in the local political circles as well as the under-world business enterprises. A privileged man, he had free access to the pleasures offered by the People's Town most of which was the Tukina business. This was the only business offered in People's Town. Some people referred to People's Town as Las Vegas or Papua New Guinea's Chief's Cross.

The town's misfits, drymen and women, those who are not satisfied and seek more to satisfy their sexual fantasies and others looking for a difference, a change from the cultured fuck (a rough, quick and expensive one), visit People's Town.

It was a clear and cloudless night. The full moon, red over the horizon, was casting long, soft rays over the world. The children were out playing, the dogs howled in anticipation of a new moon. In the distance a lover strummed his guitar strings and serenaded his sweetheart. A hooting sound could be heard. It was not an owl but men calling to their mates. It was the weekend. The government town was alive with parties and dances. The discoing kids had headed into the dance halls. The affluent entered dimly lit night clubs. They spent fortunes buying booze. They entertained the members of the opposite sex; or both. The females were regulars, but were also to be seen at People's Town. Most know them. Even the men were not strangers. They

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shacks and dustbin  
bunch seen hangin  
with bum-hugging  
they were not lool  
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Michael's villa  
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kept busy shoutin  
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come to the dance.  
out repeatedly to t  
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previous dances, se  
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that they try Peopl  
call girls and boys  
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assumably becomin  
He said he was to  
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organizers. They w  
to leave the dance



were seen sleepy eyed wandering amongst the shacks and dustbins of People's Town. The bunch seen hanging about the business centre with bum-hugging trousers were there too. If they were not looking for women they were looking for rival groups who worked over one of their members. If the groups were not to be seen then their whim was different. They were presumably looking for youthful homosexuals. They frequented such joints and during the day worked in hotels wearing see-through laplaps. The dance went on continuously till late. Meanwhile in twos or groups the dancers left. They either headed for home or moved on toward People's Town.

Michael's village boys eventually persuaded him to accompany them to one of the dances during that weekend. It was a dance hosted by the women's and men's basketball association. These village boys confided in him that the association was known for organising very successful secretarial college loose fruits from around town and rebels from the surrounding local villages. The dance was good. Good music and drinks but very few women. Most women present were either married and thus were with their husbands, were mothers nursing babies or girls who had their dates standing beside them. An over puffed gatekeeper, a living skeleton with foul smelling breath, was kept busy shouting out in an attempt to attract informal souls roaming the streets to come to the dance. Association officials drove out repeatedly to the two colleges, but were refused the girls by the two principals. On previous dances, several of the girls ended up sleeping in People's Town and goodness knows what else. Then someone suggested that they try Peoples' Town. Two bus loads of call girls and boys solved their problem. A huge bus driver picked on Michael for assumably becoming too familiar with a girl. He said he was to learn afterward that his cousins had worked him over once, using a bar room brawl in the mine camp. He spent two weeks in hospital. Michael was prepared to take him on, but was stopped by the organizers. They were unceremoniously told to leave the dance hall. They headed toward

People's Town. The town main dance shack was bursting with excitement when they arrived. Dancers and party goers from around town were congregating in People's Town after dances and parties were over in the town. People's Town provided the people with excitement till the next day. The main part of People's Town, called the Sleeping Quarters, was unaffected. A tall arc titan wire fence, topped with barbed wire hidden behind flower gardens kept the bold ones at bay.

The dance shack (they called it Hapi Haus) was fenced all around with barbed arch titan wire; the tukina bus or garden of modesty included. It was Michael's first time there. These village men, who were regulars, explained everything to him. They even invited him to explore the bushes beyond. It was apparently to him that the place was well organized. Food, beer, music, sex, fights were there, or anything else for that matter.

He spied public figures, among them senior government officials, off duty policemen, high school boys and girls, secretaries and people from all walks of life were among the mob present there that night. His village boys got two females drunk. They wanted to take them out but were stopped by a one-eyed ruffian assisted by half a dozen thugs dressed in filthy mechanics overalls. They smelled as if they had just crawled out of the sewer. When they started arguing, they were told to either leave and find themselves other prostitutes or behave themselves like everyone else.

The huge bus driver and his mates showed up toward morning. Among them were scores of hippies that he had seen hanging about hotels and wharves whenever an overseas vessel was in. They kept to themselves. Their girls were shielded from the public and they kept to the darkest corners of the dancing floor.

Michael met a Tsunarian girl who said she was not married. He knew she was married. Her husband was away on a course down south. He kept her in the care of his trusted married wantok. The same wantok had sent his own wife home and later shared his house with her. They were living as man and wife.



To Michael his place was something. It beat all the large cities like Manila, Hongkong and places known to have a reputation. What intrigued him the most was that a place like this could exist and flourish in a place where every fourth person was either a pastor or a street preacher. People's Town (its real name was Mamin Nating settlement) was notorious for the things that happened inside it. It was a rascals' town, a haven for criminals, refuge for village misfits and a training ground for future urban guerrillas, plus paupers, tax evaders, petty thieves, rapists, cradle snatchers, drunks, pirates, car thieves and any other kind of nut that walked the earth. People's Town was an oasis for this lot. The authorities tolerated it for good reason. If they ever wanted to demolish it they would eventually.

They walked out penniless as the sun rose lazily over the horizon. The patrons waved them out and asked them to return for the Saturday night fever the next evening.

"So that was the place?"

"Yu tok pinis."

"Ol man stret laga?"

"Na yu tink! Natink see mebi tu dausen man i bin kam tunait. Mebi moa! No!"

"Free gate!"

"Yes free gate except grog. Bloody bilak maket price."

"Wonder why we bother going there!"

Askim yu yet. Painim wanem tru yah? Olsem yu no gat long ples bilong yu. No? Mebi yu dariai man."

"Fakim pik. Salap long toktok olsem. Mino olsem sampela lain long hia."

The man who spoke was upset. He did not like to be spoken to like that. What was said carried some resemblance of truth. Michael had known for some time that many people among them, his wantoks, had friends or wrote letters to school girls at the provincial high school where he was a teacher. Many helped them pay for their school fees. On weekends they were together. Some were even married. On one occasion he was embarrassed because he had to teach a unit on human reproduction. He wanted to pretend that all of the students were novices, although he knew that some were married

students; one was married to one of the tomboy female teachers at the school.

The same man who was agitated by the remarks was married. He had a friend whom he met under the giant banuan tree to give her money. If she didn't he would probably rape her or ask someone else to do it for him, who in turn by some very remote chance would marry her. It had happened in many places; community schools, high schools and vocational centres. Many came from not well off families or a small group who did not care how they obtained finance to educate their children. Many young girls (they were the poor victims), had men marked for them; most were old men. After four solid years at high school they returned home to slave for their antique, museum relic of a husband for the rest of their youthful years hoping the old cow would die suddenly.

A locally based community service organisation had asked him if he would use his students to conduct research in the numerous squatter settlements. The aim was to find out how many souls lived there so some kind of community service, like piped-water could be established. He agreed to supervise the operation and to please the organisation. Hundreds of surveys had been made, so far not one had been acted upon. He had not done any, nor was he involved so he had gone out of curiosity, together with two other teachers who were mostly interested in locating and establishing dialogue with black market operators. Bacedi camp is on land owned by Kikitou's wife's clan. The Bacedi settlers had asked their kinsmen to give them a plot of land to put up a few tin sheds. Eighty percent were casual labourers, ten percent semi-skilled. Most were employed by the town disposal unit as repair men. Five percent were either skilled tradesmen or white collar workers. The white collar workers were employed by the bureau of management, provincial government and the provinces only hotel. The last five percent were either transit passengers, law breakers on the run from the village peace officers or permanent pasindias.

Bacedi camp is predominantly a male camp; all young men. One or two are older

men of 45 called Ma millionaire or thousand houses occupy the 20 planning and care that been built better than was true that the camp its residents; among foreman with Morol quality timber was used the buildings except for served as a cook house sleeping quarters for The floors were good nearby disused go houses. The houses were during the day. In occupants retired to swam in the sea until over the Crown Prince Town, Bacedi Camp. Once one of the residents to live with him. At a either abandon the idea to stay with his wife cowboy camp; by law to reside there.

Poiananga squatter hill overlooking the bay. Above the high rise are palaces, skeleton built ever against the province to do away with. Poiananga is a married five metre tin sheds kept to the corner; tin four families. Flies fly The surrounding bus Kaukau gardens and right up to the Poiananga holds the in with families, domestic belongings to try their brought by the company unemployed, fifty percent and their were many relatives. The other ten labourers many of who losing their jobs as completed their contract wound up because of



men of 45 called Mangi masters, servants of millionaire or thousandaire expatriates. Three houses occupy the 2500<sup>2</sup>m plot. With proper planning and care the buildings could have been built better than what it was. That is if it was true that the camp had tradesmen among its residents; among them a proclaimed foreman with Morobe Constructions. Good quality timber was used for the framework of the buildings except for the outer house. That served as a cook house dining area and sleeping quarters for the two mangi mastas. The floors were good; surely stolen from the nearby disused government match box houses. The houses were not so comfortable during the day. In the burning sun the occupants retired to the coconut groves or swam in the sea until the sun had disappeared over the Crown Prince Ranges. Like People's Town, Bacedi Camp operated black markets. Once one of the residents wanted to bring his to live with him. At a meeting he was told to either abandon the idea or find another camp to stay with his wife. Bacedi camp was a cowboy camp; by law only men were allowed to reside there.

Pioananga squatter settlement rests on the hill overlooking the bustling Tonive township. Above the high rise apartments, millionaire's palaces, skeleton buildings tower defiantly as ever against the provincial government's plan to do away with squatter settlements. Pioananga is a married settlement. Five by five metre tin sheds house four families each kept to the corner; tin material separates the four families. Flies fly in and out at random. The surrounding bushes are bare of trees. Kaukau gardens and vegetables are grown right up to the nearest local village. Pioananga holds the multitude who flocked in with families, domestic animals and few belongings to try their hands at the new riches brought by the copper mine. Most were unemployed, fifty percent of them to be exact and there were many women children and relatives. The other ten percent were casual labourers many of whom were on the verge of losing their jobs as construction companies completed their contract or went bankrupt or wound up because of no more contracts.

They look at research teams with scorn, malice and distrust.

When the research was complete, Michael was asked to make concluding remarks. He wasn't interested but did the summary all the same to please the organisation.

Prior to the beginning of this mammoth industry, planners could boast that the problem of mass influx of hopeful workers, (with their wives, children, dogs and cats) would make the long trek to Kekeleka and Barapinang and although the problem had occurred in many areas, the problem here would be contained. Fifty percent of them lived in the town, the other fifty percent scratched for a living on the fringes of the town in squalid squatter settlements. After the year 1979, however, all of this began to change. It has been estimated that the 1980s dawned upon a time in which only about one percent of the operators would live in squatter settlements of 100 or more inhabitants. Today over sixty percent of the people around the mine operation and the government sector live in such squatter settlements. For a small urban centre of 1300 or less the growth of squatters is very impressive having risen by 10 percent by 1980. As a result of the expansion of the mines operation there are now more than 10 squatter settlements with more developing every day.

Intensive urbanisation, the aftermath of the mine's establishment, had taken place on a selective basis effecting principally the highlands region, Mamose, Eastern Papua, Buka, Buin and to a somewhat lesser extent, Kieta and the atolls. Factors responsible for urban squatter settlements has been the result of six principal developments. Potential employment in a large scale mining establishment, improved transportation facilities, land shortage problems in densely populated regions, improved health facilities, school dropout problem where dropouts feel they are not fit to live in villages, senseless drift into towns; because everyone else does it, others want to do it too.

The first lot of recruits to work at the mine were successful. The present arrivals in the urban areas are far less sufficient than they



were in the village. Hence they provide a large market for cheap labour. Some become delinquents and add to the criminal problem. Government efforts to encourage people to stay in the village and be involved in village-based activity by introducing new methods of farming by combining science and national methods have proved unsuccessful. The rapid decline of cash crop prices is no incentive at all. Financial success, as shown by those who return home regularly are no help at all.

Squatter settlement living appeals to many. In the past decade, and especially with the development of the mine, a new dimension has been added to urbanisation in the provinces. Squatter residences represent an attempt to combine two codes of living. It avoids noise congestion and other drawbacks of city life. It is still village to many. A squatter settler is able to commute to town jobs and enjoy many of the attractions the town had to offer. Towns are reporting population losses and squatter areas are enjoying a phenomenal period of growth. In fact squatter settlements, or shanty towns, are currently the fastest growing areas in the country's urban areas. Towns and shanty towns comprise an indistinguishable urban entity. Squatter settlements and towns have adjoining borders which contain residential areas of at least 10,000 people.

There are vast differences too. The hall marks of urbanized societies are interdependence, bureaucratic organisation and impersonal relationships. This represents a sharp break with traditional patterns of social living as found in rural societies. In the squatter settlements this is not so.

Much more can be said of which will be repeated over and over again in the future. Squatter settlements cannot be seen as different from the town upon which it is built around. We have to adopt a system of respect and accept the fact that these slums are here to stay. Hence planners, policy makers and politicians must be prepared to look at other dimensions; that is to treat the problem on a regional basis. This has been done but needs reviewing. It must enforce requirements within its jurisdictional sphere and town or

urban authorities must set minimum standards. They must be fulltime on the job, be on the spot to assess whether the squatter settlements are eye sores. They must be made to look beautiful. Slum clearance is not an answer. Allocation of special areas for squatters or groups who would rather live in their own creation should be set aside for those who require it. This suggestion does not in any way encourage squatters but would help group squatters in one area with the aim of limiting and hopefully abolishing the numerous tin sheds around the urban centres.

This plan is a fore runner. Further improvements such as this will remain superficial unless social conditions which create slum conditions are changed. In the suggested squatter zones, sections can be drawn up in what could be known as ethnic zones. Once this has been set up, then policies to administer it must be drawn up. Each section can only be allowed limited spaces for building. Buildings may vary but designs must be accepted by the building board before a person can start erecting his house. Newcomers wishing to come and live in this category must write in advance. If a space or no space is available then he has to be notified. Of course, there is one more suggestion. The authorities can decide that it just does not want squatters. Civil rightists may argue that this is undemocratic. Sometimes democracy needs to be bent to suit the wishes and aspirations of the majority and not be influenced by rich fat cats. That would surely be undemocratic.

Urban areas are troubled by a bewildering array of overlapping governmental authorities. Several attempts and suggestions have been made and awaits the actions of concerned bodies. Reluctance to act on recommendations will prolong the problem. In this new political and social entity the entire urban community confronts common problems in a disorderly, disunited and inconclusive manner. Most of the officers of such authorities are happy inside air-conditioned offices sitting on easy chairs playing around with papers, figures and females. On inspection tours they can be seen

driving about in huge cruisers. Often they markets, bottle shops, the work gangs and spend the day sitting under the hibiscus hedges trimming. One wonders employ so many of them immaculately clean their offices while the and the squatter settlements town. One hears about for community service making political speeches facilities in squatter settlements are more interested in honeymoon trips, helicopters for joy riding making electoral tours they took daily trips to an hour helicopter chase.

One hears about a release of a politician something to some squatter occasion is displayed in the newspapers; the shaking hands. All background are memories. They represent a mind to have a house in the. They are forced to live on the fringes of the town dumps, sometimes around. In Moresby. Much of reserved for real estate for bourgeoisie and politicians, public servants and possibly mafia types.

It is a fact of life that cannot afford a government built by real estate that of rent before they hillsides and coastline are lined with K4 apart-ments and houses ministers, senior civil overseas and local business house for sale the K100,000 upwards.



driving about in huge four-wheel drive land cruisers. Often they head for the black markets, bottle shops rather than check on the work gangs and their supervisors who spend the day sitting about playing cards under the hibiscus hedges they ought to be trimming. One wonders why these authorities employ so many office workers. One sees them immaculately clean going in and out of their offices while the town becomes dirtier and the squatter settlements spread into the town. One hears about provincial ministers for community services, urban development making political speeches about improved facilities in squatter settlements. In reality they are more interested in going overseas for honeymoon trips, chartering planes and helicopters for joy rides under the pretext of making electoral tours. During recent famine they took daily trips to affected areas in K500 an hour helicopter charters.

One hears about a much publicised news release of a politician opening piped water or something to some squalid joint. Next day the occasion is displayed across the front pages of the newspapers; the member grinning and shaking hands. Also grinning in the background are members of the community. They represent a minority who cannot afford to have a house in the better part of the town. They are forced to back out an existence on the fringes of the town normally beside dumps, sometimes among them like six mile In Moresby. Much of the land that has idle is reserved for real estate enterprises and houses for bourgeoisie and well above middle class politicians, public servants and business men and possibly mafia type criminals.

It is a fact of life today that many people cannot afford a government house or those built by real estate that are always up for sale of rent before they are completed. The hillsides and coastline of major towns today are lined with K4000 a week flats, apartments and houses owned by government ministers, senior civil service officials and overseas and local businessmen. If there is a house for sale the price tag is from K100,000 upwards. Only government

ministers, senior bureaucrats and their friends can afford these prices. To avoid being kicked by a Castro type leader they buy an equal number in Queensland's Surfers Paradise, maybe Hawaii and if there was a chance of a settlement on the moon they would be the first ones to invest there. Years back some provincial governments wanted to take over the functions of the housing commission. Many saw it as a solution to the expensive rents charged by the government. But the reverse was seen. Provincial governments were charging other officers of other departments twice as much while their officers were allocated free accommodation. Business arms set up housing schemes and charged extravagant fees. One wonders who they are serving and where all that money goes to. To the rural people? That is absurd! To pay for salaries of the mammoth decentralization machinery? Yes! Is it any wonder so many opt to live in squatter holes? The few who are seen occupying government housing do so to have their identity or maybe because they are not strong enough to compete against seasoned squatters.

The research gave Michael an insight into the conditions in squatter settlements. He found that the places were not often as dirty as were described. Infant mortality was not as high as those in the town proper who fed on boiled rice, tinned fish washed down with ever-sweetened tea or coffee. The death rate is not as high as those in the proper towns where people are continuously dying from all sorts of diseases. The list could go on. Nursing sisters spend more time in the urban slums while right in the town proper malnourished babies howl all night and day while their mothers wither away discharging or working.

It should not be assumed however that the writer is advocating for the rights of squatters or slums to continue to exist and expand as the town proper develops. Think not that the writer is one of the members of the slum himself, who has embarked on a cause and writes thus so that his own kind will be given an ear.



## LOS BILONG OL TOWN DUMP

Kove left his little village of Matawara in 1946 at a green age of 15 years. He had been home twice. Once to marry his long time sweetheart, Mikoh, and the second time (and also the last time for twenty-five years) was to bury his old father. His father and mother had wanted him to return home to live with his wife. After so many years, Kove's wife divorced him and married his younger brother who was twice her junior. This was just the excuse Kove was waiting for. He vowed never to return home because of what happened to his wife. What was not known to the people at home was that Kove had another wife who was living with him. He found this woman in one of those all night parties that lasted throughout the weekend. Kove had had his eyes on her since the day she bought two loaves of bread at the bakery where Kove worked as a night shiftman. The second time she came Kove was there to serve her. He even sneaked her a spare loaf while the mixed-race cashier was busy talking to the boss. The girl looked up and smiled, she kept looking back at Kove. A delivery van almost knocked her down. The driver stood on the brakes and pressed on the horn angrily.

"Yu longlong meri? You no save lukim man ah? Em Kove tasol, bilong Buka sapos yu sikilap!"

From then on it became a routine; her two loaves plus an extra one sneaked in by Kove when the female cashier was not watching. As time went by Kove knew the girl so well that he slipped a note to her to ask her name. She came back the next day. As she took the bread she turned her hands showing her name boldly tattooed some weeks back. The wound was just healing.

"Aah, good morning tru Martina. Kam kisim bred gen? Hia liklik bokis bilong yu karim."

Matina left carrying her box full of loaves of bread. Kove lived at the back of the bakery in a dormitory type building. An army bunk knocked together to house the bakers and cleaners and their dogs. The house was meant for single men but soon others brought their wives and children and very soon single

men had to move out to make way for the new owners. In retrospect they moved simply to avoid the continuous crying, noise and fighting among the families. Kove was among those who moved out. They slept in delivery vans during the night and during the day when the vans were out transporting bread to various markets they made use of the old World War II German tanks.

"Ekskuis me masta. Mi wanpela wok boi bilong saina man, mi no gat haus long silip, na bet tu wantaim hap lapa long rausin len. Plenti taim mi save silip long ol ka nabaut na hap tenk bilong pikpela pait. Plenti man i kalip ol meri bilong ol wantim pikinini na ol i pulupim haus tru nami no inap long slip long haus boi. Inap sigs mun nau mi na ol poro bilong mi mipela i raun nabaut olsem ol wel dok na pik. Sapos yu kristin man tru olrait yu nap givim mi haus boi bilong yu, na mi ken slip inap masta i ken paimin haus gen?"

The speaker was Kove. He was forty years old, slim but gradually putting on fat below the belt. He was then married to Martina; sort of. Their companionship had not been consolidated because of lack of privacy and all that sort of thing..

"Yu marit?"

"Nogat masta."

"Yu laikim haus oke. But yu mas doing sampela wok tu long peim haus yu harim?"

"Em no wori masta. M wok nait na de taim me slip. Oke mi wokim sampela wok olsem masta i tok."

"Gut. Raun abat long haus yu mas klinim oke? Na wasim klos tripela taim long wik. Maski klinim huas mi yet mi doing."

"Eh gut tumas. Yu Santu man tru."

"Eh what did you say?"

"Mi tok, yu Santu Takondo."

"Oh saint! Well it's the first time. And you bet! I've been one ever since I shot out into this work. See you Bob."

"So you found yourself a house eh? Where abouts is this house did you say?"

"Long hap."

"Wanem hap?"

"Long hap klostu long polis baraks."

"Gut boi, Kove. Na inap yu kisim narapela wan wok long slip wantaim yu?"

"Ino inap tru."

"Husat it tok?"

"Masta i tok. Em slip. No moa."

"Oh bugger."

"Oke maski. Na yu trai had. Noken s"

"Rausim ol marit"

"Ino inap. Ol i g rausim ol bambai mi"

It was a very good lasted. Kove had all and the whiteman, k was pleased with the time to time Masta house for a beer or t Martina to his little they spent the night house when he was north. They even had the spare bedroom a else they did. But breakfast of boiled washed down with opportunity to tell M slept in the spare b doing that because M lot of other white women. They stayed finished. Martina ac being a participant q women. Kove had to he was an honest and the day he set eyes o purer and purer. M wrestling him into t Joe's spare bed. Ther lost his virginity.

Matina helped w ironed them as she who was married to day Kove came hom sitting on his kitch bottle as usual. Whe his boi haus, he went bottle and chattered about drinking whic causing him to have worse he said going without knowing it.



"Ino inap tru."

"Husat it tok?"

"Masta i tok. Em tok wanpela taso mi mas slip. No moa."

"Oh bugger."

"Oke maski. Na yupela ol narapela mek su yu trai had. Noken selek tumas."

"Rausim ol marit man." Someone shouted.

"Ino inap. Ol i gat ol pikinini. Sapos mi rausim ol bambai mi putim ol we?"

It was a very good moment while the time lasted. Kove had all the haus boi to himself and the whiteman, known only as Masta Joe, was pleased with the work Kove did. From time to time Masta Joe invited Kove to his house for a beer or two. In turn Kove invited Matina to his little house boi. One day they spent the night together in Masta Joe's house when he was away down south or up north. They even had the luxury of sleeping in the spare bedroom and goodness knows what else they did. But they did have a good breakfast of boiled eggs and buttered bread washed down with coffee. Kove took the opportunity to tell Matina that he sometimes slept in the spare bedroom. But he disliked doing that because Masta Joe often brought a lot of other whitemen and occasionally women. They stayed until all the grog was finished. Matina accused him jokingly of being a participant of Masta Joe's parties and women. Kove had to swear to his sisters that he was an honest and God fearing man. From the day he set eyes on Matina he had become purer and purer. Matina forgave him by wrestling him into the spare bed in Masta Joe's spare bed. There Kove admitted he had lost his virginity.

Matina helped wash up the clothes and ironed them as she was taught by her sister who was married to a police sergeant. One day Kove came home and found Masta Joe sitting on his kitchen doorsteps sipping a bottle as usual. When he saw Kove entering his boi haus, he went over and handed him a bottle and chattered about all the wickedness about drinking which ruins a man's health causing him to have cirrhosis of the liver but worse he said going to bed with a woman without knowing it.

"Yu gat meri o nogat?"

"Nogat yah masta."

"Giamen tru. Ol Buka ol man bilong painim tru. Yu noken giaman."

"Nogat mi tok stret masta."

"Tough luck ah? Mebi yu mas go bihain ol misinari."

Kove laughed. "Mi tematan man mi no inap."

"Well, Bob sapos yu gat laik na yu laki no wari yu kisim i kam. See you mate. I'm going for another beer."

Kove was delighted to hear that Masta Joe had given him the green light. Now he would bring Matina and they would share the house. She could do Masta Joe's laundry and clean around the house while he slept. He had never had a good rest. He rearranged the house and make ready for Matina.

"Eh hello there. Husat gupela meri hia? Naispela tru."

"Em Matina, kandere bilong mi."

"Yu kendere bilong Bob here? Gupela tru. Yu save stap we?"

"Em save stap wantaim sista bilong em long polis compound." answered Kove for her.

"Oh so em i kam visitim yu tasol ah?"

"Em nau masta."

"Dispela kain giaman bilong yu i no stret. Tunait bambai yu no slip wantim me."

Kove looked hurt. He had longed for the night. Instantly he laughed again.

"Nogat Matina. Em kain bilong mitupela. Mi savi giamanim em olsem, na tu em i save giamanim mi gen olsem."

"Mi no laik. Mi meri bilong yu o mi kandere bilong yu, Nating ol Buka olsem?"

Masta Joe had been overseas for more than two months. Kove did not have any idea where he was. He did not say he was heading for Rhodesia. Kove had a good year living in the haus boi. Now that Masta Joe was gone he'd have to move out when the new tenant moved into the house. But Masta Joe had told him to stay there until he was told to shift out. In the town a Chinese friend, maybe a relative of the Chinese who owned the bakery where Kove was a night shift worker had a large area of land that belonged to him. It was



fenced all around with hurricane wire; the kind manufactured by ARC Titan. Kove had known an old widow, not quite old, she would have made Kove a good wife but Kove referred to her as his mama, as he still had Matina with him. The woman was a housemaid for the Chinese family. She was on twenty-four hour alert on account of the number of children. It is well known that Chinese go about rearing children all year around. When Kove enquired about the possibility of finding accommodation in the Chinese compound (knowing that soon he would have to be asked to leave) the Chinese man gladly welcomed him. Kove would be a kind of deterrent to some clever Dick who regularly climbed over the fence to steal and rape.

Then the new tenant arrived with his family, dogs, cats and a married couple who served as their haus boi and haus girl, Kove had already moved out. He went back to return the key. Kove moved into the compound into an oversized packing container which he called his house. A Tarpaulin over the top, no windows, a makeshift door on clicking hinges, a small shelf and numerous clothes lines criss-crossing from one corner to the other where he displayed his clothes for all to see. An equally battered metal bed salvaged from the town dump filled half of the room. The house was complete. All his cooking was done outside if the weather permitted, otherwise his man cooked all his food. He paid her K15 a fortnight. Kove was not fortunate with Matina. When he moved into his packing case, Matina stopped seeing him despite assurances from Kove that this was only temporary. The bakery was building married houses which all married couples would be moving into whether marriage took place in the church in government offices or on the street and Kove was one of them being a senior.

"Yu no ken wori," Kove told her.

"Mi lukim mi belief," replied Matina.

Every Saturday fortnight Matina was there to get her share of Kove's pay; she was still his wife. She despised living with him in the box but that did not stop her from bringing all

sorts of women from around town to Kove's box house, much to the annoyance of Kove's self proclaimed mother who looked upon them as mere parasites (and they were parasites), and thieves who threatened to steal her property which she was spending much of her time fattening up. Michael found Kove during one of his travels. He was a teacher, a sort of tourist. He never stayed in one school for more than a year; sometimes a mere month. He had seen him waddling about like a duck. Kove was in his late 40s. His hair was as white as snow but he hid that by applying black hair paint regularly with the hope that people would think he was still young. He was always at the market buying buai and daka and lime. He seemed addicted to it. He never bought any food at all and he was an old bottle nose too. There was something familiar about Kove that intrigued Michael. He was a lonely man; lonely in a place where people seemed to be in groups all the time. Many people knew him. They greeted him but hardly stopped to chat to him. Maybe it was his Bannoni blood; the blood inherited from the all powerful and proud Bannonians who kicked every other clan on the west coast. Tall and proud, uncompromising in a losing battle.

"Who is he?" he asked another old time resident in town.

"That man? Why don't you know him?"

"No I don't."

"He is your wantok."

"Putting skin nabaut tasol."

"O pasindia ah?"

"Em nau."

How glad was Kove to meet him. He hailed a tax which took them to Kove's one room which he called a house. Sugarcane, pawpaw and pepper fruits and some betelnuts were growing around the shack and special care was taken of them as shown by the way the owner cultivated them. Kove offered Michael the only chair and the other man was given an empty kerosene drum. They attacked a carton of beer as Kove boiled water and rice. The other man told Kove about himself between mouthfuls of beer.

"A gali, dame malono no kone toghonota

wuka nii. Dame malo

"Bai yu stap long had stopped address that the other man place.

"Tu yias. Mebi b liklik."

"Oh gali gutpela tr kam wok giaman tasol Mi tasol mi stap yet." the boiling pot which Michael became suspicious of him Gali. Most people someone earned a good something for free work person. He dismissed saw how awful the location. It was so far worked. He decided to not given a house by closer to the bakery. Kove he had set the table (and which he stored his per

"Gali yu save nau g haus. No yupela ol sku yet mi no laik stap. Mobeta mi stap hia lo na ples hia yu no wari pawa na ol kain ravis moni long em. Mipela

Surely, he reasoned poor, neither was he seen he disliked sleeping in wouldn't object living could afford to foot the enough buai and some used to this life. He looked passing by on foot with behind them. Several transporting people, and very end of the settlement Mercedes with a flag pr by. A minister, maybe himself. Why to the settlement

They took another taxi him into his flat and curiosity. Kove consented very good. He specially the shiniest he'd ever seen

"Yes," he quipped.



wuka nii. Dame malono."

"Bai yu stap long taim or nogat?" Kove had stopped addressing him in Tsunari so that the other man would not feel out of place.

"Tu yias. Mebi bai mi stap long taim liklik."

"Oh gali gutpela tru. Plenti wantok i save kam wok giaman tasol, na bihain ranawe gen. Mi tasol mi stap yet." He turned to attend to the boiling pot which had almost tipped over. Michael became suspicious when he called him Gali. Most people when they knew someone earned a good salary and wanted something for free would start to flatter that person. He dismissed that thought when he saw how awful the shack was and the location. It was so far away from where he worked. He decided to ask him why he was not given a house by the bakery somewhere closer to the bakery. Kove did not answer until he had set the table (an empty container inside which he stored his personal things).

"Gali yu save nau gavmani i sot tru long haus. No yupela ol skulman i save olsem. Mi yet mi no laik stap long haus long taim. Mobeta mi stap hia long lus hap bilong tain na ples hia yu no wari long city kaunsil, nogat pawa na ol kain ravis samting oli save sasim moni long em. Mipela fri laip yu tok barata."

Surely, he reasoned, this fellow was not poor, neither was he serious when he said that he disliked sleeping in a proper house. He wouldn't object living with a wantok who could afford to foot the bills as long as he had enough buai and some tinned food. He was used to this life. He looked out at the people passing by on foot with a throng of children behind them. Several cars drove pass transporting people, animals and goods to the very end of the settlement. One was a Mercedes with a flag proudly flying as it sped by. A minister, maybe the prime minister himself. Why to the settlement, he wondered.

They took another taxi to town. They saw him into his flat and followed him out of curiosity. Kove consented that the house was very good. He specially described the floor as the shiniest he'd ever seen.

"Yes," he quipped.

The house was in a mess he told them. He'd just moved in and had not had the chance to clean up.

"No yupela ol waitmen. Long mipela ol lus man bilong daun em klin pinis."

They left after they had demolished a roasted chicken. Kove left saying that he would pop in now and then to leave him some bread.

One Saturday Michael saw Kove walking along the road with a middle aged woman. She would have looked younger had it not been for the loose meri blouse she wore. He greeted them and asked where she was staying in Bannoni.

"Our wantok," she said.

They were sharing a disused house out of town. Kove was still working at the bakery. As for the woman she was not quite as lucky. Every night flashy cars came and picked her up and she was back in the early morning. And she had a lot of money to spend. Sometimes she went away for weeks and when she came back she had a lot to tell. One day she just left. The owner of the house came and tossed Kove out. The last time he saw Kove he was living in another house. He told him where he was living and asked him if he was interested in going home.

"Bambai mi stap. Yu go. Mi lus bilong toun." He tried to persuade him by offering to pay his way home.

"Nogat, nogud yu moni noting. Mi stap."

He did not know that another Bannonian had paid for his way home once. He went but returned two months later.

"Oke yu stap bloody lus bilong toun."

He left him laughing at his foolishness. Wasn't he a fool trying to force people to do things that did not interest them? People like Kove. Somehow he saw sadness in Kove's face. His departure was another milestone in Kove's struggle to find wealth in town. In his quest for a better life, he found it took more than just being in a town to be successful. He was forced to shelter inside a container box for many years. His years in town was a turbulence of ups and downs. Kove was a real Boss bilong toun.



## PETROL OFFICERS

A vehicle displaying a certain emblem of authority sped by loaded with people. The passengers on the vehicle searched Michael from his head down to the soles of his shoes as he walked out of the fenced area of the school premises. He waved. They waved back in return. He wondered why they were so curious. It was school holidays. So may be they were saying, "lucky blighter, to be on holidays again."

He took a bus which needed a thorough clean up. Betel nut skins, wrappings from store goods and market good were piled knee-high on the floor, betel nut spittle coloured the outside of the vehicle. Some vile smells from unknown sources, bits of human beings perhaps, filled the whole bus. He spat out through the window. He got out at the town and entered the village tavern. The tavern was nearly empty except for a group of old men who occupied a table nearest to the bar counter. They reminded him of sand crabs gossiping over a heap of manure on the sand. They appeared to be well known; frequenters most likely and local boys. He could hear their wives or daughters shouting from the hill sides. After a spell one of them walked out and shouted back to them to shut up. He said something in language which Michael didn't catch. Probably swear words because the women replied with provocative agitation, accompanied with hand gestures.

"Husat bai laikim yu? Samting selek pinis yah!"

"Kam lukim," shouted one old man as he showed them his bottom covered with white spots and bits of grit.

The females at the top erupted into uncontrollable laughter.

One of the old men walked out to relieve himself. He almost carried the door as he stepped out.

"Pakim, wanem taim oli senisim ol bakete yah?" He spat on account of the strong smell from the urinal trough. The same old man winked at him as he returned. His friends had already refilled their table with another load of bottles of beer. The speakers high in the ceiling hissed out the latest of the Sirosis

album. Michael looked up to locate where the speakers were mounted. Instead he saw a large clock. The time was 10.00 am. Bits of broken glass and bottles were stuck on the timber wall around the clock face. Someone had used it as a target but had missed. Michael's bottle was warm; empty! He walked to the counter from the barmaid; a schoolgirl most likely. She smiled at him. He elbowed his way out and noticed one old man lunge into the bar. The man demanded six bottles. The girl asked for his money by putting out her hand.

"Na fia! Bia pastaim," he shouted.

The girl insisted he pay first.

"Mi inap long pe. Mi provinsel gavmani ofisa. Mi no lus." He thumped a twenty kina note on the counter and stood up straight with his hands on his hips. The girl brought the six beers and his change. He accepted the change from her hands and pocketed it. He eyed the girl and said, "Ai nav yu mai suvit hat. Yu priti wan. Mi liak tu kis yu on your maus." He winked at the girl as he moved back to join his friends. They applauded him.

"Yes yah, Vui wan plenti gels, Bui ol man, Vui wok for provinsel gavmant. Ol plenti gels yu skul at provinsel hai skul. Vui leiba, bat Vui got mas mani. Save Wui ara sevis man for gavman. Fes wit nasinol gavman nau wit provinsel. Yes hau baut a kis gel? A smol dens. Afta Vui go draiv raun in provinsel gavman ka." The girl called to the manager from the back room where he was probably getting drunk.

"Ah lapun mi ing yu selek pinis," a youth dressed in dirty mechanic overalls commented. Another youth joined him.

"Hei manki boi, yu tok wanem? Mi selek? Wanem hap sori samting i strong moa yet. Yu laik lukim? No maski no gut yanpela palauwa hia i lukim."

"Maski mi no wari long pisilama bilong yu. Em i gat noknok ponis," the youth replied jokingly.

"Oke wari bilong yu," replied the old buzzard. He winked at the girl again.

"Lukim em idiot!" said the girl.

"Lukim ol pispis man hia. Lukim ol. Oli spak liklik na ol singautim pinis ol meri."

Michael laughed

"Ol meri bilong ol i no longtaim i g and pointed to the

"Oli wari long longwe!"

Another older r the youths left. He v Michael bought hin man became talkati

"Yangpela, yu w

"Mi tisa."

"Em nau."

"Yupela malolo

"Yes malolo likli

"Ah . . . yes mi h

"Long redio?"

"Yep, NBC."

"Na yu?"

"Mi? Mi viles m nut levolo."

"Gut."

"Yes, plenti mor Mi disivim tu tauser

"Narapela bia?"

"Oke if yu inap."

Michael got the handed one to the drank his half way l

"Eiii big man. Ol

"De ara provinsel

"Oli de off?"

"No we, oli blari laik tisas. Em ol full man shook his head

"Yu tink wanem wokas?" Michael as gauge his views.

"I tell yu mi yar Mebi bipo mi skul, gavman. But mi te tumas! Mas moa the moa! And wat? Ol d the ka, this we, that they are ol driavas hap them are driava have kas, they driav

"Yu save olsem w gavman?"

"Oh easy. I see he



Michael laughed at the youth's comment.

"Ol meri bilong ol, oli wok long kolikolim ol i no longtaim i go pinis," he told the youth and pointed to the hill.

"Oli wari long selek bung ah? No gut i longwe!"

Another older man joined Michael when the youths left. He was fifty years old or more. Michael bought him several rounds. The old man became talkative after his third bottle.

"Yangpela, yu wok we?"

"Mi tisa."

"Em nau."

"Yupela malolo yes?"

"Yes malolo liklik tasol gen."

"Ah . . . yes mi harim las nait."

"Long redio?"

"Yep, NBC."

"Na yu?"

"Mi? Mi viles man. Koko giowa na gnas mut levolo."

"Gut."

"Yes, plenti moni. Mi selim handet begs. Mi disivim tu tausen kina."

"Narapela bia?" he asked him.

"Oke if yu inap."

Michael got them two beers each. He handed one to the old man. The old man drank his half way before putting it down.

"Eiii big man. Ol husat ol lapun long hap?"

"De ara provinsel gavman wokas, driavas."

"Oli de off?"

"No we, oli blari mas wok. No holide. No laik tisas. Em ol full taim, no blari holide," the man shook his head.

"Yu tink wanem long ol provinsel gavman wokas?" Michael asked the man in order to gauge his views.

"I tell yu mi yang boil, ai no skul man. Mebi bipo mi skul, but mino no tu mas baut gavman. But mi tel yu dis, they tumas ka; tumas! Mas moa then nasenel gavman. Plenti moa! And wat? Ol de wokas they are draivim the ka, this we, that we, up there. Ol yu tink is they are ol driavas an no ofis wokas. Mebi hap them are driavas, mebi ol gavman wokas have kas, they driav ol taim."

"Yu save olsem wanem ol kas ol i provinsel gavman?"

"Oh easy. I see head for Topeusu em sign

for Provinsel gavman. All cars for other gavman departments have name for individual department. And all provinsel ministas they all have four wheel drive Toyotas for their use, not for gavman wok, but for them to go home or maybe run away with typist meri. Bipo they buy Toyotas, naus they buy Susuki four wheel drive too, and all have that Toneusu head on them. All over province you see these cars. Plenti. Ol community gavman have one car each. All kiaps have one each too. And how many kiaps? My boy I do not know but me think way in thirty of them and they got cars or nogat motor bikes. On atolls they say they have speed boats which they use where they like. Like fishing and they give to village people mostly to young meris with susu for them i standing up."

The man stopped to catch his breath and drank his beer. He didn't want him to stop talking so he bought him another beer.

"Na you, where's your beer?" the man asked him when he saw he didn't have a bottle.

"Em meri by karim i kam."

"Meri? Oh yes that girl ah. She is school girl at mission girls high school. She's pretty. But you watch out. She is pikinini for pro insel minista. You no make eye for her otherwise you get sack. You marit?" he asked him.

Michael told him that he was not.

"Oh you are not! Oh you young man yet. Then maybe you can make eye for her. Maybe you become tambu for her father. Oh honoho. But you be careful er? You be very careful. I hear she is marked for one university man. Doctör. But for time being you make eye for her. He he he he . . ."

The girl brought their drinks. She placed them on the table and gathered the empty bottles and put them in the empty carton beside the table.

"Hei no kolupetam. Soa kodaleinauno nah tawana nah. Nako nongonighonau."

"Sena! Nah? Na soa tsidalaina nah?"

"Heh palaleghi. Waah."

"Eba waiyah," commented the old man. The girl left after chatting to them for a little



while.

"Hey young boy. You see gel? She say I grease you for her. She cross but I tell you, she lie. She big maus for you to hear and think she is angry. Tell you inside she, she die for you. No? Oh sori watpo mi no yanpela gen?"

They laughed together.

"I can see through her heart. My eye like micronoskopi," continued the man.

"Eh lapun maski long grisim ol manghi. You no lukim ol bigman bilong gavman sidaun hia?"

"Lausim ol pipia man hia. Yupela go wok maski spak, no stilim moni nating."

"I orait wari bilong yu," replied the group together.

"Yes you ol waste of time. Mi gnanas loot man mi watching yu."

"Big man yuno pinis tok tok long mi long ol provinsel."

"My boy, but you teacher you know more than me. But is that the matter? I tell you okay. Me say me man once teacher too. Taim bipo, 1956 maybe 1959, I was a teacher. I think I knows something. Long time ago we had local government council and sub-district and district headquarters. We have much development and plenty cash crop and road work was good. We help each other in our garden, we have one day for government work and four days for people in one week. The council gave us tank. Today in my village we still use tank. The council bought tractors and used tractor for carrying cocoa to society and malasin the road. We have council for big group not like today, where we have community gavman for little group there, other group there and over there. And you see councilor they work with hand but today our members do not even work. They have meeting and when they finish they come home and say "Okay this is what you do" and they say "Okay go work" and where are they? They no go work. They go sleep or get on Toyota and run away to Arawa. And people go work with no leader like kakaruk with head cut off. You call them leaders? Susus! And what makes me angry more is they full of tok tok but little or not work at all. Like

empty drums they are. Maybe they think they are the bosses so they no need for work. Maybe they think they are like plantation managers."

"That pretty good talk," Michael said trying to imitate the man. He rose to go. The man had gone out to the back.

Michael passed two vehicles with the head of the Tonevsu painted on them pulling into the club. The old man wasn't bluffing: They were a waste, all the provincial and the whole pack of public servants; teachers included. What's more he was one of them so he knew what kind of service these so called public servants gave and performed.

One of the many things he experienced the very first time he joined the so called public service was the sheer abuse of public office, especially by the so called heads. In the civil service the government allocated vehicles to its senior and semi-senior officers. To the senior officers the allocation was for twenty-four hours, seven days a week, four weeks a month, twelve months a year. In one school the headmaster influenced the board of governors to approve the purchase of a four-wheel drive vehicle on the pretext that it would be used wholly for the school. In the days after the purchase of the vehicle, the headmaster took the vehicle as his own and his family. It was left under the house and no other teacher was allowed to drive it except him. He was to tell his counterparts that the vehicle was his own bought with his own money. And so it was all his and some of his closest friends. He would use it to go for picnics or parties when there was a student ill in bed and needed transporting to the hospital.

In another school, the headmaster and the deputy competed for the use of the school vehicle. Supposing the headmaster over-nighted with the vehicle, the next day the deputy would get the vehicle and have it overnight under his house or at his village. On weekends the vehicles would be running fifty hours non-stop transporting the deputy's relatives to their villages, buying beer from the black market and running errands for all sorts of people.

One notorious complete monopoly. Being a pisspot the running day and taverns, black money was available. A vehicle to town and picked up his wife and drove to school to spend the day seeing. On Sunday road to return the to the school at 1 school inspector the vehicle as his use of the vehicle airport. The deputy vehicle was told to because the head with some students.

And then there rather let his kid drive the school students on board understand the rule he had known to of Governors' vehicle been allocated to service section Gazette Michael allocated to a h conditions of employment the odd ones out heads everlasting.

Which brings departments. In p is staffed by more available. Often maybe for a village to a relative in a radio operator is away. There are government business in the country to provincial headquarters enough speed because harbour. Most stationed there boatmen on these the government. 7



One notorious head practically had a complete monopoly on the use of the vehicle. Being a pisspot the vehicle was everlastingly running day and night to bottle shops, taverns, black markets or places where beer was available. On weekends he drove the vehicle to town and slept in hotels where he picked up his wantoks, loaded them on the vehicle and drove back 150 kilometres to the school to spend the hours drinking and sight-seeing. On Sunday he would be back on the road to return the wantoks and then go back to the school at 10 o'clock on Monday. The school inspector who advised him not to use the vehicle as his own was once refused the use of the vehicle to transport him to the airport. The deputy who asked to use the vehicle was told the vehicle could not be used because the headmaster was going fishing with some students.

And then there was the deputy who would rather let his kid brother, an unlicensed driver, drive the school vehicle with a crowd of students on board as passengers. He didn't understand the reason why the headmasters he had known took possession of the Board of Governors' vehicles. It was as if they had been allocated to them like other public service section heads. In the Education Gazette Michael had never seen a vehicle allocated to a headmaster as part of the conditions of employment. Maybe they were the odd ones out among the other sectional heads everlastingly seated behind the wheel.

Which brings us to the non-teaching departments. In particular a small place which is staffed by more officers than there is work available. Often the office is empty except maybe for a villager wishing to put on a call to a relative in another centre. Usually the radio operator is not available so he goes away. There are enough vehicles to do government business in a town the size of any in the country that could be regarded as provincial headquarters. Beside that there are enough speed boats to fill Port Moresby's harbour. Most of the time the officers stationed there are full time drivers or boatmen on these toys provided for them by the government. The patrol officers are on the

vehicles day in and out so much they are jokingly referred to as Petrol Officers. Because of the isolation and the limited length of the road, driving is confined to around the station and the nearby village and clubs where the vehicles are parked all the time. It is there that all sorts of people take a chance to test drive. It is a chance to learn to drive in the best location. One sees officers' wives and their children take command of these machines where the rate of breakdowns each weekend in double that on pay weeks.

Once Michael asked one enraged sectional head what had happened to one of the cars. The man replied the clutch had worn out and he now could not use the damn fool thing. Michael thought he would crack a silly joke which he said was one reason why the breakdowns are more frequent.

"Friend you know the saying, too many cooks spoil the soup?" he asked in a way to see if the man could see his point. He really meant that too many crooks spoiled the machine. This man was one. The man had laughed, but Michael knew in his guts that he had hurt him deeply. Days before he and two fellow teachers had grilled one petrol officer who had almost knocked one of their students flat to the road; he had been drunk of course.

He wondered whenever he saw one of these people speed by whether they had no shame or feeling at all. Abuse of public property right in front of the public who gazed and wondered at a man who foolishly used public property as if it was his own. Maybe these people were born with cars and so were used to it. Otherwise they were poor people who had never owned anything but now became a somebody because they could be seen sitting at the wheels of a car. Being inside a car, he supposed, meant that the person's social standing was elevated. Many people would believe just that. But there was also another group who admired a man of some social standing because he walks like everyone else. Many people have a general misconception of the role of a public servant. Too many people working for the government can bring about the opposite effect. The people whom they are supposed to



serve become the servants.

Once upon a time Michael tried to engage another man to give him his view about his conception of the role of public servants. The man said he only knew that he worked from 8 to 4.06 and that he got his pay on Fridays. That was that and nothing more. When he asked him about the use of public vehicles by so called public servants, the man could only reply that was part of being a public servant. He concluded that the man, and perhaps many more, resembled a majority of misinformed people who do not have a clue of basic concepts of the role they had. Someone once told Michael that he spoke like a communist or a socialist or like Narakobi or Che Gueverra spoke with modesty and simplicity whenever he saw some sign of affluence or a miscarriage of opportunity. He asked them why should he not speak about the misuse of public property. The society has always lived in a community. Things were often owned communally. Anyone who misused common property was told off and was expected to stop and do the correct thing. The government is acting in the role of the forgiving mother of lovely mischievous children, who, even though they have been naughty, are still given sweets and toys to play around with. They continued to wreck the family possessions. Mischievous and over-loved children are spoiled children. Public servants are spoiled. Having stepped into the departing Australians' shoes they have made a mess of everything with the speed-of-sound localisation programme that has landed whippersnappers into top jobs.

There is not a single man alive with a sense of responsibility. There is lack of concern over the use of public property, least still, the mentality to envisage the large cost of maintenance. The government has been buying vehicles and has been supplying them to the so called public servants as a father would buy toys and distribute them to his children to keep them happy. Isn't the government mothering and babying public servants too much? If it is, can there be a stop to it?

It is the afternoon before the National

Independence anniversary, all the vehicles and any other gadgets that run on wheels powered by engines are packed together. One seeing these machines for the first time would think the annual Port Moresby Safari had come to the sleepy rather unimportant government centre. The riders and drivers are mostly men. A few are women shopping for the day. There is only one reason why this mob was there. The usual. They gather and soon shoot off to the club where they would drink all night and force the barman to stay open late. The evening is quiet and peace reigns. The only noise is the sea breaking on the reef, crows and children crying to go to bed. The local NBC announcer signing off for the evening and ending the service for the day had no sooner switched off the transmitter, when a wave of ear-shattering noise, too familiar, took over. The Motor parade is up and down the road all night long transporting cargo from the club to government residences; drunks are on joy rides.

In the morning they are still going strong; full throttle. A few have driven theirs into coconut stumps. The screaming sound of the motor cycles pierces the still morning air. There are many crashes. Some innocent dogs are ridden over. The riders are sprawled on the road. Passers-by pick them up and the health workers are busy patching them up. Broken arms, twisted ankles and many more injuries too numerous to name. The group, or *lain*, have been on an expedition along the beach (and to say that they went down to the club was a typical cover up) hoping to find girls reknowned for having splendid reputations and maybe catch one for an evening of pleasure.

The trip was the worst over jagged coral rocks that could cut a man into tens of thousands of pieces. There were no girls. If there were, there would be only enough to satisfy three of the men. An old man, a reknowned member of the village who organises young 'meris' for 'dry' man, could not be persuaded to disclose to them where the call girls were on the pretence that no such group existed.

After having downed a dozen of the 'lain's'

drink and given a told them that they he was willing to he would be allowed next village while themselves.

And this *lain* men had found o nurses were kept caused by falling o the soil around th The men received catch a lame walla away into the ma told the nurse. Th their wives.

The continu continued to ca problems, like fan multitude of drun of night in gove after, there may And who will maintenance?

#### WHAT PRICE ?

This here is an u mommy they tell that jumped into tell him some stor

He is a teache uncle's elder bro believe him, I thin or maybe as I say word vagabond i school she once children and lap parasite on my da shelter, kai and b bottle nose. Used Sir Pita Lus conve of drink in moder uncle he is vagab he got not muc mommy, but he l some money and give my Aunty ce make friend with he is like that. He know not him we

This morning



drink and given a packet of BH, the old man told them that there were some groups which he was willing to contact provided of course he would be allowed to drive the vehicle to the next village while the men were satisfying themselves.

And this lain had to flee after the village men had found out. The next morning the nurses were kept busy stitching deep cuts caused by falling on sharp stakes driven into the soil around the perimeter of the village. The men received the cuts while attempting to catch a lame wallaby which unfortunately got away into the marshland. That is what they told the nurse. They had a different story for their wives.

The continuous drink-drive party continued to cause a heck of a lot of problems, like families having to be host to a multitude of drunks who arrived at the dead of night in government vehicles. The day after, there may be more wrecked vehicles. And who will be responsible for its maintenance?

#### WHAT PRICE MARRIAGE

This here is an uncle of mine, so daddy and mommy they tell me. He's sort of a vagabond that jumped into the billabong. So I gonna tell him some story.

He is a teacher, so my daddy who is my uncle's elder brother he tell me. But I no believe him, I think he is sumatin at university or maybe as I say afore, he's a vagabond. This word vagabond mine female teacher at pre-school she once tell me, so I use often to children and lapun men too who come and parasite on my daddy and mommy for food, shelter, kai and beer. But mine daddy he no bottle nose. Used to be when he was single but Sir Pita Lus converted him with Sir Pita's talk of drink in moderation. As I said earlier mine uncle he is vagabond, he is home on holidays, he got not much money like daddy and mommy, but he looks after me and gives me some money and ice cream. He is careful to give my Aunty cos I might say he is trying to make friend with she. I don't think mine uncle he is like that. He is probably good man but I know not him well, so I stay suspicious of he.

This morning one vagabond he come to

our house, while me and uncle are playing outside. This vagabond he brings me some toys and some potato chips and drinks too, which he gives me. I not eat this food cos mommy she tell me it is junk food. Like town dump. She says where all town people they throw rubbish. I put aside food and lie that I eat later, cos mommy she knows best. And uncle too he says this food is no good. So I not eat cos uncle say and mommy say too.

This other man he uncle of mine too, because he is mommy's wantok. This vagabond he tells me he really likes me very much. He adores me. I like his butterfly his peacock his heart he tells me. But mine daddy he thinks different. He says he lie to come see me because he really come here to grease my Aunty to marry him.

One day daddy he say this and mine mommy she shout at mine daddy, he say this and mine mommy she shout at mine daddy for saying stupid word about mine mommy's wantok. She almost eat daddy alive. Mine daddy he say nothing more. He goes to kitchen, he drink one beer and he read his newspaper while mine mommy she talktalk. Mine mommy she really talker like waterfall she never stop and when she's angry she talktalk more. Sometimes I get tired of she too. I good boy. I like adopt my daddy's ways, he's really quite a fellow. But what he says is really true, or always it comes true. He is like a prophet. But mine uncle he says no. Mine daddy he is Sherlock Holmes.

This other vagabond when he gives me toys and food, he goes upstairs and he says he like drink water very much. He very hot, he says. But he no fool me. I maybe kid but I no fool. I knowes he goes upstairs to drink giaman and at same time he meet my Aunty because she upstairs and she sweeping and washing dishes and plates and making our beds. When vagabond he goes upstairs, mine Aunty she stops sweeping and she giggles. I knows she is delighted very much at seeing this fellow. I think she likes him too. But mine mommy she not know my daddy, he knows already and no tell mommy cos he is afraid mine mommy she got big mouth and she eats him alive, like crocodile it eats harmless



puppy.

I know mine daddy he says to herself, "maski let her find out herself." Cos long time ago same thing happen and mine mommy she found out later that one of mine aunties she is pregnant. Mine daddy he simply say, "who knows better?" But mine mommy she cross very much and accuse mine daddy. Mine daddy she says wait till baby is born and we'll see. And when baby she finally shot out into daylight, we find it for one wantok who used to come often to our house. So mine mother she shut her big mouth.

Now same thing its happening. This vagabond he's doing same thing and very soon I have no Auntie to look after me. They stay for long time upstairs by themselves and I know this vagabond he come here to see me but to make eye for mine Auntie. So I shout to he to come down and show me how to operate my toys. Mine other uncle he busy reading book, very thick one too like bible for Father at Catholic mission. He reads all time and he got glasses to help he read. He is just like daddy. He too read all time. Book to uncle and mine daddy is like smoke to mine babu or beer to mine other uncle called John. Mine mommy she called daddy a book worm, now too she called mine uncle a book worm too. Mine uncle's real name is Tomi Michael Tsim. Me too I like mine daddy and mine uncle. I do this cos daddy and uncle do so I follow for they know well so I follow too.

I am getting tired for waiting for vagabond to come show me way for operating my toys. I fed up so I run up and open door and find mine Auntie holding vagabond's his hand. She drop his hand and push him away. I ask why Auntie she hold hand for he. She says he was malasining it. I no believe it cos I know they were giamanim me. I ask mine vagabond uncle and come out but his eyes on my Auntie. He no see swing back door which flats him on his head. Amy Auntie she sighs little but I know she love he so much, but I no want tell mine mommy and daddy. I good boy. I no want meddle with some other he and she's affairs.

When vagabond he gone away mine Auntie she called me and tell me to swear that I no see nothing so I keep my mouth shut. I

get angry and I tell she if she no careful I tell mine mommy and mine uncle he knows too. But mine uncle he's too educated, he not tell anyone.

Now mine uncle he takes me and mine Auntie for drive in town in our car. We meet many of may uncle's friends. I see many humbugs with girls, they talk under trees and they laugh a lot. When we leave I ask mine uncle to tell me about they. He says they are his friends. And how about girl? Is she friend of he too? No he says she wife for his male friend. I believe he cos he teacher and no tell lie. But when we go home I tell mommy and daddy that me uncle and Auntie we see many married he and she. Many would soon have baby who will cry all day and maybe night too and then his mommy and daddy will not sleep well and maybe cross too among they for reason why they marry too soon.

Mine uncle he tell me he is more than thirty years now and yet he no marry. Maybe he has sweetheart but he no tell me. He says he no interested in skirt business. I see him when I follow him about that he no make eye for she; meri who watch he with six year old boy walking with he but no she to follow they. So they wonder who he with boy but no wife. But some times I no believe uncle for me. Because he tell me that marriage business is too hard. He no able to look after wife and feed many mouths like his other younger brother who has many children. Mine uncle he says this brother of his who is my other uncle, is like rooster, he's got too many boys and girls. My uncle he says he no want to be like this. Mine uncle he says he afraid for wife to ask where he been to if he come late, or why he look at other girl. Like mine mommy, she's cross with mine daddy when sometimes come home late or when he look hard at some girls or woman. He too scared for some people to look at he with many children going after he like ducklings following their mommy. people be believe will say this man is anytime or maybe they say he's greedy fellow. Marriage he tell me is like prison camp, like kuveria haus kalabus. Man he no more free to do what he likes as soon as he is with woman. He want to be like a bird or a dolphin who command herself, no more bossed by wife

and relatives from r

I knows too cos mommy's place, r mommy like little g you do that, you make me my tea. T and you do that. they boss too much happen, so mine da no go to mommy's mine mommy's bos says white man's r boss business. All v free.

My uncle he also to marry too cos parents of girls they daughter who ma uncle he says he's sc expensive like cars, very much in some K3,000.00 to mar the woman she no father he marry mommy's daddy he for mine mommy. uncle Tommy (for f help him with K1, good man. He give know not but mine mine daddy he K1,000.00, cos he as help pay for mom educated, she gone she is too much expe thinks mine bubu he sure that mine but relatives of mine m to mine daddy's hou money to pay for n money already. M mouth but she cann one rule only. This r for home straight, with mine bubu an greedy too, but mine who say it's you bus I only speak out th mine bubu he cries a mommy and he wa



and relatives from morning to evening.

I knows too cos sometimes when we go to mommy's place, my bubu he bosses my mommy like little girl. He tell she you do this, you do that, you fetch me my water, you make me my tea. To daddy he says to do this and you do that. And my daddy's tambus they boss too much too. This kind it often happen, so mine daddy, he put rule that we no go to mommy's place cos he's fed up with mine mommy's bossy daddy. Mine daddy he says white man's marriage is for better, no boss business. All ways marriage people are free.

My uncle he also tells me that he's scared to marry too cos of big payment many parents of girls they want man to pay their daughter who marry another man. Mine uncle he says he's scared, cos all females are so expensive like cars, balus or boats. He scared very much in some place where man he pay K3,000.00 to marry some other girl and the woman she no pay one toea. When my father he marry mine mommy, mine mommy's daddy he says you pay K2,000.00 for mine mommy. Mine daddy he ask mine uncle Tommy (for first I call him Tommy) to help him with K1,000.00. Mine uncle he's good man. He give mine daddy K1,000.00. I know not but mine daddy he tell me. But mine daddy he pay back mine uncle K1,000.00, cos he ashame to know mine uncle help pay for mommy. Mine mommy she's educated, she gone to good school that why she is too much expensive. But mine daddy he thinks mine bubu he is greedy pig, so he make sure that mine bubu and his relatives and relatives of mine mommy they cannot come to mine daddy's house cos he spent too much money to pay for mine mommy so they got money already. Mine mommy she's big mouth but she cannot talk against daddy on one rule only. This rule is strong like puripuri for home straight, so sometimes she angry with mine bubu and mine mommy call he greedy too, but mine bubu he says tis not me who say it's you business people who say and I only speak out their price. But sometimes mine bubu he cries and he says he loose mine mommy and he want to return money. But

daddy says he no dog to swallow his own vomit. Many times they look other way and they don't talk as if they not know each other. Mine mommy she says to daddy to talk to bubu but daddy he says I no want talk to greedy cow.

Mine uncle, uncle Tommy, he tells me plenty stories about custom for home. Mine daddy was marked to one girl by his daddy who is mine other bubu. This girl she was mine daddy's old playmate. But she go to primary school only and her daddy took her out, say she waste her time at school. Girls were not made to attend school. Mine daddy he went to high school and then he work for company for many years so he found my mommy while she was a typist so he married her. When mine bubu who daddy for mine daddy heard about mine daddy he go after other girl he very angry and tell mine daddy he very humbug true, cos he no respect mine daddy who know much wisdom and now all hard work all wasted for nothing. His wife to be was angry too, she say he, my daddy, must pay shes compensation for refusing to marry she. Mine daddy, he say no way so mine bubu he pay compensation money and four pigs and four arm lengths of sesalina kulaga. Mine bubu he blames always mine daddy much money, but mine bubu he is no satisfied, he says he see no reason for mine daddy's marry to other woman not of mine bubu's choice. Mine bubu he says he much wisdom man. He thinks mine daddy he got brain of cat, but mine bubu real reason he want daddy to marry woman of his choice cos this woman she come from wealthy family and she too daughter of mine bubu's distant cousin, so, mine uncle Tommy he says mine bubu he want to keep marriage in family and also get some money from she. Mine uncle Tommy he says he disagree with marriage to same clan, cos in the long run there is danger for the whole population being turned into vegetable offsprings. I know not this talk. I not yet educated as he so mine uncle he says it is better for mine daddy he marry other woman from other place. I healthy boy cos I result of mixture of different bloods. I no half caste as some people refer themselves. I just good boy



and strong.

When mine daddy he married mine mommy, mine bubu he say he no will spend one shilling to pay for my mommy. And he keep his word. He no pay a single shilling. But today mine mommy she look after old man well always giving him laplaps, shirt, tobacco and handkerchief. One day mine bubu he almost kick bucket when sharp stick it tore his testicles and his balls they come popping out. Mine mommy she send daddy at midnight to fetch poor bubu to hospital where doctor he sew back mine bubu's testicles. And she look after he like her own daddy whom mine daddy call greedy cow. Mine bubu he slowly accepting mine mommy as he daughter-in-law. She good he says. But sometimes he wish my daddy he marry other woman of his choice.

Mine parents they like good samaritans. Every young fellows who marry they come and live with us. They take my room and I forced to sleep on floor with my Auntie in other room I get sick cos I made to sleep on the floor in my own room. My mommy she complain but my daddy he says not to worry. I told mine uncle Tommy and he say you are good family you look after other people. I think I know he feel sorry for mine daddy so one day he leave us and he go home to mine daddy's village. Other people who marry on street they turn up one day and when he see them he tell daddy he must go home. And he ask if he take me home too to see mine bubu. Mine daddy he agrees but he says I must go back after three weeks. But real reason he decide to go is he made way for newly married couple to sleep in spare bedroom he using. He lie good to mommy. But mine daddy he knows so he no question he.

In mine uncle's village we sleep in mine daddy's house. Mine bubu he look after me and uncle good. Mine cousins of my other uncle they play with me. They are too many. And mine bubu he always play with us too. But sometimes he bore mine uncle. He tell he you getting old, now when you marry so you have babies? Mine uncle he says he no interested in sharing bed with skirt. That makes mine bubu laugh.

One day one pretty girl, she DPI didi meri, she goes by and mine bubu he call her and she come and sit next to me. He talk with her and they laugh. I see mine uncle he embarrassed man straight. He knows old fox, mine bubu he call didi meri over so he grease her to make eye to uncle Tommy. Didi meri she ask uncle Tommy. Didi meri she ask uncle Tommy where he work. Before he reply, I answer for he that uncle he teacher at big governmental school in Papua. Didi meri she laugh all time and she eye uncle Tommy all time. I see uncle he feel smitten. When she leave us, mine bubu he say that a good one. Mine uncle he no reply, he busy read again. When bubu he talk more about didi meri mine uncle he pick up axe and knife and tell bubu to follow he to garden. Bubu of mine he knows uncle Tommy he no interest to marry woman. I make up mind I too don't want to marry. If uncle is strong team, I will be strong team, but I too young yet. Maybe I change my mind when I see pretty sweetie one day.

Mine bubu he tells me about three young men from village who will marry girls from other village. He says they already living in one house but no married in church before padre. Padre really cross cos these humbugs are living in sin. There will be much to eat and people will spark and mine bubu, he says some people will be asking him for his three young sons to marry their daughters. Mine uncle he hears and talks nothing in return. Bubu he talking marriage all time, that's why they call he 'marit kansola'. These words they fit him well cos he make many people marry; old men, young men and educated men too.

One day one man his name is Vapai he come and he make fun with my uncle. They are brothers mine uncle he tells me. He talks about beautiful girl at end of village. He say boy if I was young I could fix my spine with she. You young boys are slack. He tell mine uncle he go tell she to marry he. Mine uncle he says you marry she yourself. Vapai he laughs and he say you think I loose ah? Vapai he gets up and he say okay, I go tell she you love her. He no bullshit. So mine uncle he act fast. No you no tell her, otherwise I no buy you beer on marriage day of three men. Vapai

he stops cos beer I

I lucky man. males, Ororo, M Muruans they at double ceremony them sacrament have traditional Waiwakohosagi. I but uncle Tomm First they sing pl He Wiu! They sir get all relatives of to enter one ding into pot full of tar 'Wahtsiloko'. In ancestors so mine mother for each pikinini for the las to husband. This woman she cries a far. But mine bu Tommy that won now will do all w she married.

When she finish she come and carry back style like Co on back of Jum woman she carry Her husband he man too and he to with 'mimis'. Mi 'Mimis' for husbar

That end of married and for f house.

When we go ho like marriage for .the amount man argue with bubu, mine uncle he ask grandmommy. M idea, maybe two a

"There you see say, "why pay so n

Mine bubu he uncle he trap him push his hand into buai, daka and lim inside mouth and



he stops cos beer his kaikai.

I lucky man. I saw marriage. All these males, Ororo, Mawatatagana and all the Muruans they attend cos the marriage was double ceremony. First the Padre he give them sacrament of matrimony and after they have traditional marriage again called Waiwakohosagi. Mine bubu he say it's pagan but uncle Tommy he say this really good. First they sing plenty of song called 'He He He Wiu!'. They sing for two hours. Then they get all relatives of he and she who is married to enter one dingy house and all they look into pot full of taro and possum. This is called 'Wahtsiloko'. In the pot are their dead ancestors so mine uncle he tell me. Then the mother for each married woman wash her pikinini for the last time before she give away to husband. This is funny cos the grown up woman she cries as if daughter she going very far. But mine bubu he tell me and uncle Tommy that woman she cries really cos she now will do all work her pikinini did before she married.

When she finish washing her other woman she come and carry woman on her back piggy back style like Colombia it rode piggy back on back of Jumbo 747 het. The married woman she carry basket of food and 'mimis'. Her husband he rode piggy back on other man too and he too carry basket full to brim with 'mimis'. Mine uncle he tell me that 'Mimis' for husband it equal to K1,000.00.

That end of marriage. Man he now married and for first time they sleep in one house.

When we go home mine uncle he tell me he like marriage for pasim tubuna, but he hate the amount man pay to marry woman. He argue with bubu, he say that is tumbuna law, mine uncle he ask he how much he pay for grandmommy. Mine bubu he say he got no idea, maybe two arm lengths or less.

"There you see," mine uncle Tommy he say, "why pay so much now eh?"

Mine bubu he got no answer. He know uncle he trap him well like pig in pig trap. He push his hand into he basket and he take out buai, daka and lime. He throw buai and daka inside mouth and he make much noise like

pig as he chew buai and daka. He chew for very very long time. I curious so I watch he. He make funny face at me. When he satisfied, that bilinat is as good as red volcano he sigh and he answer mine uncle.

"Is why you no want marry cos you no want pay so much?" bubu he ask uncle. Uncle he no reply, he's busy reading book same as bubu he busy chewing buai. "Yes?" mine bubu he ask again and uncle he no reply. "Yes?" mine bubu he ask again.

"Yes!" mine uncle he say. He close his book and use as head rest for his head full of English word. He close eye and sleep.

"What about Margarette didi meri then?" bubu he ask again. Mine uncle he no reply. "Do I waste my eye for gris she for you?" No reply. "You marry misis then?" Still no reply. "Then you marry who then?" Mine bubu he disappointed cos uncle is dumb-founded. He continue sleep as if dead. "Oii you hear me?" mine bubu he shout.

"Soa teh keta bokouinai ghole ghelo", mine uncle he reply.

"Who will you marry then?"

"No one, if you want you marry them yourself!" mine uncle he angry too. I see his eye and I afraid. Mine female bubu she come and tell mine male bubu to shut his mouth and not pester mine uncle. She tell he that he talk married all time. Has he no shame.

"Why not you go and arrange marriage for your own relatives?" mine female bubu she tell he. "See those women in your clan, already old now and no married yet. Why you not find husband for they some where? We are tired of marrying you."

I no want tell you more what she say, but she say mine male bubu he bloody lazy fellow just like he relatives. Mine female bubu she big mouth too like mine mommy so I scared very bad mine he bubu, he'll be eaten raw by she bubu like cat it eat rat. It eat slowly. Mine bubu he sleep, he know she bubu's shouts is worser than her bite. Mine she-bubu she got tired crowss with sleeping form so she left after she almost pull he bubu's balls which hanging between legs. I laugh out loud very loud that I wake up mine uncle.

"Why you laugh loudly?" he asked me.



I point at bubu's balls, they shiny like polished table of prime minister. Mine uncle he laugh too and he wink at me. He go back to sleep. I saw didi meri she walk past and she look at me and she smile. She no come in like last time cos uncle and bubu they are asleep. Didi meri she all time watch uncle but I knows he not want to marry her not that she ugly. She is pretty like morning sunrise. But

he just like that. Mine bubu he told me he name sake he like that too. He no marry until he kick bucket. So uncle too he remain like name sake too, he tell me. It's traditional he say. Big magic true.

I look at forms they all sleeping. I lay down too. I go to sleep like they. I fed up with all this marit business.

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