



NEMESIS

Paul O'Sullivan is difficult to pin down. It's not clear exactly where he came from, or where he's headed. But he is dogged, and he got his man.

photographed by sally shorkend, at *Maverick* offices, Hyde Park, Johannesburg, 8 february 2008

The tale
of the pugnacious
Irishman
and the
crooked
police commissioner:

more than you ever wanted to know
about the dark side of South Africa

Knowing who to believe, and when, is half the battle in
understanding the story of Paul O'Sullivan, the man who helped
bring down Jackie Selebi. BY RIAN MALAN

IS IT CHAOS THEORY WHICH HOLDS THAT A butterfly flaps its wings in Tasmania and causes an enormously complex chain reaction that eventually results in a devastating hurricane on the far side of the planet? This story opens with just such an event. It takes place outside international arrivals at Johannesburg International Airport on a hot morning in March 2000. A South African Airways flight has just arrived from Germany. Passengers are edging out into the sun. Among them is a 45-year-old businessman in a black suit, carrying two suitcases. He puts them down, lights a smoke. Spots his driver approaching, steps off the curb to wave him down.

Just then, a loiterer dashes forward, grabs one of the unattended cases and runs. Black suit looks an easy victim, balding and a bit soft in the middle. He isn't. He runs the felon down, drops him with a rugby tackle. An accomplice leaps into the fray, but by now the driver is out of the car and coming towards them, so the second hoodlum flees, leaving his buddy to face the music alone. Black suit sees security guards across the road, shouts for help, but they pretend not to see. At this, black suit strips his proverbial *moer*. He gives the struggling felon "a few taps" and warns that if he doesn't come quietly, he'll get hurt for real. Then he hauls the felon to his feet, twists his arm behind his back, and frog-marches him towards justice. The driver picks up the suitcases, follows. Onlookers shrug, go on their way.

The butterfly has flapped its wings. Eight years hence, this minor event will result in an enormous scandal that reveals the outlines of a master plan to take control of the South African criminal justice system, causes mortal damage to President Thabo Mbeki, and leads ultimately to the arrest of Jackie Selebi, the nation's – in fact, the world's – top policeman. It's a story that reveals more than you want to know about the dark side of South Africa, and it all began, improbably, with a bungled petty crime at the airport.

PART TWO: THE IMPROBABLE MR O'SULLIVAN

Paul O'Sullivan is a cautious man. You send him an email inviting him to dinner in Rosebank. He fires back a response saying, sorry, I can't, try another date. Seconds later, he phones to say this is just a ruse; he can make it, but suspects that sinister forces are intercepting his email and wants to be sure they don't show up too. O'Sullivan has many enemies, and he's not keen to say too much about his survival strategies. "If I tell you what precautions I take," he says, sliding into a booth and ordering a Guinness, "I'm telling you how to defeat me."

O'Sullivan is wearing a bomber jacket and jeans

tonight, and there's a bulge on his hip that looks like a handgun. In this guise, he resembles the veteran detective sergeant in some noirish 1990s British TV crime series, but this is a man with many faces. Four days hence he'll be wearing a suit and tie, playing the polished toff at a chamber of commerce gathering. A week after that, drinking beer and chowing tripe in Soweto with black empowerment luminaries. Next afternoon, sunning himself at a Houghton poolside in the company of a hauntingly beautiful Russian who turns out to be his third wife, Irina, aged 32.

In the course of the 1990s, South Africa became one of the planet's great marijuana-exporting nations, as well as a major trans-shipment point for Europe-bound cocaine.

O'Sullivan says he's Irish, but his accent shifts chameleon-like from British midlands to hardcore Johannesburg southern suburbs and even Afrikaans. He says he visited South Africa in the 1980s but was never comfortable because of apartheid. When Mandela was freed in 1990, however, "I came screaming down here with the wife and kids." He was an electrical engineer by profession, but he'd made some sound investments and when he liquidated everything in the UK he was worth a shade over a million pounds; nice money when converted to rands at the preferential rate offered to immigrants. He bought a faux Cape Dutch mansion in Bedfordview and dabbled in property development before taking a job with Highmoon Properties.

His starting salary was R100 000 per annum, but O'Sullivan was a driven man; by the end of the decade, he'd held senior executive positions in a string of firms like Chubb or Sage Properties, and his salary had risen tenfold. That's the mundane part of his CV. O'Sullivan describes himself as the son of a "post-war colonial police officer" who taught him to pull his weight and do his duty. So he'd pull weight at the office, and then pull a second shift as a volunteer for worthy causes. He was a director of the Johannesburg Tourist Board, chairman of the inner city Community Policing Forum, director of the Tourism Business Council and founder of Johannesburg City Watch. He was the guy who persuaded sponsors to install closed-circuit cameras throughout Johannesburg's crime-blighted downtown. The guy who decided

it was an insult for the city's main police station to be named after John Vorster and organised for it to be renamed Johannesburg Central. The guy who raised R16-million to build a museum at the spot where schoolboy Hector Pietersen died in the opening minutes of the 1976 Soweto uprising.

O'Sullivan loved South Africa. He thought of it as "paradise on Earth". He liked the sun, enjoyed the company of Africans, even liked crime, if only in the sense that it provided opportunities for high adventure. He joined the police reserve in 1992, and spent thirty to forty hours a week

pulling his weight there too. He lectured at the Police Reserve College, assisted in the prosecution of white-collar swindlers, patrolled the streets as a beat cop. One night, on the East Rand, he and his partners stopped a car that had just been reported hijacked. He took three bullets in the ensuing shootout, but lived to tell the tale. One of the bad guys didn't.

Three bullets would dampen most people's enthusiasm, but not O'Sullivan's. His optimism has taken a bit of a knock in recent years, but he's still the sort of *oke* who gets a faraway look in his eyes and says, "My old man taught me that if a country is worth living in, it is worth fighting for." Or, "I firmly believe that the world's next great civilisation will rise right here in South Africa."

In pursuit of this vision, O'Sullivan flies to a tourism conference in Berlin in March 2000 representing the Soweto Tourism Development Association. He spends three days handing out glossy brochures and assuring apprehensive Europeans that no harm will befall them if they visit South Africa. Then he steps off the plane back home, and someone scales his suitcase. This does not amuse him, and there is worse to come.

"What happened," he says, "is that we arrive in the charge office and the sergeant behind the desk says, 'Ah, thanks, man, we'll take care of it from here.'" Being a part-time cop, O'Sullivan knows that the sergeant can't do anything without a statement, so he insists on making one. Then he insists on being given a case

number, or at least a cell register number. The sergeant says he can't help. By now, O'Sullivan's bones are telling him that this cop is planning to cut a deal with the thief as soon as his back is turned, so he whips out his camera, pops a flash in the sergeant's face and says, "Right. If you don't phone me in 24 hours with a case number, I'm going to make sure you get fired or locked up or both."

After that, the law takes its course and the thief goes to prison, but the experience sets O'Sullivan thinking that someone ought to do something about the gauntlet tourists have to run after their jets touch down. Their baggage is sometimes rifled or stolen. In the concourse, they're besieged by dodgy taxi drivers. Petty thieves, pickpockets and robbers lurk outside and, from what he's seen, policing is pretty slack. So he arranges a reservist transfer to the airport's border police unit, and a year or so later accepts an offer to become group executive for security at the Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa), the parastatal that manages the country's ten largest airfields. It's the perfect job for a man of his skills and inclination. He dusts off his hands and says, "Right, let's get stuck in."

PART 3: NATURE OF THE BEAST

"All international airports," says a study by criminologist Mark Gurkel, "are sites of struggle between justice and criminality." Johannesburg International (as it was in 2001) holds its head high in this regard. In the course of the 1990s, South Africa became one of the planet's great marijuana-exporting nations, as well as a major trans-shipment point for Europe-bound cocaine.

An unknown proportion of this contraband is passing through JIA, which is also a hotspot for human traffickers who fly Third Worlders into Johannesburg, kit them out with fake identity documents and ship them on to the UK, where a South African passport allows visa-free entry. Policing this zoo requires the services of 1200 people – per shift: customs officers to inspect cargo; clerks to check passports; cops and intelligence specialists to watch out for smugglers, terrorists or wanted criminals; private security guards to patrol the perimeters. In theory, it's the most tightly policed forty square kilometres in the country. In theory.

Five days after O'Sullivan starts his new job in July 2001, a truck rolls up to a perimeter gate that is supposed to be locked at all times. It isn't. There are supposed to be two guards on duty, but there's only one. He's supposed to be armed, but he isn't. Gunmen overpower him and proceed to the precious goods cargo terminal, where a Swissair plane is unloading a \$16-million consignment of cash and diamonds. The gunmen help themselves and leave without being

detected. This fiasco sets the tone. There will be five similar robberies before the year is out.

"Security was useless," says O'Sullivan. He catches guards sleeping on the job, or accepting bribes to escort illegal immigrants around passport control; customs agents being paid to overlook containers full of counterfeit goods; cops who would, for a fee, smuggle a suitcase full of hot cash or contraband through security and hand it back to you in the departure lounge. According to O'Sullivan's reports, after every shift change you see airport workers lining up at the exchange bureaux in the concourse to convert their foreign currency bribes into rands. His boss, Acsa chairman Mashudu Ramano, shares his concerns, describing airport crime as "unbearable" and backing the Irishman's efforts to fight it.

O'Sullivan has no authority over policemen or customs agents, but he and Ramano can crack the whip over Acsa's private security contractors. The largest of these is Khuselani Security, the outfit whose *slapgat* guards let the Swissair robbers through the gates in the first week of O'Sullivan's tenure. After that, the Irishman keeps an eye on Khuselani's operations, and discovers dismaying shortcomings. Guards absent from their posts. Guards so ill-trained they barely understand their standing orders. In some instances there are guards who don't exist at all: the Airports Company is being billed for their services, but when O'Sullivan makes surprise checks in the dead of night there's no one there. He starts documenting these lapses, and every time there's another one sends a letter to Khuselani's owners.

Out of it steps your proverbial fat cat – a giant Zulu, weighing at least 150 kilograms. He says to O'Sullivan, "I understand you want to alter my contract." O'Sullivan assents. The visitor seems amused. He says, "You don't know who you're dealing with."

By 5 October 2001, O'Sullivan has sent 23 such warnings and he's ready to take it to the next level: a legal letter informing Khuselani's owners that he's converting their contract from a yearly to a monthly basis and giving them thirty days to shape up or ship out.

A few days later, a giant Mercedes Benz ML glides into Acsa's parking lot. It's a so-called Yengeni Benz, one of the seventy-odd luxury cars offered at steep discounts to figures positioned to ease approval of the South African military's

purchase of some very expensive German warships. Out of it steps your proverbial fat cat – a giant Zulu, weighing at least 150 kilograms. He says to O'Sullivan, "I understand you want to alter my contract." O'Sullivan assents. The visitor seems amused. He says, "You don't know who you're dealing with." Paul O'Sullivan has arrived at the base of a steep learning curve.

PART 4: THE BATTLE OF JOBURG AIRPORT

Professor Noel Ngwenya was a comet who blazed brightly for a year or two and then vanished into the obscurity from whence he came. Some say he once taught at Rand Afrikaans University, but that could not be confirmed. He apparently spent time in Canada, and when he returned was given a seat in the senate of Mangosothu Technikon in Durban. In the late 1990s, he comes into focus as an executive at Denel's human resources division in Isando. While there he comes to realise that vast opportunities are opening up in the security field: every national key point requires protection, and the ANC government is determined to swing the business to black-owned entities. So he quits Denel and becomes chief executive of a company called Khuselani Security, which tenders in 2000 for a giant contract put out by the state-owned Airports Company.

The incumbent is Fidelity, an old-guard firm that stands little chance against a bright and shiny empowerment outfit whose shareholders include Noel's brother Jerome, an eminent lawyer and soon to be judge, and Vuyo Ndzeke,

once described by the *Mail&Guardian* as a man who could "open doors" and "take you to minister level, to premier level". Khuselani has little experience in the security field and only sixty employees, whereas the airports contract calls for 3700, but these are minor problems. The political climate favours Khuselani and it winds up winning a contract potentially worth R280-million over the next five years. Noel Ngwenya celebrates by throwing a victory bash at which the guest of honour is his friend Jacob

Sello Selebi, the recently appointed national commissioner of police.

After taking his cut, Ngwenya discovers that he has underbid on the contract and there's too little money left to do the job properly. He pressures rank and file guards to accept minimum wage and newcomers are given little or no training. "If they were short-staffed," says O'Sullivan, "they'd just go out into the street and hire anyone who fitted the uniform." Some of the guards thus dragooned are good men, but others are bent or incompetent, and their managers are "useless", in O'Sullivan's estimation. This leads, as we have seen, to an avalanche of complaints about Khuselani's performance and ultimately to a visit from the corpulent Ngwenya, who smiles and says, "You don't know who you're dealing with."

O'Sullivan registers the implied threat, but it doesn't phase him, not even when two eminent empowerment wheeler-dealers come to warn him to tread carefully. Lungi Sisulu is a son of the illustrious Walter, who spent 26 years on Robben Island with Nelson Mandela. Sisulu tells O'Sullivan that Khuselani Security is actually his baby; he founded it and laid the groundwork for the Acsa bid before moving to New York, where his wife had been appointed South Africa's consul general. On his return, he says, he discovered Ngwenya had cut him out entirely. His companion, the aforementioned Vuyo Ndzeke, says he was similarly treated and then thrown into prison – on the personal orders of Jackie Selebi, no less – when he threatened to cause a fuss. This strikes O'Sullivan as wildly implausible. The commissioner of police misusing his position to settle a business dispute? He offers Ndzeke a cup of tea, but secretly dismisses him as a nutter.

PEACE MISSION

Another of O'Sullivan's pictures, also from 1973, of him atop an armoured vehicle in Cyprus as part of British military assistance in a peace-keeping operation.



The very next morning, O'Sullivan receives a phone call saying commissioner Selebi wants to see him. Selebi is an avuncular ex-diplomat who claims to be one of President Thabo Mbeki's closest allies. Friends describe him as a charming bon vivant and raconteur. Underlings dread his temper. O'Sullivan is impressed by his uniform, a gold braid-encrusted affair that steals the show in the VIP lounge where their meeting takes place. Selebi tells O'Sullivan he's unhappy to hear that Acsa is thinking of changing its security arrangements. This is reinforced the following morning by a call from Selebi's deputy, Andre Pruis: don't touch the Khuselani contract.

O'Sullivan says, pardon me, sir, but this has nothing to do with the police. It's a dispute between Acsa and a contractor. In subsequent court papers, the police will claim that they acted pursuant to a cabinet-level re-evaluation of airport security in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. O'Sullivan counters that if this was indeed the case the order should have come from Transport Minister Dullah Omar, under whose control Acsa falls. He asks the cops to make their case in writing, but nothing materialises, so O'Sullivan, with the backing of his board, proceeds with his plan to oust Khuselani.

On 29 October, Ngwenya is formally notified that Acsa intends to revoke his contract on grounds of non-performance. Back comes a letter accusing O'Sullivan of "violating the direct instructions of the National Commissioner of Police". Acsa's lawyers respond by again asking the police chief to spell out the grounds on which he presumes to issue orders. Nothing more is heard on this score,

HARD SCHOOL

A snapshot from Paul O'Sullivan's private collection, showing him at the site of a 1973 bomb blast in Northern Ireland.

and the game moves in a new direction.

Mashudu Ramano is a Soweto-born financier who rose to prominence as general secretary of business federation Nafcoc in the early 1990s. After the fall of apartheid, he rocketed to the top of the business world, becoming chief executive officer of Nafcoc's investment vehicle, chairman of African Harvest and, in August 2000, chairman of Acsa. On 21 November 2001, this corporate star sits down in front of a tape recorder to tell an extraordinary story. "The name is Mashudu Ramano," he begins. "Over the past four months, I have had a security problem." It all began, he says, when a disgruntled former employee warned him that "the ANC is doing an investigation of Mashudu" and that "he knew people who would put bullets in my head". Such talk initially struck Ramano as absurd, but as the Khuselani dispute intensified, he began to wonder. Strange things were happening around him. Spurious salesmen made calls to his home, asking questions about his family. Armed men came piling over his garden wall one night and traded shots with his security guards, an event that left Ramano so shaken he moved into a hotel and took the precaution of making this recording.

"Some time during October," he continues, "we changed the contract of Khuselani Security, headed by a gentleman named Noel Ngwenya, who

apparently has certain relationships with certain politicians. When we cancelled the contract Noel appealed for help to the commissioner of police." Ramano notes that Selebi has approached employees with a view to getting the Khuselani decision reversed, but refuses to meet Ramano himself on the grounds that "he has instituted an investigation into my affairs and within two weeks he would have a report exposing whatever their findings are going to be". Ramano observes that these threats are "almost identical" to earlier warnings and concludes, "Perhaps there is a link between the security problems I am experiencing and the events that are now beginning to unfold." He leaves the tape with his secretary, who is instructed to release it should any harm befall him.

Five days later, policemen rock up at Ramano's hotel and haul him off to Pretoria, claiming they have discovered he is an illegal alien living in South Africa on forged identity documents. This is bizarre, given that Ramano is Soweto born and bred, but it doesn't stop police spin-doctors from leaking the story to the media. Said spin-doctors launch a simultaneous strike against O'Sullivan, using credit card and bank statements stolen from his office. These are handed to an investigative reporter at the *Mail&Guardian*, along with a briefing to the effect that they contain proof of corruption.

Reporter Evidence wa ka Ngobeni is particularly interested in a R400 000 deposit into O'Sullivan's bank account. O'Sullivan says he'd sold a tranche of shares, but Ngobeni has been told the money is a bribe from the security company angling to replace Khuselani. Ngobeni is also interested in a credit card transaction involving the purchase of a voice-stress lie detector from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation. "You impersonated a law enforcement officer here," he says. "You claimed you were with the border police." "But I am with the border police," protests O'Sullivan. He pulls out his badge. "Detective-sergeant O'Sullivan, reservist attached to the border police."

O'Sullivan's explanations notwithstanding, the *Mail&Guardian* publishes a story noting that Ramano and his security chief are facing investigation. If this is intended to intimidate them, it fails: the Acsa boys stand firm and at midnight on 30 November, Khuselani's contract is cancelled. This is a crippling blow to Ngwenya and his allies, who go to court to have the revocation overturned.

On 6 December, a red Volkswagen with tinted windows fall in behind O'Sullivan as he leaves the office. As the VW draws abreast, he says, its passenger window slides down and he sees a man in a balaclava raising a gun to take aim at him. The Irishman does a hand-brake turn and screams off in the opposite direction. He's initially willing to regard this as just another

Joburg hijacking attempt, but a month later there's a second incident in which shots are fired. There is no evidence to link these attacks to the police or Khuselani, but this doesn't stop O'Sullivan from feeling someone has declared war on him, and retaliating in kind.

His chosen weapon is a tax investigation, instigated by a tip-off to tax authorities. A raid on Khuselani's office reveals evidence of tax fraud that will eventually land Ngwenya in jail. Meanwhile, Ngwenya has the satisfaction of seeing O'Sullivan booted out of the police reserve, a move that drastically limits his room for manoeuvre. By now, O'Sullivan claims to have established that moles inside Acsa are reporting his every move to Ngwenya, so he starts investigating fellow executives for corruption, fraud and conflicts of interest. They counter with an accusation of sexual harassment and disciplinary procedures aimed at curbing his allegedly "rude and aggressive" behaviour. These developments create an atmosphere so toxic that only one end is conceivable: in January 2003 O'Sullivan is fired.

Five years later, Acsa's lawyers sit down with *Maverick* to discuss the firestorm of litigation that ensued. We find ourselves in a boardroom at Webber Wentzel, one of South Africa's largest law firms, facing a panel of six legal heavyweights. We present O'Sullivan's version of events, which rests on the assertion that key Acsa executives conspired with police chief Selebi to save Khuselani's R280-million contract. Not so, says litigator Trevor Versfeld. "If Paul O'Sullivan's conspiracy claim is taken to its ultimate, you would have expected Acsa to pull the plug on the Khuselani litigation. This didn't happen. I never was told to go easy or give them a second chance. The litigation proceeded expeditiously, and they were in fact fired."

We grant the point and move on to the circumstances surrounding O'Sullivan's dismissal. An affidavit has recently come to light in which Glenn Agliotti, the noted drug dealer, asks his pal Selebi why O'Sullivan is causing so much trouble. Selebi says, "I had him removed from the airport," or words to that effect. The police chief makes a similar claim in an affidavit of his own, saying that "O'Sullivan was relieved of his duties after I exposed his incompetence." Either way, the evidence indicates that Selebi played a leading role in the Irishman's demise.

The members of Acsa's legal team say they have no knowledge of such things; as far as they're concerned it was an "incompatibility dismissal". In July 2002, says labour specialist José Jorge, O'Sullivan and Acsa CEO Monthla Hlahla signed a memo recording their "history of conflict and mistrust" and "the need to create a more positive relationship". Both parties committed themselves to attending monthly counselling sessions mediated by a consultant, and O'Sullivan undertook to mend



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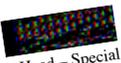
URGENT Attention Mr. Jackie Selebi – President
by e-mail to

c/o Room 6005, Hotel Mansour Eddahbi
contact@hotel-mansoureddahbi-marrakech.com

Dear President Selebi,
INVESTIGATION REGARDING 'The Scarlet Pimpernel'

Further to the documents dropped off at your hotel and distributed to various members of the Interpol fraternity, revealing your criminal activities, our investigations have revealed the following:-

1. It seems this so called 'Scarlet Pimpernel' is hell bent on, as he says, setting the record straight.
2. He alleges that you have perpetrated some wrong against him in the past and he will not rest until you are held accountable for it.
3. It appears that this 'pimpernel' has many skills which he says he has only just started to deploy and it is very likely that you will be hearing from him again and again well into the future. Its as if he was 'unstoppable'.
4. From our investigations it seems that your failure to properly explain many inconsistencies with various facts allegedly related to the media will be your undoing. According to this 'Pimpernel' he has proof that you and those associated closely with you, have been involved in a campaign against him and he intends to pursue you all to the very bitter end.
5. It seems he will leave no stone unturned in getting back at you and, accordingly, we have to advise you that it seems you may not win the war.

We'll be in touch again soon, when we hope to have more disturbing news for you.
Yours etc

Head – Special Investigator of Corruption

BRIEF PROFILE OF PAUL ROBERT O'SULLIVAN
1. **BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**
Paul Robert O'SULLIVAN is an Irish national who subsequently obtained South African citizenship and resides in Johannesburg in the United Kingdom. He was born on the 17th of November 1962 in London, UK. He is a former member of the Special Air Services (SAS) and was involved in the African continent and training the African National Congress (ANC) in the 1980s.



TOP SECRET
Paul O'SULLIVAN
[Redacted]

2. **BACKGROUND**
Paul Robert O'SULLIVAN immigrated (was deployed) to South Africa in 1990 from the United Kingdom and has since obtained South African Citizenship.

2.1 **EDUCATION**
[Redacted]

2.2 **WORK CAREER**
O'SULLIVAN is believed to be an active MI 5 Agent (O'SULLIVAN himself confirmed that he works for the "Secret Services" at a press

TOP SECRET
conference held on Friday the 17th of November 2006, who conducted Secret Service operations against the Russian Military Aviation Centre for a period of seven years. O'SULLIVAN has done extensive training in Penetration, Counter Intelligence, Counter Surveillance and Counter Terrorism.
His declared career profile is vague but alludes to the following:

2.2.1 1972
Paul O'Sullivan
[Redacted]

He was subsequently employed by the British Intelligence Services. He was also, at some stage, seconded to the United Nations Police, Special Operations Program.

TOP SECRET
[Redacted]

TOP SECRET
2.4 **LINKS WITH JOURNALISTS AND PENETRATION OF THE DSO**
Paul O'SULLIVAN by his own admission is linked to both Ivor POWELL, Rayne PLITT, Peter BEAF, Andrew LEASK and Gerrie VIEL, all from the Directorate of Special Operations (DSO). It is common cause that Ivor POWELL from the DSO is a former journalist from the Mail & Guardian, a weekly newspaper that employs Stefan BRUMMER, Stan SOLE, Nick DAVIS who have all been writing extensively on the suspected allegations against the National Commissioner of the SAPS.
It is known that Ivor POWELL has been a live-in partner of China CARTER, a one-time journalist with Independent Newspapers. POWELL is also known to have sensitive links with declared foreign intelligence operatives Rayne SPICHER (based at the US Consulate General in Cape Town), Kenneth DOUGLOVUS LUM (CIA member based at the US Embassy in Pretoria) and Hans Joachim WITTE BOTJE (member of BND and Head of Station at the German Embassy in Pretoria).

Paul O'SULLIVAN has confessed links to Stanley Times journalist B. NAIDOO. O'SULLIVAN is also a close associate of ex-investigative reporter Justice CAMERON. CAMERON is the journalist who compiled reports with O'SULLIVAN on sensitive video footage using O'SULLIVAN's access to the SAIA to portray "weakness" in Airport Security.
With regards to O'SULLIVAN's associations with the DSO it is clear that he initially presented himself as a source of Andrew LEASK and Rayne PLITT. It is not clear whether he is an agent or an employee of DSO. There is however, conclusive evidence of O'SULLIVAN's intelligence gathering activities.
O'SULLIVAN has been handling human sources, debriefing and holding these sources, conducting both electronic, physical and aerial surveillance operations and also engaged in covert communications. O'SULLIVAN has also been involved in operations. Section 201

TOP SECRET
3. **CONCLUSION**
Indications and witness protection to suspects involved in criminal activities, a function normally carried out by prosecutors.
Paul Robert O'SULLIVAN is clearly an intelligence operative, who's current employer is not declared and who has access to funds, operational tools and operational facilities. He has embedded in the DSO and has immense influence that structure. O'Sullivan has both direct and covert links to the hostile centers of the Media and is clearly on an agenda to undermine the integrity of the South African.

TOP SECRET
[Redacted]

SPY DOSSIER
Right: pages from the "top secret" document used by the South African Police Service to portray Paul O'Sullivan as a British MI5 agent. Top left: part of a taunting letter O'Sullivan sent to Selebi.

his relationship with the police. Towards the end of the year, he sent Selebi a Christmas present, but otherwise, says Jorge, "He just didn't come to the party. He was not prepared to change his ways." O'Sullivan, for his part, contends that his disruptive investigations continued until the day he was fired "and if there was an incompatibility issue, this was its root cause".

The last straw, says Jorge, was an incident on 17 January 2003, when O'Sullivan allegedly stormed into a boardroom where Hlahla was meeting an advisor to the Minister of Transport. "Actually," says Webber Wentzel senior partner Daniel le Roux, "the door was locked, so he went around outside and banged on the window. I mean, this is extreme behaviour." The distinguished guest was hauled off to the parking lot and asked to explain a scratch on O'Sullivan's R450 000 Audi. When it emerged that he was not responsible for the damage, O'Sullivan apologised and the meeting resumed. O'Sullivan claims it was all "extremely cordial", but CEO Hlahla was left feeling "undermined and humiliated". She reported the matter to the mediator, who concluded that the relationship was beyond saving and that "termination is appropriate".

And so O'Sullivan found himself on the street, his chances of landing another senior executive position fatally damaged. He filed a wrongful dismissal claim, but lost on a technicality. He appealed to the Public Protector to investigate Selebi, but his letters were ignored. He asks the police's Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) for help, but his plea fell on deaf ears. In April 2004, he convinced a judge to order the ICD to look into his complaints, but the ensuing inquiry was a cursory affair, conducted by a Scotland Yard detective who clearly failed to take O'Sullivan very seriously. By January 2005, O'Sullivan had exhausted all orthodox avenues of redress. "And that," he says, "is when the war began."

PART 5: THE IRISHMAN GOES RENEGADE

We are now entering murky territory where hard men carry guns and kill those who threaten their secrets. O'Sullivan is our guide in this netherworld, and when he talks about it, his narratives are so riddled with half-truths, ellipses and evasions that they read like a cut-up William Burroughs novel. O'Sullivan says this is as it must be: "It's called securing your sources, your assets. If you don't protect them, they get terrified and refuse to testify. Or die." All his sources are therefore nameless, and the Scorpions, who feature heavily in what follows, have been ordered to say nothing. So then, should we trust our guide?

This turns out to be an enormously interesting question. Over the years, O'Sullivan has built up a chorus of supporters who see him as a self-

sacrificing altruist who simply cannot be stopped once he gets his teeth into an investigation. "He'll work his butt off just for the honour of it," says Lungi Sisulu. "A man of the highest integrity," says former Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Patrick Corbin. Webber Wentzel partner emeritus Ronnie Napier got to know O'Sullivan while they were jointly investigating a giant fraud case in the '90s. "Paul's a serious operative with a focused and all-consuming passion for justice," he says. "God knows when he sleeps. This is a very unusual human being."

In the middle ground, battered by gales of disinformation, stands a small group of investigative reporters who have known O'Sullivan for years and rate him a reliable source. And in the opposite corner we find the police, who say the Irishman is a liar, an arsonist, a wife-beater, a foreign secret agent, mentally unstable, an arms dealer, a human trafficker, and a sexual predator besides.

As for *Maverick*, we yawned between these extremes on a daily basis. At times, we were ready to write O'Sullivan off as a fantasist, but we were always checked by the one unassailable fact on view here: the Irishman got it right. For years, he stood alone in a storm of propaganda and derision, saying, "The police chief is a crook." Nobody believed him, so he squandered millions of his own money on the quest for proof, and lo, in the end, he was vindicated. The tale of how he did it reads like a spy novel, and may in parts be one. But it certainly merits hearing.

Some time in early 2005, we are told, O'Sullivan established an operations room in his Bedfordview home. He says the walls were covered with organograms showing the overlapping structures of half a dozen Johannesburg crime syndicates, with dotted lines linking crime bosses to shadowy intermediaries who were in turn linked in unknown ways to police headquarters in Pretoria. There were also aerial photographs (he's a pilot) of places of interest. A farmhouse where drugs were stashed. A security company's sprawling operations base. A holiday complex on the Indian Ocean where Selebi and his family once spent a holiday.

The shelves in this room were laden with lever-arch files containing reports and statements, all meticulously typed by his own hand. All told, he estimates there were around 2000 names in those files. The names were on his computer too, in a law enforcement software program designed to find connections that elude human analysis. O'Sullivan also had recording devices, eavesdropping gear and guns, because he was playing a dangerous game.

If you'd been standing outside a certain strip joint in Rivonia on certain nights in early 2005, you would have seen O'Sullivan rolling up in his Audi roadster, wearing his standard

jeans and bomber jacket with pistol bulging beneath. O'Sullivan has been hanging out here, trying to get a handle on who comes in, what they talk about. He's particularly interested in the bouncers, steroid-crazed gorillas with shaven heads who do dirty work on the side, like smashing up nightclubs that decline to hire the protection services of an outfit called CNSG – Central National Security Group.

O'Sullivan has a theory. He believes CNSG owner Clint Nassif is involved in all sorts of rackets, and has police protection. Exactly how this works O'Sullivan has no idea, but he's watching and learning, making friends in dark corners. In fact, he says he's recruited two of Nassif's sidekicks as deep-cover agents, paying them out of his own pocket. O'Sullivan is building a dossier. A dossier, ultimately, on police chief Selebi, who has by now risen to global prominence as president of Interpol.

In April 2005, O'Sullivan buys a cheap pay-as-you-go cellphone, easy to ditch once it's served its purpose. He uses it to call CNSG, posing as a security consultant whose clients are interested in the firm's services. They say, come in, we'll show you around. The tour starts at JCI House, the skyscraper that houses the headquarters of Brett Kebble, billionaire financier and art patron. Kebble is CNSG's most famous client, and O'Sullivan is impressed by the work CNSG has done for him. "It was a sophisticated set-up," he says. "Skilled managers, modern control room, closed-circuit surveillance of almost everyone in the building."

On the other hand, O'Sullivan doubts that this aspect of Nassif's business is generating enough to subsidise the boss's flashy lifestyle. The Mayfair boykie has moved up in the world. He owns two properties in the northern suburbs, a posh weekend retreat at Hartebeespoort Dam, shares in various IT companies and wristwatches worth around R3-million. Nassif is also a fan of rare and expensive cars. He's been seen driving a Lamborghini, a Mercedes Benz SC65, a Porsche GT2. He seems to own an entire fleet of Hummers. Where's all the money coming from?

Some potential answers emerge in the next phase of the tour, which features a visit to CNSG's headquarters on Loveday Street. "It was like a warehouse," says O'Sullivan, "a big semi-industrial indoor car park with a suite of offices inside." Along the way, his guide is boasting about the firms' police connections. They have several legendary (some would say notorious) police murder and robbery squad veterans on the payroll. Several serving cops are moonlighting for them too. "They took me into a control room from where they ran dirty tricks and undercover ops," says O'Sullivan. "All these people tapping away at computers. They told me, 'From here we can do wiretaps, get phone records and police records'.

The message was, 'Between us and this brick wall, you can get anything you want here.'

As he leaves, the guide hands O'Sullivan a glossy brochure hyping CNSG's capabilities. In it there's a colour photograph of a young woman named Ntombi Matshoba. A caption identifies her as a director of CNSG. The name means nothing to O'Sullivan, so the guide gives him a nudge: "Keep it to yourself, but she's Jackie Selebi's mistress."

At this point in the telling, O'Sullivan's eyes widen comically and he exclaims, "Hello?" It turns out Matshoba was Selebi's secretary in the early 1990s, when he was in charge of the ANC's repatriation programme. They fell in love, had a child. Selebi still lives with his wife Ann, but he and Ntombi are often seen together in public. What on earth is the police chief's girlfriend doing in a firm that, by Sullivan's reckoning, is involved in protection rackets, money-laundering, industrial espionage and assassination?

Meanwhile, another line of investigation has thrown up the name of Glenn Agliotti, a charming glad-hander who runs an events company in Midrand. The Italian-South African has no record, but O'Sullivan has a connection at police headquarters who tells him Agliotti has an alter-ego nicknamed "The Landlord", who runs drugs. O'Sullivan pays little attention until the late winter of 2005, when a reservist he knows responds to a "robbery in progress" call on School Road, Sandton. While he's interviewing the victim, a muscular neighbour comes over, introduces himself as Glenn Agliotti. When he hears what's happened, Agliotti whips out a cellphone, dials a number and hands the receiver to the cop, who finds himself speaking to police chief Selebi. The commissioner says, "Glenn is a good friend of mine, take care of him," or words to that effect. The dumbfounded reservist hands the phone back to Agliotti, who seems very pleased with himself. He says, "Ja, Jackie's my mate. We had breakfast just this morning." Then he hands the cop his business card. It reads, "Glenn Agliotti, JCI." It's another "Hello" moment.

So now O'Sullivan's got Nassif, Agliotti, the police chief and his mistress locked in a mysterious orbit around Brett Kebble. What makes this particularly intriguing is that Kebble has become very big news in recent weeks. On 30 August 2005, the flamboyant young wheeler-dealer is booted out of his JCI and Randgold chairmanships by institutional investors who suspect they've been swindled. Forensic accountants are beavering in JCI's books, where they will shortly uncover R2-billion missing. In months to come, some will claim Kebble wanted to die rather than face the music, and was begging connections to help him stage an "assisted suicide". Others maintain he'd lost the confidence of his criminal associates, who suspected he was about to cut a deal with prosecutors and sacrifice them all to save his own neck. Whatever the truth, Kebble dies on the

night of 27 September 2005, cut down by seven bullets on his way to a dinner engagement.

Newspapers initially portray the murder as a botched hijacking, but O'Sullivan calls his underworld sources the following morning and hears a different story entirely. They tell him the hit was orchestrated by Agliotti in conjunction with John Stratton, Kebble's partner, and Nassif, whose bouncers pulled the trigger. They say Agliotti was lurking nearby when the hit went down and called Selebi on his cellphone to report its successful conclusion.

A top secret letter to Mbeki expresses it thus: "In essence, the complaint was that the National Commissioner of the SAPS, Mr. JS Selebi, was perceived to be protecting a target of the investigation."

O'Sullivan cannot remotely prove any of this, but it rings true to his ear. "I swallowed hard," he says. "I mean, put yourself in my shoes. Who do I tell?" Not the police, for sure. Nassif's operatives were all over the Kebble murder scene, tampering with evidence and chatting happily with police investigators, one of whom had a brother who worked for Nassif. Under the circumstances, O'Sullivan is pretty certain that disclosing his informers' scuttlebutt will result in bullets in the head for all concerned. So he starts a process he likens to "planting a trail of aniseed balls and letting the hounds smell them out".

In early October 2005, eight days after the murder, he sends the Scorpions "an overview of personalities around Kebble, mentioning Nassif, Agliotti, Selebi, his girlfriend and many others". He's hoping this will be enough to get the bloodhounds out, but there's no response. Nothing at all. By Christmas, O'Sullivan has come to the dismaying conclusion that Selebi is truly untouchable. He is wrong.

PART 6: ENTER THE SCORPIONS

The Directorate of Special Operations, aka The Scorpions, was established in 1999 to combat corruption and organised crime. In the years since, the 500-person "hot squad" has acquired a reputation for nailing its targets. On the other hand, it has a knack for making sure TV cameras are on hand whenever it raids a prominent

suspect, which leads to heated charges of trial by media. But this is part of the plan. The Scorpions are designed to appear as Hollywood-style super cops who drive fast cars, carry special weapons and strike unexpectedly. They are supposed to be invincible, incorruptible, deadly.

On the day of Kebble's death, they are also in deep political trouble, largely as a result of their pursuit of corruption charges against former Deputy President Jacob Zuma. The Scorpions say they are just doing their job, but Zuma supporters believe President Thabo Mbeki is using them

to eliminate "Msholoji" as a contender for the state presidency. This argument has merit, but meanwhile the growing populist clamour for the Scorpions' disbanding is providing cover for a host of other agendas. Some ANC parliamentarians are still smarting over the Scorpions' "Travelgate" case, which led to humiliating fraud convictions against 38 MPs. Western Cape militants are angry about the jailing of their hero, MP Tony Yengeni. A Durban-based cabal is furiously resisting investigation of struggle icon Mac Maharaj, and several ANC figures are anxious about the Scorpions' probe into Kebble, who pumped hundreds of millions of other people's money into eighty flimsy "joint ventures" with politically connected empowerment types.

Against this backdrop, the last thing the Scorpions need is another high-profile investigation of a senior ANC leader, which might explain why O'Sullivan's memo about Selebi has gone unanswered for nearly six months. Behind the scenes, however, trouble is brewing. The Kebble murder investigation is initially a joint police/Scorpions effort, with the rival forces sharing information and apparently pursuing clues with equal zeal. By January 2006, however, Johannesburg chief prosecutor Carin de Beer has come to suspect something is wrong somewhere. A top secret letter to Mbeki expresses it thus: "In essence, the complaint was that the National Commissioner of the SAPS, Mr. JS Selebi, was perceived to be protecting a target of the investigation." The letter goes on to state that

“analysis of phone call data” shows “suspicious” calls between Selebi and certain suspects “on the night of and after the murder”, and that Selebi has warned these suspects to watch their backs. Only at this point – on 28 March 2006 – is an investigation formally authorised.

Within days, O’Sullivan is summoned to a Sandton coffee shop to meet a fast-talking, chain-smoking Scorpions investigator named Robyn Plitt. She tells him the Scorpions are moving, and she’d like some help. O’Sullivan’s heart leaps: at last, a real investigation. “Think of my situation,” he says. “You’re out there doing your thing in the playground and all the other children are spitting and throwing stones at you and nobody’s backing you up. Then all of a sudden you’ve got 500 guys behind you. I thought, we’re on the move at last, so I dropped everything else and ramped up the speed of my investigation. I worked seven days a week, flat out, to bring all the pieces together.”

O’Sullivan says he was operating in accordance with the domino theory of organised crime investigation: you start at the very bottom, catch a small fry, force him to roll over on his boss, and so on up the rungs. In this case, the bottom is easy to plumb: O’Sullivan hears of an East Rand bar owner whose joint was trashed by CNSG boss Nassif’s bouncers when he declined to pay protection. The bar owner provided police with the bouncers’ names and closed-circuit TV footage of their rampage, but no arrests were made. O’Sullivan visits the injured party and says, “Want justice? I can help you.” The bar owner agrees to co-operate.

A second aniseed ball involves a brand-new Mercedes E55, apparently “totalled” in an accident in 2004. The car belonged to Nassif, who insisted that insurer Lloyds pay him out for his loss. According to O’Sullivan, insurance investigators knew there was something fishy about the claim but couldn’t prove anything, so Nassif walked off with a cheque for R500 000. Two years later, O’Sullivan asks the insurance assessors to reopen their file for him. They refuse. He speaks to their lawyer, who says, “I have a wife and kids,” and hangs up.

“I realised I had to start again from scratch,” says O’Sullivan, “so I went to the scene of the accident looking for tow truck operators. I went back night after night until I found a guy who helped load Nassif’s vehicle onto a flatbed. He told me the name of the flatbed driver, and that he lived somewhere in Alexandra township. I drove around Alex for days, knocking on doors. Do you know what it’s like, looking for an address in Alex? I made six or seven visits, but in the end I found this guy, and he confirmed what we’d suspected: when Nassif’s car was loaded onto that flatbed it had a flat tyre with a damaged rim, nothing else.”

O’Sullivan says he booked the driver off work, gave him a stipend and sent him to Cape Town, “where he could not be got at”. Then he went to the Scorpions with his latest aniseed ball. It subsequently emerged that Nassif took the barely damaged Merc to a panel beater and had it dropped repeatedly off a forklift. After this, the car was indeed a write-off and Nassif was able to file a fraudulent insurance claim that he would come to bitterly regret.

A third aniseed ball involves a trucker who has been doing odd jobs for Glenn Agliotti for years, delivering consignments of drugs, untaxed cigarettes and counterfeit goods. When the Scorpions’ Robyn Plitt mentions this guy’s name, it rings bells in O’Sullivan’s brain. “I realised I’d met him about ten years earlier, so I set out to find him.” The Irishman traces the trucker, wins his trust and documents every delivery he’s ever made for Agliotti. The cherry on the cake is a giant consignment of hashish and compressed marijuana, shipped to South Africa from Iran by an international drugs syndicate a year earlier. Part of the consignment is still sitting in the source’s warehouse. The rest is parked on a farm outside town.

On April 27, 2006, O’Sullivan meets with the Scorpions at an East Rand McDonalds, where he hands over the trucker and his electrifying information. Ten weeks later, South Africa wakes up to news of a R200-million hashish bust near Benoni. Beyond that point, the dominoes tumble.

Confronted with video footage of themselves trashing an East Rand pool hall and other evidence, bouncers Mikey Schultz and Nigel McGirk start co-operating. Nassif collapses when investigators tell him he’s going to prison for that fraudulent insurance claim. As for Agliotti, the Benoni hashish bust results in charges likely to earn him 15 years in jail. By the end of 2006, everyone is talking, and the investigation has moved into realms darker than anything O’Sullivan has ever dreamed of.

For more on the case against commissioner Selebi, see the accompanying article. Suffice it here to say that the evidence includes cheque stubs marked “cashcop” or “cashchief”, testimony from the banker who converted those cheques into cash, and supporting affidavits from Agliotti employee Dianne Muller, who was frequently required to count and package large amounts of wonga allegedly destined for Selebi. In one particularly damning passage, Muller describes carrying a bag containing R110 000 in cash into the boardroom where Agliotti and the commissioner are waiting. Agliotti takes the cash and pushes it across the table, saying, “Here you go, my china.”

With evidence like this, the Scorpions have no further need of O’Sullivan’s help. Indeed, court papers indicate that Scorpions investigators

The case against Jackie Selebi and the Kebble connection

It wasn't just cash for favours. It was a plot to seize control of South Africa's key law enforcement agencies, engineered by "our late comrade Brett Kebble".

ON THE MORNING OF 10 JANUARY 2008, LAWYERS acting for national commissioner of police Jackie Selebi served papers on the National Prosecuting Authority, informing it that Selebi was seeking an urgent interdict blocking his imminent arrest on corruption charges. Included was an affidavit in which Selebi portrayed himself as an innocent framed by a vendetta-bent Irishman and two murder accused eager to save their own necks. Selebi argued that the Scorpions were using this false testimony to whip up support for their drive to survive as an independent entity.

Twenty-four hours later, the NPA and its investigative arm the Scorpions tabled a 335-page response laying out their case against Selebi in fine detail. This is the tale told in those pages.

According to star witness Glenn Agliotti, it all began in December 2002, when billionaire swindler Brett Kebble learned that the Scorpions were investigating him and his dad Roger. Incensed that anyone should treat him thus, Kebble "initiated a project to get (Scorpions chief) Bulelani Ngcuka and (Safety and Security Minister) Penuell Maduna out of office". Agliotti says Kebble was also keen to topple Ngcuka's wife, Pumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who was then Minister of Energy Affairs.

Soon thereafter, Kebble started financing politicians positioned to expand his influence. Scores of ANC-aligned figures were given lucrative black empowerment deals. Kebble became a vociferous supporter of Jacob Zuma, placing his R250 000-a-month spin doctor Dominic Ntsele at Zuma's disposal. His motives were "purely selfish", says Kebble biographer Barry Sergeant. "If he could show that Zuma was the victim of a malicious, politically based smear campaign, Kebble reasoned, he might also be able to discredit the charges he and Roger faced as spurious and part of a power play within the ANC."

In the course of 2003, Kebble and his partner John Stratton buddied up to Agliotti, who was known to boast about his friendship with Selebi. "They wanted to know how much it would take to secure a relationship with Jackie, to have him in their camp," says one of Agliotti's affidavits. "I made up my own figure – a million dollars." Agliotti

suggested that Kebble start by firing his present security advisers and hiring Clint Nassif, whom he portrayed as a fellow Selebi crony. He also organised the first of several dinners where the police chief and the financier met face to face.

According to court documents, Kebble and Selebi spent the evening discussing *Trial by Media*, an allegedly Kebble-financed documentary about Zuma's martyrdom at the Scorpions' hands. The SABC declined to screen the film, but Selebi somehow laid hands on a bootleg copy. He thought the documentary was a bit tough on his friend Thabo Mbeki, but was nevertheless moved by a "very beautiful song" that portrayed Zuma as a man "smeared with ox blood and accused of eating meat he did not eat".

In early 2004, Kebble deposited R10.7-million into a slush fund, and cash started flowing to the various conspirators. The lion's share went to Nassif, who was running a dirty tricks operation that reportedly included the attempted assassination of Stephen Mildenhall, an investment analyst who'd come dangerously close to uncovering Kebble's grand swindle. (Mildenhall was shot in his Cape Town driveway in August 2005.) Agliotti helped himself too, and "more than R1.2-million" is said to have gone to Selebi, who allegedly made frequent visits to Agliotti's Midrand office to collect his cut. In return, Selebi allegedly used his influence to urge that the Scorpions either be disbanded or placed under his command.

In fairness, it should be noted that Selebi was antagonistic towards the Scorpions long before the alleged payments commenced. But there were other favours too. He allegedly showed Agliotti a top-secret National Intelligence Estimate in which his name was mentioned, and gave him a British customs "activity report" indicating that Agliotti and his drug-dealing associates were under surveillance in the UK. In June 2006, he allegedly passed on a document showing that independent investigator Paul O'Sullivan had a mole inside Nassif's organisation. As O'Sullivan says, "This was tantamount to putting out a contract on me, my source and my family."

In 2005, fugitive organised-crime figure Billy Rautenbach caught wind of Agliotti's closeness



to Selebi and asked for his help. Agliotti says Rautenbach's lawyer gave him \$40 000 in cash, \$30 000 of which was handed to Selebi, who spoke to the NPA about dropping its case against Rautenbach. Selebi is also alleged to have received R30 000 to finance his successful campaign for Interpol's presidency. "In essence," observes O'Sullivan, "the mafia would seem to have bought the world's top policeman."

Are these accusations credible, given that they come from a man trying to stay out of jail by turning state's evidence? The question was weighed by an independent panel whose report was included in the NPA filings. They found that Agliotti's charges were generally corroborated by a "golden thread" of testimony from minor players who had no incentive to lie. They were also struck by Selebi's dissimulation in key areas.

By his own account, Selebi learned in 2003 that Agliotti was telling third parties that South Africa's top cop was amenable to bribes. "One would have expected the commissioner to distance himself from Agliotti (at this point)," says the panel's report, and indeed Selebi claimed to have done so. But witness after witness told a different story: Selebi had continued to meet Agliotti in Sandton coffee shops, visit his office and accept gifts from him. Most damning of all, cellphone records showed that Agliotti was phoning the commissioner every third day, and that Selebi was returning calls at least once a week. "Until explained," said the panel, "such conduct does not seem to accord with innocence." On 29 November 2007,

the panel unanimously resolved that Selebi should face trial.

By this time, Brett Kebble was long dead, but his dream was about to come to fruition: three weeks later, in Polokwane, the ANC resolved to disband the Scorpions. Within days, moves were afoot to undo the elite unit's legacy. On 4 January, Glenn Agliotti was summoned to a Sandton hotel where he was confronted by a group that included South African Police Service crime intelligence head Mulangi Mphego and National Intelligence Agency boss Manala Manzini, who described himself as "the most powerful man in the country". Agliotti was required to sign an affidavit saying he'd lied about Selebi at the behest of the Scorpions, who were said to be engaged in a "political game" aimed at causing the demise of Zuma and Selebi "for the benefit of outside forces, namely the CIA and FBI".

These bizarre claims formed the centrepiece of Selebi's 10 January court application, but the commissioner and his lawyers had made a dumbfounding miscalculation. "They had no idea of the strength of the Scorpions' case," says a source close to the proceedings. "Once they'd read the response, they slunk out of court with their tails between their legs." The following morning, Selebi resigned as president of Interpol.

What comes next is hard to say. If Mphego and Manzini's presence in that hotel room is taken at face value, powerful forces are already committed to sabotaging Selebi's prosecution. Will anyone in government resist them? Watch this space. – *Rian Malan*

THE SWINDLER

Mining magnate Brett Kebble used other people's money to buy influence with key members of the ruling party – and police commissioner Jackie Selebi was drawn into the web.

were instructed to distance themselves from the Irishman in July 2006 on the grounds that his parallel investigation was threatening to muddy the waters. This didn't suit certain parties, who had been intercepting O'Sullivan's communications, tailing him around town and digging into his background. By November 2006, they'd come to realise that the Irishman was a block of Semtex that might blow the Scorpions to smithereens if detonated in their hands.

On 5 November 2006, O'Sullivan records a phone conversation with deputy police commissioner Andre Pruis, a suave Afrikaner with a background in counter-intelligence, one of the few old-guard police generals who survived the post-1994 purges. Pruis says he knows a spy when he sees one and O'Sullivan's day has come. "The British high commissioner is on his way right here right now," Pruis barks, "and I think you should attend the meeting. I want to know, today, what's going on here!"

Pruis is onto something, because O'Sullivan does indeed have an intelligence background. It's right there in his CV – a cryptic reference to "foreign intelligence work" during his stint with the British military in the 1970s. O'Sullivan says he can't discuss this aspect of his life, other than to say he went to places he can't name where he did things he can't talk about. But there's little doubt that he's had intelligence training. You see it in the way he drives, the cleansing rites he follows to make sure he's not followed, the psychological tactics he deploys to win the trust of informers: all classic British spycraft, straight out of a John le Carre novel. Pruis says, "I'm not a moron, Paul. I'm not a child. You run sources. You act as a handler. What is that? It's an intelligence role."

A few days later, the South African Police Service starts circulating a "top secret" document in which O'Sullivan is portrayed as "an active MI5 agent". The report claims there is "conclusive evidence" of O'Sullivan's intelligence-gathering activities. "O'Sullivan has been handling human resources, debriefing these resources, conducting electronic, physical and aerial surveillance operations and engaging in covert communications." Conclusion: O'Sullivan is engaged in "a concerted effort to undermine the law enforcement agencies of the state".

On its face, this sounds persuasive, but the underlying logic is defective. Granted, there was a point where O'Sullivan's behaviour resembled a professional spy's, but since the Scorpions took over the investigation, he has confined himself largely to harrying operations and psychological warfare. A deep-cover secret agent doesn't file lawsuits, appear on talk radio or share his gleanings with investigative reporters. He definitely does not call a press conference where he stands up in a firestorm of camera flashes and calls on Selebi

to "resign, finish and klaar". These are, beyond reasonable doubt, the acts of a man with a score to settle.

But some things lie beyond logic, especially in a country where racial suspicions lurk beneath every surface. In this context, the spy charges are a masterful counter move, because all but one of the six investigative reporters said to be O'Sullivan's pawns are white, as are all five Scorpions alleged to be part of his network. One of these pale-faced sleuths – Ivor Powell – is in turn said to be "linked" to American, British and German secret agents. In short, Selebi's henchmen are playing the race card, insinuating that the ANC is once again under attack by Third Force gremlins.

**“You’ll never set
foot in South Africa
again, not even
under a disguise. I
can beat you up to
a pulp, you coward!
Your time is running
out! VOETSEK!!!”**

– AN EMAIL SENT BY SELBY BOKABA

Such are calculated to inflame the residents of what *Sunday Times* editor Mondli Makhanya calls "Conspiracy Lane". The spy allegations make their way into the press, into private security briefings by Selebi's colleague Pruis, and ultimately onto the desk of the state president. Towards the end of November 2006, Thabo Mbeki alludes to O'Sullivan's intelligence background in a private meeting with religious leaders, "supposedly to indicate that this man was undermining our national commissioner at the behest of a foreign government", as the *Sunday Times* put it. The clerics are relieved to hear this. The president assures them he's on top of things and that there's no hard evidence against Selebi. "Trust me," he says.

Until the very end, Selebi's allies took a similar position: the charges against the police chief were the creation of "unrepentant former members of the apartheid-era murderous police force", abetted by a "failed master spy". When

Mbeki fired National Prosecuting Authority boss Vusi Pikoli, allegedly because he had "political problems" with the case against Selebi, O'Sullivan received a triumphant email from Director Selby Bokaba, a former journalist who handles communications at police HQ. "You promised the president was going to take action," says Bokaba, "and voilà, what happened was the opposite. Jackie will not be convicted for any crime. I can bet my life on it."

O'Sullivan cautions Bokaba against premature celebration and a heated email exchange ensues, with Bokaba eventually saying he "can't wait" for 16 December – the opening day of the ANC's Polokwane conference, where the ruling party is expected to pass a resolution calling for the Scorpions' immediate disbanding. "You're history," Bokaba tells the Irishman. "You'll never set foot in South Africa again, not even under a disguise. I can beat you up to a pulp, you coward! Your time is running out! VOETSEK!!!"

But it was Jackie Selebi for whom the bell tolled, not Paul O'Sullivan. In the drama's closing moments, the police chief's henchmen tried to intimidate Scorpions investigators, two of whom were arrested on absurdly flimsy charges. They also launched an urgent High Court application seeking to have Selebi's arrest warrant quashed, but these were the desperate acts of drowning men. On 1 February 2008, in a blinding blaze of klieg lights, South Africa's – indeed the world's – top cop appeared in court to face charges of corruption and defeating the ends of justice.

O'Sullivan was "overseas" when the news came through. We wanted to know how and where he'd celebrated, but he wasn't saying. We said, "Aw, c'mon, Paul. What was it? A bottle of Guinness? A case of champagne?" Our emails went unanswered. The Irishman had slipped back into no-comment mode.

IT'S A HOT SUMMER NIGHT, AND O'SULLIVAN IS saying goodbye to some friends in Soweto. We don't really know where he came from, or where he's going next. Sometimes he talks of flying to Australia to confront the saturnine John Stratton, alleged to be the mastermind behind Brett Kebble's criminal empire, and the ultimate puppeteer in his murder. On other occasions, he seems to be calling from England, but background noise suggests he's really in Cape Town. All that's certain is that he is here tonight, sitting under the stars with a beer in his hand, surrounded by men who admire him hugely.

One is Tebogo Motswai, owner of this joint, a restaurant/bar called The Rock. He says he's known O'Sullivan since the mid-1990s, when the latter was managing director of the Randburg Waterfront. He tells you how the Irishman spruced the place up, drove out the bad elements, and offered him a prime restaurant site in the



THE THUMB

Suspended national commissioner of police Jackie Selebi and members of his legal team head for the courtroom where he faced corruption charges.

rejuvenated complex. This leads to a story about O'Sullivan's pioneering efforts to get nervous whites to visit Soweto. He erected a spurious "whites only" bus stop at the Waterfront, whistled up some transport and, next thing, well-heeled honkeys were coming to Rockville to eat Tebogo's tripe (which is very good, incidentally).

The burly figure seated next to me turns out to be aeronautical engineer Zukile Nomvete, a former chairman of South African Airways. He says he met O'Sullivan in some tourism body where a senior employee had fingers in the till; the Irishman sorted the problem, and they've been friends ever since. Bra Zuki spent several years working in Dublin for Aer Lingus and acquired a liking for Irish jokes. O'Sullivan obliges with an hour-long carnival of ribaldry that leaves the gathering gasping for breath, slapping his back and offering drinks on the

house. Is this the performance that won hearts and minds in dark bars and led hard men to entrust a stranger with secrets that could have got them all murdered? It seems likely, but the Irishman doesn't volunteer details.

The charges against commissioner Selebi remain untested, but those who doubt their gravity should read the charge sheet. O'Sullivan's role is not acknowledged. He isn't even listed as a witness. But there is little doubt that his long and lonely battle for justice helped propel the Selebi case to where it stands today, and South Africa to its moment of truth. If justice is seen to be done, we might yet regain our status as a light unto nations. If not – if the prosecution is sabotaged, or key witnesses murdered – there is darkness ahead.

Paul O'Sullivan, the butterfly who precipitated this tempest, is confident that South Africa will

survive the challenge. "It's problem/solution, innit?" he says. "This is a great country. We can't let a few bad men ruin it." His only regret is that his one-man investigation has left him almost bankrupt and living temporarily in exile. Not for his own sake, he says. He just felt it was unfair to endanger his family's lives, so he moved them to the UK two years ago. He says they're all coming home as soon as it's safe.

"You know what I really want?" he says. "I want my airport job back. I want to be paid for all the years I wasn't there, and then to finish the job properly." M

Rian Malan is an old (white, reactionary) hack who has seen his share of cloak-and-dagger, but even he is taken aback by the level of intrigue in this case. Still, being paid by the word has its advantages.