

Throwing the book

Normally when you get caught out telling lies you feel a bit embarrassed. Not your columnist Ronald Suresh Roberts. He just carries on repeating them unbothered, and telling even more.

In his book *Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki*, published last year, Roberts claimed, contrary to every indication from what the President had said and written, that "Thabo Mbeki is not now, nor has he ever been, an Aids dissident". Unfortunately for Roberts, Mark Gevisser revealed a few months later in *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* that Mbeki had telephoned him in June, the month in which Roberts's book came out, to repudiate this false claim and to set the record

The Guardian's headline report on November 6, "Mbeki admits he's still an Aids dissident six years on", was "rather implausibly" made, as if Gevisser had screwed up in noting that Mbeki "wished the record to reflect that – despite his near-silence since it was initially distributed – he still held to the views expressed in 'Castro Hlongwane'".

Three days after Gevisser's biography came out, on November 7, I published a critical analysis of Roberts's book entitled *Lying and Thieving: The fraudulent scholarship of Ronald Suresh Roberts*, exposing his extensive plagiarism, fabrication and historical falsification, line by line. After reading it, Roberts's publisher cancelled the second impression of his best-selling book then about to go to print, and the book's editor Dr James Sanders judged it "the most serious case of plagiarism and literary fraud in South African literary history".

In a new chapter of the expanded edition of *Lying and Thieving* published in January, I revealed that even as he was claiming to have written *Fit to Govern* with a free hand, Roberts was writing to order, chopping and changing his manuscript on Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad's secret instructions. Roberts responded the following month, not by answering my charges, but by abusing his column space in *Empire* to smear me in terms he's repeatedly denounced as illegitimate in fair discourse and to tell more lies about me, even bringing a woman into it.

Since these smears and further lies were an obvious decoy to distract from my account of his lying hypocrisy and political whoring and they take a while to pick apart, I won't do so here; instead readers can find them refuted at www.lyingandthieving.com, where they can also download my book free.

Anthony Brink

Nuts to you, rent boy!

"Now you've really arrived," a journalist colleague told me after I was sneered at by your columnist Ronald Suresh Roberts ("Goldniggers & native assistants", Vol 1, Issue 5), who Justice Malala a few pages before correctly calls a "liar, plagiarist and illiterate".

I am always amused at the petty point scoring of Roberts, who was just as aptly summed up by Ken Owen as a "carpetbagger".

I have been watching for years how Roberts seems to lie in wait for anyone who criticises him and then attacks their ankles in print, as in his entire book *Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki*.

My "offence", it seems, was that I commented on his hypocrisy in wearing a T-shirt that implied he'd never been on the gravy train. He obviously chose to be here in South Africa, and obviously lacks the sense of irony in trying to tell this to an audience of several hundred people who actually survived apartheid and didn't arrive after it ended to become the President's hagiographer. Dude, people stopped calling T-shirts "art" in the 1970s.

It is such a pity his blatant agenda as "the President's intellectual rent boy" – as someone called him at that screening where, as an SABC apologist, he argued for its "editorial independence" without a hint of irony – is at the centre of our debate about freedom of speech. Why do we as a society have to give any credence to a man who continues to use his made-up, meaningless word "illiberals" as if he's engaged in serious debate?

Roberts is a cultural oddity that we can't stop ourselves staring at and waiting for his next absurd antics. He is South Africa's Michael Jackson. Only less interesting. Or our own Jonathan Moyo. Only less intelligent.

As General Anthony McAuliffe, who commanded the surrounded American paratroopers in the Battle of the Bulge, told the Nazi commander who asked for his surrender: Nuts!

Toby Shapshak, "An IT guy"



straight, briefing him the next day with an updated hard copy of his critique and debunk of the germ/poison model of Aids: "Castro Hlongwane, Caravans, Cats, Geese, Foot & Mouth and Statistics".

Gevisser recorded in his book accordingly: "There is no question as to the message Thabo Mbeki was delivering to me along with this document: he was now, as he had been since 1999, an Aids dissident." And obviously so: after reading "Castro Hlongwane" only an extremely stupid or childishly dishonest person would dispute that Mbeki is a dissident on Aids.

Notwithstanding this, Roberts persisted with his lie in his second column in *Empire* in December (Vol 1, Issue 2) by claiming that