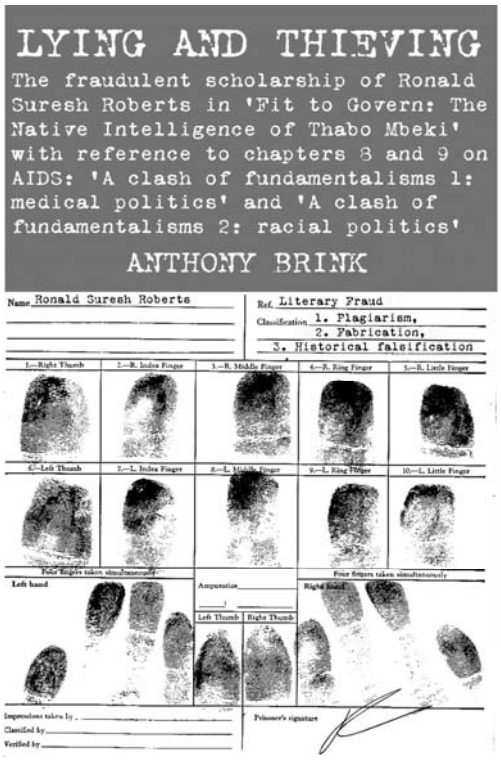
Lying and Thieving: The fraudulent scholarship of Ronald Suresh Roberts in 'Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki' with reference to chapters 8 and 9 on AIDS: 'A clash of fundamentalisms 1: medical politics' and 'A clash of fundamentalisms 2: racial politics'

Anthony Brink



In two central chapters of his best-seller *Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki* (STE, June 2007), Ronald Suresh Roberts purported to explicate Mbeki's thinking on AIDS – by far the most controversial policy issue of his Presidency. But as the back cover blurb of *Lying and Thieving* puts it:

> ***This critical analysis of chapters 8 and 9 of 'Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki' (Johannesburg: STE, 2007) demonstrates Ronald Suresh Roberts to be an extensive plagiarist, a fabricator and falsifier of history, and the author of a colossal literary fraud, and accordingly so grossly unprofessional and discreditable a writer that he's unfit to be relied upon for any purpose, not even for directions to the post office.***

And after reading the first release of *Lying and Thieving* in November 2007, both Roberts's publisher and editor agreed: STE Publishers cancelled the second print run of *Fit to Govern*, then about to go to press; and historian Dr James Sanders judged the book to be 'the most serious case of plagiarism and literary fraud in South African literary history'.

The expanded edition of *Lying and Thieving* (January 2008) includes five new chapters based on documents and information come to hand since its initial release – including how Mbeki himself moved behind the scenes to repudiate Roberts's misrepresentation of his views on

AIDS and ARVs and set the record straight, and how Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad directed and censored *Fit to Govern* in an independently initiated, misconceived, and ultimately abortive exercise in political damage control.

Lying and Thieving may be downloaded free from www.lyingandthieving.com, or ordered from the site as a 443-page paperback for R150, p&p incl., for an easier read.

The author

Anthony Brink is an advocate of the High Court of South Africa and chairman of the Treatment Information Group. He is also the author of *Debating AZT: Mbeki and the AIDS drug controversy* (Pietermaritzburg: Open books, 2001) and *The trouble with nevirapine* (Cape Town: Open books, in press); see 'Other Titles' at www.lyingandthieving.com.

Reviews

Debating AZT: Mbeki and the AIDS drug controversy

'Absolutely spectacular … superb ... the definitive refutation' **Harvey Bialy PhD, founding scientific editor, *Bio/Technology* (now *Nature Biotechnology*), and scholar in residence, Institute for Biotechnology, National Autonomous University of Mexico**

'excellent … the best, most comprehensive review on AZT currently available' **Etienne de Harven MD PhD, Emeritus Professor of Pathology, University of Toronto, Canada**

'outstanding … top dollar writing' **Hiram Caton PhD, Emeritus Professor of Politics and History, and former Head of the School of Applied Ethics, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia**

'Anthony Brink is a man of many parts: magistrate or barrister by day, musician by night … prose stylist. Above all, dedicated and fearless. … his book … is clear and crisp and his technical mastery most impressive' **Philip Johnson PhD, Emeritus Professor of Law, University of California at Berkeley, US**

'extremely courageous … I thought I was beyond shockability but [Brink's] revelations were stupefying. I think the marketing of AZT to pregnant women is an obscenity' **James P Hogan, science writer and science fiction novelist, Sligo, Ireland**

'Very good, convinced me completely' **Paul Foot**

'Deserves serious treatment. More strength to your arm' **Donald Woods**

'Absolutely amazing … a work of genius … he writes really well … I just love his one-liners' **Rian Malan**

'very nice writing … you can't really be a lawyer … I love the parallels with other past failed medical panaceas – calomel etc' **Denis Beckett**

'It must be said in Mbeki's defence that Brink … is an able lawyer who argues his case with persuasive force. … "That was the first time I became aware of this alternative viewpoint," Mbeki told me. … He was able to persuade the country's most experienced investigative journalist, Martin Welz,

of the validity of his case, so that Welz not only published a series of … articles on AIDS in his investigative magazine, noseweek, but also wrote a rapturous foreword to Brink's book on AZT' **Allister Sparks**

'A hefty blow for free speech and against the strictures of dogma … Crisp. Logical. Sometimes over the top. Bristlingly intelligent. Exhausting. Acerbic. Sometimes vicious. For anyone who wants to know what Mbeki's on about, it's all here, in a nutshell' **Yves Vanderhaeghen, deputy editor, the *Witness***

'an outstanding piece of work … enormously entertaining … expert, trenchant devastation of AZT apologists' **Neville Hodgkinson, former medical correspondent, the London *Sunday Times*, and author, *AIDS: The Failure of Contemporary Science***

'superb, extremely well researched, analyzed, written. … I could not have done a better job. … Are you a scientist or do you collaborate with one? How could you survey so many scientific publications as an attorney? … Could you publish your article or a variant of it in a medical/scientific journal? It would strengthen our case no end, if scientific papers of that quality would come from several sources, not only from Berkeley and Perth.' 'I still can't believe he wrote that. He's really a molecular biologist pretending to be a lawyer' **Peter Duesberg PhD, Professor of Molecular Biology, University of California at Berkeley, member of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America**

'wonderful … soldier on!' **George Kent PhD, Professor of Political Science, University of Hawaii, US**

'[*'AZT: A Medicine from Hell' in* Debating AZT] is a well written, lucid article for anybody to read. … your arguments about prescribing this drug are excellent . … Perhaps when more people like yourself who are not scientists come out publicly to clarify the issue on this drug, pregnant women will be spared! Your article will now be additional prescribed reading for the students in my class' **Shadrack Moephuli PhD (toxicology), senior lecturer, Department of Biochemistry, University of the Witwatersrand**

'What a good comprehensive review of the literature you performed! … During my research I noticed a lot of resistance from many different people to believe our data. In general there is resistance to the "bad news"' **Ofelia Olivero PhD, staff scientist, National Cancer Institute, US**

'Christ this is good … beautifully written … extremely accomplished … so much data. Makes the opposition's platitudes look embarrassingly hollow … Eleni and I think it's really great' **Valendar Turner MD, consultant emergency physician, Department of Health, Western Australia**

'Anthony knows more about the science of this than all the other AIDS dissidents put together.' 'No … you don't [merely review the medical literature], it's the way you write, it's the way you put it' **Eleni Papadopulos-Eleopulos MSc, biophysicist, Department of Medical Physics, Royal Perth Hospital, Perth, Western Australia**

'a masterful piece' **David Rasnick PhD, pharmaceutical biochemist and patent holder, California, US**

'amazing' **Margarette Driscoll, senior feature writer, London *Sunday Times***

'a rare combination of incisive insight, entertaining wit, profound perspicacity, all of which and a lot more being available through his racy, delicious pen. He exhibits the uncommon gift of a timely turn of phrase that truly adds spice to the intellectual content. … Mr Brink's book will have an Illichean impact likely to cure the increasingly sick HIV-AIDS establishment in particular and the medical and governmental establishments in general. His expose is both a diagnosis and a cure. … [It] will remain a classic eye-opener to the misdeeds of modern medicine for decades to come. I am also sure that Mr Illich will give his imprimatur to Mr Brink at first reading' **Manu Kothari PhD, Professor of**

Anatomy, Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College, King Edward Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, India

'Humor kan soms 'n politieke daad van die ernstigste aard wees. Niks is gevaarliker as om onaantasbare persone en instansies belaglik te maak nie. … Wees gewaarsku – die boek het 'n vreemde uitwerking op die leser. Enersyds laai dit iets ondraaglik swaar – grotesk eintlik – op jou skouers, iets waarvan jy nie meer met integriteit kan afkom nie. Andersyds moet jy nie verbaas wees as daar na dese 'n glimlag aan jou lippe kom pluk elke keer as jy die woord "AIDS expert" hoor nie. … Die kersie op die koek – wat van *Debating AZT* 'n meesterstuk maak – is die humor waarvan elke reël, asook die spasies tussenin, deurtrek is. … Brink se styl – die samespel van ligsinnige humor en dodelike erns – laat my byvoorbeeld onwillekeurig dink aan die profetiese literatuur in die *Bybel*. … Anthony Brink deins nie terug vir "lawsuits" nie. Hy [skryf] in die styl van meeslepende fiksie. Die boek is 'n taboebreker – nie in die eerste plek omdat dit die taboe-gelaaide tema van VIGS in Suid-Afrika aanvat nie – maar ook en veral omdat dit alle genre-matige grense verontagsaam. Volgens die antropoloog Mary Douglas het taboe te make met verskynsels wat dreig om gevestigde klassifikasieskemas te ontwrig. Ook die outeur van hierdie boek is in dié sin 'n taboeverskynsel: 'n advokaat uit KwaZulu-Natal wat met innemende hubris die heilige teoretiese grond van die mediese wetenskap betree. … Ek kan nie *Debating AZT* sterk genoeg aanbeveel nie – of jy nou 'n literêre ervaring wil hê, boeiende geskiedenis wil lees, meer te wete wil kom oor die VIGS-polemiek, tot teologiese en filosofiese besinning gebring wil word, of sommer net lekker wil lag. As ek die pous was (of 'n leidende VIGS-navorser) sou ek die stempel van goedkeuring op hierdie boek aangebring het: *nihil obstat*. Dit staan geskrywe. Niemand sal ooit kan sê: "Ek het nie geweet nie"' **Gerrit Brand PhD, books editor, *Die Burger***

'you are justified in sounding a warning against the long-term therapeutic use of AZT, or its use in pregnant women, because of its demonstrated toxicity and side effects. Unfortunately, the devastating effects of AZT emerged only after the final level of experiments was well underway … Your effort is a worthy one. … I hope you succeed in convincing your government not to make AZT available' **Richard Beltz PhD, Professor of Biochemistry, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, California, inventor of AZT in 1961**

The trouble with nevirapine

'an amazing job … brilliantly dissects an avoidable tragedy: how misconceptions and misunderstandings about a new medicine … caused a pointless, costly and toxic mess that still needs clearing up. An important story with lessons for us all – and readable with it' **Professor Andrew Herxheimer MB, FRCP, Emeritus Fellow of the UK Cochrane Centre, Oxford; tutor in clinical pharmacology and therapeutics at Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School, London University (ret.); advisor to the WHO; founder of *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*; co-founder of the International Society of Drug Bulletins; and co-founder of DIPEx.org**

'an expertly written piece about this very dangerous drug' **Dr Jonathan Fishbein MD, former Director of the Office for Policy in Clinical Research Operations, Division of AIDS, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health, US; and former vice president of North American Medical Services, PAREXEL International**

'Brink's meticulously researched … detailed exposé on the controversial AIDS drug … reads like a sophisticated crime novel and is full of harrowing facts you won't find anywhere else' **Christine Maggiore, founder of Alive&Well AIDS Alternatives, Los Angeles, US**