

**Marelise van der Merwe's misleading and unethical attack on Ronald and Darren Bobroff published on Fin 24 website 19 July 2020**



The question may properly be asked as to why Ms. Van der Merwe pictured above, would suddenly decide more than four months after former Ronald Bobroff and Partners Inc. employee Zenobia Venter pleaded guilty to theft from the Practice of R1 902 225.05, and was sentenced to seven years imprisonment, was now suddenly *hot news*.



Tony Beamish

Was it mere coincidence that Discovery Health's media lackey Tony Beamish (pictured above) had more than a year ago, on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2019 addressed an email to me ([click here to view](#)), commencing with the words "Dear Monsieur's Bobroff", which Beamish presumably regarded as demonstrating proficiency in french, and making reference to Venters allegation "that the alleged crimes were committed by her at the behest of Mr Darren Bobroff".

Beamish's malice and agenda to defame us never mind the facts was evidenced by his threat that "The story which I propose to write for a local publication will also hopefully be syndicated abroad, inter alia, in the Sydney Jewish Report and The Daily Telegraph".

My factual response to Beamish([click here to view](#)) supported by a letter dated 11 March 2019 ,from Mr van Staden, the Court appointed Curator to our Practice ([click here to view](#))seemed to have extinguished Beamish's appetite to pursue what he must have realised was a false trail, and which rather than defame Ronald and Darren would have the opposite effect of demonstrating that we were wholly uninvolved in Venters thefts from the Practice.

Van der Merwe's email ([click here to view](#))was preceded by a telephone call I received a few days earlier from Ms. Catherine Rice, who sweetly attempted to soft soap me into agreeing to a pod cast interview "about your life in Sydney".

She could not explain why this had suddenly become of interest to her more than four years after I had been forced to flee South Africa for fear of my life.

I immediately suspected that Discovery and its cronies had either hacked into my emails, or via the 24/7 surveillance to which Discovery have subjected us to in Sydney, had become aware of certain impending events, and that as had been the case during the previous six years during which Beamish would publish poisonous media and social media attacks on us prior to and contemporaneously with every Discovery funded court hearing against us and our Practice, as also in respect of attacks by attorney Anthony Millar on the Practice against our Law Society compliant Contingency Fee Agreements.

From the aforesaid we and our advisors realised that it was certainly no coincidence that in the weeks and days that preceded every single court hearing involving Discovery, or its proxy attorney Anthony Millar, Beamish would crank up his vitriol machine resulting in malicious and defamatory attacks on myself, Darren, our Practice and the Law Society (prior to its hijacking by Edward Nathan on behalf of Discovery in November 2015), appearing on Moneyweb and other publications which carried Moneyweb material.

Much like the canary in the mine, Discovery's Jeffrey Katz's tweets, have either heralded or acknowledged the poisonous material, and it was surely no coincidence that Katz should have swiftly tweeted the link to van der Merwe's article once she published it online.



One needs to recall that after Darren and I had inadvertently exposed Katz and his employer Discovery Health's decades of institutionalised defrauding and extortion perpetrated upon Discovery Health members who had suffered injuries in road accidents, Katz repeatedly and publicly threatened that as revenge: "no matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will destroy you all".

More recently he has boasted that "we have unlimited money and will never stop" (clearly referring to the ongoing harassment we have suffered at the instance of Discovery and its proxies even now and in Sydney).



Philiipa Farraj/Leisegang



Zenobia Venter

That neither Darren, nor I were involved in any way whatsoever in Zenobia Venters thefts from our own Practice is clearly apparent from the content of a letter sent to me by the Court appointed curator to our Practice dated 11 March 2019, and in which he states the following: " I wish to advise that Mr Beamish did not approach me in this regard. I furthermore wish to confirm that I have not made any allegation of either

you or Darren Bobroff having being involved in the alleged fraud perpetrated by Ms Z. Venter”, pictured above.

Whenever Practice employees required cheques to be written by the bookkeeping department in favour of service providers or others, the standard procedure was that the attorney and his/her secretary dealing with a particular case, were required to complete a cheque requisition form, which was to reflect the name of the client, the file number, the payee of the cheque and the amount thereof, and a copy of the service providers account was to accompany the triplicate requisition forms.

As is evident in the summons commencing High Court proceedings against Farraj (pictured above) and Venter by our Practices director Mr Stephen Bezuidenhout, Farraj/Leisegang and Venter cunningly abused the requisition procedure by fabricating accounts in the name of a fictitious Dr M M Botha, and which were submitted to the Practices bookkeeping department in hundreds of matters all of which were handled exclusively by Farraj/Leisegang and Venter.

Venter worked exclusively for Farraj/Leisegang.

The summons and particulars of claim may be viewed by [clicking here](#).

My response to Beamish’s March 2019 letter, included the letter dated 11 March 2019 sent to me by the curator clearly stating that neither Darren or I were in any way involved in Venters thefts, as also the summons against Farraj/Leisegang and Venter was referred to and attached to my response to van der Merwe, yet she deliberately ignored these vital documents, in what was an obvious agenda to ignore the true facts and to defame us irrespective of whatever was contained in my response to her mail.

If the article authored by van der Merwe up to the point dealing with Zenobia Venters thefts could be described as biased and unethical, stronger language would be appropriate to the way in which she simply ignored my response to the question in her mail to me “What implications, if any, do you believe Ms Venters guilty plea may have for your own case?”

The only case Ms. van der Merwe could be referring to was the ongoing and absurd allegations by Discovery proxy, attorney Anthony Millar and spokespersons for the National Prosecuting Authority, that Darren and I had stolen “hundreds of millions of Rands” from clients, and the even more bizarre “over a billion Rand” from clients.

Yet Ms. Van der Merwe completely ignored two letters addressed to me by Mr Johan van Staden, the court appointed curator to the Practice of Ronald Bobroff and Partners Inc., in which he repeatedly confirms that no

misappropriation claims had been made by any of the Practices clients against the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund alleging theft by Darren or I. Mr van Staden's letters may be viewed by [clicking here](#) to read the letter dated the 28th August 2018 and by [clicking here](#) to view the letter dated 4th June 2019.

The Fidelity Fund is a fund created by the Attorneys Profession to reimburse clients trust monies belonging to such clients, which were misappropriated(stolen)by their attorneys.

Not only did Ms. Van der Merwe ignore Mr van Stadens letters, which totally exonerated Darren and I from the malicious allegations of having misappropriated trust money, she also chose to ignore an email addressed to our attorney Mr John Cameron dated 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and which can be viewed by ([clicking here](#)).

In this letter the Fidelity Fund again confirmed that no claims (in respect of trust monies)whatsoever have ever been made against it by any of our Practices clients.

Ms. Van der Merwe's statement in her email , "In the interests of fair and balanced reporting, I am writing to offer you the opportunity to comment", rings hollow, given how she completely ignored any facts or documents I had provided to her in what was clearly her intention come what may to follow a premeditated agenda to serve outside interests, rather than the truth.

In yet a further demonstration of her bias or lack of any intention of observing any aspect of ethical journalism ,she published shocking allegations against us by a Mr Eric September without making any reference to such allegations in her mail to me, so as to afford me an opportunity of responding thereto.

Mr Septembers allegations had been published by reporter Msindisi Fengu in the City Press in September 2018.

Fengu like van der Merwe had never informed me that he intended publishing Septembers allegations.

I only became aware of Fengu's article, when it was forwarded to me by a colleague shortly after it was published.

I immediately wrote to Fengu informing him that September's allegation that our Practice had finalised his Road Accident Fund claim and received payment of R1.4million, which had never been paid out to him was false.

To my astonishment, Fengu's response to me included correspondence which September had received from attorney Vanessa Valente employed

by our Practice, as also from our partner Stephen Bezuidenhout, in which the both of them had informed Mr September that the Practice had never finalised any personal injury claim on his behalf against the Road Accident Fund, nor had any been money received by the Practice from the Road Accident Fund.

They informed September (who had subsequently been convicted of raping and murdering his wife) that he had furnished two contradictory versions of how his "accident" had occurred. The one version given to the police was that he had been forced to swerve off the road to avoid colliding with a cow, in which event there could be no claim against the Road Accident Fund, and the other version was that he swerved to avoid a vehicle in his path and hit a tree.

Attorneys Andrews, Podbielsky and Grimsell who had been instructed by the hospital at which September had been treated for his injuries were of the same opinion as attorneys Valente and Bezuidenhout, and which was that September's versions of how his "accident" had occurred were suspect, and that no valid Road Accident Fund claim existed. Copies of the correspondence I refer to, may be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Given that City Press is owned by the same holding company as Media 24, one would assume that Ms. Van der Merwe would have spoken with Mr Fengu, or accessed hard copy or electronic material, comprising the correspondence between Fengu and Mr van Staden, Mr Bezuidenhout and myself.

She would then obviously then have been aware that September (convicted of raping and murdering his wife), was, in addition to being a violent criminal of the worst kind, was not to be believed.

The only inference to be drawn from Ms. Van der Merwe's failure to put September's allegations to me, but to nevertheless publish these in full, is that it was always her intention to cause as much reputational harm to Darren and I as possible, and that she is clearly doing so in accordance with an ulterior agenda.

To the extent that those in control of Fin24, or more importantly its holding company Media24 are committed to ethical and honest journalism, they would surely and once they have received a letter which is to be addressed to them concerning van der Merwe's conduct, swiftly take appropriate action against her.

The media is a vital element of a free and democratic society and it wields enormous power – infinitely more so with the advent of electronic media where millions of readers can be reached at the click of a computer key.

With that power should come highly responsible and ethical conduct and total fairness towards subjects of intended publication.

Given the shocking and recent history in South Africa of fake news, brown envelope reporters and the disgraceful abuse of print and electronic media by editors, journalists and reporters for political or personal agendas, surely the time is well overdue for stringent state regulation of all editors, journalists and reporters.

There should be appropriate tertiary educational requirements for all editors, journalists and reporters prior to being permitted to enter the time honoured profession of journalism, and just as doctors and lawyers are held to rigorous professional standards, have to annually renew their practicing licenses and are accountable for misconduct and subject to being disciplined or struck off the roll, so too and in the public interest should editors, journalists and reporters be held to professional standards.

Finally can it simply be a coincidence that neither van der Merwe nor Beamish make any mention of Mr Stephen Bezuidenhout who for more than three decades was a partner in the Practice of Ronald Bobroff and partners Inc., was intimately involved in the administration of the Practice, and the initiator of the High Court proceedings against Leisegang and Venter.

My detailed response to van der Merwe appears below.

"My Ref	:	Ronald Bobroff
Your Ref	:	Marelise van der Merwe
Date	:	17 July 2020

Dear Madam

**RE: MEDIA ENQUIRY : FIN 24**

I refer to your email received by me shortly after midnight Sydney time last night and requiring a response by 14:00 South African time today – very short notice.

I received a phone call on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at approximately 19:30pm Sydney time from Catherine Rice, who requested an interview with me “about your life in Australia as well as the allegations against you in South Africa”.

I note that both you and she work for the same organisation, and would be obliged if you would confirm whether or not you are working together with regards to any article you intend publishing concerning myself.

I am intrigued by the timing of your mail, given that Venter was rightfully found guilty of extensive theft and fraud perpetrated on the Practice, during her employment by attorney Phillipa Farraj aka Leisegang on behalf of Ronald Bobroff and Partners Inc.

Given that Venters conviction was more than four months ago, I would be obliged if you would please indicate what has prompted your sudden need, and presumably that of Ms. Rice to do an article on me concerning Venter.

It has been my experience that every previous article written about my son and I, and the Practice, invariably by Discovery media lackey Mr Anthony Beamish, or others known to be closely associated with him were always linked to an impending event, and quite frankly given the plethora of invariably malicious and defamatory articles churned out by Mr Beamish and his cronies, everything is now old news.

It is important for me to inform you – although if you have read my website as you state you have done, you would by now be aware that the Court appointed curator to our Practice – Mr Johan van Staden has repeatedly stated that:

- The Practices trust account balanced to the cent – i.e. no trust funds whatsoever are missing,
- No claims of misappropriation of trust monies have been lodged against the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund by any of the Practices former clients – numbering many thousands of persons.

This fact was again confirmed directly by the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund in its email dated 15 June 2020 addressed to our attorney Mr John Cameron that “We confirm that we have no contingent claims registered against your clients” i.e. not a single one of the Practices thousands of former clients have alleged misappropriation.

Being the senior journalist you are, I sincerely hope that you will publish the documented fact that neither my son nor I misappropriated a cent of trust monies from any Practice client.

I do indeed stand by the contents of my website, and I thank you for taking the trouble to have read same.

Likewise everything on my website referring to me, my son, and his wife having to flee South Africa for fear of our lives. Nothing which has

occurred subsequently has changed the factual perceptions as to the extent of the power and influence of Discovery and its attorney on senior persons within South Africa's Law enforcement agencies.

In this regard you will of course be aware of the recent reports in the Daily Maverick, (with which I note you are also involved), concerning Edward Nathans payment to Mr Paul O'Sullivan of an amount of R3.5million.

Although members of attorneys Edward Nathan tried to soft soap the reasons for such payment, Mr. O'Sullivan is quoted in the same report stating that: "It was my contention that ENS' assistance to Dudu Myeni contributed to my unlawful arrest, detention, torture and malicious prosecution and that this has caused me physical harm and monetary damages".

As you will have noted on my website my wife's unlawful arrest on trumped up allegations was likewise brought about by Discovery's attorney ENS' George van Niekerk.

With regards to question number 3, I am unable to understand why this is anything other than an invasion of my privacy, given that it is firmly and irrevocably established by the various reports by our Practices Curator, as also the Fidelity Fund itself that: **there was absolutely no misappropriation of client trust funds whatsoever**, and therefore my personal financial circumstances with respect are no one's business.

However I remain unemployed, have received absolutely no income from my Practice since March 2016, and are most grateful for the generosity of family and friends.

With regards to all your questions relating to Venter, I trust you accept that she is a self-confessed thief and fraudster, and her dishonest attempts to exculpate herself should be regarded as being just that.

However there is a sinister background as to how she came to make these bizarre allegations.

Full details of same as also a comprehensive response to the same questions now being raised by you, will be found in my email to Mr Beamish and which is attached hereto.

You will note his threats to deliberately defame us and cause us as much harm as possible when he states: "The story which I propose to write for a local publication will also hopefully be syndicated abroad, inter alia, in the Sydney Jewish Report and The Daily Telegraph".

You will also note a letter by the Curator dated 11 March 2020 in which he states the following, and which I attach for your convenience:

"I wish to advise that Mr Beamish did not approach me in this regard. I furthermore wish to confirm that I have not made any allegation of either you or Darren having being involved in the alleged fraud perpetrated by Ms Z Venter".

I also attach a copy of the summons which was served upon attorney Farraj aka Leisegang and her secretary Ms Venter by RBP Inc, at the instance of our partner Mr Stephen Bezuidenhout setting out in detail how it is alleged that Venter and Farraj colluded in their joint endeavour to defraud the Practice.

I understand a complaint of serious unprofessional conduct has been made against Ms Farraj/Leisegang by the Curator and Mr Bezuidenhout to the Legal Practice Council.

I also understand, that despite Lt. Colonel Tobias Marais of the Hawks having being furnished by Mr Bezuidenhout and the Curator with the same information and supporting material as that referred to in the particulars of claim against Farraj, no prosecution has been instituted against her, and no reasons have to the best of my knowledge have been provided as to why this is the case.

Given that Venters allegations are obviously engineered fabrications, concocted by for and by her, same are irrelevant.

I do however wish to point out that there is "no case" against me, as was confirmed in a letter by our attorney Mr David Bayliss dated 11 May 2018, and a copy of which is attached.

I trust that I have dealt with all your queries, but would deem it a favour and in the interest of ethical and fair journalism, that you furnish me with a copy of any article you intend publishing **before** same is published for comment.

Finally I suggest you contact Mr Bezuidenhout on 083 737 4183, and the Curator Mr Johan van Staden on 082 494 7440, both of whom are in a much better position than I to tell you about the machinations of Venter and Farraj.

Sincerely,

Ronald Bobroff"

