

Nando's spices up our lives, Apple falls far from the tree

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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One of the sure-fire ways to accelerate a country's decline to failed state status is to clamp down on legitimate comment.

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa has just signed into law a bill that imposes penalties on citizens "willfully injuring the sovereignty and national interest of Zimbabwe."



Blockbusters

Thank goodness President Cyril Ramaphosa doesn't take himself that seriously. If he did, he would be sending around Bheki Cele and one or other goon squad to arrest the executives at Nando's (and their ad agency) for the latest TV ad which certainly doesn't make our country of unintended comedians look very clever.

But, being Nando's, it is very funny. It's an award show for *Mzansi's Hot Plots* and features a number of theoretical blockbusters taken straight from the headlines. We have the *Comrades in Arms. From Russia with Love* which features someone who could look like a senior ANC minister in bed with two Russian generals. Given the fact that many in the ruling party have a fascination with Moscow and would love, in the words of the Beatles, to be "back in the USSR," the gag is spot on in terms of timing.

But Ramaphosa himself is not spared in *The Buffalo Soldiers*. Everything undeclared all at once. We see two khaki-clad dudes who look like they might work at a game ranch in Limpopo, frantically stuffing cash into a leather sofa.

Sounds a bit Phala-Phala, doesn't it? But, given the absurdity of all that has happened around the saga of the US dollars hidden in our President's couch, it is sadly so spot on that it is difficult to tell where reality might end and the satire might begin.

Quick creative thinking

It's all a good giggle, though, but combines with Nando's message: It's winter, so forget about hot plots and get the special on Nando's "Hot Pot."

An Orchid to Nando's and long may you keep on keeping on in taking the mickey out of anyone and anything in your efforts to spice up our lives.

Nando's is often successful because its gags are timeous and built around the news. That takes quick creative thinking and execution, because there is nothing worse than a stale joke.

But last week, retroviral and Iwisa, the maize meal brand, set the bar so high for instantaneous marketing reaction to the news that I doubt anyone would better it.

“

[View this post on Instagram](#)

[A post shared by Donovan Goliath | CREATOR \(@donovangoliath\)](#)

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Within hours, if not minutes, of the snow beginning to fall in Joburg, they got their man, comedian Donovan Goliath, out with a cellphone, posting on TikTok that this wasn't snow, it was a very clever marketing activation by Iwisa. And, the flakes softly falling did look a bit like sprinklings of maize meal.

The gag got a lot of eyeballs on social media as well as on some mainstream websites, so it was a cost-effective way of getting Iwisa's brand noticed in a humorous way.

For lightning-fast reactions, another Orchid this week to Iwisa and retroviral.

Brand evangelism

The Holy Grail of marketing, they will tell you, is to get your consumer to become more than just a mere buyer of your product or service, it is to get them to be a "brand evangelist." This is a true "influencer" who so believes in what you sell that they will praise it without payment, through word of mouth and on social media.

For many years, I was just such a person for Apple computers. After using them in a work environment and seeing how they were years ahead of the PC people (Bill Gates's rubbish, I used to call it), I bought Macs for home use.

Like the rest of the Apple early adopters, I had to cope for many years with compatibility issues, lack of software and, Apple's biggest bugbear, the prices.

I could always justify it, though, by pointing out to my PC-using friends and family, that the quality of Apple was of orders of magnitude greater than that of anything produced by Microsoft or anyone else. This particularly applied to Apple's high-definition displays, which were perfect when you were working with imaging or design. And they last longer, too.

At home I have two iMacs – the newest is six years old (spring chicken for a Mac) and the other must be at least 15. I also have a 2012 Macbook Pro laptop. When the newer iMac and Macbook Pro started giving issues recently, I had a brief, heart attack-inducing look at the options for replacing them with new units. Together, I would not see much change from R76,000, I worked out. Sure, the new computers would have better processor sand better RAM memory cards, but they would still have the same storage.

An outfit called Repaircentric sorted out both machines and replaced the existing hard-disk drives with SSDs (Solid State Drives), which are basically big USB memory sticks and are the current solution for most new computers.

They both whizz along much faster than before (SSD-equipped machines do) and, in total, they cost a twelfth of what buying new would have.

The point is that Apple – which makes huge profits margins) – is pricing itself out of the market, especially for its own evangelists. That may be good business, but it is just nasty, in my view.

An Onion, then to Apple (ironically this is being typed on my iMac) for leaving behind the people who originally made you into the global giant you are today.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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