

Journey to Canada

Xavier Sequeira



Acknowledgments

I'm fortunate to have experienced so many nice things, met so many nice and interesting people, visited and lived in so many nice and interesting places. I have attempted to capture some of those experiences in the following pages. There are so many more events and people that I fail to remember now but who have been part of the exciting life I've lived.

Here are some of the events in my life with people I've met along the way, who for better or worse have made an impression on me. The following pages record the people, places and parties, that have made my life what it is. If we met, and your name is not here, just blame it on my memory.

This is my life, in my own words.

Chapter 1

It was a cool Sunday morning in April, 1946. My father, John Sequeira, had been in attendance at mass that Sunday. After the service wrapped up, Dad met up with the local Goan community of Iringa. The community was relatively small: about ten families or so. Today he had some special news to share: earlier that day, in the very early hours of morning, I was born at the Iringa General Hospital!

Some skeptical eyebrows met his announcement — and I don't blame them. How were his friends supposed to believe that my dad had a son on what just happened to be April 1st or April Fool's Day. April Fools pranks were taken pretty seriously at that time. But it was true and I happened to come along fairly far down the line of children in the family. As the fifth child in a family of seven, I had two older brothers, Clement and Jesuinho, and one older sister Virgilia. Eventually my dad would have two more announcements to make for the arrival of my two younger siblings, Justin and Antonetta. I had also had a brother "Xavier" who was born before me but had unfortunately got terribly ill and died at the tender age of seven, months after a bout with pneumonia on November 20th 1945. I was born four months later and was named after my brother.

Iringa was the fifth largest town in Tanzania and located in the southern highlands. The altitude was 4700 feet above sea level and approximately 300 miles from the capital of Dar-es-Salaam, located on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Temperatures ranged between 17 and 22 degrees C. In the upscale areas of the town, many homes had fireplaces; central heating was definitely out of the question. I have no memories of Iringa, but my

brother Jesuinho, better known as Jesse, told me of the wood cooking stove that my mother used, which also doubled up as a heat source that kept the house warm. This stove resembled ones we see in western movies that my father purchased from a German family returning home from the First World War. I remember seeing this stove later when it was transported to Dar-es-Salaam together with the rest of our belongings. A photo of the replica of this stove is in the photo album at the end of this book. The top songs at the time were “Let it snow, let it snow” by Vaughan Monroe and “Sentimental Journey” by Nat King Cole and hearing those songs now always bring me back to a simpler time. Back then; my dad was a talented tailor for ladies and gents alike. With the only tailoring shop in the town, there wasn’t any competition for business and he automatically landed all contracts. A big one was to sew the uniforms for all Civil Service Officers, including the post office and prisons. Business was good and my mother Luiza helped dad with sewing buttons, buttonholes, and hemming trousers and skirts. Nothing was automated in those days and the foot pedal operated my dad’s sewing machine. A good old-fashioned charcoal iron was used to press all the clothes. For transportation, dad used the good old bicycle and fruit and vegetables vendors would peddle their wares right to our doorstep.

But those happy times were not entirely without hardship. Jesse was only eight years old when he was struck with polio, while the family was on vacation in Goa. There had been no schools in Iringa at the time my older brothers had started school. They would regularly travel by bus to Dar-es-Salaam and live as boarders at the St. Joseph’s Convent school. It was hard on my mother to see Clement and Jesse leave home, especially

Jesse whose was crippled with polio and hobbled to walk. But in 1950, my dad made the serious decision to move the family to the capital city of Dar-es-Salaam. Already, Virgilia had just turned six years old and was late in enrolling to attend school. Accommodations were hard to find for a family of seven and though I was four at the time, I clearly remember the house my dad rented in the Mnazi Moja area. Here was where I had my first real memories as a kid. The roof of the house we rented would leak when it rained and the plaster from the ceiling would drop down and sometimes land on top of the mosquito nets that we slept under at night.

So Dad decided to build his own house. Since there were no such things as mortgages at the time, he used up all his savings at the time and paid cash for the complete project. He bought a plot of land in the suburb of Dar-es-Salaam called Changombe. This was roughly three miles out of town. The foundation of the house was laid in 1952 and by September of 1953; we were able to move into the house. Here, there was plenty of space for our family — and no leaky roof! Designed by Goan architect Anthony Almeida, the floor plan was about 2500 square feet and had a spacious five-bedroom layout with one bathroom and one toilet. It had a terrace that made a great place to hang out and in later years a great place to make out. As teenagers, we jammed on the roof playing electric guitars, which drove the neighbors crazy. My mother had a green thumb and planted eight coconut trees around the perimeter of the house. We had orange, guava, mango, papaya, tamarind, lime and a bimbilie tree. The bimbilie was a sour fruit that resembled a tiny cucumber and was mainly used for pickles and for enhancing curries. In one corner of the yard was a banana grove that was irrigated with the water from

the bathroom. We harvested a bunch of bananas every five weeks; each banana tree would produce only one bunch of bananas and then had to be chopped down and new shoots would pop up so a new tree could take its place. By contrast, the coconuts trees took ten years to produce fruit. It was my job to pluck and de-husk the coconuts every three months. The coconut trees were about 12 feet tall and climbing the tree was an art. You had to tie a rope in a 20-inch loop and wrap it between your feet. You then hugged the tree and climbed on rung at a time. It really didn't feel like work to me; more like fun. It took an average of twenty minutes to harvest the coconuts from each tree and I de-husked them, as we needed them. One time, I disturbed a bird's nest and the mother bird attacked me and I nearly dropped to the ground. With a yield of almost 1,200 coconuts each year, we had plenty of fruits to share with family, neighbors and friends. I always wanted to deliver coconuts to my Godmother who would always reward me with a few shillings for my trouble.

Two large Indian almond trees in front of the house provided shade and fruits called kungu in Swahili that were very tart and sour to the palate. Rose bushes and clusters of lilies, violets, Zinnia, marigolds, chrysanthemums and other tropical flowers filled up all the other space in the garden. There were other flowers that we had no idea of their English names. One I particularly remember was called "The Four O'clock Flower" that bloomed late afternoon when the sun was setting.

St. Joseph's convent was the only parish in the city and had very limited spaces in its school. The Goan community decided to build their own school to accommodate the growing number of children in the community. The committee was able to obtain temporary space from The Goan Institute Club House and

started classes in 1952 with Standard One being the very first generation of students while the Goan school building was under construction. There were only two teachers and Mrs. Machado, the principal. They turned the main dance floor of the clubhouse into our classroom. Naturally, we were thrilled to get a day off whenever the hall was booked by a club member for a wedding. One year later we had graduated to Standard Two and now there were two sets of kids in the hall. One class sat at the front of the hall while the other took up the rear.

It wasn't until 1955 that the Goan school was completed in Changombe and suddenly we had a real school building with real classrooms to sit in. There were 14 classrooms, a library, a laboratory, and a staff room along with the general office. Standard Four was the highest class and a new class was added on every year until standard 12, that was the last year of high school. Exams were prepared and corrected by the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. As class sizes increased, many teachers were recruited from India – most of them, novices straight out of teachers' training college themselves. I must say, there were some cute young ladies! We gave almost all of them nicknames and all of them were aware of their names. One of the teachers, Jocelyn was nicknamed "Suku." As kids, we played and gambled with marbles regularly and gave the name "Suku" to marbles with no flaws, cracks or chips. Jocelyn Andrade, was a good-looking lady and not much older than us, now lives in Toronto, Canada. Whenever we run into each other at social events, I still call her by her nickname. I didn't generally excel as far as the academic curriculum and studies were concerned; normally, I stood 20th in a class of 28 students. But as a student I fared well in physics and had a passion for music and automo-

biles. My dream was to be an auto mechanic and racecar driver. I consider myself lucky to have been able to achieve and fulfill both my dreams, as most people never get the chance or the opportunity to do so.

The school was built from funds raised entirely by the Goan community and on completion, there were no funds left to build any sporting facilities. A prominent Goan architect was able to get one of contractors to level a piece of the school property to build a football ground and the kids finished the job by installing the goal posts and marking the field. Most of us played barefoot and some used canvass shoes. No one had soccer boots. For uniforms, we played with shirts on one team and bare chested on the other. Yet from these poor and humble backgrounds, I am proud one of my classmates, Dominic Soares became a professional soccer player and played as an all star for the state of Goa, India.

The only mode of transportation in our home was the bicycle and together with my younger siblings, we walked the one-mile distance to school. I was an entrepreneur even as a kid as I would pluck Guava fruits from the garden and sell them to the kids in school to make enough money to buy a bottle of soda pop. I really never missed much as most of the kids I grew up with came from the same financial background as me.

I sit down and look at the success of most of my colleagues who finished high school in a place that had an inadequate library, laboratory and facilities to become professionals in high standings. From the class of 64 came two civil engineers, one Assistant Chancellor of a University in Toronto and one doctor with a fellowship in pathology. None of us in our wildest dreams ever thought we would ever leave Tanzania, the land of our birth.

Chapter 2

We were not financially well off and were not blessed with toys and fancy clothing. Receiving hand-me-downs was the norm and we were grateful for them. My brother Jesse was a wizard with the fret saw and cut intricate designs on plywood to build various gadgets and curios. My younger brother Justin watched Jesse work and picked up his skills too and built his own acoustic guitar from scratch. We got a little pocket money and managed to buy plywood, glue and mini saws for the project. I picked up old car batteries, strapped them to the back of my bicycle and took them to the scrap yard for cash. It took a whole year to build the guitar and when completed, the sound of the guitar was as good as one bought in the store.

I joined the boy scouts at the age of twelve and enjoyed six years of fun. I went to several camps and we travelled a long way from home. One camp was held at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro and another at the foot of the Uluguru mountains in Morogoro. I gained an enormous wealth of knowledge in the scouts by building rafts with empty oil drums, carrying out first aid and cooking for the group. Back in school, we started a band with Ray de Souza on the piano, Tony Gonsalves on the drums and I on the double bass. Needless to say, I made my own instrument with a Jonnie Walker Scotch Whiskey box that was made of plywood. I made the instrument by drilling a hole in the middle of the box and pulled a nylon gut string through, tied to a wooden post. The harder you pulled the string, the higher the pitch of the note. I played this instrument and got really good at

it until I graduated to a real double bass with four strings which I purchased from a good friend, Jack Demello, who had decided to retire from playing in his band. I was sixteen at the time and practiced daily playing the bass that I bought for 500 shillings. As the school band got better, we added one more musician, a black boy by the name of Godfrey Kayombo who was our classmate. We were invited twice by the Radio Tanzania by guest host Titus Simbutu to play a half hour session on Radio Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. "Joey's song" was our opening and signature tune. The popular tunes we played at the time were Venus, Never on a Sunday and Tea for Two, just to name a few.

I passed my driving test on November 22, 1963. I will always remember that day as I had just returned to the base after my test and the news of the death of J. F. Kennedy was announced on the radio. I was the only kid in the school who had a license to drive a car and the only one who owned a motorcycle.

Television was yet to arrive in Tanzania and we listened to the radio. It was considered super luxury if you had a radio in your car. If you owned a tape deck, you were rich.

As time went by, I got better on the "double bass" which was not a popular instrument. It was hard to find bass players and a local band called the "Clubmen" invited me to play in their group. I was thrilled to get asked to join the group and we played every Wednesday night at a restaurant call "Margo's." I transported the bass in the family car, a V.W. Beatle and drove to the city for the gig. I got paid 75 shillings for the evening and got two rounds of free drinks. The rest of the band members were at least 13 years senior to me, and I was called the kid. They made me order Scotch and soda for the free drink that I was entitled to and they would buy me a coke in exchange. We

played from 7 pm to 11.30 and received a plate of sandwiches at the end of the evening. We divided the money at the end of the evening and my share was 75 shillings, which was a lot of money at the time for a kid. A bottle of soda pop was 35 cents, ice cream was 50 cents and a packet of cigarettes was one shilling seventy five cents. We got some contracts to play for weddings and local Goan dances. I was privileged to play at the residences of ambassadors of various countries. I remember playing at the American Ambassador's house and the wife of the ambassador wanted us to play an hour longer. At the end of the show, she presented all the band members with a bag filled with a bottle of Scotch, Brandy and two cartons of cigarettes. I gave the booze to my dad and kept a carton of cigarettes for myself. I was seventeen and had just started the bad habit of smoking. I always gave my mother my earnings, but would hold back a little for myself. One year in December, I earned close to 1,500 Shillings and I was considered the richest kid in school. None of the teachers in school owned a car or possessed a driver's license. One science teacher owned a Vespa scooter that constantly broke down. I used to roll in school on a 500cc Triumph motorcycle with a modified exhaust pipe that made a lot of noise. I was the hero and many of the girls and guys wanted me to take them for a ride on my bike and I got a great thrill from that.

My older brother Clement was an auto mechanic. He used to repair cars at home in his spare time and I used to help him. It didn't take me long to learn the trade and get my own clients cars to fix. The Volks Wagon was my favorite car to work on. I could remove the engine in a matter of 12 minutes with the help of the local teenage boys in the neighborhood. I would replace clutch plates and brake liners, tune carburetors and set

the timing. All the kids from the neighborhood had their cycles repaired at my house. We built go-carts with automotive bearings and wheels from baby prams. There was this old man that lived behind my house whose nickname was “Kudo Gamma” who was a miser and tight with his money. I once repaired his V.W. and we negotiated on a price for the work that was to be done. When it came to settle the bill, he underpaid me with the excuse that I was a junior and should not make that kind of money. A few weeks later, I stole all four wheel covers from his car under the cover of darkness and a few days later approached him and advised him that I could acquire wheel caps from the scrap yard for a deal. I sold him his own covers two at a time and collected more money than he cheated me for.

I did not have a steady girlfriend at the time but fooled around with lots of girls and went to all the dances and parties. I could dance anything from a Waltz to a Tango but I excelled in dancing the Jive, which we then called the Rock and Roll.

We could always depend on the weather conditions and dances would be held on the terraces and the flat rooftop of homes. Dances at the club would start at 9:00 p.m. and go on to the early hours of the morning. My best friend in school was Fernando Mendes and he and I were known as troublemakers. We got blamed for mischief we didn't do, and many a parent would caution their kids not socialize with us. But, we were up to clean fun and never hurt anyone. Sure, we expected the little kids to show us respect. Fernando, Zulficar and I would take a walk to the local village “Temeka” which was a walking distance from the school and visit a bar that served cold beer. The bartender was not concerned that we were school kids and had no problem serving alcohol. We would get a large one-liter bottle

of beer called “Tusker” and a ginger ale and make three shandies. We bought three cigarettes from the local street vendor and smoked them with our glasses of beer. On our way back to school, we would rub our hands and mouth with the leaves of the lime tree to camouflage the odor of beer and cigarettes. Back in school, the girls, mainly Shamim, Cellie and Kamala would check our breath and ask us how many “elephants we killed.” “Elephants” was a reference to Tusker Beer. We would lie and boast and say that we all killed one each.

Chapter 3

In August, 1963, I was seventeen years old and received one of two scholarships from the British Council of Africa to attend an Outward Bound Mountain Course in Loitokitok, Kenya, to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. Bernard Fernandes, my classmate was the second recipient of the award. To this very day, I do not know why I was chosen from the school but feel it might be due to the fact that I was a scout and I would excel. Then, on the other hand, maybe the teachers hoped I would fall off the cliff and the mountain.

Mount Kilimanjaro lies entirely within the borders of Tanzania and Kenya with Loitokitok situated close to Kenya's border. Mount Kilimanjaro is just three degrees, or about 340 km, south of the equator and contains an example of virtually every ecosystem on earth – glacier, snowfields, deserts, alpine moorland, savannah and tropical jungle. Three distinct volcanic cones make up the mountain: Kibo 19,340 feet, Mawenzi 16,896 feet and Shira 13,000 ft. Gilman's point is considered the top of the mountain and is situated on the rim of the extinct volcano crater. Uhuru Peak is the highest point and summit of Mount Kilimanjaro and can only be reached by mountaineers. The peak was originally called Hans Meyer Point, but the name changed to Uhuru just after Tanzania's independence from Britain. The word Uhuru means freedom in Swahili.

The city of Moshi is just over 30 km from the mountain's base and is the hub and starting point for the mountain climb. Travelling on a steam engine better known today as a "Choo-Choo" train might be considered a novelty for both the young and old but back in those days it was a way of life. With our

scholarship came a third-class train ticket to travel to Moshi to attend the mountain course. The train ride took 26 hours with its umpteen numbers of stops. We sat on hard wooden benches with no cushions and no dining car in the third-class compartment. There were food vendors at every stop the train made but we lived on fruit and sandwiches that we brought from home. This was the second time I would make the same journey in the same third-class section with my companion Bernard. The first time I made the trip was when I travelled with the Boy Scout troop to camp in Moshi. Though at that time, I remember it being a lot of fun as we filled up two entire compartments with our troop of forty scouts.

We arrived at The Loitokitok Outward Bound School, based at the foot of the mountain and the altitude there was 5,445 feet. The complete course was to last 19 days and the climb to the summit would take place during the last four days of our stay. We were put in groups to create team spirit and each group was housed in a log cabin. There were ten in my group and the wakeup call was at 7.00 a.m. We had to wear tennis or canvas shoes (Nike was unheard of at the time) and shorts or bathing trunks for the morning run and it was freezing for us boys from the coast. The whole group would take a 15 minute run on man-made tracks under tall mountain trees before ending up at the camp swimming pool where we'd dip our whole body, including our heads, into the freezing pool. I used to dive in from one side of the pool, hop out the other and then run to the warmth of the cabin. I must admit you couldn't feel more fresh and awake after that dip in the pool.

Growing up, we had no concept of weather temperature. In our mind, it was "hot", "very hot", and "cold" or "very cold."

Nairobi, Kenya sat at an altitude of 5,889 feet and the temperature at night could drop to a low of 10 degrees Celsius. Loitokitok at about the same altitude as Nairobi, I guessed that the temperature in the early morning would be 15 degrees, reaching maybe 18 degrees in the daytime.

After breakfast, we were supplied with heavy army mountain boots and a heavy-duty canvas backpack. We had to fill the knapsacks with rocks to make it weigh at least thirty pounds. I cheated by putting two water canteens and later draining the water. We went on a 10 kilometers hike and were exhausted by the time we got back for lunch. A few of the lads had blisters on their feet having to break in leather boots that were used by other boys.

There were many activities at the base camp including rock climbing, abseiling and completing an obstacle course. A week later, we went on a hike to the first hut called Mawenzi at 10,196 feet. The hut is named after "Mawenzi Peak" which is at the other end of Mount Kilimanjaro. The trek took up one whole day and we camped at Mawenzi for the night before returning to base the next day. By now we were acclimatized to the altitude and prepared for the final climb that was soon to come.

A few days later we loaded our backpacks for the final ascent of the mountain. We stopped at the first Mawenzi hut for the evening and proceeded to the next stop which was natural caves the next day. You could see the vegetation change as we climbed higher on the mountain. In the savannah region, we picked up what we called "Everlasting Flowers." I have no idea what the actual botanical name is. They had beautiful pastel colors like magenta, lilac, yellow and blue and a petal texture that felt like straw. The warden and instructors braided the flowers around

their caps and I did the same. I saved that hat for many years as a memento of the trip.

All the boys had to build a bivouac, using materials found on the mountain. We were to spend the night alone while the instructors spent the night in the caves. I used twigs and tall grass to build a fire and cook my meal for the evening. It was a fantastic experience to sleep under the stars high above the clouds. I was not afraid of being alone as the next bivouac was just a stone's throw away. What bothered me was that there was talk that there was a rhino in the neighborhood. What I did not know as a kid was that most animals shy away from humans, as we are their biggest enemy. The thought of me conquering Mount Kilimanjaro was all I could think of.

The next day, we trekked to the next stop called the Third Hut. There was no vegetation to be seen at this point, only volcanic rock on the ground. This hut was built entirely of steel and corrugated iron sheets. The British Royal Air Force had transported steel beams by helicopter and conducted a project there for their air force. We had an early night and woke up at 2.00 a.m. to make the final climb to the top of the mountain

We followed our guide as we made our way along scree trails. Scree is loose broken lava rocks that resembles gravel on pavements and made it difficult to climb the mountain. For every step we took, we'd slide half a step back. It was dark and we used our flashlights to pick out the shape of our leader ahead of us on the trail. As dawn broke, we saw patches of snow and ice glitter on the ground; this was the first time I had ever seen snow. I was too tired to even enjoy and make a snow ball as I had to keep on trekking along to keep up with the leader and rest of the lads.

The air soon got thinner and breathing became a harder

task. Some lads suffered from exposure and could not carry on; they sat down and waited for the group to pick them up on their way back to base after the climb. But, I pressed on and was rewarded with a breathtaking sunrise along the way. We arrived at Gilman's point at about 8.00 a.m. that morning. Although this is the top of the mountain at an altitude of 18,933 ft., there was still the Uhuru Peak at 19,331, a place reachable only by walking along rim of the crater. Since I was a junior, I wasn't allowed to climb to the summit – but even if I was allowed, I didn't have the will or energy to carry on.

The climb back down was a breeze though, as we almost skidded down the mountain to hut number three. By the following day we'd trekked all the way to base camp and spent our last night at the camp. We were exhausted and lived on chocolate and energy food. The air was still thin and no one seemed to be in a celebratory mood even after what we achieved. It took us one and a half day to return to base camp and to a hot meal and comfortable room and bed. On our very last day, I was awarded a medal and certificate from the school. Then we bid farewell to the troop and made our way home on the train.

When I look at modern technology today and folk using their cell phones to photograph umpteen pictures at no cost, I feel sad we did not have a camera to capture the unforgettable moments and landscape of the expedition.

Chapter 4

Class of 1964 ended in December just before the Christmas vacation. As I mentioned before, we had to wait for our exam results, since our papers were sent to the United Kingdom for correction at the University of Cambridge in the U.K. Dar-es-Salaam had only one university and one technical school and you had to be a citizen of the country to get admission into the university. I didn't have any desire to go to university and the technical school didn't have any courses in Auto Mechanics, so I realized I would have to leave the country and find a school in India. It wasn't completely straightforward though – even if my parents could afford the costs and expenses involved, the government of Tanzania would have to approve foreign exchange for the remittances of boarding and tuition fees.

I got a job at the Motor Mart Corporation through my good friend Mike Kan Hai and worked under his supervision in the Renault department. Mike was an ace mechanic and I learned a lot from him. Within a few months, I was working independently on all Renault models and once had the privilege of working on a Bentley that came in for an engine repair.

The workday started at 8 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m. with a two-hour lunch break. Those days, I went home for lunch, it barely took me seven minutes to get there on my motor bike and, there, my mother had a four-course lunch ready for the family. A one-hour siesta filled out the rest of my break and then it was back to work for 2 p.m. Most people worked a six-day week but worked only half-days on Saturdays.

After work, I'd head to the sports grounds for a game of soccer or go to the Goan Club to play snooker and drink beer. I enjoyed

my job, even though I made a mere 300 shillings a month in pay. (To put this in perspective, I remember getting paid 75 shillings for performing just four hours with a band). My boss, Alex Rose, considered me a junior even though I produced and made money for the company without any supervision. I'd replace brakes and change clutch plates, tune-up engines and align wheels. I used to service cars on motor rally trails of the East African Safari especially the Renault team. My boss drove in the Tanganyika Thousand Rally and Mike Kan Hai and I would travel to different points along the route to offer service to the cars in our team.

The company had promised to give me a pay raise after six months service but management did not keep their bargain. I tendered my notice and only then was offered a raise of 200 shillings, which was almost double my pay to stay on. But I was stubborn and arrogantly turned down the offer. I told Alex that he could stuff his job since he couldn't keep his word. The white English employers took advantage and exploited Asian employees who usually kissed up to them. East Indians in general suffered from an inferiority complex. It was a sign of the times that pay scales were based on the color of your skin and not your skills and qualifications or attributes. Three different applicants for a job – one white, one brown and one black – with the same age and qualifications would end up with three different salaries for the exact same job. The black worker would get the lowest, the brown person would make eight to ten times more than the black man and the white worker would make four to five times more than his brown-skinned counterpart.

We had a big yard at home and so I decided that I would bring cars back to the house and carry out private jobs. I made three times the money I made working for Motor Mart, work-

ing half the number of hours I used to. This let me spend a lot of time at the club and I even took to deep-sea fishing. Most of my friends rarely took vacations but spent a lot of time in town mainly because trips were something we could not afford. I attended most functions organized by the club and played with the band and so I can say I enjoyed a comfortable social life.

I bought my first car, an Italian made Fiat model 500. It was a tiny four-seat vehicle with a 500cc engine located in the rear of the car. It had fantastic fuel economy and dating became easier and more fun as many women would not dare ride pillion on my motorbike. I remember backing into a parking lot and leaving the vehicle at an angle with the front sticking out. I would walk to the front of the car and lift it by holding the bumper and sliding it towards the curb. This of course was to show off when there were a few girls and even guys that were around. The curb weight of the total car was 1,100 pounds and with the engine in the rear, the front was pretty light.

One day, there was a job posted for a typewriter and office equipment technician by a company called Stationery & Office Supplies. S & O was a subsidiary of a major European company that also owned Tanganyika Standard, the only local newspaper in the country. The advertisement in the paper stated the successful applicant would be sent to Nairobi, Kenya for training. I really didn't have any desire to work on typewriters and calculators but the thought of a chance of going to Nairobi tickled my fancy. So I applied for the job and started my training on the Facit Calculator made in Sweden. I was offered 600 shillings pay a month to start, with the promise of a raise after my three-month probation. This was double the salary my last employer paid me. I watched Swedish technicians dismantle and repair the

complex machinery. The machines were strictly mechanical and built with almost 3,000 parts. One electrical motor would take the place of the hand-operated machines and the average selling price of the model CA1-13 was 4,000.00 shillings. I showed good skills during my probation and the bosses were pleased with my progress.

Meanwhile, the Barclays bank was planning on purchasing a few of these machines for many of their busy branches and we placed a machine on trial at their head office. One morning, the trial machine at the bank had jammed and none of the Swedish technicians were available to take the service call. My boss asked me to go to the bank and open the cover of the machine and pretend to work on it. The plan was to tell management of the bank that it needed a part and that would at least buy us some time until we could return to finish the job. He even let me use his brand new Ford Cortina — little did he know that I'd never driven a car with automatic transmission before.

When I got to the bank, I carefully opened the cover of the machine. As I hand-cycled the machine in reverse, I could hear the bar that jammed the machine release. I plugged in the machine and it worked like a charm. Now a lot of Goans working in the bank were intrigued looking at the machine working away at high speed. To impress them, I unplugged the machine, put my screwdriver down the middle of the machine and turned an imaginary screw. I took my time pretending to fix the machine as only white expatriates would be trained and privileged to work on such products. Finally, I plugged the machine back in and conspicuously tested it. Of course it still worked.

I returned to my workshop and my boss asked me how it went. He was surprised to learn that the machine had been “repaired”

and asked me if I had a passport. When I told him I didn't have travel papers, he told me to take the afternoon off to sort that out because I was going to Nairobi to attend the next course, scheduled for two weeks from then. I was thrilled and excited – this is what I had hoped for all along.

I got my travel papers in order and the company booked my hotel and gave me a ticket to travel by air to Nairobi. I'd never owned a suitcase before, let alone been in an airplane. I bought a new suitcase and Dad sewed me a new pair of trousers for the trip, as there was an unwritten rule of dress code that travelers should always wear a suit and tie when travelling by plane. The day I left, I could see the plane, a Fokker Friendship with twin turbo-prop engines, parked on the tarmac just a little away from the main building. As we walked to board the aircraft, I remember being extremely excited. The view at 20,000 feet above sea level was marvelous. I lucked out with clear skies and great weather for that first trip. The plane made two stopovers, one in Zanzibar, and the other in Tanga, before finally landing at Embakasi Airport in Nairobi.

I was booked at the Pan African Hotel in the city — running with the theme of this trip... I'd never stayed in a hotel in my life, either. Sleeping in a room with bedside lamps and a telephone and an ensuite bathroom may not seem like much today, but at the time, it was the definition of luxury. The icing on the cake on my arrival was getting to eat cereal (Corn Flakes) for breakfast, as this was definitely a treat for us at home. The training course was interesting and lasted five days and on the last day, we were treated to a mini safari at a game reserve just outside the city of Nairobi, where we also visited the animal orphanage in the reserve. Nairobi is the only city in the world that has a

natural game reserve just outside the city boundary and limits. I returned home with fond memories and experience of the trip. As if it couldn't get any better, upon my return, my salary was bumped to 850.00 shillings a month. The Swedish personnel were wonderful and showed no discrimination toward the non-white workers, which was both a novelty and refreshing experience. I got invited to many of their homes for parties and built up a tolerance to withstanding a lot of booze without even trying. Something I'll always remember is being introduced to Swedish schnapps called "Aquavit" which was chilled in the freezer and served as shots in little glasses.

Three months later, I was sent back to Nairobi trained on the new and sophisticated model CA2-16, just released from Sweden. This time I had more confidence staying away from home and my boss gave me the option of taking a meal allowance of seventy-five shillings for the day or eating at the hotel and charging it to the room. I chose the allowance and dined out with my friend Mario Rebello, who was studying at the Royal Technical School. With my newfound spending power I invited Mario's college friends Osborn Remedios, Navajo Dos Remedios, and a couple others to The Sequeira's bar, a popular hangout for college boys to play pool and drink beer. With beer priced at just two shillings a bottle, 75 shillings went a long way. This trip would also mark my first trip to strip bar, where I saw a naked white woman's breasts as she danced around on stage. The girls still wore their 'G' strings and were not as scanty as what we might see in Toronto in 2009, but you wouldn't ever hear me complain back then. I was enjoying the new trade and job and had no intentions of going back to the automobile shop.

Chapter 5

One of the Swedish expatriates based at the Tanga branch was reaching the end of his contract and had to return home to Sweden. My boss asked me if I would like to move to Tanga and work as a branch manager. I was reluctant to do this as I was still very young and felt intimidated to be in charge of a major venture. But most of all, I had a girlfriend I was involved with and I wasn't thrilled with the idea of leaving her behind. I met my girlfriend (let's call her Suzy) at one of the terrace parties and oh boy! She was a great dancer. But she was very possessive and we wound up fighting after every dance. When I told her that I might have to move to Tanga, all hell broke loose and somehow I felt it might be a good thing for me to move away. I used to jam with one of the American attaché daughters, Donna and her friend. Donna played the piano and her friend played the flute. On one occasion I brought Donna to the party. Once again, Suzy did not approve of my friendship with Donna. In a nutshell, I was having a ball of a time in Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga did not look so exciting.

I talked to my folks, and my mother was not too keen on the idea of me leaving home, even though Tanga was only 220 miles away. My boss asked me to visit the branch anyway, look around, and then make a decision. So once again, I travelled by plane (this time with my boss) and was met in Tanga by Karl Holmdhal, who was running the show as the branch manager. The branch had four staff members, one technician, two salesmen and one secretary. I was barely 20 years old and the secretary had to be at least 36 years old. Karl took us to lunch at

the yacht club and later went for coffee at his home as we had a two-hour lunch break and we were booked on the evening flight back to Dar-es-Salaam. I saw the company house that was located overlooking the Indian Ocean that I would live in and the new car that was just ordered for the branch. My pay would double up with a lot of perks that would accompany the position; I would get an expense account and a free telephone in the house. I felt I would like to give Tanga a chance, and if it did not workout, I could always go back to Dar-es-Salaam.

I accepted the position and got to live in the company house situated in the prime residential area of the town called Nguvu-mail. It was a four-bed room bungalow with a sunken bathtub, fully furnished, with an awesome view of the ocean. All I had to provide was my own linen and crockery, which I was happy to oblige. There was a phone in the house but, sadly, none of my Goan friends had phones in their homes. I had a servant who lived in a separate set of servant quarters to one side of the house. Club fees at the Goan Gymkhana and a membership to the local Yacht Club was picked up by my company as part of what they called then a “representation allowance.” Companies would normally shell-out these expenses, as a lot of business was conducted over bars and pool tables and especially golf clubs. Also, with the new job was a brand new car: a Ford Tanus 12M that I could use for work and pleasure combined. My new salary was bumped to 2,300 shillings a month and, on top of this, there was an expense account with which to entertain my business clients and associates. Just like that, I was living the life of a lord and was the envy of the local Goans. In all honesty, the only reason I was given the position was because there were no technicians trained on the new Facit calculator and the branch

could not afford two people in management positions in a little town. But I supposed it all worked out to my advantage in the end.

Zulema, my secretary was multitasked. She ran the shop, kept the accounts, balanced petty cash, answered the phones, and brought my opened mail over to my desk for me. I was so naïve; I had to hide my lack of knowledge and management experience from the staff as best I could. On my lunch hour, I'd take home any letter that needed to be answered and would practice dictating the letter by heart. Later in the afternoon, I'd orally dictate the letter back to Zulema. As time went by, I got better and mastered the style of dictating without having to practice first. I had employed a wonderful and talented servant called Sebastian who was an awesome cook. He had previously worked for a Goan family who taught him how to prepare Sorpotel, Xacuti and various other Goan dishes. I called him Bostioa, which stood for Sebastian in Konkani and later all my friends did the same. When I invited people for dinner, all he would ask me if the guests were white or Goan and spiced the food accordingly.

A typical day would start with Bostioa waking me with a cup of tea, stirred with milk and sugar by my bedside. After tea, I'd take a shower, while Bostioa would start on breakfast, which usually consisted of one soft-boiled egg and toast. My shoes were polished and the car would get a wipe down. After my tool bag and briefcase were put in the car, I'd set off to the office by

8 a.m. After a brief sales meeting, the salesmen took off and I dispatched the service calls. At ten o'clock, I'd meet Nico Pinto and Sonny Vaz at the local coffee shop for samosas, bajias, or pakoras, as they are now known with Indian tea or coffee.

We tried to meet regularly but all of us had to service our customers in the town and around the suburbs. Still, if a morning meeting didn't work, we'd try to catch up at the club later for a beer before we headed home for our meal and a nap. We were all single and unattached, had cushy jobs and were living like lords. Sunny was an avid gambler and liked playing Rummy and Flush (also known as three card brag) for money. Nico and myself were introduced to the game and when there was not much else to do, we played cards till the early hours of the morning.

Nico was 5'11" tall and weighed 290 lbs., while Sunny was smaller and lighter at 5'3" and weighed 95 lbs. I was 5'6" and weighed 140 pounds. When we walked into the Goan club together, we were described the big, the small, and the tiny. Both Nico and Sunny were ten and eleven years my senior and I was still the kid on the block. Sonny's father and brother were great hunters and Sunny owned several guns. The most powerful gun was a 0.375 automatic rifle, followed by a twelve-bore double barrel shot gun and a 0.22 Hornet rifle. Unlike a regular 0.22 rifle, the Hornet had a bullet with a large powder charge and a firing range of 500 yards. However the gun was not accurate for distances of over two hundred yards as the small and light slug tended to drift with the wind. Pretty often on a Saturday afternoon, Sunny and I would drive 30 miles from the city and into the sisal estates to hunt for small game. We never came home without shooting a deer, for there were plenty of Impala, Dik-Dik or Guinea fowls for a barbecue soon after we returned. My cook Bostioa would skin the animal and there would be plenty of meat for grilled steaks and kebabs or even a mean curry.

Tanga was the second largest town in Tanzania and the banks were run almost entirely by Goans. I received my salary through

the Barclay Bank and had my office petty cash reimbursement cheque deposited to my personal account. The young ladies working in the bank monitored my account and it didn't take too long for many of the town folk to know my salary. However they got an inflated figure, as they were not aware of the petty cash deposit. Pretty soon, I came to be regarded as the most eligible bachelor in town. No one actually believed my age due to the fact I was held a senior position with a foreign-based company. I was barely 20 years old and unfortunately was being hit on by much older women. Tanga also had the second largest Goan population and was known by the men in Dar-es-Salaam to be a haven for pretty ladies. In fact, many of the men from Dar-es-Salaam found their way to Tanga to look for potential suitors.

There were many women that came into my life during that time and, out of respect for them, all names mentioned in my memoirs are fictitious. I was delivering a brand new top-of-the-line electric typewriter "Adler model 21D" to a major company. The executive secretary Norma was now the only person with an electric machine in the office. It may not seem like much now, but 95 per cent of typewriters used in the city were manual. It was customary to set up and demonstrate the features of the machine and it took me one whole hour to do so. Some gentle smiles and a gentle brush against her breasts lent me confidence to ask her out for drinks that evening. We decided to go to The Twiga restaurant for a drink. By the next day, almost everyone in town knew that I had had a date with Norma.

Drinking and driving laws certainly existed at the time, but they were almost never monitored and enforced by police. You more or less had to stagger and be completely inebriated to be

arrested. So after a few drinks, we thought nothing of deciding to go out for a drive. We landed by the oceanfront to take in the sounds of the waves breaking on the shore and, just like that, we were making out. Our friendship blossomed and our relationship soon became serious – which worried me, as I was not ready to have a steady girlfriend. There was a lot of action in the town and I had no plans just yet to being tied down to just one girl.

Chapter 6

Part of the perks of my job was that my company would pay all my social club membership fees that I chose to join. I joined the Tanga yacht club, the Tanga gymkhana and the Tanganyika Motor Sports Club. There was not much to do in this town other than go fishing and drinking in the bar and clubs. I frequented the gymkhana, as the membership here was predominantly Goan while mainly businessmen patronized the yacht club. Between Nico, Sunny and me, we chose to drink at the Goan Gymkhana and closed the club bar every evening and then scouted around town for a bite to eat. We usually ended at this “Hole-in-the-wall” restaurant that was open till 3 a.m. and famous for their Chicken Tika.

Having a lot of disposal income, I joined the go-karts races that were held once a month by the Motor Sports Club. The competition was held in a street square that would be closed by the police for the event. Only six members owned their personal go-carts as it was an expensive sport and I had to rent a cart for the meet. A set of retread tires would last only one afternoon and cost 200 shillings for four tires. Don't seem much today, but a beer in the club then cost two shillings and a pack of cigarettes cost two and a half shillings.

I became very serious and joined the local auto rallies organized by the Tanga Motor Sports Club. I took part in many rallies including the Tanga 300, the Tanganyika 1000, the Kili-manjaro 500, and the Rift Valley rally held in Nakuru, Kenya. Here the Japanese Auto Company sponsored me, Isuzu motors and I was driving the Isuzu Ballet. I did not excel and did not win many rallies and eventually retired from racing when I

rolled my car several times on the Nakuru Escarpment. Being the only Goan in the races, I developed a small Goan fan club that was mainly the Tanga youth. I met quite a few of the kids now grown men and living in Toronto that remember cheering for me at the races when they were kids. It was hard to get sponsors in the auto sport industry as this was predominately a white man's sport and to the best of my knowledge, no other Goan in Tanzania got involved.

I was now enjoying life with a high social standing and mingled with many of the successful businessmen and families. The Suchuck family were big business magnets and landlords and I got to be very friendly with their son Hatim, who just happened to be as old as myself. We liked to gamble playing cards, both "Rummy" and "Flush" and many a time we would go out to their holiday house in a little village high in the Usambara Mountains called Lushoto. They owned a beautiful mansion that had wooden walls, wainscoting, Cornish moldings, chandeliers and a fireplace. The village was at an altitude of 4,600 feet and you definitely needed to wear a light jacket or a sweater. The house was surrounded with tall eucalyptus trees and the air was filled with the aroma and fresh cool eucalyptus. The cool air and smell of eucalyptus made it seem like someone hung a big air refresher out in the yard. I would pick a big bunch of eucalyptus leaves and throw them in the back of my car. The hot sun on the coast would dehydrate and extract the oils from the leaves and fill the car with the sweet scent. We had no concept of temperatures and I would estimate the temperatures to be in the mid teens. On a few occasions, I was privy to use the house for my personal use for the weekend and took my favorite squeezebox with me for a romantic weekend. The huge mansion that did not have

any heating facilities other than fire places in the hall and master bedroom. The caretaker got a good fire going in the parlor while we cuddled and sipped 'A Five Star Beehive Brandy' which was the most popular brandy at the time. In the morning, the caretaker would prepare breakfast of fresh free-range eggs from the chicken coop and boiled coffee with parathas.

I turned 21 in 1967 and my older sister got married on my 21st birthday. I was best man at the wedding. The United States of America started the Peace Corp program and Tanzania was privileged to be recipient of many American kids that found their calling to help and share their expertise in Tanzania. At about this same time, the Scandinavian countries also started a similar program called S.V.S.O. which stood for Scandinavian Volunteer Services Overseas who also sent many of their youth to Tanzania to help the Tanzania families in the villages and worked for a small allowance and accommodation only. I met many Americans and Danish kids and fell in love with a Danish girl from Copenhagen called Ingeborge Poulsen, who worked in a village called Korogwe. Ingeborge was a teacher and lived with the native people in a thatched roof house. She received a small salary and part of their training was to live with the people and their environment. Korogwe was approximately 60 miles from Tanga, which is the second largest city in Tanzania. I would pick her every Friday to spend the weekend with me in the city. Norma did not approve of my friendship with Ingeborge, but having an 'Mzungu Bibi' (white) girl was really a big deal. After all Ingeborge was just a friend to Norma and me had no reason to worry. That is my story and I am sticking to it. Through Ingeborge, I met many Scandinavians who I must admit were very warm and friendly people. They showed no

negative feeling towards the minorities and treated the Asians and Africans with dignity. I got very close to Ingeborge and was devastated when her contract expired and she had to return home. We promised to keep in touch and never in my wildest dreams did I ever believe that I would ever see her again or ever leave Tanzania for that matter.

Sunny Vaz was a district manager of National Insurance Company and was based in Moshi, a town at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. He was posted in Tanga and after the lease on his house ran out, he moved in with me for three months. Sunny was 5 foot three inches and weighed 95 pounds. He owned several guns and his most powerful rifle was a Remington BSA .375 which was 5 feet and almost as tall as him. This gun was lethal and powerful enough to bring down a full-grown elephant. We laughed at him, as no one would believe that he had killed two elephants with tusks weighing an average of 115 pounds each. Thanks to Sunny, who took me on hunting trips, I had the privilege to shoot an elephant, a Zebra, Impala, Deer, Guinea Fowls and "Wilder beasts" or Gnu as they are called in the west. There was a tremendous rush of adrenalin while shooting the elephant but, after you see this big creature drop to the ground with a single bullet to the side of the head, a great amount of sadness followed and it took me a long time to get over it. The kill was not a matter of sport as the carcass of the animal was used in full. We sent the four legs to the taxidermist to be made into stools and the ears as rugs. The tusks were sold for ivory and the hair on the tail was used to make ornamental bangles as good luck charms. The natives enjoyed the meat and there was enough to feed a whole village for a few days. One might ask today if this was necessary, but there were strict rules to the hunt. The

government had to cull the animals and would issue a license to shoot the animals in a controlled game area. If the animals threatened livestock or crops, they would have to be brought down. There were designated areas to hunt and you were only allowed to shoot the male. You were in big trouble if you shot a female of any species except for rabbits and birds. Then there were times Sunny and I would sleep under a huge Acacia tree a few miles out of town just before dusk and wait for the Green pigeons to roost. As they perched, Sunny would drop them one by one and bring home enough birds for a meal and some for the servant and his family. I really have to say that we never killed for fun or sport but only for the trophies and meat. Yes, there was just the one occasion when I shot a monkey for fun. Can't say I am proud now or even then, as I felt terrible when I picked the tiny monkey that weighed about five pounds. When I held its hands, it was just like holding a little baby's hand; soft, tender and gentle. Blood oozed down the side of the face and it looked so human. I felt so disgusted and ashamed of myself and could not sleep for a few days. I had vowed I would never kill another animal again and kept my word since then.

Tanga was the capital of Sisal industry and surrounded by Sisal estates. The average size of a plantation would be 15 square kilometers. The Sisal plant looked like the head of a pineapple but only 10 feet tall on an average. Many Goans worked and managed these farms and all of them received company houses for accommodation complete with servants and all utilities. If you ever visited people on the farms, you would be lucky to leave without having a meal and a few drinks. They were very lonely and longed for company and would force you to stay and spend the night, as life on the farm could be very boring. I

remember one family keeping me for the weekend and letting me go home on Monday morning. Most of them kept chickens and sometimes goats and pigs. It was not uncommon for them to slaughter a chicken when a guest arrived. Sometimes a card game would be organized at the farm and a few of the city boys would get invited and we would play cards round the clock with great food and lots of booze to wash it down.

Chapter 7

The company opened a new branch in the city of Mwanza and the manager resigned not very long after the office was established. I was asked to take over the branch and much to my dismay, I had to leave Tanga and the good times and head off to Mwanza. I missed Norma and called her every day and ran up a hefty phone bill. The branch was smaller than Tanga with one secretary and one technician. I had to give up my luxury Ford Taunus for a Ford Station Wagon and a larger territory to look after. The company provided me with a house that was located on top of a high hill. Getting to the house was a nightmare as you had to put car in first gear and it was a steep climb all the way to the top. It was a bigger challenge and a feat especially when it rained. The panoramic view from the house of the lake was breathtaking as the lake was filled with what they called floating islands. Huge masses of papyrus weed would cluster together and form floating islands, which were sometimes 500 feet wide. They would float on the lake and move around with the tides and the winds and every morning, you woke up to completely different scenery on the lake.

Mwanza was the third largest city in Tanzania after Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga and situated on the shores of Lake Victoria. Lake Victoria is the third largest fresh water lake in the world and borders Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The lake is situated 3,720 feet above sea level and is about 26,800 square miles with an average depth of 270 feet. It's a fishing paradise with over 200 species of fish with *Thalapia* being one of the most popular. The Goan club was built on the shore of Lake Victoria and was a tiny

little shack with a membership of 50 with their families. There were ten Goan families with not much else to do other than play cards, table tennis and share long stories at the bar. There was only one single girl in the membership and when the club organized a dance, we scrambled to get a chance to dance with her. It actually got to the point where you had to book a dance with her. I joined the golf club and was one of two Goans in town to do so. The fees at the Golf club were very expensive and most Goans could not afford to be members. My Company picked up the fees and I became a member of both clubs. I learned to play golf and played 18 holes once a week. With having to walk a lot and not being very athletic, I chose to play snooker and billiards instead. Business was good and I had to travel long distances to visit my clients.

A little town called Bukoba was on the other side of the lake and getting there was an ordeal. You had to cross two ferries; one that was operated manually. You drove your car on to a pontoon that was harnessed to the other side of the river with a rope and pulley. Once you and car were on board the pontoon, two or three men would pull the rope and drag the pontoon to the other side of the river. The journey to Bukoba would take 10 to 12 hours on gravel roads and there were no restaurants or toilets on route. One of the club members at the golf club operated a private single engine charter plane. There were times when the Barclays bank would have their posting machine break down and they would authorize me to charter the plane to complete the service call. I would post a note in the club notice board and see if anyone else needed to visit Bukoba and share the cost of the flight. The flight across the lake took 45 minutes and the plane would land on a gravel airstrip. The

bank would send a car to pick me up and the pilot would tag along and stop for a coffee at the only hotel in town. I would complete my service call in an hour or so, pick up the pilot and head back home. On two occasions, the pilot would let me fly the plane once we were at the chosen altitude. The aircraft was a 'Cessna Five' with dual controls and he showed me how to steer, lift and lower the craft to different altitudes. The two-foot pedals had dual functions: pushing the left pedal in would tilt the left wing to the left and pushing the right pedal would tilt the right wing. Rocking the pedals would operate the brakes once you have landed and taxied the aircraft on the runway to the hanger. The Steering wheel directed the aircraft the same as you would a car. The pilot set the course on the compass, which I was familiar with as it was the same type of prismatic compass I used during my scout outings.

Lake Victoria had three major Ports, Bukoba, and Mwanza in Tanzania & Kisumu in Kenya. A small cargo vessel operated the lake and had about ten cabins to carry on passengers for a cruise on the lake that lasted three days. The boat travelled at night and stopped in the ports by day to drop and load cargo. My Danish friend Ingeborge visited me in Mwanza and I treated her to a cruise on the lake. We were fortunate there was a full moon during our trip on the lake sitting on the deck of the ship and watching the reflection of the moonlight on the lake was out of this world. I had the nasty habit of smoking cigarettes and sometimes would smoke a pipe. I can still remember the pleasure of smoking my Meerschaum pipe with the wind blowing the sweet scented tobacco smoke across the deck. There was no entertainment on board the ship and most of the passengers played cards and strolled on the decks. The food menu was

European and I looked forward to breakfast of bacon, sausage, eggs and papaya served with a wedge of fresh lime. The ship was equipped with a huge floodlight to look out for floating papyrus Islands on the lake that kept drifting. There was no danger of the vessel sinking in the event of crash into one of these islands but it could tangle the propeller and disable the ship.

Norma decided to visit me for a few days in Mwanza. There was nothing much to do other than go to the movies and visit the clubs. There was only one movie theater in town and ran two movies a week. Norma was bored to tears and wanted to go to Nairobi for a few days. I tried to get a flight to Kenya and was not able to get seats, as East African Airlines that operated only one flight a day. The plane made a few stops before arriving in Mwanza and was sometimes full before it landed. Well, I had to get my girl to Nairobi and so I chartered the private plane to take us back and forth. Fortunately, I only paid one way as the pilot had a fare three days later to Nairobi and was returning empty to Mwanza. Going to Nairobi was a treat as there were two great Chinese restaurants and I went for Chinese food every evening. Most Goans in Tanga, Dar-es-Salaam and Mwanza had never experienced Chinese food in their lives. Dar-es-Salaam had only one Chinese restaurant and the myth of Chinese cooking eating snakes and rodents kept us ignorant folk away. Dar-es-Salaam had about eight Chinese families. Most of them from Mainland China and most of their children converted to Catholicism and attended the St. Joseph Convent School. They hung around Goans and some even married Goans and are now living in Toronto Canada. I first ate Chinese food at the home of three Chinese bachelor boys who were my neighbors in Changombe. It was not exciting at all as the boys trained their

native servant to stir-fry and basically, the food was flavored with soy sauce and garlic. I remember the time the servant was asked to cook snow peas with beef and he peeled the snow peas and only used the little peas and threw out the green casing.

The rains came to Tanzania in March April and May and this was the time the East African Safari was organized. In the seventies, The East African Safari was the most grueling race in the world at that time and lasted the Easter weekend. The rally started in Nairobi and passed through Kenya Uganda and Tanzania. The rally started Thursday and finished Sunday and covered just over three thousand miles of roads that were sometimes just animal tracks.

I missed Norma and was planning to drive 800 miles to Tanga via the Serengeti National game park to spend Easter with her. One of the bridges on route had been washed away and the road was closed until further notice. Buses would drive to the bridge and passengers would wade across the now shallow river to the other side to meet buses that would turn around and continue their journey. I had to go to Tanga and I convinced a friend to ride his bike to Tanga. He agreed and we loaded the bike in my station wagon and drove to the broken bridge. We off loaded the bike, a Honda 175cc and carried it across the river and carried on the journey of approximately 450 miles. Looking back today, I was a complete idiot to even consider this journey for I did not have any protection from the wild animals in case of a breakdown. We had a Jerry can of extra fuel and thought a fire would be good enough to protect us. Had I seen National Geographic programs on the wild life in Africa, I would never attempt to make that trip across the Serengeti. We crossed many herds of zebra, wildebeests and deer mostly

Impala, Kudu, Eland, and Dik-Dik. We reached Tanga in the evening and drove directly to the club walked straight up to the bar and downed a few Brandies. The motorbike and our clothes were covered with red mud and we were greeted with hero worship at the bar. Friends were in awe of our journey and there was no end of Brandies and drinks offered to us by the members. I asked for Norma and there was sad silence that led me to believe something was wrong. A friend called me to one side and told me that Norma was seeing someone else and my heart just sank. I was actually more embarrassed than hurt, as I felt that I was made a laughing stock. The next morning, we left town and headed to Arusha, which was on the border of the Serengeti. The journey home was painful and difficult but we got to the bridge, waded across the river, loaded the motorbike in the van and carried on to Mwanza in the car, which was a blessing to our sore bottoms. I was pretty well liked by the folks in Tanga and Norma was scorned by many for her actions and what she did to me. Eight months passed by and while I was getting over Norma, friends of mine would keep me informed of her movements and I finally learned that she was pregnant and had to plan a quick wedding before the baby arrived. The Mwanza branch was now running as best can be and the head office decided to move me back to The Tanga branch, which was having problems. Coming back to the Tanga branch and to the beautiful house overlooking the ocean again brought back painful memories. Things were not the same and I was not too happy to be back, but I had a job to do and put Norma on the back burner.

Chapter 8

Goa was a Portuguese colony in India from the year 1510 to 1962 and since my parents were both born in Goa, they were automatically Portuguese citizens at the time of their birth. Hence, I was born a Portuguese citizen and entitled to Portuguese nationality. I was born on British soil in Tanganyika (a British colony at the time) and I was entitled to British nationality. I was born on Tanzanian soil and when Tanzania became independent in 1961, I was entitled to Tanzanian nationality too. The Indian government was negotiating with the Portuguese government to release the territory of Goa since their independence in 1947. In 1962, India walked into Goa with their troops and took over the country that the Portuguese held for 550 years and hence all people of Goan origin were now entitled to Indian Nationality. Of the four choices of nationalities, I chose to become British. As a result, I was considered a foreigner in Tanzania and needed a work permit to live and work in the country. In October of 1969, my work permit expired and I was forced to leave the country and go “home” to England, the country I held the nationality of and a country I knew nothing about, other than what I had read about in books and magazines. After several appeals to the government for an extension to the permit, I was denied all extensions and came to terms with myself that I had to leave Tanzania and go to England.

My parents were devastated especially my mother who cried for days. Money was hard to come by and vacations to European destinations were virtually unheard of. My neighbor’s son had left for England on a job offer and had never come back home for eight years. In 1966, my older sister Virgilia left home for

Germany after marrying a German social worker and in 1969, my younger sister Annette joined my sister Virgilia in Germany to pursue a nursing career. My younger brother Justin left for India to study architecture at the Sir J. J. College of Art and I was the fourth child to leave home for a foreign destination, which broke my mother's heart. I promised my mother that I would come home every two years and I kept my word and made two trips back to Tanzania until cancer took my mother at the young age of fifty-eight.

I had a couple of classmates in England; one lived in Manchester and the other in Oxfordshire. I had no clue of the geography of England and distances of towns and places. I had an English lady friend, Philippa Saunders living in London, who had just returned home after completing her work contract in Tanzania. I wrote to her for help and she was a Godsend to me and agreed to meet me at London Heathrow Airport and make temporary accommodations for me in London. She was living with Lady Rae Burn who was of an aristocratic background as a house companion and could not put me up at her place, so she arranged for me to stay with an English couple in Earls-Court London.

One of my letters written to Philippa, which was addressed care of Lady Rae Burn, went to the wrong address. I addressed the letter to house number 32 instead of 34 and lo and behold, the letter went to Margaret Thatcher's home. Margaret Thatcher later went on to become the prime minister of England. Feisty Margaret cautioned Philippa of using her address and later realized that Philippa was a companion of Lady Rae Burn and lived next door. Margaret's husband Denis invited Philippa to a glass of sherry and little did Philippa know that nine years later, Mar-

garet Thatcher would become Prime Minister of England.

My parents had met Philippa several times, as I would bring her home and she would relish my mum's beef bone soup made from scratch. I was on my way to a country filled with prejudice toward the brown and black races and was faced with the challenge of not knowing what I had in store.

Tuesday, January 20th 1970, my parents, my brothers Jesse and Justin together with our house servant Juma, headed for the airport to bid me farewell for my first journey overseas. It was the first time I saw my father cry while I kissed and hugged the family and walked the tarmac to the ramp and stairs to board the airplane. The family moved out of the terminal building and rushed to the fence that was four feet high to get a glimpse of me walk to the aircraft. The B.O.A.C. Super VC10 jet aircraft was the first jet plane to be powered by two Rolls Royce engines placed on the rear tail of the plane. It was parked a short distance away from the terminal and was the largest plane I had ever stepped into. Although I was very excited, I was in tears saying my good byes and very sad not knowing when I would see my family again. For the first time in my life I was afraid and terrified feeling alone and very confused. The flight to London's Heathrow airport took seven hours and the outside temperature on arrival at Heathrow was plus 4 degrees. It was the first time I related temperature by degrees and an educated guess of the temperature when I left home would be 25 degrees. From the window of the plane, I saw all white men servicing the aircraft and it was a strange feeling, for I had never seen white folk work and dirty their hands. I walked through the gangway bridge that was annexed to the plane and entered the terminal without having to walk the tarmac and this was a first for me. The size

of the terminal astonished me and I had never seen or travelled on an escalator or a “moving floor” before and felt I was in wonderland. Philippa and her boyfriend John were at the airport to meet me and Philippa brought me a winter coat for she worried I may freeze to death. I was wearing a vest, an undershirt shirt, a collared shirt and sweater plus a suite jacket and was so hot that I developed a cold sweat. Our first stop after we left Heathrow Airport was a pub and John ordered a couple of pints of lager. The beer was “Double Diamond” a popular draft beer at the time but I did not care too much for it as draft beer was not available in Dar, and I was used to drinking the bottled stuff. The endless number of traffic lights we had travelled through for there were only ten sets of traffic lights in the whole city of Dar-es-Salaam amazed me.

After a quick drink at the pub, we arrived at number 4 Nevern Square in Chelsea and met my hosts Mr. & Mrs. Alan & Toni Lamb, an English couple in their mid fifties. They were polite and very warm and concerned about my welfare. I had to pay them six pounds a week for my stay and that included breakfast and an evening meal. The two-bedroom basement flat was not particularly warm as “Storage Block heaters” a new technology just introduced in England heated it. There were three metal boxes in the apartment and each box was loaded with special bricks that were heated by a separate electrical line and only received power in the off-peak hours i.e. midnight to 7.00 a.m. The block heater emitted heat slowly during the day. In my opinion the system sucked. The water heater was powered by the same cheap night rate and we could not afford to run the tank dry, as the power would only kick in at midnight. There was enough water for one bath a day, so I had to take a bath every other day and

the Lambs bathed together. There was no shower and I could not sit in a bathtub without rinsing out with a shower. I still feel the same way until this very day. So I filled a pale of water and showered with a cup the old fashioned Indian/African way. I had to sit and bathe, as I could not afford to stand and mess the bathroom floor since there was no shower curtain. Getting into bed was a nightmare as the bed was made up with layers of sheets, blankets and comforters. I carefully pulled the sheets to figure how to re-make the bed in the morning. I enjoyed breakfast as it varied every day from cereal, eggs, toasts and porridge. Being used to three square meals a day at home, the evening dinner was a challenge. One evening, dinner was two tiny braised lamb chops with mint sauce, two tablespoons of peas and a handful of potato chips. The chops were so small that I believed the poor sheep was probably on diet. I could have easily eaten two more chops but everything cooked was served on one plate and nothing left for seconds. I looked forward to desert as this consisted usually of apple crumble, apple pie, or rhubarb pie and custard. I did not care too much for rhubarb pie, as it seemed very tart.

England was a cultural shock for me after seeing how the British lived in the colonies. I had never ever seen poor white people before. The whites back in Africa lived like Lords and kings and got all the preferred jobs and lived in the upscale neighborhoods and homes. Not a single white person in Tanzania worked a menial job. I was suffering a five-hour jetlag and the following day, Toni Lamb decided to take me sightseeing after breakfast. I was dressed with five layers of clothes and developed a cold sweat. We walked out of Nevern Square and walked towards Earl's Court High Street. I suddenly stopped to see a coal truck delivering coal to one of the houses. The truck was rigged

with a mini-hoist in the rear and a canvas bag was attached to a chute. The deliveryman opened the gate and the coals filled the bag. Once full, a hydraulic platform would hoist the bag to shoulder height and the man would carry the bag on his back and drop the coal down a chute in front of the building straight to the cellar. The deliveryman's clothes face and hands were black with soot and I had never seen a white man in this condition ever in my life. I could not take my eyes off this scene and Toni Lamb wondered what I was looking at. I dare not tell her the truth and told her that I was watching the automatics of the coal delivery lorry or truck as we call it in Canada. In a few hours, I got used to the fact that the whites did all kinds of menial work including driving busses, waiters and street cleaners. Toni Lamb took me to the science museum and I was amazed at the exhibits. Over time I made several visits to the museum, as there was so much to see. Toni treated me to a cucumber sandwich and a cup of tea for lunch at the café in the museum. I had never eaten a vegetable sandwich except for spiced green coriander chutney that we got back home. I had never experienced or seen a self service restaurant and did not know the protocol of standing in a queue and pick up your choice of food.

Thursday, January 23, and day number three. I telephoned Block & Anderson who were the main agents of the Swedish calculators and typewriters I was trained on back home. I had an appointment for an interview for a job application the following day and ventured out on my own to travel on the subway lines also called the "Tube." Everyone seemed to be hurry and walked briskly while I strolled with an easy pace looking at stores and shops filled with goods that were not available in Tanzania. The subway was complicated as I had never seen a multi level plat-

form station before but the people were wonderful and very helpful and directed me to the platform that would take me to my destination. The interview was short and I was offered a position as a field service technician with the company and was asked to start work on Monday the 26th of January. I was offered seventeen pounds sterling per week which when converted, amounted to three hundred and forty Tanzanian shillings. Talk about going from riches to rags, based on a four-week month, my salary in England was equivalent to what my company paid for my accommodations in Tanzania.

I took the job as I had landed in London with three hundred and fifty pounds sterling in my wallet. Tanzania had a foreign exchange program in force and would limit you with how much money you could take out of the country. Three hundred and fifty pounds sterling was not much after landing in England with two suitcases and having to buy winter clothes. Toni Lamb took me shopping to the famous Marks & Spencer store on the weekend and I got myself a tweed double-breasted winter coat. It was on sale and cost me a whole five pounds. Everything seemed so expensive when converted to Tanzania shillings. I had to count my pennies, as I had no one to lean on. Philippa stopped by and brought me a lovely sweater and bath towel as a welcome gift. I started looking for accommodation and chose to live in a single bed-sitter because this is all I could afford. I called a couple of places and when I went to see the units, I was told that it was rented just before I got there. Then there was the time they recognized my accent on the phone, they informed me that the room had been rented and saved me the trouble of going to check it out.

Chapter 9

Monday January 26th was my first day at work and I joined the hustle of the crowd on their way to work on the busy London Subway Network. The air on the platform at the station was filled with an odor of an electrical smell caused by plates brushing on the electrical rails used by the tubes. Everyone seemed to be reading a newspaper or a novel and half asleep except for the young school kids that chatted and chuckled in their pretty uniforms and smart jackets, ties and Tartan skirts. I was now familiar with how to use the subway to Hammersmith and did not have to ask anyone for directions and was pretty proud of myself. The workshop was large and there were over twenty technicians working for the company. I happened to be the only non-white member of the team. I was dressed in a suit and wore my new tweed overcoat. The lads looked at me with curiosity and probably wondered if I even spoke English. I was amazed to hear the different dialects of English spoken and could not understand some of my colleagues. People in Yorkshire would say “Poob” for the word “Pub” and “Boose” for the word “bus”. Then there was “Cockney” spoken by the working class of the East End dwellers of London. I now realized that all the British ex-patriots I had met in East Africa put on an act to speak the so called posh accent usually spoken by the elite and college educated in England. There was a large cafeteria at work with a hot table and the company subsidized the food. I was never fond of vegetables as a kid growing up, but just plain boiled veggies was disgusting. In the days that followed, my favorite meal became “Fish & Chips” and later grew to like the Sheppard’s

pie after spiking it with a dash of Tabasco sauce. The menu in pubs and café would have names like “Ploughman’s lunch” which in essence was a piece of French bread with a slice of cheese and “Toad in a hole” which really was sausage in a bun. I spent a whole week in the workshop and was on probation for three months. After work, I headed straight for home for dinner with the Lambs that was served at about 6:00 p.m. I was not used to eating this early, as dinner back home was usually at 8:00 p.m. It was the same routine every evening, a tiny glass of sherry and then on to the dinner table. After dinner we would play cards or scrabble and then off to bed at 9:30 p.m. The Lambs did not own a television set, for they believed it was a very unsociable piece of equipment.

My two weeks accommodation with the Lambs was coming to an end and I could not find a place to stay and so I moved into a hotel that was like a youth hostel and shared a room with three other lads. Fortunately, I did not have a snoring issue at the time for I would definitely be thrown out. I left all my precious belongings and documents with the Lambs and moved out with a little duffle bag to the hotel on Earls Court Road. This street was a haven for young people from the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There were tons of little restaurants, mostly take-out places. I tried Kentucky Fried Chicken for the first time, which I believed, was the best thing since sliced bread and that became my main dinner almost every evening. There was a common room in the hotel with a 30” black and white television set and London had only three stations at the time BBC-1, BBC-2 and London-TV. I frequented the pubs every evening and made friends with some of the regulars. There was this cute Irish nurse “Shauna” that I met every evening and

I would buy her a drink. Nurses in England were one of the poorest paid professionals and I believe Shauna just earned ten pounds a week and I was happy to buy her a drink for she was great company. The hotel was draining my resources and I had to dig into my savings and withdraw five pounds a week to make ends meet. We did not have a phone at home in Dar-es-salaam and I would write long letters and never let the family know of the hardship and loneliness I was going through. I even made up a story that I met a Goan family and was invited to their home for a meal just to keep my mother happy. To economize, I cut down the number of cigarettes I smoked and learned to drink a cheap Apple Cider, which resulted in leaving me with a massive hangover every morning. I learned to accept the fact that it would be a long time before I would be able to afford a car and also get used to the traffic and complicated maze of roads in London. After all, I had hailed from a city that had only ten sets of traffic lights and was definitely intimidated by London.

Four months later and still in the hotel, Toni Lamb came up with a scheme to get me rental accommodation. She called a rooming house and rented a room for her “son in law to be” who would be arriving in London shortly. She paid three months rent for a single bed-sitter and a week later, I moved in 426 Fulham Road in the Borough of Chelsea. You should have seen the look on the face of the landlady when she saw me at the door but she was very polite and professional in welcoming me to the building and I was shown to my room, which was five feet, by nine feet. There was a twin bed, a little 20”x20” cabinet with a little mini stove oven and hot plate called the “Baby Belling.” Next to the stove was a face washbasin and that basically was the length of the room. Opposite the bed was a wardrobe and a little

table and chair and all this accommodation cost me six pounds a week which then was half my take home pay. By the way, there was an electric meter that was coin operated for the use of lights and heat in the room and if you ran out of coins, you were left in the dark. You got very little time on the meter for your money as the management cheated the tenants. I soon fixed that by drilling a tiny hole under the meter and using a plastic needle to stop the wheel from turning and fed the meter with a minimum so as not to get caught. There was a single bar infrared electrical heat radiator installed on the wall, and for music I had to depend on my little radio alarm clock. I had realized now that I went from riches to rags and scared if I would ever come close to the lifestyle I left behind in Africa; living in a three bedroom bungalow by the sea, driving brand new cars and a comfortable amount of disposal income. My accommodations were half the size of my kitchen back home but I was glad to be out of the hotel and have my own privacy. Fortunately, there was a pub right opposite the building and an Off License (liquor store) right next to it. The Chelsea football (soccer) stadium was just a three minutes walk down the road and I christened as a new fan of the Chelsea Football Club. I would have loved to go to all the home games but could not afford to do so.

After two weeks in the workshop, my boss decided to put me on the road and send me out on service calls in the city. I carried a large leather bag loaded with spare parts and tools and headed to customers having to use public transport. It was hard lugging this Tool bag in the subway and buses but soon I got used to it. I completed seven to eight calls in the city and then headed for home, dropped off my bag and then headed to the pub across the road. I now mastered the subway system and all

the platform changes to catch the various lines needed to carry out my service calls. In summer, I would go to Hyde Park on the week-ends and listen to speakers standing on soap boxes and get amused at the language and boldness of the speakers, mostly black, blasting the politicians and British government. Once every two weeks, I would visit the Lambs and play Canasta or Scrabble with them and would sometimes get invited to dinner. I volunteered to raise money for the blind and would stand at street corners with Toni with money cans. There were very few Indian restaurants in London and most of them were Pakistani cuisine with a huge choice of dishes on the menu. The European relished the food but to the East Indians, it was a load of crap. The chef cooked a large pot of curry gravy and would use the same base for all the dishes. For an egg curry, the chef would add boiled eggs to the curry and heat it up and all the dishes tasted alike. I yearned for a good Goan home cooked meal.

I was entitled to three weeks vacation and planned to visit my sister in Germany. My brother-in-law Willy was German and Virgilia became a German citizen. He hailed from a town called Aachen, which was situated on the border of Belgium and the Netherlands better known to us as Holland. They bought a home in Belgium in a little village called La Calamine just outside the border of Germany. For shopping reasons they carried three wallets with them taking advantage of the pricing in different countries. They bought their wines and alcohol in Germany, their rice and spices in Holland and all other groceries and gasoline in Belgium. I visited my sister and spent two weeks with her in the summer. I met Willy's family and a few friends and enjoyed the various beers. I was not a wine drinker in general and stuck to beer and snaps.

From Germany, I took the train north to Denmark to visit my Danish friend Ingeborge who I had met in Africa. The British had issued so many passports in the commonwealth that many foreign crossing officials of various countries were confused and not updated with the requirements of entry into their countries. Some countries needed you to have a Visa if the British passport was issued outside the United Kingdom while others did not, and every time I came to a border crossing, I dreaded the hassle I would get. Also it was embarrassing, as people stared at you while your papers were being processed for many Indians and Pakistanis were arrested during this time trying to slip into Europe illegally. The Danish border guards did the same and questioned me but exercised a lot of courtesy. I had proof of residence with my work identity; driver's license and social insurance card issued in London and was eventually allowed to carry on my travels.

Denmark is made up of a few islands and the largest two are Jutland and Zealand. Copenhagen is situated on Zealand, the smaller island. I stayed with Ingeborge's mother Edit Poulsen in Jutland in a large farmhouse that was converted into an old age home. There were seven residents and two young girls that worked and helped run the place with no one speaking English. The younger of the two girls was in high school and very shy to speak the little English she knew. I was treated like a king and was not allowed to do anything at all. Ingeborge's mother would sleep on the main floor with the residents and I slept on the loft that was converted into a large room with the young ladies. One of them would crawl and cuddle with me at night but nothing serious really happened as I was treated as a novelty for the girls had never actually seen a brown person in real life before. After

five days at the farmhouse, I drove Ingeborg's car to Copenhagen and had to cross a ferry to Zealand. Copenhagen was a fun city and very expensive compared to England. Two main things that bothered me was the price of cigarettes and liquor that was almost three times more than England. I visited the beautiful Tivoli gardens that to me was out of this world and was disappointed to see the world famous Mermaid statue to be so small. We took a trip with some of Inga's friends to Helsingør to visit the castle of "Hamlet" which we read about in Shakespeare's tales and then took a hydrofoil for a day trip to Helsingborg in Sweden across the straits of Denmark. Ingeborg could not be nicer to me for all the good time I gave her in Tanzania. There were no other colored people, and people kept staring at me.

Chapter 10

It was ten months since I landed in England and I decided that I needed to get a part-time job to make some extra money for the airline ticket to go home and keep the promise I made to my mum. There was a fish and chips shop just down the road from where I lived run by a Greek Cypriot named John and his new and very pregnant wife. I dined there at least twice a week and got to know the owner very well, and when his wife went to the hospital to deliver her baby, John asked me if I would help him in the evenings after work. I welcomed the idea and also considered the free meal every evening. John paid me one pound fifty for three hours of work. I got five pounds for working the whole of Saturday and the job involved doing almost everything other than cleaning and cutting the fish. Potatoes came in fifty-six pound bags, which I carried on my shoulder and then dumped half the bag into a rotating drum that had sand paper on its walls. The drum spun round with a spray of water agitating the potatoes that scraped against the wall of the drum. Once you saw the bare flesh of the potatoes, you opened the gate and the potatoes rolled into a big tub. Then you put the potatoes into another machine that cut them into chips until you filled a drum the size of an average thrash can. I fried the fish, the potatoes and waited tables. I served and wrapped the fish and chips for takeout customers, cleaned dishes and mopped floors and very seldom received a tip. Work was not fun but it kept my mind busy for I would otherwise be sitting in a lonely room listening to the radio or drinking at the pub. The return fare to Tanzania was one hundred twenty pounds sterling and it took

me a long time to save and reach my goal. Fish & Chips was thirteen pence at the time and a cup of tea was three pence.

December was cold and damp and Christmas carols were played on the radio as early as in the first week of December, something I was not used to back home. The streets were decorated with garlands and wreaths and the shops were decorated with Christmas trees, holly and ornaments. Toni Lamb took me to see “Selfridges” one of the best-dressed shops on Oxford Street. Outside the store on a canopy was a huge Santa Clause riding a sleigh with six reindeer and the windows were dressed impeccably with festive décor complete with tinsel, holly and fake snow. This was my first Christmas in England and my first time away from home for the Christmas festivities. I sent Christmas cards only to the family, as I could not afford to buy cards or the mail. On Christmas Eve, I went to the mid-night service and later headed home to my room. The pubs were allowed to open late as they usually closed at eleven and I stopped in for a drink. I wished the barman Merry Christmas and bought him a drink and he reciprocated by getting me one. Everyone seemed to be happy greeting and kissing each other and the ladies wore beautiful Christmas corsages. Being of Indian origin, most British folk thought I was Hindu and celebrated Divali. I woke up Christmas morning and hoped to see snow but there was a steady drizzle of rain and a light fog. A skeleton staff mainly by Pakistani drivers who welcomed the triple time and a day off for working Christmas day ran the buses. All shops and restaurants were closed and I walked over two miles down Fulham Road and finally found a Fish and chips shop open. The place was crowded with senior citizens who probably lived alone like me and I felt relieved to learn that there were many people in the

same boat as myself. I sat in the restaurant for as long as I could and talked and greeted the seniors for I had no other agenda to look forward to. I later realized that the owner of the restaurant only opened the diner as a goodwill gesture to accommodate his regular seniors who would get a hot meal or otherwise go hungry or eat a sandwich or canned food. For my dinner, I made myself a corned beef sandwich which I cooked with onions and seasoned with Tabasco on my little stove, downed half a bottle of Johnnie Walker Scotch (Red Label of course, as I could not afford the Black Label) and was in bed at 9 p.m. I was never so low in my entire life and during the Christmas season, suicide did cross my mind more than once. I managed to get over the doldrums and once again New Year eve and New Years day were just other days of the calendar.

The toilets and shower of the rooming house were located at the end of the corridor and I used to take a shower every evening after I got home from work. The hot water shower was coin operated and one evening on the way to the shower, I bumped into an Australian girl who told me that the shower was not working. I checked the shower and all it needed was a new

15-amp fuse, which I had in my tool bag. I installed a fuse and got the shower working and got a long free shower by using up the minutes left in the coin meter by other tenants. On my way back to my room, I knocked on the door of the Aussie girl who was glad to know that the shower was up and running. Just like that I made two new friends Trisha Lee and Dianne Bushel who shared a double bed sitter. Both girls were from Perth, Western Australia and were living in England on a working holiday on a two-year work permit. Trish was the younger and prettier of the two with long jet-black hair right down to her bottom.

We met the next evening and I invited them for a drink at the pub across the street. They were dying to visit the pub before but were intimidated by going in without male company, as they were simple small town girls. A week later, I got a knock on my door at 1 a.m. in the morning only to find Trish and Dianne in their nightclothes. They had received a phone call from their parents from Perth on Saturday night and rushed out of their room to the pay phone down the hallway without taking their key and locked themselves out. I welcomed them in my room, made them a cup of tea and sleeping arrangements. Trish got the single bed, Dianne slept on the floor in a sleeping bag and I slept on the chair till six in the morning. We woke up to instant coffee and cookies and waited till eight in the morning for the janitor to open the door.

I was celebrating my first anniversary in England and I eventually managed to get the address of my classmate Caridade D'Souza better known as Carrie who worked for the Royal Air Force and was based at the Brice Norton base in Oxfordshire. We made phone contact, and one week later I took the train to his base to meet him. Both of us were happy to see each other, as he too did not have any contact with any friends or family or any other Goan for that matter. He showed me around the base and boarded the Queen's aircraft, a SuperVC-10 complete with a sofa, lounge and study. I sat on the queen's personal toilet better known as "The Throne" to most of us and was tempted to take a dump. I also had a tour of the Cockpit. Carrie turned on a switch on the panel to light up the control board. He was showing off a little and at first I thought he was a pilot with the R.A.F but later found out that he worked on the hydraulics of the plane. I spent the weekend with him and slept on the floor

of the old Victorian English stone house, which he shared with three other Air Force lads. Carrie would visit London often and we would hit the city and he would spend the night on the floor in the sleeping bag. Sometimes we would double date and go out with the Aussie girls. One of our favourite places was a nightclub called "The talk of the town." It was noisy but loaded with gorgeous ladies. I received a letter from my brother Jesse advising me that one of my classmates Raymond D'Souza had moved to England and was studying and living in London on a scholarship. Ray was living with his cousins in Thornton Heath Surrey, a suburb of London. With Ray not having a phone in his house, I decided to surprise him with a visit one Saturday morning. I took the tube from Fulham to Victoria station and then the overland train to Clapham junction. There I changed platforms for the train bound for Thornton Heath. From the station, it took ten minutes to walk to 8, Geneva Road only to find that Raymond was away for the weekend in Brighton by the seaside. His cousin Aggie who invited me into his home and offered me a coffee and a sandwich greeted me. He introduced me to his wife Dorothy and his brother Maurice who lived with him, and I must say they were very hospitable people. The D'Souza family were the first Goans I met after living in England for fifteen months. The mantle over the fireplace was full of trophies and silver cups and I asked them which member of the family was responsible for the trophies. Aggie soon boasted of his wins as a motor rally driver in his hometown of Nakuru in highlands of Kenya. We were both excited when I told him that I drove in the auto rallies back home and that my last race before I left for England was in Nakuru. I arrived in Nakuru for the rally without my co-driver who became ill just before the event and

stopped at the Goan club for a drink. I met several Goans who told me of the D'Souza brothers that had since left for England that would have been glad to drive with me. It was such a great co-incidence to meet them. After spending a couple of hours with them, I got invited to lunch the following Sunday as they were entertaining a few friends and was sure to meet Raymond.

I couldn't wait for Sunday to come around and I went through the same routine all over again. Bus, subway, train and the long walk only this time I carried a bunch of flowers, a box of chocolates for the two young lads and a bottle of wine. My first Goan meal in more than fifteen months and I ate like a pig. I took two helpings and could force myself to a third but saved some space for the delicious looking trifle. It was good to see Raymond and now met some new people at the luncheon, mainly Aggie's friends from Nakuru. Dorothy could not help feeling sorry for me and packed me a lunch box of rice pilaf and beef cutlets. As the weeks went by, I became a frequent visitor and a household name to Genève Road. Aggie was a handy man and liked to renovate his terraced house. I helped break down walls and build a conservatory and the various projects he undertook. I stopped going to the pubs and found my way to Aggie's place, carrying a case of beer, and Dorothy's favorite drink "Baby Cham." Over time, Maurice and I became close friends and took several vacations together and have always stayed in touch.

Brazil is world famous for Carnival festivities and pageants, which are always held on the weekend before Ash Wednesday. Many small towns in Europe celebrate carnival on a very smaller scale than Brazil. Maurice and I decided to take a trip to my sister's place in Belgium for Carnival. Maurice owned a

luxury car called the Humber Snipe. We drove to Dover on the coast and took the hovercraft to Calais in France. We travelled along the coast to Ostend in Belgium and stopped for lunch in Amsterdam. There were umpteen Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands, for Indonesia was a Dutch colony for many years. I first ate Indonesian food when a Dutch family in Tanzania who prepared some succulent Indonesian dishes invited me and I thoroughly enjoyed the cuisine. They talked of “Riztaffel” and I was determined to try this dish. Maurice was a poor eater and the waiter told us we could share one order of Riztaffel. It consisted of about thirty tiny plates of dumplings, fried fish, Sate, braised steak and various tiny portions of seafood condiments and veggies that were just divine. We arrived at my sister’s place Thursday evening just after they got back from work. Carnival was a fun time and Thursday was “lady’s night.” Most women, mothers, wives, and ladies would dress up in masks, camouflage themselves and hit the pubs. Sometimes they would fool their husbands and hit on them in the pub without being recognized. Friday was “men’s night” and Saturday was the grand parade and float. There was a lot of drinking and dancing that weekend and everyone was in the carnival spirit. Schools and offices were closed making it a four daylong weekend. Many people got into debt by overspending and some actually pawned the treasures for the extra cash for the carnival bash.

Chapter 11

I took my Automobile drivers test and passed it on my first attempt. I could not afford to buy a car and would definitely not spend the money I had saved for my plane ticket to go home for Christmas. I saw an advertisement in the local newspaper for a used one-year-old Honda Moped scooter for eighteen pounds sterling. I didn't think you would get much for eighteen pounds but when I saw the motor scooter, it was almost brand new with only two hundred miles on the odometer and I decided to purchase it. It had a four-stroke engine with a pedal start and no gears. Honestly, I was as excited to get my own wheels, as I was when I took delivery of my new cars back home. The lady who was selling the Moped had recently lost her husband and gave me the crash helmet and a waterproof jacket to go with the bike. The first thing I did was to stop at the local hardware store and get myself a chain and lock as I would have to park the scooter in the yard outside my building. The fuel economy was excellent and I averaged over one hundred twenty miles to the gallon. Petrol or gas as we now call it, was forty pence a gallon and one tank would last me ages. A week later I rode my scooter to work and decided to carry out my service calls using my bike instead of public transportation. The company used to re-imburse me with all subway and bus fares and within a few weeks, I had recovered the cost of the bike. I saved my transportation cost to work but best of all, I was home at two in the afternoon after finishing eight calls and not having to carry the heavy tool bag in the busses and trains. Parking the bike in the city was no issue as you could wheel it to the side of buildings and the police

did not hassle you.

My trips to Thornton Heath to visit Maurice and the gang were now a breeze thanks to my bike. I got lost the first and second time though the maze of the London streets but soon got my bearings and memorized the route. Maurice and his brother Aggie were like little kids again and got a kick riding my Moped around the block. I now enjoyed the summer riding to Soho, Portobello Road and the various fun and tourist spots in London. The Pakistani, Indian and Malaysian Embassies offered subsidized Indian meals at their Embassies, mainly for students and I was a frequent visitor to these establishments. Bhuna Ghosh and chapaties with a cup of tea was 30 pence. I ate out every day and eventually got sick and tired of the same routine and was now determined to learn to cook. With a little training and help from Aggie's wife Dorothy, I got myself a pot, some spices and a few gadgets to start me off. My first attempt was minced beef better known as "Khema." Much to my surprise, it turned out really good. However I bombed on the rice, which overcooked and became a congee. Back to Thornton Heath for some more training and my coach Dorothy, decided to teach me how to make a rice Pilau. This time my rice was a great success for you could count every grain of the basmati rice flavored to a perfect ten even if I should say so myself. The washbasin in my room doubled up as a kitchen sink and it was hard to store any groceries for lack of space. With no refrigerator, I have to consume all my food within a couple of days. I invited Trisha and Diana to lunch one Sunday and they relished the food and raved about my cooking. This was the beginning of my cooking career and now set out to master some more recipes. I wrote to my brother Jesse of my success and my mother was thrilled to learn that I

was eating well. Incidentally, my mum was an excellent cook and was well known in our family connection of her culinary skills. Friends would beg my mother to give them pickles mainly to send for their loved ones living in Australia, Europe, Canada and the USA. On a recent trip to Calgary in 2006, I met my former neighbor; Cyril De Mellow who remarked how he still remembers the beef cutlets and pickles my mother would make and give him as a kid. Cyril is now an older man and it was so refreshing and rewarding to hear him, remember and praise my mother's cooking.

Maurice moved from Kenya and settled in London in the summer of 1967 and was a member of the Goan club. I went to a function with Maurice as his guest and later joined the membership of the club. It was strange going to a dance at six in the evening with the event winding up at 11:00 p.m. Dances back in Dar-es-Salaam started at 9:00 p.m. and would wind up in the early hours of the morning. The club was full of Goans, originally Kenyans and mostly from the city of Nairobi. It was refreshing seeing so many Goans and especially Goan girls in one place. It reminded me of the days back home at the club in Dar-es-Salaam. Most of the social functions organized by the London Goan Association were held at the Porchester Hall in Bayswater. Everyone with the exception of about five families came to the dance using public transportation and I was privileged to ride with Maurice in his luxury car. I did not know a soul at the dance but I had my eye on this very pretty girl who happened to be a very good dancer struggling to dance the rock and roll with her partner who had no idea of what he was doing. A few sets later when the band played the Jive, I plucked my courage and walked up to her table and asked her for a dance.

I was almost certain she would have declined and to my surprise, she accepted and we just hit it off. We coordinated our steps so well that people and Maurice kept looking at the two of us dance. I was one hundred and forty pounds at the time and danced a pretty good Jive, while she on the other hand was a good follower and we had ball. The music slowed down and we swayed to a slow waltz tempo and her dress moved in unison making us stand out on the dance floor. We danced so well that one would believe we had practiced and danced together before. I took her back to her seat and offered her a drink as courtesy would demand and left for the bar with a big grin on my face. My first dance in eighteen months and a rare treat to dance with a beautiful and talented lady. Her name was Catherine and I got her a Rum and Coke from the bar and got myself a pint of lager. I joined Maurice at the bar and he was anxious to know if I had got her phone number. When I told him that I did not, he called me a wimp and in my defense, I told him that I was not interested in her. A little while later, the band was playing a Cha-Cha and I saw Catherine walking towards the bar and straight to the corner where we were sitting. I was almost very certain she was going to ask Maurice for a dance and when she held me by the hand and asked me to dance. I was tickled pink as the saying goes and needless to say, I was good at the Cha-Cha and then demonstrated the “Off Step Cha-Cha” to Catherine, which she had never seen before. The music slowed down and we got a chance to chat. I held her close to me and felt her soft bosoms lean on my chest. She responded by holding me with a tight grip on my shoulder. I cannot say I was in love but thrilled by the affection, especially after not having any social contact with a Goan girl in over eighteen months.

Catherine hailed from Nairobi, Kenya and immigrated to England in 1967 and worked as a secretary in the city of London. I walked her back to her table and we exchanged phone numbers and I had this strong feeling that she would definitely call me. I knew I had found myself a new dancing partner and somehow felt she shared my thoughts and felt the same way. Catherine did not have a phone at home and gave me a number to reach her at the office. I gave Catherine my phone number at the rooming house and warned her it was a payphone very often people from the house would pick up the phone and not bother to call you. I anxiously waited for Catherine to call and eventually called her at the office and asked her out to lunch one day. We went out to a pub located near her office close to the Bank of England and met several times again later. I managed to get seats to watch "Fiddler on the Roof." This was the first time I went to the theater in London. We both enjoyed the show and later went to dinner at an Italian bistro in "Soho" which was located in the heart of the theatre district of London. Catherine invited me to lunch at her place and I gladly accepted with a certain degree of suspicion.

Catherine lived with her parents and younger sister in Middlesex and I did not want to ride my bike and walk into her house with a crash helmet and leather jacket so I decided to take the train to her home instead. I bought a bouquet of Chrysanthemums and a box of Cadbury Chocolates and was met by her mother at the door. I presented her mother with the box of chocolates and kissed her with a little hug. Catherine walked up later and greeted me with a great hug and a kiss too close to my lips which made me just a bit uncomfortable with her mother standing right there. I gave her the bouquet of Chrysanthemums

and she told me they were her favorite flowers. I told her that I remembered her mention that in one of our conversations and remembered that even more because they my mother's favorite flower too. They served some lovely hors d'overs and a wonderful lunch. I dreaded to go for seconds, as I did not want to show the parents how greedy I was but was glad when Catherine forced me to the dining table for seconds. The parents thought I was a good candidate for their daughter's hand in marriage but felt very different when they learned I was not of the Brahmin Caste. They were very old fashioned in their way of thinking and I was surprised that in this modern day and age, people still believed in the caste system. I really believed the only person they were hurting was their daughter as I stopped seeing her and only met at dances organized by the Goan club every three months or so. At the Goan functions, I met Xavier and Sandra Fernandes, some old friends from Nairobi after ages. Xavier and Sandra were warm and very hospitable people and lived in the north of London with their three children. I visited Xavier one Friday evening and he took me to the local pub called the "Manor House" and was surprised to see over twenty Goan men and women mostly all ex Nairobi, Kenya folk. Through the evening I met most of the Goans in the pub and waited till closing time to take a cab home to Xavier's place. I spent the night with Xavier and he wouldn't let me go home the next day and insisted I spend the weekend at his place. I picked up a shirt and underwear and some personal hygiene items from the local store and we were back at the pub the next evening. Oddly enough, I met almost all the same old crowd that were there the night before. Many of the guys had nicknames like "Peter Mad Dog," "Peter Hammer," "Filu Mazore," Tony Singer and the list goes

on. Over the months that went by, I became a regular visitor and enjoyed my visits to North London.

Most pubs in England had two sections. One was called the lounge and the other was called the public bar. Both sections were separated with the bar set right down the middle or a wall. There was a dress code for the lounge and the drinks cost a little more. The public bar was reserved for the working class that would come in with muddy workbooks and coveralls. The Landlord or Governor of a pub in the same neighborhood of the Manor House wanted the business of the Goans for they were a social bunch of drinkers that never created trouble and always had fun. He invited the whole gang for a free drink to his pub nearby and offered the use of the public section entirely to the Goans. Arrangements were made for us to leave our special glasses and personalized tankards in the bar. We were having such a great time that some of the white patrons from the lounge would come and hang out in our section. My circle of friends In London grew larger as I met another classmate Mathew D'Souza and his Anglo-Indian girlfriend Sandy in North London. Sandy had a younger sister Diana and we went out as a foursome to functions and shows. England became a fun and great place for me to live in.

Chapter 12

I was counting the weeks and days left for me to catch my flight to Tanzania and spend Christmas of 1972 at home with the family but the days just dragged on. Shopping for gifts to take home with a baggage allowance of twenty kilos was a challenge and not having a weighing scale at home drove me crazy. Eventually the day arrived and I had to lug my suitcase via public transport to Heathrow Airport. Suitcases with wheels were not invented at the time and if they did, I could not afford one. I had to carry this 20 kilo case and walk a good ways to the railway station, then down stairs to the station platform and eventually catch the Piccadilly tube line that ended at the Airport terminal.

I travelled Egypt Air and I got a glimpse of the pyramids from the window of the aircraft as we landed at Cairo International Airport. We had a two-hour layover before we headed nonstop to Dar-es-Salam. My parents and Jesse were at the airport to meet me. My older brother Clement was always too busy wrapped up in his own world to come to the airport. It was great to be back home and to the bumpy roads compared to the smooth asphalt of the British highways. There was a sign of emptiness at home with my younger brother Justin in college in Mumbai, India and my younger sister Annette studying nursing in Germany. Our servant, Juma ran up to the car as we rolled up the driveway and greeted me with a big hug and a fresh young tender coconut that he plucked from our tree. The first thing I did when I got home was to pick a half ripe papaya from the tree in our yard and relished it with chilly powder and salt.

December was the mango season my mum made sure she had them in her shopping list. My mother went out of her way to

prepare my favorite dishes and I was determined to take cooking lessons from my mum who, like I mentioned before, happened to be a terrific cook. I enjoyed fresh fish right from the ocean and vegetables planted in our garden by my mum. There were two bunches of bananas ready to be harvested in our grove and tons of guavas on the trees. Strange as it may seem, I felt like a kid again, climbing the guava tree and plucking and eating fruit from our garden.

The next day I travelled with Jesse on his way to his office, dropped him off and took his car for a spin by the oceanfront and promenade. I visited all the old hangouts, familiar places and finally landed at the club for a beer and a game of snooker. It was so strange to be able to cross the streets and park your car almost next to your destination with so little traffic compared to London. A few days after I arrived, I visited the different eating joints that I frequented in the past and met many of my friends and business acquaintances.

I was in a coffee house one morning when I saw this young handsome man with a mustache that wrapped all the way to the side of his lips. He looked very Mexican and about my age I guessed and in a loud voice ordered a coffee with a heavy American accent. It was cool to be American those days and I knew he had to be a local Goan who had returned home after a stay in the USA and was showing off. Not to be out done, I ordered a cup of tea in a strong English accent and made sure that he noticed the large tip I left for the young African waiter. The next day, I went to the club only to find the same American sitting alone at the bar drinking a beer and watching me with the corner of his

eye. He was smoking Marlborough Cigarettes and I was smoking Benson & Hedges and now I knew for sure he was Goan. I decided to break the ice and walked up to him and bummed him for an American cigarette in exchange for one of mine. We got talking while we bought each other drinks; both our accents took a dramatic change to the typical African Goan. His name was Leslie Gonsalves and he lived in Chicago, Illinois and, was the brother of Jane and Lawrence who were my personal friends. He was home on vacation to see his family but especially his childhood sweetheart that he kept writing to every week for years since he left home. The Gonsalves family hailed from the island of Zanzibar and after the revolution, Jane and Lawrence found their way to Dar-es-Salaam while Leslie managed to get entry into the USA to join his older sister Juanita Birkmeyer. I had met Juanita and her husband Robert when they visited Tanzania on a holiday in 1968 and had the pleasure of their company when they stayed with me for a few days. I took them sightseeing to the Caves and the Usambara mountains and then dropped them off in the town of Moshi to visit their cousins. I met Leslie at the Christmas and New Year's dances at the club a few times and later around the town. He left for the USA at the end of the first week of January and I never expected in my wildest dreams that we would ever meet again.

Christmas Eve was normally the day we put up the Christmas tree at home and later we all went to midnight mass at the local St. Xavier's Parish. After mass, the family all came home had a drink and toasted the season and later Jesse and I drove to the Goan Club. There were groups of carol singers and the younger

members would drink iced coffee while I stuck to scotch and soda. Jesse and I came home in the wee hours of the morning and Christmas presents would be opened after breakfast. The big meal for Christmas was lunch that mum would serve at about 2:00 p.m. and followed by a siesta. Traditionally, we would only visit relatives on Christmas day and after a light supper, Jesse and I would go to the Christmas dance at 9:00 p.m. which would end at 6.00 a.m. Christmas was a time for eating and drinking and this carried on all week to New Year's Eve and the dance that followed. Time passed so quickly and I dreaded the day I had to leave. All good things had to come to an end and after a delightful four-week stay; I packed my bags and left for England with sad hearts all around.

Soon it was February and Carnival time again and Maurice and I headed for Belgium on the Thursday morning before Ash Wednesday to be in time for Ladies' night in the pubs. We had a lot of fun as we were the only non-white people in the pub and women hit on us mainly out of curiosity. Needless to say, we did not complain. I carried on working for John at the Fish & Chips shop only on weekends and John was very appreciative of my help. I would borrow his car to go on dates and one day brought it back to my place to adjust the carburetor for the car kept stalling while in idling mode. While I was under the hood, a tall young man of Indian origin out of curiosity leaned over and asked me what I was doing. I told him I was adjusting the carburetor and asked him where he came from and he told me he was Indian. I told him that I was Indian too and asked which part of India he hailed from. I smiled when he told me he was Goan but born and raised in Uganda. When I told him I was Goan and born and raised in Tanzania, a sudden bond of brotherhood

and a sense of belonging and friendship developed. Better still, he lived in the same rooming house as I did and only a few doors down the corridor. His name was Ignatius Coelho and shared a double bed sitter with his cousin Jose who had grown up in Karachi, Pakistan. They were both students and worked part time to make ends meet. Jose on the other hand was a freeloader, a bum and a bull-shitter, making up stories that he was a physicist, played the violin in the Karachi symphony and was a member of the Pakistan Air Force. We would sometimes cook and eat together and the menu was usually rice and curried minced meat. I learned to cook lentils and a beef stew and as time went by the food got better.

A few weeks later Roma Rodrigues arrived from Uganda and rented a single room in the same building. Roma was madly in love with Ignatius and followed him all the way to England. Not so long later Ignatius's sister Ninette landed in England and shared a double bedsitter with Roma. We went out to pubs and the movies and spent a lot of time together and decided to rent a flat with a kitchen and bath and toilet and live together. Accommodation was hard to find and we managed to rent a flat in Hedgegate Court in the Nothing Hill Gate area of London and shared the rent. Ignatius was very light skinned and the landlord presumed he was Portuguese with a name like "Coelho." Once again the landlord was surprised to see four "Darkies" move in with Ignatius. There was a big living room and a large bedroom, which was about 18 x 18 feet, and in the winter months, the five of us slept in the same room mainly due to the high cost heating the flat. Each one of us had our own corner and we let the girls have their privacy to get in their nightgowns. I tampered with the coin operated electric meter to get free electricity and we

enjoyed a warm and cozy room to sleep in. We had a fridge and life got much better and easier as we could now store our food and enjoy cold beers.

The lease on the flat ran out and we had to look for another place to live in. We found a two bedroom flat that was not too far away on St. Stevens Gardens in the Bayswater area. The old dingy flat owned by an old Irish lady was in very poor shape and needed a lot of repairs carried out on it. We had to share a bathroom and toilet with the flat next door and the bathroom was located on the landing in between the two floors and had a coin operated hot water heater. I used to fill a large pail of water and bathe myself with a cup while I stood in the tub. Roma, Ignatius and Ninette took a sponge bath every day and went to the public baths two to three times a week. We had a swell time and went to the movies and theatre every week, living from paycheck to pay check. Roma and Ignatius decided to tie the knot on October 14, 1972 and I had been given the pleasure to give the bride away, since Roma did not have any family in London. I was also the main chef, wedding planner, the photographer and driver of the wedding car, which John from the fish restaurant kindly offered. It was about this time, just before the wedding, that Idi Amin, president of Uganda, expelled over thirty thousand Asians from Uganda. Roma's sister and brother in law were among the group of deportees. They stopped in London just in time for Roma's wedding on their way to Canada as refugees and I felt it would be appropriate for Roma's brother in law, Hubert, would be the right person to give Roma away at the wedding. After all, he was her family.

The reception was held in our humble apartment and the wedding guests numbered about eighteen. Mrs. Oriely, our land

lady was very fond of Ignatius and gave him a couple of bottles of Hennessy cognac and a generous cash gift which was all used to pay the wedding expenses. It was a special treat for me to sip a premium Cognac like Hennessy and we had a great wedding celebration. I had an even better time after the wedding as I got lucky with one of the guests who's name I do not choose to mention.

Roma had it up her eyeballs with Jose who refused to work or look for a job and make us all pay for his keep. He was forced by Roma to vacate the flat and found alternate accommodation with some of his school friends. Meanwhile, I decided it was time for me to leave the nest and find a place of my own and give the newlyweds their privacy.

Carrie ended his contract with the Air force and moved to London. We decided to share a flat and for a while there, we stayed with a friend of Carrie in Wimbledon. Carrie's friend had a son, Damasian who was hearing impaired. He was a great guy and a little younger than myself and I learned to sign and communicate with him with my hands. He used to tag along with Carrie and myself and go to the Goan dances. When he was checking out a girl, I would sign and tease him and in return, he would show me the "finger" which we are all familiar with.

I sold my Moped scooter and was the proud owner of a used Mini Minor automobile and now had wheels of my own even though it was an old heap of metal. It was a great sign of prestige to attend a Goan dance and drive to the venue in your own car as to the best of my knowledge, there were only six to eight Goans that would attend the dances and drive to the city in their own cars.

Chapter 13

I had completed two years service with the company in 1972 and was now entitled to four weeks vacation at work. I spent a week with my sister in Belgium and later that year Maurice and I drove to Scotland and toured the whole country in his car. We stayed in bed and breakfast places and visited the famous Loch Ness and you guessed it, we did not see the monster. Life in England was suddenly more fun but salary increases at work were at a standstill as I was earning only 22 pounds a week. I decided to look around for a new job and found a job with a company called Thames Office Equipment in Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey. It was a nice sized company with wonderful people to work with. I still keep in touch with the owner president Peter Hawker, many years after I left the company. I kept in touch with Phil Cutler, Jack Greene and David Sells who had two girls Joanne and Suzanne. I got invited to Joanne's wedding a few years later and flew down to London strictly for the wedding. I still keep in touch with the girls to this very day. They were a great bunch of people to work with and with the job came a brand new company car that I got to take home. The company paid for the gas for all my driving and I did not have any restrictions for all my personal use so, I sold my little Morris Mini Minor. I earned forty pounds a week and was a supervisor of the mechanical division. There were times when there was an overload of work and I would go to the workshop on a Saturday to catch up and work for free. Peter Hawker the CEO was aware of this and would walk in the shop with sandwiches for lunch. I was the first non-white person on the company payroll and was

treated fairly and with respect by all the staff. I made good money and worked mainly on the south side of London in Surrey. There was a cute girl in the accounts department that I used to date and we kept it a secret, as we did not want the office to know. I was a very visible minority at the time and did not want to rock the boat. The company had two main annual social events with a picnic in the summer and a grand Christmas Dinner and Dance. I took a cute Goan girl to the office Christmas dinner and my colleagues were surprised to see us dancing ballroom.

Not too many people forget my birthday and a few friends told me that they were dropping over on the 1st of April for drinks as my birthday fell on a Saturday. I decided to invite a few more and just like that, I had thirty people accept the invitation. Dorothy helped me cook and together we prepared a lovely meal and had a great party. April 1st later became an annual open house event and is still prevalent to this very day in Toronto.

Maurice and I would drive to the Goan dances, and after the function that ended at 11 p.m. we would invite friends to continue the party at my place. We would pile the girls into our two cars and get the guys to take the train over. There was no food served at the function nor could we buy any snacks. I used to prepare stir-fry noodles with chicken and veggies before I left for the dance and serve it when we got home from the dance for everyone was starving by midnight. We danced, played the guitar and sang to the wee hours of the morning. By now, you would see girls and guys tired and slumped on the chairs and sofas and the girls usually got preferential treatment and got to sleep on our beds. At the first light of dawn, some would creep

out and take the first subway trains at six a.m. and then the rest would wait for coffee and breakfast.

I met a Goan girl; Lynette who attended one of my after dances parties and stayed on for breakfast the next morning. She did not leave with the rest of the party guests and asked me if she could stay on and take me out to lunch later. Carrie left to spend the day with his Air Force pals and we pretty much had the place to ourselves. It was Sunday morning and we attended mass and later went to lunch at a Bangladesh restaurant. I sat across the table and listened as she spoke softly and distinctly, gently casting little smiles. She was not wearing any make-up other than a smear of a light shade of dusty rose lipstick. She was absolutely beautiful and I felt a strong attraction towards her. The waiter brought over the bill and I offered to pay but she demanded to pick up the tab. I did not have any plans that day and with Carrie not around, we went back to my place. She took a shower and slipped into one of my shirts and we watched television all day. I had this strong feeling that she had a problem and needed to talk but we had just met for the very first time and we had known each other for less than 24 hours. Then I thought she wanted me to make a move and when I tried to get close to her and she got emotional and I backed off and comforted her best I could. She would not divulge her problems and later told me she was engaged to be married. I now realized she was mixed up, maybe pregnant or forced into a relationship with her fiancée and was very attracted towards me for comfort and company. I was very disappointed to learn that she was taken and also felt sorry for her, as she had no family in London.

Later that evening, I cooked a gourmet dinner of braised steak with mushrooms, onions with mashed potato and gravy

and she was impressed with my culinary skills. I dropped her back to the Catholic Hostel for girls that she lived in which was not too far from where I lived. I could not help thinking of her for the next few days and I eventually asked her out to a show one weekend. We went to see "The Mouse Trap" by Agatha Christie and later had dinner in Soho. She had an 11.00 p.m. curfew and I had to get her back in time to the nuns or she would be in deep trouble. I fell in love and would pick Lynette at least three times a week and began a strong and heavy relationship with her for many months. Her fiancée did not have a car and would take her out using public transportation and drop her at the hostel at 7 p.m. Later when he was out of sight, she would meet me in my car parked down the road. This went on for months and I was in a dilemma and had to make a decision. Lynette would always have to be a secret date and this bothered me, as I could not show her off to my Goan friends. In September of 1972, I proposed to her and was disappointed that she did not accept and wanted a little more time. I loved her very much and chose to give her time as I was now seeing someone else in the meantime. Lynette agreed to go to my office Christmas dinner party with me, as there would not be any Goans at the function to contend with. We dined out a lot and went to the movies and sometimes to Hyde Park where I would rent a boat and romantically row around the Serpentine, which was a man-made lake in Hyde Park. With all the lovely and beautiful girls I knew, I had to fall in love with a girl that was engaged and torn between two lovers.

Chapter 14

Arthur and Valentine Soares were two cousins who lived in the U.K that I finally made contact with, after writing several letters. Arthur and Valentine grew up in Dar-es-Salaam and left for India to attend college and later found their way to England. Valentine was the younger of the two and lived in Hemel Hempstead some 70 miles north of London. It was hard to meet as it took a whole day to travel by train and bus to get to Hemel and back. I spent one whole weekend with Val who at the time was engaged to Irene and had a wedding date set for May 25, 1974. This was the second wedding I got invited to since coming to England and the reception was held at an Indian restaurant. Irene immigrated to England from Poona, India and was a family friend of Valentine's older brother Arthur.

October 14, 1973 and Roma and Ignatius celebrated their first wedding anniversary. Roma made plans to visit her sister in Canada in November with the hope getting a job and immigrating to Toronto. She invited me to go along but I declined on the basis that Canada was cold, frozen and an icebox. Roma told me how happy and comfortable her sister was in Canada after landing there as a refugee and that I should at least take a look at Toronto for myself and then make a decision. I had two weeks left in my annual vacation with no particular place to go, Roma convinced me and booked the tickets on Freddie Laker Charter Airlines to Toronto. The total fare with insurance was fifty pounds sterling return and we travelled on a Jumbo DC10 jet that was half full on November 3rd. 1973. The airline served unlimited free drinks on board and the stewardess gave us so many miniatures that we

put some in our carry-on luggage. We landed at Lester Pearson Airport in Mississauga and Hubert and Greeba were at the airport to meet us. Hubert had an eight-cylinder Chevrolet sedan that was equipped with power steering, power brakes, automatic transmission and power windows. I was in awe of the car Hubert drove considering that he landed in Canada with one hundred dollars just a year earlier. He backed his car and turned the steering with ease using his little finger. We merged into the four-lane highway and headed for Etobicoke, which was not too far from the airport. It was bitterly cold and the temperature had to be minus 10 degrees I believe. We went to their flat on Rathburn Road and were surprised to see how warm it was in the building. I felt a cold sweat and had to strip off my coat and jacket for the temperature had to be in the mid twenties in the flat.

I was surprised to meet one of the teachers from the Goan School in Dar-es-Salaam, Isobel Pereira living in the building. She moved to Uganda and was married to Charles D'Souza and had four young children. Charles was a warm and generous person and made our holiday a comfortable and memorial one. He insisted on letting us take his car to visit Niagara Falls when we had plans to rent a vehicle. Towards the end of my stay, he went to the extent of offering me accommodation if I was successful with my application to immigrate and let me use his name as a reference with the Canadian authorities. Hubert had thirteen hundred square feet; two-bedroom apartment and the master bedroom had a huge walk-in closet. The rooms were large and the kitchen was fitted with beautiful cabinets. There was a seventeen cubic refrigerator and a stove that was forty inches wide. Fridges in England were usually seven cubic feet and stoves were usually thirty inches wide. The whole apartment was fitted

with a parquet wooden floor and the three-piece bathroom equipped with a shower. There were phone jacks in every room and this apartment was considered nothing special for it was the accommodation of the average working class in Toronto. I was amazed at the luxury Hubert lived in and now knew why Greeba wanted her sister to move to Canada after seeing the pitiful conditions we lived in London. You paid twelve dollars for a phone line in Toronto and you got unlimited number of phone calls and further more they were untimed and while in London you paid for every call it was timed too. You never had to worry about the hot water running out, and I took a long hot shower and steamed up the bathroom. The monthly rent for Hubert's flat was one hundred sixty dollars a month and that included water electricity and heating. When calculated, his rent amounted to thirty-seven Canadian dollars a week and when converted to sterling, only sixteen pounds a week.

The vast open spaces and massive highways impressed me very much. Everything was so new and without a doubt, Toronto had to be the cleanest city I had ever seen. We went grocery shopping the next day and all the goods were packaged in large quantities compared to England. Sugar in five-pound bags, Milk in one-gallon jugs, Coke in 30 ounces bottles and the list goes on. The grocery carts were twice the size as those in London supermarkets and food was extremely cheap. Beer was \$4.00 for a case of twenty-four and cigarettes were \$7.50 for a carton of ten packets (Two hundred cigarettes). Gasoline was forty-nine cents for one imperial gallon (4.5Litres) and a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken was \$3.50 for a tub of eighteen pieces.

On Monday morning, Roma and Ignatius were on the phone making appointments for interviews with companies they had

written to with prospective job offers. With the outside temperatures being bitterly cold and nothing else to do, I decided to look through the yellow pages and got affirmative replies from both the companies I called. One of the companies, N.T.I. Business systems actually offered to send someone to pick me up and take me to the shop for an interview. I told the manager that it was not convenient for me at this time and promised to visit him in the next few days. Quite honestly, I got afraid and felt that the company wanted to report me to the authorities for job-hunting while on a vacation visa. Three days later, Hubert, Ignatius and I went to the city for a tour and stopped at the Wall-banger restaurant for a steak sandwich and a coke that cost \$1.24. The steak sandwich cost 99 cents and the coke 25 cents. At 2 p.m. and with no other plans we decided to visit N.T.I. and called the manager to see if he was available to meet with me. He asked me to come right away and gave me directions to the shop by travel on the subway and buses. The workshop was located on Curlew Drive in Scarborough. We took the subway, the bus and then a long walk from the bus stop to the shop. I froze my hands, nose, and ears and wondered what I was doing trying to come to this land of ice and snow. Mr. Alan Topp walked into the reception and invited me to his office and offered me a coffee. I accepted and politely asked if his secretary would make coffee for Hubert and Ignatius who were frozen in the lobby and she kindly obliged. After a brief interview, he showed me around the shop and asked me if I could come in and work for a few days to evaluate my skills. I politely told him that I was on vacation and although I did not have any credentials or papers with me, I was qualified and trained in London and Nairobi and worked with the largest dealer of the Swedish product "Facit" in England. I

really did not care if I got a job or not as I was very happy to be in England. Alan Topp then proceeded to tell me that they had only one technician in Toronto that was trained and qualified to work on the “Facit CA2-16” and that he was dying of leukemia and in hospital. There was a shelf full of machines that needed to be repaired and he would really appreciate my help. With no particular plans at home and everybody at work and nothing much to do in the daytime, I agreed to help him out on the condition that he bought me lunch every day.

Two days later, I hopped on the buses and trains to make the long journey to the east end of the city. I had curly long hair and a Foo-man-choo style moustache. I wore a double-breasted suit and a long woolen overcoat. The style then was shirts with wide rounded collars and the necktie had to be tied with a thick heavy knot. I wore kid leather gloves that did not protect me from the cold and three inch high platform shoes. I was definitely overdressed but then I was on holiday and did not have anything casual to wear after all. I removed my overcoat and jacket and hung it in the executive office and sat down to work in the shop. There were two Hungarian and two Italian technicians in the shop who greeted me and watched me curiously. The canteen truck arrived at the rear of the building and blew its horn at 10 a.m. and all work stopped for the coffee break. I braved the cold with only a light dustcoat to get a coffee and a doughnut that cost just thirty cents. There were twelve machines on the shelves and I got down to work. We stopped for lunch at twelve noon and Derrick Lawrence; the service manager took me out to lunch at the “Squire Bar & Restaurant.” Derrick was having a steak on a Kaiser and when I asked him what a Kaiser was. I realized it was just a big round bun. I chose to have a “T-Bone”

steak and asked the waitress for the wine list and Derrick looked up with curiosity. I told him to order anything he wanted and I would sign the chit as the company offered and agreed to pick up the tab for my lunch. I ordered a bottle of Chateauneuf du Pape mainly to impress Derrick but the restaurant was out of stock. I ordered a bottle of Mateusz, a light rose wine and Derrick was surprised that I would drink in the lunch hour. I told him that it was a done thing and normal in England to have a pub lunch and down a pint or two of beer. Derrick shared the bottle of wine and picked up the tab for our lunch. Three days later, I repaired eleven of the twelve machines and went out on a service call with one of the technicians to fix a machine on site. I could not complete the twelfth machine, as I needed parts that were not in stock and had to cannibalized parts from that machine to repair and fix the others.

Alan Topp offered me a job and a salary of one hundred and sixty dollars a week. Not having a clue of what I was worth to the company, I asked for one hundred eighty a week as I explained that if my income would be close to ten thousand a year, it would look good to Canada Immigration officer to approve my papers. He agreed and signed a letter with a job offer and dropped one hundred dollars in the envelope for my expenses. I was surprised to get any money and \$100 was equivalent to what I paid for my return airfare from England to Canada.

After a wonderful stay and a memorable visit to Niagara Falls, my two weeks came up and had to leave for London, leaving Roma and Ignatius to spend a week longer in Toronto. I now realized that Canada was a great country to live in and made my decision to start the ball rolling and apply for immigration.

Chapter 15

Back in London, I went to the Canadian embassy and collected the necessary forms that were required to be completed for immigrating to the country of my dreams. Within a week, I presented my papers to the embassy and waited anxiously for a response. Roma and Ignatius were also successful with their interviews in Toronto and received job offers with letters of employment. They also, on their return to London filed their papers at about the same time as I did.

In December, I took Lynette to the office Christmas dinner and dance and she was the center of attraction of the evening. She looked stunning and wore a gorgeous black evening gown with an off white Pashmina draped over her shoulders. Her long silky hair that was groomed to perfection fell all the way down to her waist. She was wearing this exotic and heavenly perfume called Shalimar by Guerlain that touches a soft spot inside of me to this very day. I was proud to have her as my date and all the guys lined up to dance with her. Lynette was such a hit at the party that two of my colleague's wives baked her Christmas Cakes and cookies and we got invited to a Christmas party at the residence of the vice-president of the company.

Within six months of our application, Roma, Ignatius and I received our papers for immigrating to Canada after successfully passing the interviews and medical exams. We planned to terminate our employment and affairs and leave England by September and get into Canada before the winter set in. We did not have a lot of money and planned to share an apartment in Toronto for a short while until we got settled on our arrival. I was now beginning to feel sad to leave England and found it

hard to tell my friends that I was immigrating to Canada. When I told the president and owner of the company Peter Hawker of my decision, he told me that he was not surprised as he had a gut feeling that this would happen after my Canadian vacation. He had visited Canada and the USA a few years earlier and was especially impressed by Canada for it was young country and had a lot of potential. As a successful business man, he encouraged me to go and make a life in Canada and told me I had nothing to lose and if ever things did not work out, there would always be a job for me in his company should I return. He told me he was sad to lose me but would feel very guilty if he did not encourage me to make the move. He still keeps in touch with me so many years after my departure and never fails to send me a Christmas card with a letter enclosed. I gave the company three months termination of employment notice and I believe this was sometime in July of 1974.

A friend of mine who had immigrated to England from Kenya had two galvanized metal trunks or “chests” as some people call them for sale and I thought that this were just perfect for shipping my possessions via sea freight. It was hard to discard things that I had purchased and collected after having lived in London for five years. It did not take too long to fill the trunks with my Zebra and Impala Skins, my Ebony and Ivory statues and carvings, my photo albums, a few clothes and items of sentimental value. Roma and Ignatius similarly packed all their treasures and I took all the boxes and cases in my company van to the shipping and freight Forwarding Company by mid July.

I received some sad news from home that my mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and that she was not doing too

well. In the early seventies, the success rate of curing cancer was very low and the first thing that came to your mind was death. The positive thing was that mum was getting chemotherapy and good treatment and was fighting the cancer well. I called my brother Jesse every week to get an update of Mum's condition.

One afternoon, I got a call from my service manager to return to the office and the president needed to see me. Peter Hawker had received a call from my brother and was informed that my mother was in serious condition and in hospital. The doctors had given her no hope of recovery and that I should try and come home as soon as possible. On hearing the news, I broke down and my boss told me to take the rest of the day off and make arrangements to get a flight home. He asked me if I had the finances and offered me his personal cheque to buy the ticket to fly home even though I had given my notice of quitting the job in three months. Within three days I was on my way home and Jesse was at the airport to meet me. The drive home was somber and sad this time and I had come to terms with myself that my mother was dying. I kept on thinking how Jesse would cope up with the physical and emotional gap my mother would leave after she passes on. A few months earlier, my dad had left for Goa with the idea of purchasing property, for he had plans to leave Tanzania and retire with my mother and Jesse in his homeland. He purchased a condominium in Panjim and no sooner receiving the keys and deeds to the flat; he got the telegram from Jesse to fly home and made his way to Dar-es-Salaam in three days. Justin, my younger brother was studying Architecture at the Sir J. J. College in Bombay and had just completed his final year and made his way home as soon as he could. Annette, my younger sister gave up her job in Germany

and was home six weeks earlier to help and spend some quality time with my mother.

When I saw my mother in hospital, she had lost so much weight that she was just skin and bone. On August 28, we celebrated her 58th birthday in the hospital and the room was filled with flowers, which my mum simply adored. On my previous trip to Dar, I prepaid a florist to deliver flowers to my mother on her birthday and for Christmas and Mum got an extra bouquet delivered automatically to our home. I went to the hospital everyday and found it hard to see my mother in pain and agony and the nurses feeding her with a constant supply of morphine. I now prayed God would take her away from her misery and give her peace as I saw no chance of her ever getting better. The biggest concern my mother had before she closed her eyes was what would happen to her handicapped son Jesse. She cared and looked after Jesse all his life and on the death bed, I promised my mum I would take care of him come what may. My mother had great faith that I would keep my promise and passed away peacefully on September 16, 1974 at the Muhimbili Hospital. She was only 58 years old and when I got the news of her death, I felt a sigh of relief that mum was out of her misery and pain and hopefully be in a better place. My mother was lucky to have her husband and five of her six children at her bedside before she passed away. It was my mother's intention to join my dad in Goa after he closed the deal on the condominium but that was not to be. Dad was so proud of the condo he purchased in Goa and his biggest regret was that my mother never got the chance to see it.

I convinced my younger brother Justin to immigrate to Canada and that I would sponsor him once I settled down in

Toronto. Dad decided to sell his house and retire in Goa as he originally planned to and Jesse decided that he would follow two years later and prematurely retire in Goa. The family would now be spread all over the world and in four continents, with one sister in Belgium, the other in Germany, my Dad in Goa, Justin and Jesse in Tanzania, my older brother Clement in Czechoslovakia on a two year training term and myself in Toronto, Canada. A week after the funeral, I headed back for London to wind up my affairs pack up and got ready for my move to Canada. This time the journey back to England was even harder for me to accept as I kept thinking of my mum, her smiles, and the delicious and tasty food she would prepare for us and the fact that I would never see her again just broke my heart. I thought of the cost of the trip from Canada to visit Jesse in Tanzania in the near future and the extra travel time of seven hours on the airplane.

Roma and Ignatius left for Canada on August 28, and were staying with her sister and were gainfully employed. They were waiting for news of my mother's condition and wondered when I would arrive in Canada. I got back to London and set a departure date for October 20, 1974 and booked my ticket on Freddie Laker Airways. I was invited to several farewell dinner parties and lunches and was tied down socially almost every day of the week. Carrie was now desperately looking for someone to share the flat with, as he could not afford to live there alone. I had dinner with Lynette and hoped she would make up her mind between her fiancé and myself and begged her to visit Canada with the hope that the infrastructure of Toronto may influence her decision to immigrate to Canada. There were twelve people at Gatwick Airport to bid me farewell and I became very emo-

tional when Dorothy and the two boys broke down as I walked towards the departure gates and I was very sad to leave England. Aggie was the only one with the cheerful face, almost happy to see me leave when he exclaimed, "It's only fifty quid for a ticket to fly back." He also went on to say that if they all pooled in five pounds each, they would cover my return fare for a visit to London.

Chapter 16

The flight on Freddie Laker Airlines to Toronto took seven hours, with superb service on board the aircraft. Maurice, Aggie and the gang were buying me farewell drinks at Gatwick Airport and later I continued drinking on board the plane trying to drown my sorrows or, if not, teaching them how to swim. When I landed at Toronto Lester Pearson Airport, I was totally inebriated and glad to see Ignatius and Hubert at the airport to meet me and especially help me carry my luggage out. Roma and Ignatius had rented a two-bedroom apartment on the seventh floor of the same building that her sister was living in and signed a one-year lease effective October 1, 1974. The building was located on Rathburn Road in Etobicoke and was nicknamed “Uganda House” by the Goan refugees from Uganda, as there were about thirty families that managed to get apartments in the building. Most families landed in Canada with just a few dollars in their pockets and struggled to make ends meet. There was a tremendous amount of camaraderie among the families, as most of them knew each other from back home. Those that had cars would volunteer to drive those that did not have cars to do their grocery shopping and doctor’s visits. Kids would share their bicycles, their toys and even their clothes. This was a great building to live in, with all the Goans to network with when you needed advice or transportation or general information on the social services that the country had to offer. It was a good feeling to see so many Goan faces all in one building.

I was suffering a 5-hour jet lag and a nasty hangover. I slept for 12 hours straight and woke up in time for brunch the next

day. Roma bought her bedroom furniture and at the same time picked-up a single bed for me. I was to report to work on Monday October 22nd, so I spent the Sunday refraining from any booze so as to be fresh for work in my new environment.

I lived in the west end of the city and had to commute an hour to the east end by bus, by train and then a long walk to the office. On my first day at work, I was allocated a desk and supplied with a tool kit and started working on a shelf full of broken machines. Derek, the service supervisor took me to lunch and this time told me that it was not appropriate to consume alcoholic beverages during working hours in Canada. I spent the whole week in the shop and went out on a service call the odd time using the company vehicle.

Driving in Toronto was a breeze after driving in the city of London as most the roads ran parallel to each other and in a grid formation. One week later, I was allowed to take the company car home after work and had to pay a small premium of 8 cents a mile for personal use, which included the gasoline, used. The company vehicle was a Pontiac Astra with a six-cylinder engine and was the most powerful car I had ever driven. Roma, Ignatius and I would go out into the countryside and gorge on the awesome fall colors, which I believe are one of the most beautiful in the world. The bright red, maroon, yellow, green and white shades are almost hard to describe. In a couple of weeks, the trees would lose all their leaves and look like bare skeletons of branches and twigs. The frost and snow flurries were expected soon and the scenery would change one hundred percent.

There were some restrictions using the company car so I now decided to buy my own vehicle. I passed my Canadian driving test on the first attempt and was now able to qualify

for personal auto insurance coverage. On December 15, 1974, I treated myself to an early Christmas present and took delivery of my first brand new car, a Fiat model 128. I paid \$2,995.00 for it, on the road, complete with all taxes and registration fees. The federal government did still not introduce G.S.T. I had to pay another \$22.00 for a radio to be installed. With gasoline at 49 cents a gallon, it cost me \$3.50 to fill the tank. I had landed in Canada with \$300.00 and used this money as a deposit to buy the car with a monthly installment of \$80.00. I drove my car to carry out my service calls and received a car allowance of 12 cents a mile. My average car allowance income was \$100.00 a month, which covered my installment payments and all expenses. Public transportation was cheap and bus fares were 25 cents flat rate to travel any distance in the metropolitan area.

The two-bedroom apartment we rented was approximately 1,300 square feet with a walk-in closet in the master bedroom. The monthly rent was \$175.00, which included all utilities (electricity, water & heat) a cable was hooked up to every unit to receive a free television signal from an antenna located on the roof of the building. Food was extremely cheap as you could fill an average shopping cart to the brim for about \$30.00. Beer was \$4.00 for a case of 24, bread was 15 cents a loaf and the daily newspaper, "The Toronto Star" was 10 cents. We shared the rent and living expenses and amazingly, we were left with a lot of disposal income. We made a lot of Goan friends but no one seemed to like the pub life so we spent a lot of evening's playing cards as the cold days of winter set in. We shared the cooking and surprisingly, our culinary skills improved as time went by. We did not scrounge on food and enjoyed steaks, salmon, shrimp and lobster every month. Roma purchased a new beige sofa set

and a couple of rugs from a store that was closing down and got a real bargain. We received and unpacked the trunks and boxes that we shipped out of England and our apartment looked beautiful, decorated with Zebra and wild life skins, Ebony statues and carvings that I brought from Tanzania.

I joined the Goan Overseas Association, which had a membership of over four hundred and attended the feast of St. Francis Xavier celebrated at the Lions Club followed with a social gathering. In mid December, the GOA organized a Christmas party for the kids, complete with Santa and his elves. Parents and adults would socialize by the bar while the kids were entertained by the elves while waiting for Santa to arrive. It's my belief that the adults had a better time than the kids. I decided to bake a cake and traditional Goan Christmas sweets together with Roma and her sister, and we produced some tasty and delicious treats.

Toronto received its first snowfall of the year on December 15 that year, and the scenery and landscape was just stunning. This was the first time I saw snow sticking and hanging on the branches of the fir and evergreen trees. Driving on the snow became interesting, as I did not have snow tires installed on the car, but having the experience of driving on muddy tracks in Tanzania made it easier. Christmas day was spent at Hubert and Greeba's apartment. We shared the cooking and planed to have a late lunch. With so many Goans in the building, the corridors of the building were filled with strong aromas of traditional Goan foods like Sorpotel, Xacuti, Vindalo and Rechaedo fish. The Goans of "Uganda House" had an open house policy on Christmas day and folks walked in and out of your apartment to have a quick drink. You prepared snacks and were prepared for

a mass number of visitors. Since we did not have to worry about driving home, everyone got smashed by the time they got back to their own apartments.

The New Year's Eve dance organized by the GOA was a grand occasion with a large buffet dinner complete with Prime Rib Steak carved by the chef. The hall was decorated and members were provided with hats, garlands, noisemakers and the usual paraphernalia to bring in the New Year. I met many people and made some new friends and acquaintances. Functions in Toronto ended at 2:00 a.m. compared with functions in England that wound up at 11:00 p.m. due to the bar licenses hours. For the exception on Christmas and New Year's Day, bars in England would shut down at 1:00 a.m. I had no regrets leaving England for Canada except missing my friends that took me five years to make. I did miss the fish & chips and promised myself to make it a point to eat fish & chips every time I visited England.

Chapter 17

January 1975, and the average temperatures was minus twelve degrees. The beautiful thing about living in Toronto was the buildings had very efficient heating systems and you could walk around your home in a regular pair of shorts and a cotton shirt with the outside temperature at minus 25 degrees Celsius. Sometimes it got so warm in the home that you had to open a window to cool down the place. Most women who used public transport to go to work would wear pants under their dresses or skirts or leg warmers and an extra layer of clothes to travel to work and then strip in the office to their comfortable office attire. My car had an engine block heater and I would plug the car into an electrical outlet at night that would heat the oil and coolant for an easy start in the morning. In February, which can be the coldest month, temperatures would drop to between minus 20 to minus 30 degrees Celsius. The coldest temperature I experienced in Toronto was minus 38 degree Celsius.

Within twelve weeks of working in Toronto, I surprised myself by accumulating a saving of over 1,200 dollars. This was the most amount of money I had in my saving account without trying since I left Tanzania. With the cost of living being so low and earning more money than I did in England, it wasn't hard to save. My goal was to save \$5,000 so I could take a trip to Goa, India to visit my dad, and at this rate, I knew that it would not be difficult to do. Having a permanent job and money in the bank, I sponsored my younger brother Justin to immigrate to Canada as he had very little of a future in Tanzania and I knew he would excel in Toronto. I wrote Justin a long letter explain-

ing the luxuries I enjoyed in Toronto and that he should seriously think of joining me what with the situation of shortages of food and basic commodities in Tanzania, Justin filed his papers in Dar-es-Salaam and was waiting to hear from the Canadian Embassy.

I met John Lopes at the New Year's dance and we exchanged phone numbers. John and I knew each other back in Tanzania and had recently immigrated to Canada and were living in the same neighborhood as myself. He had a couple of cousins Wanda and Carmen, both young ladies and about our age that he wanted to meet with and go out for a drink. They shared an apartment downtown with another roommate Vicki Da Costa and all the ladies hailed from Mombasa, Kenya and like us, they were all new immigrants. Francis D'Souza happened to be visiting Vicki, and the six of us piled into my new Fiat and we went to a restaurant to see Andy Nichols, a very talented guitarist, singer and a great showman from Guyana. Francis was a musician and played in a band and he marveled at the talent shown by Andy Nichols and was determined to see him again. We had a wonderful evening, though I had to limit myself to two drinks, as I was the designated driver. Over a period of time, I became very close to Francis, Vicki and John but drifted away from Carmen and Wanda as they had steady boyfriends.

It was about this time that I received my "Dear John" letter from Lynette telling me that she had definitely made up her mind and regretted we had to sever our relationship. Her father who was living in Goa took very ill and she anticipated frequent visits to India and wanted to be close to him. The journey from Canada would be too far off and almost unaffordable. I was heartbroken for, I hoped her decision would have swung

the other way and not let our friendship drift away. I received a birthday card from Lynette, and never heard from her again for she had moved from the hostel with no forwarding address.

I met several people at a party held in the recreation room of a large condominium complex. But to me, a young girl called Olivia stood out. I approached Olivia at the party and conned her into inviting me to dinner on the pretense that I had not eaten Goan food in a long while. I told her that I heard that she was a wonderful cook and she was flattered to hear that, considering she hardly ever went into the kitchen. In the fall that year, her parents were visiting from England and so she invited me and had her mother cook a delicious meal that I enjoyed. Her mother Libby was talented in the Goan cuisine and could cook up a storm in the kitchen. A couple of years later, her husband suddenly passed away after a massive heart attack and Libby was forced to become the breadwinner of the family. With her culinary skills, she opened a catering business and became well known in the Goan circle in London, catering for many parties and weddings. I got to know the family well had the pleasure of meeting Olivia's family and go on several vacations with her three sisters to Florida, Cuba and the USA.

My dad wound up his affairs in Tanzania and left to retire in Goa. My first priority was to go to Goa to see my father and also the homeland, which I last visited when I was barely two years old. Jesse would eventually join my dad after he was able to transfer his nest egg with the tough foreign exchange control laws in place with the government of Tanzania. I felt very sorry for Jesse, as he was now all alone what with conditions getting tough and great shortages of food and supplies. The government was broke and short of foreign exchange and unable to trade

with the world. People would line up for the bare necessities like toiletries, bread, cooking oil and canned goods. Some folks even started to barter goods to keep going and I wanted Jesse leave and join my dad as soon as possible. He had his whole life savings at stake and decided to hang in there under the difficult circumstances.

My circle of friends now spread to the four corners of the globe and I spent a lot of time writing letters to keep in touch and spent a fortune in postage. Patricia Lee and Diane Bushel from Perth, Australia kept inviting me to visit, but I kept putting it off due to the cost and distance. I met Jane Gonsalves from Chicago USA in the summer of 1975 at a Goan function organized by the GOA in Toronto. I was glad to meet her as we last saw each other in Dar-es-Salaam in 1972 when I was visiting from England. Jane immigrated to the USA to join her brother and sister and extended me an invitation to visit her and her family in the windy city of Chicago. I did not have any vacation time, as I had not completed a year with the company. The Canadian thanksgiving holiday is always celebrated on the second Monday in October. I invited John Lopes and a girlfriend to join me on the long weekend trip to visit Jane and we took a flight out on a Friday evening and landed at Chicago O'Hare Airport. I was amazed at the size of the airport and the number of passengers that went through it each day for it was the busiest airport in the world. Jane and her brother Leslie were at the airport to meet us and drove to their apartment located in the west side of the city. They lived with their mother in a two-bedroom unit and the old girl prepared a lovely dinner for us when we got home. I first met Leslie in Dar-es-Salaam when he was vacationing in Tanzania in 1972 at the Goan club at the

bar and had a drink with him. Les had a makeshift bar at home and probably had more alcohol than an average local tavern. I was used to seeing liquor bottles that were 750 ml and one-liter sizes but most of the bottles in the bar were 1.75-liter size. I realized later that liquor was very cheap in the state of Illinois as the average price of \$1.75 a bottle of Bacardi Rum, Scotch Whiskey, Gin, and Brandy was \$4.00. We were having a ball with Les, Jane and their mother, they being gracious hosts and we enjoyed a wonderful city tour chauffeured by Les. The highlight of the tour was a visit to the Sears Tower, the tallest building in the world soaring 110 stories. We took the elevator to the top of the building onto the observation floor and had a fantastic view of the city. We partied till the early hours of the morning and got very little sleep that weekend. Sleeping arrangements were easy, the girls got the rooms and the boys crashed on the living room floor. I had never in my wildest dreams thought that I would meet Leslie's sister Juanita better known as Jo and her husband Bob Birkmeyer, who had stayed with me in Tanga in the late sixties while touring Tanzania. They were pleased to meet me and invited me to spend Thanksgiving with them in November as they hosted the day with their family and friends. October 22, 1975 would be my one-year anniversary with NTI, the company I worked for and I was now entitled to two weeks of vacation. With no other plans in mind, I accepted their offer and decided to drive to Chicago in November and enjoy the countryside, as it was only an eight-hour drive from Toronto.

Roma and Ignatius had saved enough money for a down payment to buy a Town House and had a closing date for November 03, 1975. It was a lovely three-bedroom corner unit and about 5 kilometers from where we lived. This is the first time since their

marriage that Roma and Ignatius got to live on their own after having to share accommodation with their family and myself in three and a half years. They were difficult years for most of us displaced from our roots and we had to do what it took to stay afloat. I decided to take over the new lease of the apartment and hoped my brother Justin would qualify for immigration and save a room for him, as there was not much difference in the rent between a one bedroom and two-bedroom apartment. I picked up a used bedroom suite and sofa set complete with a buffet and hutch and six chairs. Although I had a mix and match ensemble, the room did not look all that bad after all. I graduated to the master bedroom that had a 6'x 8' walk-in closet that most women would die for and had my own place and privacy for the first time in five years. There was no more having to rent a motel room or sneak in and out of the house for those special moments.

Chapter 18

Fr. Carlito, a Catholic priest from Tanzania was on vacation in Toronto and on a mission to raise funds. When I told him of my plans to go to Chicago for Thanksgiving, he asked me if he could tag along. Vicki had some vacation time that she had to use by the end of the year and since there was a chaperone, she decided to join and come along. I called Les and Jane to advise them of two more guests for Thanksgiving; they welcomed them in the true well-known hospitality of the Zanzibari people. Closer to the time of our drive to Chicago, I suggested we take a trip all the way to Disney land in Florida and Vicki and the padre thought that it was a great idea.

The American Thanksgiving is held on the last Thursday in November and is always celebrated in grand style. Thanksgiving is a celebration of the American Indians and pilgrims offering each other food in 1620, when a boat filled with more than one hundred people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in the New World. The Pilgrims settled in what is now the state of Massachusetts. Their first winter in the New World was difficult. They had arrived too late to grow any crops, and without fresh food, half the colony died from disease and hunger. The following spring the Mashpee Wampanoag Indians taught them how to grow corn (maize), a new food for the colonists. They showed them how to grow other crops in the unfamiliar soil and how to hunt and fish. In the autumn of 1621, bountiful crops of corn, barley, beans and pumpkins were harvested. The colonists had much to be thankful for, so a feast was planned. They invited the local Indian chief and 90 Indians (Natives). The Indians brought deer to roast with the turkeys and other wild

game offered by the colonists. The colonists had learned how to cook cranberries and different kinds of corn and squash dishes from the Indians. To this first Thanksgiving, the Indians had even brought popcorn. To this day, Thanksgiving is one of the biggest holidays of the United States of America. The airlines are virtually sold out of seats and the traffic on the highways is a nightmare for people going home to spend Thanksgiving with their families. In all honesty, Thanksgiving is celebrated with more enthusiasm than Christmas.

The drive to Chicago was not as complicated as I thought it would be for I had never driven in the United States before. I was intimidated by the multilane traffic when I reached the metropolitan area of Chicago but sailed right through with the help of Vicki, a great navigator, right to Leslie's home on a Wednesday afternoon. With my car parked for the weekend, I was free to drink to my heart's content. Les was up early Thursday morning to dress and baste the turkey for the oven while Jane prepared the sweet potato pie.

We set out for dinner at Juanita's place at 4 p.m., a ten-minute drive, with the car loaded with a turkey, sweet potato pies and champagne. There were four long tables stretched from the dining room to the living room draped with damask tablecloths, fine china and flatware for a sit-down dinner for 24 people. As tradition would have it, the same food shared by the Natives and Pilgrims over three centuries ago, like turkey, sweet potato, corn, cranberries, squash and greens was served for dinner. All the men wore ties and jackets while the ladies were dressed fit for the occasion. Champagne, wine and liquor flowed easily while Les carved two turkeys. He was good at this and looked like a professional and had a system of carving the turkey, putting

all the dark meat on one platter and all the white on another. The evening wound up at about midnight and we headed home to Les's place to continue the party. Since Les was the designated driver, he had to moderate his drinking. The day after Thanksgiving is called Black Friday in the USA. It is the greatest shopping day of the year in the USA. People stand in line at the shopping malls and stores as early as 3:00 a.m. to get the best deals. Vendors have genuine sale prices for 50% and more off the suggested list price. Les took us on the Chicago tour, this time for the benefit of Vicki and the padre rather than for the shopping, and we took in the sights and a trip to Chicago's famous aquarium. Les and I became very close friends over the years and I became a frequent guest at Thanksgiving of the Birkmeyer and Gonsalves families. In all the years that I've lived in Canada, I've seldom missed Chicago for Thanksgiving.

We left for Florida on Sunday morning and I drove right through, stopping only for meals, fuel and washroom breaks. We traveled through Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and finally to Kissimmee Florida. We visited Disneyland, which was the only theme park at the time while The Epcot Center was under construction and Universal Studios was not even thought off. We marveled at all the events and shows feeling like kids again. I was amazed by the concrete construction of the Robinson Crusoe tree house that looked so real with plastic leaves. Our journey back to Toronto took us through Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan and over the bridge to Winsor Canada. When we ended our trip, we had covered just over 5,000 kilometers, with me being the only driver.

We had now rolled into December and the feeling of Christmas was in the air. Carols echoed on the radios and the streets

and shops were decorated with lights, holly and wreaths. Soon it was Christmas day and Roma and Ignatius spent the season holidays with her sister and Hubert in Uganda House. Since I was on my own that year, I closed my kitchen for Christmas and feasted with my friends and neighbors. I applied for a four-week leave of absence at work to visit my dad in India for the month of May 1976 and my boss approved the leave without hesitation fearing I would otherwise terminate my services with the company.

Chapter 19

I was getting excited as I started shopping and packing for my trip to India at the end of April 1976. The baggage allowance of the airlines at the time was 20 kilos and when you needed clothes for a month, it did not take too much to fill the suitcase. I had gifts for my dad, my schoolteacher and her kids, for my cousins and for Nico and his family. The airlines were not too particular about your hand luggage and I must have had fifteen kilos in my handbag. I booked my ticket on British Airways and travelled via London to Bombay and then on a local carrier from Bombay to Goa. I stopped over in London for three days and Maurice was at Heathrow Airport to meet me. It was strange to see the narrow streets with small cars after the monster vehicles and trucks of Toronto. I stopped by the old office the next day and was glad to meet everyone. The President, Mr. Hawker took me to a pub lunch and insisted on me using his daughter's car as she was on vacation in France. It was convenient to have a car in London but I had to concentrate really hard for I was used to driving on the other side of the road in Canada. It was difficult trying to meet my friends and called Xavier in North London to get the lads together the next evening at the famous hangout "The Manor House Pub." After three days in London, I drove to the old office to return the vehicle that my boss loaned me and took a cab to the airport for my onward journey to Bombay. Talk about wonderful people and hospitality; my boss got one of the junior technicians to drive me to the airport and save me the cab fare.

The plane landed at Bombay Santa Cruz Airport in the

early hours of the morning and I had to wait till noon for my connection to Goa. There was a terrible stench in the air and it just didn't seem to go away. The airport looked antiquated with cracked concrete floors and paint peeling of the walls. The luggage trolleys were made of heavy gage steel and were difficult to maneuver even when they were empty. Hundreds of porters crowded you to carry your bags. They intimidated me as I was warned about pickpockets and scam artists at the airport. Custom officers were known to give people of Indian origin, coming from western countries a hard time as they hoped to get "Chai" money out of them. Fortunately, all went well at Bombay airport and the flight to Dabolim airport in Goa took just 45 minutes. We landed at this quaint tiny little airport, as Goa received only two flights a day and shared the runway with the Indian Air Force.

Goa is India's smallest state in terms of area and the fourth smallest state in terms of population and is located on the west coast of India in the region known as the Konkan. It is bounded by the state of Maharashtra to the north and by Karnataka to the east and south, while the Arabian Sea forms its western coast. Panjim is the state's capital. Vasco da Gama is the largest city. The historic city of Margao still exhibits the influence of Portuguese culture. The Portuguese first landed in Goa as merchants, in the early 16th century, and conquered it soon thereafter. The Portuguese overseas territory existed for about 550 years, until it was annexed by India in 1962.

The Airport bus drove along the Zuari river embankment and the road was picturesque fringed with coconut palms and Mango trees. Mediterranean style houses, which were built more than a century ago, stood out with their walls and stone

fences painted with white wash. The narrow roads were shared with the vehicular traffic, bullock-carts, dogs, pigs and cows that were left unattended. The bus driver drove me really crazy for he had one of those loud-pitched air horns and blasted it continuously. We stopped at Cortalim to board a pontoon ferry to cross the Zuari River and carry on our journey to the Airline office terminal in Panjim.

My dad was anxiously waiting for me at the terminal and greeted me with a big hug. His condominium was literally a three minutes walk from the airline office and we walked home while a porter carried the luggage. Dad had a modern two bedroom flat with three balconies, a large fitted kitchen and a bathroom with a shower and toilet. There was a beautiful dining table made of solid mahogany and a sofa set complete with end tables. There was a picture frame of my mother on one wall and on the other wall, a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus. I took a cold shower and later sat down and had a beer with my dad. I was dying for a cigarette but I never smoked in front of my dad out of respect for him and was not about to do so now. It was amazing to experience the hospitality of the neighbors who were aware of my arrival and walked in with cookies and homemade delicacies for tea and food for the evening meal, since my dad lived on his own.

It is hard to explain the strange feeling of a special bond and sense of belonging I felt towards Goa, a country my father always called home. Growing up in Tanzania and England, I was always considered a foreigner and this was home. The majority of the people shared the same skin pigmentation and spoke Konkani, the local language. Later, after tea, I took a walk with my dad to the ocean front two blocks away and sat on the bench

enjoying the breeze and watching the fishing boats and trawlers. My dad smoked one of the cigars I brought for him and we both sipped on two miniature bottles of Scotch whiskey I brought from the aircraft. Once again, I died for a cigarette and then thought – this would be a good time to quit smoking.

April and May are regarded as the hottest months in southern India and temperatures in Goa hovered between 30 to 40 degrees Celsius. Virtually no homes had air conditioning and even the wealthy that could afford air conditioners had a hard time using them, as there was a problem with the power supply even in the capital city of Panjim. All homes with refrigerators had to have a power regulator installed on the fridge or the compressor would sooner or later short out due to the fluctuation of the electric current. Thank God my dad had installed ceiling fans in all the rooms of the flat for it would otherwise be hell.

Chapter 20

I woke up early the following day to the noise of the cars hooting and vendors selling fresh fish, fruit and vegetables right at the doorstep. Furthermore, with the 11-hour time difference between Toronto and Goa, the body clock needed some time to get adjusted to. I unpacked my suitcase; I brought my dad a shirt, a box of cigars, a carton of cigarettes and a bottle of fine Cognac. People in India longed for imported goods as the government had a policy of producing and buying local. I took a walk to the local market and realized how primitive and antiquated everything seemed to be. There were no cash registers and all weighing scales were mechanical. Shoppers bargained with the vendors and it brought familiar memories of my younger days in Tanzania. Vendors wrapped produce and goods in newspaper and everyone carried a cloth shopping bag. At that time, I thought that the Goan people were so backward but now realize that maybe they were far ahead. Recycling and saving the planet, they had a head start of 40 years towards helping the environment and eco system.

My dad and I packed a small bag and made our way to Salcette, the south side of Goa, to spend a couple of days with relatives. Dad hailed from a village called Majorda and my mum from the next village called Verna. We took the local bus that was packed and overloaded to the Verna village and rented a couple of bicycles. My dad was 72 years old and heavy built and I was surprised to see how fast he rode the bicycle on the bumpy and narrow village roads at his age. I went to my dad's ancestral home that was built by my grandfather in the 1800's and was sad to see the condition of the house. In accordance

with Portuguese law, my dad automatically inherited this house being the oldest male child of the family. My uncle and his three children lived in the house ever since my dad left for Africa in the late 1930's. My dad used to send my uncle money to maintain the house but my uncle did very little to improve the condition of the house and spent the money on himself. When my dad returned to Goa to retire, my uncle informed my dad of the new Indian law "squatters rights" and claimed the property for himself. My uncle and cousins did not speak English and I found it hard to converse with the little Konkani I spoke. It is hard to describe how I felt dressed up in jeans and wearing sneakers and a quartz watch and being admired as the rich cousin from America. Furthermore, my dad had a falling-out with his brother over the property matter and I was not very comfortable with the situation. I brought some chocolates from England and a local bottle of whiskey and Fený, (a Goan home-brewed liquor) for the family as gifts.

We cycled back to the Verna Village Square and returned the rental bikes and waked to my aunt's house just down the road. She was so excited to see me and hugged and kissed me with tears rolling down her eyes. She had last seen me when I was a baby of two years many years ago. My cousin Guilhermina had to be twenty-five years older than me and I called her "aunty" out of respect; she had children as old as me. Guilhermina and her five children lived in Bombay and were home in Goa for the summer holidays. It was very refreshing to have some younger company, as I would otherwise have to hang out with the old folk. April was the mango and jackfruit season and the trees in the yard were loaded with fruit. There were several coconut palm trees and a little stream flowing behind the house.

Across the stream were vast lush green paddy fields with coconut palms planted to create the dividing lines of the different owners. It was quiet and peaceful with only the sound of chickens, birds, pigs and the occasional blare of the bus horn breaking the silence now and then. They say that the apple does not fall far from the tree; my mum must have got her cooking skills and talent from my aunt. The food for the next two days was just fantastic, especially the crab curry cooked with coconut milk.

The family lived in a three-bedroom bungalow with a well that provided water built just outside the kitchen window. There was no running water in the house and one had to take a bath with a cup and pail of water. The electric lines were installed only a year earlier and thank God, there was a fridge in the house. There was a propane stove in the kitchen and a charcoal stove used as a backup, as gas was rationed and sometimes not available for days. A large water tank in the backyard was heated with logs, twigs and coconut husks and leaves to supply bathing water. I marveled at the efficiency and practicality of the people using natural resources to the fullest. Nothing was wasted in the house; vegetable and potato peels were fed to the pigs and chickens. Newspapers and cardboard boxes were burnt to heat the bath water and the poor tribal people to be sold for recycling collected anything plastic. A week before I arrived in Goa, my uncle installed ceiling fans, which served a double purpose. They cooled the room and kept the mosquitoes away. There was an outhouse for the toilet. But the thing that scared me the most, was the fright of snakes in the night, for Cobras are prevalent in southern India and are very poisonous. My aunt called the local toddy tapper and ordered a bottle of toddy for me to drink in the morning. Coconut toddy is delicious and

sweet, especially when you drink it early in the early morning before the heat of the morning sun. Toddy tappers climb a coconut tree and cut a sliver on the stalk of the arm of the palm that is about to bear flowers. They climb up the tree in the evenings and tie a pot under the bruise they have just created and a sap oozes out slowly all through the night until nature builds a clot to stop it. The tappers climb the tree in the morning, collect the sap (toddy) and cut of another thin sliver on the stalk and go through the same process again. When toddy is allowed to sit for a couple of days, it ferments and gets sour and is then used in the process of distilling and making Feny, a potent alcoholic drink, also called “madell” by the locals. My aunt would collect and fill a big earthen pot, store it for one year and it would become flavorful vinegar after the fermenting process. After two wonderful days in the village, we headed back to the hustle and bustle of the city life. Back in the city, I specially enjoyed eating Masala Dosa and Wadas in the Madras South Indian restaurants, a nice change after eating Goan food for a week.

My friend Nico Pinto tried to immigrate to Australia, Canada, and the USA but got rejected by all countries. In one case, he got accepted but failed his medical exam. In 1975, he wound-up his affairs in Tanzania, got married and made his home in Goa. His wife Anita, was a pretty lady from Bombay who had a Bachelor of Arts degree and had worked for a large advertising company. She gave it all up to settle in Goa and raise a family together with Nico. I took a rickety old cab from Panjim for the seven-kilometer ride to Salvador du Mundo where Nico lived in his ancestral home. The cab driver would turn off the engine and coast to save gas and it took forever to get there. 25 kilometers an hour was the fastest speed the cab reached and I was the

happier for it as I felt very unsafe in this vehicle that would never ever pass the roadworthy test in Canada. Nico lived in a huge house, which I would estimate to be more than six thousand square feet, all on one level. The bedrooms were approximately 20 x 25 feet each. The dining room had to be 20 x 30 feet. All the rooms of the house had ceilings that were at least 15 feet high and a large verandah wrapped around the front and side of the house. I met Anita for the first time and felt very happy for Nico for finding the woman of his dreams. Nico wasted no time starting a family and Anita was pregnant and was due to have her baby in August. Anita was a gracious host and prepared a beautiful meal at very short notice, while the two of us sat in the porch sipping Cashew Feny and talking about old times. Nico had a dream to open up his own business in Goa. He had a lot of expertise in the Automobile Industry, having worked for Oil companies most of his life. He wanted to build the most sophisticated auto garage with a dust free paint booth and advanced wheel alignment equipment, which would be one-of-a-kind in Goa. He has started the groundwork and put a deposit on a unit that was under construction. Getting back to Panjim was an ordeal. The buses bound for Panjim were packed like sardines with passengers and did not stop for additional people. I was on the verge of riding a bicycle back to Panjim when a cab passed by and took me home.

Academically, I was not the greatest student and did not “apply” myself according to my teachers. In a class of 28 students, I ranked between 18 and 22 and to my consolation, I felt good knowing that I was not the last in the class. One of my teachers, Lydia Carvalho, a young beautiful rookie fresh from teacher’s training school knew I had potential and decided to

make it her goal that I passed and finished high school. She gave me extra attention and threatened to talk to my parents if I failed to do my homework. Later I learned that she used to correct my papers and inflate my score to encourage me to improve myself. Her plan worked and for the first time in my life I ranked number five in my class. In later years, Lydia moved back to India with her husband and two children and settled in Goa. I was always very grateful for what she did and now treated her as my contemporary and corresponded with her, exchanging Christmas cards over the years. I took a cab to visit her in Porvorim, a village not too far from Panjim. I was loaded with gifts for her children and a bottle of her favorite perfume “Blue Grass” by Elizabeth Arden. She was very light skinned and turned red, blushing while she opened her gift, thanking me profusely for she had run out of her stock ages ago. Her big question was how did I know that this was her favorite perfume? I told her that she moved me from the rear of the class to sit on the front row to monitor my movements and drove me wild with this exotic smell. She was surprised at how observant I was, for most folk took boys for granted. I told her that I remembered the candy striped dress she wore with matching ear rings that had tiny pastel colored roses with shades of pink, green, yellow and lavender. It blew her mind when I told her that she wore sandals with blue, green and yellow straps to match her ensemble. She was happy at my success, for many kids who excelled far more than I did struggled to get decent jobs in India. My father and I were invited to lunch at her home where she prepared a lovely spread.

The expulsion of the Asians by Idi Amin from Uganda led Roma's parents and her two younger brothers to find refuge in

Goa. Roma and Ignatius gave me a gift parcel for her family who I was about to meet for the very first time. They had heard so much about me over the years from their daughter who corresponded to them on a regular basis and had felt a certain comfort that I sort of acted as a guardian to their daughter. They invited my father and me to lunch and I spent the afternoon talking of my experiences with Roma and Ignatius in England and Canada while the two boys Cornel and Kenneth wore their “Canada” t-shirts, showing off in the village of Ibo Dando Santa Cruz where they lived.

The month went by quickly and after one more visit to see the cousins in Verna, it was time to say goodbye and get packed and ready to head home to Canada. I was not too sad to leave my dad behind this time as my sister in Germany and I had made plans to fly my dad to visit us in the summer later that year and dad was waiting for his visas to be processed. We knew that there would be no problem acquiring visas, as dad was old and applying as a visitor. The journey home was long and tiring and after I got back to Toronto, I could have taken another week off work to rest.

Chapter 21

I met a pretty young lady in Goa who was in the process of making her way to Canada on a working Visa and have to be very discrete of her identity. I had the pleasure of having lunch with her and promised to carry a document to her relatives who lived in my neighborhood in Toronto that was needed by the Canadian authorities. She finally arrived in Canada and contacted me and as she did not have any friends, spent a lot of time with me. We got very close and went out almost every weekend. She was a very beautiful and a talented dancer. I fell in love with her. She enjoyed my cooking and I was encouraged to venture into making exotic dishes to surprise her. I would cook baby-shrimp and clams with onions and Rechaed masala and stuff them into whole junior squid and then bake them, brushing and basting with olive oil. I would prepare curry with fresh crabs and use coconut milk squeezed from fresh grated coconuts just to name a few dishes.

Two years later, she made a trip to Goa to visit her family. Meanwhile, I would housesit her apartment, had her car serviced and took care of her chores. On her return, she told me that she met someone in Goa and that she had agreed to marry him. I was angry, hurt and disappointed. Thoughts I am ashamed to mention crossed my mind. I eventually got her out of my mind and system. This was the last serious relationship I had in my life and found it very hard to trust another woman again. I developed my new motto of the three “F’s – Find, F*** and Forget.

I got some exciting news at the end of May. I received a letter from my brother Justin that he received his Visa for immigration

to Canada and was scheduled to arrive early July. I couldn't be happier to learn that Justin and my dad would be here at the same time and I would be able to show my dad a great time for he had never been to a western country before. This time I bought some new bedroom furniture for the second room and started planning an itinerary for my dad's stay way in advance.

Justin arrived in Toronto from Tanzania on July 07, 1977 just before the summer Olympics. I had a black and white television set and told him that if he wanted to really enjoy the Olympics, he would have to buy a color set, since he would be staying with me. Justin applied for jobs at various companies and was not successful securing a job as an architect. He was offered junior positions as draftsmen and having worked on major projects in Tanzania as an assistant and main architect, he declined the offers and moved to Edmonton, Alberta where he managed to get a job pretty easily. Justin had a girlfriend in Bombay and corresponded with her on a regular basis. He had never been alone and was lonely and found it hard to cope in Edmonton. He proposed to his girlfriend, Tina Fernandes who accepted his hand in marriage and her papers were now in the pipeline for the move to Canada.

At about the same time, Justin was settling down, my dad took a nasty fall in Goa and broke his hip. Dad believed he had just bruised himself and refused to go to the hospital. When the pain got excruciating, he admitted himself into the hospital. My sister Annette took her vacation and travelled from Germany to spend a month with him. After a five-week stay in Goa, Annette returned to Germany and Virgilia, my other sister in Germany, came to Goa to take care of my dad. One thing led to another, and my dad's condition got worse and he eventually

died on October 20, 1976 after a bout of pneumonia. I was devastated at the news of my father's death but felt consoled that I got to spend a month of quality time with him earlier in the year. My sister took care of the funeral arrangements and later returned to her family in Germany. My dad was only 72 years old at the time of his death and my biggest regret was that my father missed his opportunity to see his kids settled in Europe and Canada. We had plans to give him the greatest time of his life after he worked hard and long hours depriving him of a lot to give us the best in life. My siblings and I will never forget the unconditional love and commitment my dad had for his children and family right to the end of his life.

Nico and Anita were proud parents of a baby boy, William on August 08, 1976. I was honored and privileged to be asked if I would be godfather to "Billy" as they now called him. Billy was their first child and only boy in the Pinto family and I gladly accepted the honor. Billy was my second Godchild and I now had a girl and a boy as Godchildren.

My brother Justin was lonely and missed me and my friends and the extreme cold and temperatures of Edmonton convinced him to move back to Ontario. He landed in Toronto in early December and desperately needed transportation. I offered him my car and asked him to take over the loan payments of 15 months at 80 dollars a month. With a steady job and comfortable income, I graduated to a luxurious, larger vehicle. I bought a Pontiac LeMans. The car was equipped with a 6,000 CC engine, power brakes, power steering, power windows, automatic transmission and air conditioning. It was a great joy to drive this car after the little Fiat that had a manual transmission. On the other hand my wallet felt the pinch as my fuel bills

now trebled. Now it cost me \$10 to fill up the tank and get half the fuel economy compared to the Fiat, but my motto was “Live and let live” you only live once. Justin needed to get a job and worked as a draftsman to make ends meet. He also had a wedding planned once his fiancé received her papers to immigrate. It was good to have family at Christmas after having spent mine with friends over the last few years. Christmas once again was a new experience for Justin and a fun time at Uganda House.

Chapter 22

Jesse tried to visit my dad when he was ill but could not get approval from the Bank of Tanzania to purchase a ticket to travel. Eventually, he was able to get travel documents after my Dad passed away and he went to Goa in December of 1976. This was the first time he went back to Goa after he contracted Polio on his first visit as a kid in 1948. My aunt who cared and nursed him when he was ill was overwhelmed to see him as the doctors at the time told my father and family that Jesse would be lucky to live to be sixteen years old. Both Justin and I felt very happy Jess would be spending Christmas in Goa with the cousins, knowing that he would be with family and not alone in Dar-es-Salaam.

The winter was harsh in January 1977. The kids in the building built a skating rink by pouring water on the snow and letting it freeze overnight. It was fun to watch the kids skate and I decided to join the kids and try my skills on the ice. After a few falls, I knew that skating was not for me as I could foresee myself fracturing a bone in the near future. We played a lot of cards in the winter and rummy was the most popular game. There were enough people to form a table in Uganda House and you had to come early to secure a seat at the table.

I turned 31 on the 1st. of April and expected a few friends over for the evening. Before long, about thirty friends called to tell me they were stopping in for a drink. I prepared dinner with the help of some of the ladies at Uganda House and the spirit of “Open House” started once again in Toronto, which exists to this very day. Justin received news that Tina received her Visa to Canada and was expected to arrive at the end of Septem-

ber. The ruling by the Canadian government was that anyone entering Canada on a marriage Visa had to tie the knot within one month of entry into the country. I helped Justin with the wedding preparations and he set the wedding date for October 22, 1977.

The summer went by quickly and Tina arrived at the end of September as planned. She was extremely shy, soft spoken and intimidated by the cold and infrastructure of Canada. She was a poor cook had probably taken a crash course with her mother before her trip to Canada. She will kill me for writing this in my memoirs but in all honesty, over the years she wound up to be a great chef. She had only one distant relative living in Toronto who stood in for her father to give her away at her wedding.

October 22nd was a cool fall day with the trees wearing their beautiful colors. Justin had invited about fifty guests to the wedding and the reception was held at The Valhalla Inn that was located just round the corner from where we lived. Tina made a beautiful bride and was livid at the fact that her husband was wearing rented clothes at their wedding referring to the tuxedos both Justin and I wore and insisted that he buy a suit. I had a hard time convincing her that this was a done thing in the western world and we would not be the only Goans renting tuxedos. We had a fun wedding and Justin and Tina left to spend their honeymoon in Mexico. While he was gone, I managed to secure and rented an apartment in Uganda House for Justine and Tina, thus making it one more new unit rented by Goans in the building. Tina managed to get a very good job at the Red Cross of Canada and with a double income, things now looked great for Justin and Tina.

A good buddy of mine, Raul Demello from Moshi, Tanzania

moved to Toronto and was staying with his sister in the east end of the city. He was an addicted card player and used to spend weekends at Uganda House with me joining the card games that would start Friday evening and go through the night to Saturday noon. He eventually moved to Uganda House and shared my apartment with me and I now started giving Raul cooking lessons to help in the kitchen. He shared my apartment until his mother arrived and then moved to a unit in the same building.

Roma was pregnant and expecting a baby in December and with so many gamblers at Uganda House, wagers were set to determine the sex of the child. I placed my bet and cannot remember if I won or not. Roma delivered a healthy baby boy on December 15th and named him David Simon Coelho. There was a lot of excitement and Ignatius dished out huge Cuban cigars. I was thrilled and honored to be asked to be the Godfather to David who would now be my third Godchild. Traditionally, most parents choose their siblings and family to be Godparents to their children and both Ignatius and Roma had a few to choose from. I felt special and most privileged, and proudly accepted the honor of being Godfather to David.

Francis, Vicki and I planned to visit and tour India together and planned our journey to leave Toronto in early December. The plan was to complete the tour of India together and wind up in Goa where we would split and go our separate ways. We left Toronto in mid December and landed in Bombay and spent a few days sightseeing and visiting family and friends. We spent Christmas with Francis's sister Maria and her husband Roman and attended an open air midnight service at Don Bosco's church in Matunga where there had to be over 1,500 people at the service. The Altar was set under a large Mango tree and lit

up with hundreds of Christmas tree lights with loud speakers set around the pavilion. Soon after Christmas in Bombay, we flew to Delhi and travelled to Agra to visit the world famous Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal was built by the Mughal Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife Mumtaz Mahal and is regarded to be one of the greatest gifts of mankind to a woman. From Delhi, we took the plane to Madras and stayed in a five star hotel but I was disappointed touring the city and beaches. From Madras we travelled on to Bangalore and stayed with Vicki's aunt's family and went to the New Year's dance with her cousins. The function was so poorly organized that we left just after the New Year rolled in and were home in bed by 1.00 am. We took a day trip to Mysore and had a tour of a palace owned by one of the Mughals and ended our trip at Mysore's most famous Brindavan Gardens. From Bangalore, we travelled to Goa where we split up and planned to meet for dinner before our flight back to Canada. While Vicki and Francis went to Margao, I went to Mapuca to spend a few days with Nico. His business was struggling due to lack of skilled labor and the mentality of most people, which Nico had not anticipated. People shopped by price and not quality and Nico's garage was equipped with the best tools and service. Nico had the only dust proof auto paint shop in Goa but professional Goans with an upscale income would have their cars painted at makeshift workshops conducting their business and working under the mango trees. Nico had 30 technicians on his payroll but there never was a week with a 100% turnout of the staff. On many a Monday, only fifteen men would show up for work. On the 2nd of January that year, only two technicians showed up for work and Nico was frustrated and had plans of selling the workshop. With less than two weeks in Goa, it was

tough visiting family and friends as nobody had phones in the house. Everyone you visited expected you to return and have a meal with them. The hospitality in Goa is second to none but with the poor communications and transportation, it was hard to please people. I spent some time with the cousins in Verna and eventually met up with Vicki and Francis to head home to Canada.

Chapter 23

It was 1978 and all my friends are buying homes and making babies. The influx of Goan immigrants to Toronto from Tanzania was incredible and every month, someone or the other that I had known back home was a new face in Toronto. My good friend Sonny Vaz had immigrated to Perth in Western Australia to join his brother and sister. Sonny won a jackpot in the casino and planned to take his family to India for Christmas of 1980 and asked me to try and join him and meet with Nico in Goa for old time sakes. I had twenty-two months to save up for the trip and applied for vacation almost two years in advance. I needed six weeks time off and lied to my boss that I was getting married to get the leave approved. To authenticate this, I got Nico to print a few wedding invitation cards as printing was cheap in India and the fictitious bride was named "Cortrine Jaebel Fernandes." I knew I was coming back to tell my colleagues at work that the marriage had to be cancelled for a reason I hate to publish in this memoir. My sister Virgilia and brother in law Willy were visiting from Germany for six weeks and Willy being a school teacher got a lot of vacation. I booked my holidays and the three of us took a flight to Calgary to visit Western Canada. We stayed with the Dourado family. Albertina, Veronica and Manual for a couple of days and took in a tour of the city and then rented a car and drove off to Banff. We had lunch at the famous Fairmont Chateau Louise and later headed out to Vancouver British Columbia driving across Jasper Park via the Trans Atlantic Highway. I am unable to describe the beauty of the scenery through the Rock Mountains. Snow capped mountains, blue

water lakes fringed with fir trees, hot springs, mini waterfalls, and rivers lined the route. We stopped to visit The Crows Foot Glacier and a native Indian village. We drove through Rogers Pass and down the Rocky Mountains to Vancouver. We spent three days with my classmate Raymond D'Souza who was now married to Vivien and blessed with a cute little girl Lara. Ray took us on a tour of the city and a visit to the famous Stanley Park. We attended a Salmon festival on Vancouver beach where the local Lions Club organized a charity BBQ with salmon donated by the Fisheries Association. We took the scenic route along the American border through the Okanagan valley passing apple and peach orchard and crystal clear lakes along the route. This valley is regarded to have the warmest temperatures in Canada and many people spend their retirement years here. Our journey ended at Calgary where we returned the rental car and took the flight back to Toronto. Justin and Tina did not waste too much time and Tina was expecting a baby in November. Justin and I were not too pleased about Jesse going to settle in India, as there are no provisions made for the handicapped. I did not see any ramps for wheel chair access at public places nor preferred parking either. India I believe was country for survival of the fittest. The only great advantage living in Goa was being able to get cheap help such as domestic maids, cooks and a full time chauffeurs. We had a notion that Jesse would like Canada and be happier here as people with far greater disabilities cope better; even joining the work force. We felt that if he can withstand the winter, the summer would be just a breeze. We got the ball rolling and

Called Jesse and invited him to spend Christmas with us. He

applied and received a tourist visa for Canada and was expected to land in Toronto in mid December. Justin and Tina were proud parents of a baby boy Shaun born on November 14th ironically sharing the same birthday as my older brother Clement. Good old Uncle Xavier spent a lot of time fussing and dotting over his nephew and got to see him every day as we lived in the same building. Both my sisters and brother in law decided to spend Christmas with us. Now, the whole family minus my oldest brother Clement would be together in Toronto. The christening was set for early January and the family celebrated three birthdays and a christening together: Justin's birthday on the 12th of December, Tina's on the 4th and Jesse's on the 5th of January.

Jesse could not believe how disciplined and efficient everything seemed to be in Canada. He saw snow for the first time and would stand by the window looking out as roads were ploughed after a snowfall and salted in a matter of hours. He was amazed at what we took for granted like telephone operators responding within a couple of rings and being very courteous, withdrawing money from bank in a matter of seconds, the use of ATM machines for this would be a nightmare and a dream in Tanzania. There were no ATM machines in Tanzania and if one were installed, you would need a 24 hour armed guard to maintain it. The choice of over thirty television channels compared to two in Dar-es-Salaam, the size of the supermarkets loaded with tons of food was mind-boggling and the list goes on. He decided that this is the place he would like to be and like myself, fell in love with Canada in the winter. I was pleased of his decision and sponsored Jesse to come to Canada in February 1979.

Chapter 24

Jesse applied for immigration to Canada in March of 1979. Three months later, he received a letter from the embassy informing him that he was rejected, as he did not score enough points to qualify. We were all very disappointed but I told Jesse not to give up as immigration applications are evaluated with the job demand in Canada.

Rolph and Albertina, Roland, Olga, Luis and I decided to go on a holiday to Goa as a group. I managed to get six weeks vacation approved by the office so I planned my visit to Goa and be in time for the feast of St. Francis Xavier that is always held and celebrated on the 3rd of December. I shopped around for cheap fares and the best deal I got was on Czechoslovakian Airlines with an overnight stopover in Prague and a night in a hotel included. At first we were skeptical about travelling on a Russian built aircraft and going behind the iron curtain but then the price of the ticket and a free night in a five star hotel in Prague sweetened the deal. The aircraft was comfortable and the service was great. Food was served on fine china plates and drinks served in crystal glasses. They even served Russian caviar on board the aircraft. After a night in the hotel and a day tour of Prague, we left for Goa and I have to admit that this was the best all round airline experience I ever had. I made Nico's home in Mapuca my headquarters. Luis, Roland, Rolph and I rented motorcycles for the month and travelling around Goa became very easy.

The family living right opposite Nico's home was celebrating the 21st birthday of their daughter Glenda. A party was held in the garden and there must have been about twenty

young ladies and surprising much fewer guys invited. The Royal Enfield motorcycle that I had rented had a loud exhaust pipe and the bike roared as I rolled down the narrow lane to Nico's house. Everybody at the party turned to look at me over the fence and many of the ladies were aware that Nico had a Canadian visitor living with him. Nico and Anita were invited to the party and Glenda's folks extended the invitation to me as I was living with them. After a quick shave and shower, I joined the party and met some really nice people. I took many photographs mainly of the young ladies and thought what a nice way to hit on the chicks after I developed the pictures. With all the beautiful young ladies I met, I suddenly felt that there would be many more reasons for me to visit Goa again.

I had taken a real fancy to one of the girls from Saligao but unfortunately; she was spoken for and had a boyfriend working in the Persian Gulf. I kept bumping into so many of the girls that I met at the party in the small town of Mapusa and in the market square. It was embarrassing as I could hardly remember their names but a "hello Sweetie" usually did the trick. "Casa Bella" a local bar and restaurant was the rendezvous for the Canadian gang and we would roll our bikes in at about 11AM. Many Goan tourists from all over the world would frequent this joint and sometimes I would meet friends from Tanzania that I had not seen for years. The restaurant prepared some delicious snacks as no one kept count of the beef croquets, shrimp puffs and samosas that were devoured as soon as they were placed on the table. The Christmas dance was held in the open courtyard with a small cover charge and to my surprise, the ladies got in for free. The highlight of the holiday was a proposal of marriage Luis received through a matchmaker to get married to a young

lady Elsa. Luis met with Elsa and accepted and the wedding date was set for January 12th 1980. Luis asked me to be his best man at his wedding which I accepted and amazingly the whole event was planned in ten days complete with a reception for 300 hundred guests.

Chapter 25

The long and expensive holidays started to take a toll on my pocket book and I decided to take on a part time job to make some extra cash. I got a part time job repairing high-speed Swiss made calculators called “Precisa” and was trained on this product in Tanzania. I worked 8 hours every Saturday and would sometimes go in on a weekday for 4 hours after my workday. The owner of the company liked me very much and offered me a job with a \$5,000 dollars signing bonus. He wanted me to use the bonus for a down payment to buy a home or Condominium in the East end of the city so as to be closer to the office. I would be appointed service manager and run the shop and would make more money than I was at my current job. The offer seemed very inviting but it would mean that I would have to live in the east end while Justin lived in the west. Most of my friends lived in the west and this was a stumbling block. Furthermore, it was a smaller company compared to the one I worked for and getting vacation would be a problem as the company would be very dependent on me. Looking at the facts and doing the math, I turned down the offer and continued to work part time, which suited me best.

In September 1980, I received a letter from Jesse telling me that he received his Visa for permanent residence in Canada and that his arrival date in Toronto would be sometime in March of 1981. I was thrilled and ecstatic with the news and now happy that he would not be alone, as he would have two brothers in Toronto. He planned to stop over in Germany on his way and spend some time with my sisters Virgilia and Annette. To this very day, I feel that the Canadian government issued Jesse a

Visa based on the fact that 1980 was “The Year of the Handicapped” and a certain number of Visas had been allocated for challenged people. Whatever the reason, we were in thrilled on hearing the news for I was otherwise planning to spend Christmas with him in Tanzania.

Right on schedule, Jesse arrived in March, in time for my birthday and the annual open house party that I started a couple years before. He was really happy to be in Canada and showed no regret to have to leave Tanzania. He now left behind bitter memories of the country he grew up in and spent all his life in. He spent a lot of time watching television, sometimes forgetting to have his lunch, which I prepared and left for him before I set off for work. He was astonished and intrigued to see the buds pop up in the trees in spring and marveled how nature played its roll in changing bare trees and have their branches filled with leaves and blossoms in a couple of weeks. He got to meet all of my newly made friends that attended my birthday party on the 1st of April. My first priority was to get Jesse to pass his driver’s test as the traffic and the multi lane highways intimidated him. Justin and I pooled in some cash and bought him a used midsize Chevrolet vehicle with automatic transmission. He took to the wheel very quickly and passed his driver’s test at the first attempt. At this time he stayed away from driving on the freeways and stuck to the side roads until he gained confidence to hit the highways. He got a job in Mississauga, a suburb of Toronto and drove to work receiving peanuts for pay. I encouraged him to stay on to gain some experience and get used to the Canadian lingo and system. In December of 1981, Maurice had plans of taking a trip to visit and spend Christmas with his mother in Goa. I got the travel bug to join Maurice in

Goa since I had four weeks vacation time to use up before the end of the year. With my vacation approved, I chose to travel Alitalia Airlines so I could take advantage of a free stopover in Rome. One day was not enough for the tour of this beautiful city and I planned that I would hopefully come back some day when I got married. I arrived in Goa a day later and took a cab to Nico's home in Mapuca and reached his home in the early afternoon. Talk about burning the candle at both ends. After a twenty-hour journey and eleven hours of jetlag, I dropped off my bags and went to visit Maurice in Saligao. There was a dance held in the village chapel courtyard, which was patronized by all the village girls, so we attended the function, and I spent the night or should I say the morning at Maurice's home. By now I had not slept for over 48 hours and with all the booze that evening, I slept for ten hours flat. I returned to Nico's home to find his two boys waiting for me to come home and open my cases to see what goodies I had brought for them.

Maurice's mother was extremely fond of me and treated me as her own son. She was anxious to see Maurice settle-down and contacted a matchmaker in the village to set up an appointment for a young lady to be introduced to him. Maurice's mother requested the matchmaker for two young ladies, as she wanted to try and set me up at the same time. Not to hurt his mother's feelings, Maurice and I agreed to meet with the girls and the appointment was set for the next morning at 10 a.m. After a heavy drinking session that evening, we went to bed in the early hours of the morning only to be woken up at 9:45 in the morning to freshen up and get ready to meet the girls that would drop in. I peeped through the crack in the door and said to Maurice "I don't like yours." Maurice's mum entertained the ladies and

offered them coffee while I planned a scheme. I told Maurice to walk in the living room first and I would follow later and ask him if he wanted coffee, feny or tea, and to answer “feny.” I walked in and greeted the ladies and asked Maurice what he wanted and he requested feny as the beverage of his preference. Feny is clear liquor and looks like water but has an extremely strong fruity odor. I splashed my hands with some fenny and walked in the living room with a bottle of water and two glasses. We gulped a triple shot of plain water and the ladies looked at us in disgust assuming we were drinking feny. The strong odor of Cashew feny in the air led the women to believe that we were drinking the potent brew first thing in the morning. We later learnt from the matchmaker that the parents of the girls rejected us as prospective grooms for they felt we were two drunkards. Come to think of it they were not too far wrong. Trips to the village in Verna were a must. With my cousins now working in the Persian Gulf, the extra cash flow filtered in to modernizing the house. Granite and marble are very cheap in India compared to prices in Canada. All the rooms in the house had marble floors and the kitchen was fitted entirely with granite. A brand new toilet and bathroom was now built and annexed to the house with a shower powered with an electric geyser. I was happy for my relatives getting to enjoy the finer things in life that we took for granted in the western world.

Chapter 26

My older brother Clement immigrated to Canada on his own merits and lived in the city center of Toronto. Clem, by nature was hot tempered and had his differences with almost all his siblings. He rarely had time for the family and never visited at birthdays or family events. Even when he lived in Tanzania, I never received a Christmas or birthday card from him. He opened a print shop in the city and ran it with the help of his wife.

In 1983, fuel prices soared from 9 cents a liter in 1974 to 30 cents a liter. I spent my total car allowance and sometimes more to pay the gas bill to drive the 8-cylinder car for work and pleasure and had to come up with a new game plan. The company paid a flat mileage rate for use of your vehicle for company business irrespective of the size or make of the vehicle you drove. I decided to purchase a new car that would have a better fuel economy to complete my service calls. I closed a deal on a brand new Volks Wagon Rabbit also known as the “Golf” with a diesel engine. I did not sell the Pontiac and saved it for my evening pleasure and use mainly to drive the girlfriends around. The fuel economy on the V.W. was just unbelievable as it consumed one gallon or 4.5 liters of diesel for 100 hundred kilometers. In U.S. terms, it gave me 60 miles to the gallon. It was a double whammy for not only was I getting great fuel economy, diesel was only 26 cents a liter. I was earning an average of \$400 a month in car allowance and spent no more than \$50 on fuel for my pleasure and business driving. I became a penny pincher and it bothered me to drive the Pontiac, which used over three times more fuel, and I seldom took it out. It was expensive to maintain two cars

in the way of insurance and parking fees and especially if one of the cars sat in the parking lot most of the time. Six months later, I sold the Pontiac to a friend who was a recent immigrant and in desperate need of a car but had a budget problem. I gave him an easy payment plan of “pay me when you can.” He was a professional musician and needed a vehicle to carry his instruments to his gigs. He was extremely grateful and years later, he insisted on playing for my 50th birthday party free of charge as a token of his gratitude.

Justin and Tina had a new addition to their family. A beautiful baby girl, Avril was born on the 26th of October 1983, and was my first niece after two nephews. With our circle of friends getting larger, Justin threw a grand party in December and rented the recreation hall in the building to celebrate the Christening of his daughter and his 35th birthday. My sister and brother in law who had travelled from Germany for the party stayed on to celebrate Christmas with us.

In 1984, my friend Richard Da Costa better known as Rico was at loose ends because his wife went home to Kenya to spend a month’s vacation to visit her aging father. The two of us took off for a couple of weeks and drove to the east coast of Canada. We travelled through the province of Quebec, passing Montreal and stopping in Quebec City, which was really very beautiful. A strong influence of European architecture enhanced the houses and streets and the ladies in my opinion dressed more fashionably than those in Toronto and in Ontario. The downtown has a distinct European feel with its stone buildings and winding streets lined with shops and restaurants. Porte St. Louis and Port St. Jean are the main gates through the walls from the modern section of downtown. You had this inner feeling within yourself

that you were magically transported and dropped off in a city in France.

There was very little traffic driving through the woods and forests of New Brunswick and we encountered a lot of deer and moose on the way. Halifax was a quiet and laid-back city where the only industry was fishing. Everyone raved about the famous Peggy's Cove, but I was so disappointed when I got there, as all there was to see was a large lighthouse and huge rocks.

I used to hangout in a bar and restaurant called "The Safari" in Toronto that was owned by a Goan friend. Here, I met a French Canadian from the east coast who was a fun character and musician, and played a mean violin. He used to boast about the lovely fishing village called Cheticamp that he hailed from and that it was located on the "Cabot Trail" and invited a whole bunch of patrons at the tavern to visit him if we ever went that way. He did not give me an address but told me all you got to do is ask for Jerry Rouault in the village and everyone knows him. Rico and I drove to this gorgeous fishing village that was located on the Cabot Trail and stopped at the first bar in town. We walked into the bar and everyone turned to look at us for I strongly believe that did not get too many colored visitors in the village. The people were very friendly and spoke French and they understood us when we asked for Jerry Rouault. It looked just like a scene from a movie when the bar man hailed a little kid out on the street in French to look for Jerry while we drank a bottle of beer as we waited. The barman asked me how I knew Jerry and I told him that he was my brother. Now I really confused him, for Jerry was a white man. We were surprised when one of the patrons sent us a round of beers and the bar man nodded to the person that set it. A few minutes later,

Jerry walked in and all the men in his bar jabbered in French with him and we assumed we were the topic of the conversation. After a couple of beers, he took us to his home and met his girlfriend who was very young and very beautiful. To date, I have never seen a detached property as small as Jerry's for it had to be no bigger than 500 square feet. He was unable to accommodate us as he had only one bedroom and made arrangements for us to stay at the local inn for a very special price. Rico was allergic to fish that had scales and could only eat shellfish. We went to the Legion Club that afternoon and the local folk at the club were very friendly and generous and would not let us buy a drink all evening.

One of the fishermen, Marcel had just docked his boat at the pier after he returned from his fishing trip with a boat full of snow crabs and stopped by at the Legion for a drink. Jerry asked him if he could give us some crabs and he took us to his boat and Jerry filled a large plastic bag. We took them home and Jerry boiled them in a large pot with salt. We ate so much that we nearly got sick and then lay down on the lawn and fell fast asleep in the afternoon sun. Marcel had tied an illegal lobster trap anchored it on one of the buoys as it was not in season to catch lobster. Later that afternoon, he took us out on his boat into the ocean to check if had caught any lobsters in the trap. The sea was rough and choppy and the buoy was difficult to reach with the large waves rocking the Boat. Marcel, like most fishermen, had a gas stove and a pot on board the boat. If they caught a lobster, they would boil in seawater eat the lobster for a meal and toss the shells overboard and evidence out into the depths of the ocean.

The following day we left for Halifax, not before we emptied

out the beer cooler and loaded it with the leftover crab. We stayed the night at a friend's place and enjoyed the crab with them. Polly and Theodora were friends that hailed from Mombasa, Kenya and settled in Halifax. We were surprised to learn that they don't see crab and lobster sold in the local markets because it is all exported to the other provinces and the United States. This was the first time they had eaten crabs in years.

We left for Prince Edward Island the following day. We took the scenic drive along the coast and took the ferry to P.E.I. from the mainland. In Charlottetown, we went to a restaurant that charges only \$10 per person for "all you can eat" lobster and clam dinner. I definitely ate nine lobsters but did not do justice to the animal as I mainly attacked the tail and claws and didn't pick on the body. The little lobsters on the east coast are called "Cannery" and have a total body weight of less than half a pound and are not very fleshy. Needless to say, Rico did the same justice to his meal. I carried my bottle of Tabasco sauce and spiked the hot melted butter served by the restaurant. After spending a day and a night in P.E.I. we headed for Shediac, which is regarded as the lobster capital of Canada. After the P.E.I. experience, we did not want to see or eat another lobster again.

Along the way back home, we saw huge billboards advertising the "Magnetic Hill" in New Brunswick. We stopped to visit and somehow in a vast open field, you experience an optical illusion. When you drive your car to the bottom of this world-famous hill, take your foot off the brake and be prepared to be amazed. Your car will roll uphill, even as your brain is telling you it's simply not possible! And it doesn't just work on cars. Vans, trucks and even tour buses roll uphill in total defiance of nature's law. Stories about this wondrous place have been

around since the early 1800s. Magnetic Hill has been puzzling tourists for decades. This attraction is a completely natural phenomenon. To this very day I cannot fathom the theory of the magnetic hill.

We had plans to visit Newfoundland, but the cost of the ferry was far too high and we felt we would not have enough time to tour the island. There were two ferries that took you to the island. One of the ferries took two and a half hours and then you had a seven hour drive to Saint John's. The other ferry was about seven hours to the island and then a two-hour drive. When we returned back to Toronto, we had covered a distance of just under 5,000 Km. in a couple of weeks and spent less than \$50.00 on diesel fuel. Newfoundland is still the only place I have not visited in Canada and is definitely on my bucket list.

Chapter 27

Trish and Diana kept in touch with me at least once a year and we always exchanged Christmas cards with a letter enclosed. We seldom called each other on the phone as it used to be very expensive. Trish was still single, and purchased a “round the world trip” ticket to travel from Perth to England, Canada, and Hawaii, Fiji and then head back home via Sydney. Trish was travelling with two of her girlfriends, Ellen and Nita; this would be their first trip to North America. It was the summer of 1985 and Trish and the girls arrived at the Toronto’s Lester Pearson Airport after their stay in Europe. Trish looked gorgeous and was happy to see me but disappointed to see that I drove a Volks Wagon Golf after hearing from me about the massive American car I used to drive, in my letters to her. We did the Toronto tour and Niagara Falls and then rented a full-sized 8-cylinder American car and drove it all the way to Florida. Nelson, a bachelor friend of mine, agreed to tag along with us on the trip. The highlight of the trip was the visit to Disneyland. This time I got to see the addition of the new theme park “The Epcot Center” which had just opened. We travelled back to Toronto via South and North Carolina and stopped in Maryland and some other place on route that I don’t remember. We toured Washington DC, passed by the White House and visited the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in The Arlington Cemetery. The girls returned home with fond memories of their trip and now pressured me to come visit Australia.

The following year, Dianne’s parents Charlie and Gladis Bushell together with another couple Bruce and June Chappell

visited Canada and had booked rooms in a hotel just a block from my apartment. I pulled them out of the hotel and housed them for five days and showed them a good time doing the usual tour of Toronto and then on to Niagara Falls. They could not believe the volume of water that went down the falls and hoped they could only get a fraction of the falls for their home city of Perth that had a very little rainfall and suffered a shortage of water every year. I remember Diane's dad Charlie telling me that if he could only have one foot of the falls in Perth, he would be in seventh heaven.

My eight-year-old nephew Shaun stopped by with his dad one evening to visit Jesse and myself and saw me smoking a cigarette. In school, the kids are lectured about the ills of smoking and Shaun asked me why I was smoked. He went on to tell me that my lungs would go black and that I would die and went on and on. I was caught unawares and stuck for an answer and lied to him that I had received a carton of cigarettes for Christmas and that is why I smoked. He returned to visit once again on February 13, 1985 and saw me smoking and I told him that I still had one pack left of the carton I received for Christmas. On February 14, my neighbor, who had run out of cigarettes, borrowed my last pack of cigarettes. I was left with one single cigarette and smoked it after my morning coffee break and made up my mind that this would be the last cigarette I ever smoked. I have never smoked another cigarette again. 1986 had to be the most expensive year for me in my entire life. I bought a brand new condominium, not too far from where I lived and furnished it tastefully without cutting any corners on the expense. The bedroom furniture was made of solid Maple wood and Cherry stained. The dining room was solid mahogany and included a

table with six chairs and a buffet and hutch. I had a custom-built sofa set and a custom-built sofa bed for the second room. The condo was only 1,000 square feet and very cramped but I decided that if I married and moved to a house, I could use the same furniture. I got rid of all my stoneware crockery and replaced it with fine china by Mikasa. I took out my German made WMF flatware and put it out for daily use. I replaced all my drinking glasses with crystal, except for a few that would need to be used in the microwave oven. I decided that I was the most important person in my home and should eat and drink from fine china and glass and not just save it for guests. In the summer, I traded-in my Volks Wagon, for a brand new Toyota Camry. Then, later that year, I treated myself to the car of my dreams: a Mercedes Benz model 300D for Christmas. My Toyota was blessed with a personalized car number plate that I still own to this very day. The plate number “43CHA” when translated in Konkani, is a swear word and is only offensive for the older Goans who speak Konkani. After all these years, almost all the Goans who are known to me and many that are not, recognize the plate. I was told someone in Goa had written an article about Toronto and mentioned my number plate. My next big expense on the agenda was a trip to Australia planned for January of 1987.

I left Toronto on January 5, for Perth Australia and travelled via Hawaii and Fiji to Sydney. I stopped in Honolulu for three days and took in the usual tours that most tourists are attracted to. Hawaii was beautiful but very commercial and very expensive. When I landed at Honolulu airport, I was greeted by overweight Hawaiian woman who looked nothing like the ones I saw on TV. She greeted me with an Aloha and put Lei (flower garland) around my neck and asked me for \$15 U.S. as I

was walking to the baggage area. I asked her to remove the Lei as I was allergic to flowers and very quickly offered me a plastic one for \$7 U.S. that I declined. Because everything is imported from the mainland, Hawaii has to be the most expensive state in the U.S.A. Furthermore, the Japanese tourists do not help the issue as they find everything very cheap compared to Japan. So the Hawaiians bump up their prices. I took a tour of the memorial U.S.S. Arizona that was sunk by the Japanese in Pearl Harbor where a lot of soldiers drowned in the ship. To date, the bodies of all the soldiers still lie in their watery grave in the sunken vessel. I saw a Japanese woman with tears throwing flowers in the ocean and burning incense to mourn her loved one. I left Hawaii for Fiji the following day and had an 8-hour layover; so I took a day tour of the capital city of Suva. There were lots of East Indian settlers and I felt it reminded me so of Dar-es-Salaam with the Indian merchants, traders and gold shops. A young couple from Tasmania, also on the bus tour had never eaten Indian food. So, for lunch, I treated them to “Bajji Poorie” which they thoroughly enjoyed.

The next leg of the journey took me to Sydney where an old friend of mine, Brazilio came to the airport to meet me. I met Brazilio in London where he lived in the flat above me in Wimbledon; he had since migrated to Australia. He bought a beautiful home in the suburb of Campbell Town, just outside Sydney. He and his wife Glaffy were blessed with three sons. The infrastructure of Australia was similar to that of Canada, with little strip malls and houses very much like those in Toronto. The houses did not have basements though, and many homes had carports and not enclosed garages, since the weather was mild and not as harsh as Toronto's. Glaffy's entire family had now

immigrated to Australia from England and was living within a few minutes of each other. Glaffy had three sisters and parents who I met and socialized with in London. Braz organized a BBQ, and invited the whole family and a few other friends to his home. It was so good to see them after all these years. Australia was good to Braz and his in-laws as they all enjoyed a high standard of living compared to England. Braz took me to his beach caravan and the two of us spent the evening smoking cigars and drinking Cognac, listening to the breaking of the waves on the rocks and beach close by. The next morning, we fished on the rocks while we exercised our eyes looking at the topless and bottomless beauties on the beach. I spent a couple of days with another friend, Clifton Carrasco, who took me on a tour of Sydney on the subway. We visited the world famous Sydney Opera House, The Sydney Bridge and a huge salt-water aquarium with hundreds of species of fish from the ocean. The Stingray looked so majestic as did the huge turtle that gracefully swam in the tank.

I left Sydney and took the bus to the nation's capitol, Canberra, about 250 Km. away. Joe Pinto, my old friend and colleague from Tanzania better known as "Cookie" was at the bus station to meet me. He had left Tanzania and lived in England and later migrated to Australia and settled in Canberra with wife and two daughters. I used to baby-sit the girls when they were little in London and they were now in their mid teens, excited to know I was visiting. I was their favorite "Uncle Xav" who brought them candy and always gave them a hard time. Joe set up his own business in the same field as mine and was very happy to make the move to Australia. Joe was lucky for he immigrated to Australia on the promotion that the Australia

Government offered British subjects in England. All he paid was ten pounds sterling for the entire family of four for air transportation and accommodations on arrival in Sydney. They gave him free bus tickets to travel to any city of his choice to look for employment and also help him secure a job. After a four-day stay in Canberra, I travelled to Sydney and boarded the plane for the four-hour journey to Perth in Western Australia.

Chapter 28

Perth is the capital of Western Australia and regarded the most isolated city in the world. The closest city is Adelaide, which is a two-hour plane ride away in the province of South Adelaide. There was an entourage of seventeen people at the Perth International airport to greet me on my arrival and a standby person asked Trish's family if I was some kind of a guru they were there to meet. There were two Goans, Sonny and his wife Phulu and the rest were white Aussies. There was Dianne, her husband and two kids, her parents, Trish, her mother and sister and a young son and other friends that passed by in Toronto. I had 21 days to spend in Perth and everyone wanted me to spend some time with them. I was overwhelmed and decided to stay with Trish and make her place my head quarters and plan my itinerary accordingly. It was so good to see Sonny after all these years and he was amazed that I had made so many Aussie friends after I left Tanzania especially not having been down under before.

The ride to Trish's home was beautiful and the vegetation very dry and arid. The outside temperature had to be in the mid thirties and humid and there were endless number of gum trees. The black Boy was a peculiar tree that looked like a sisal Bush that had been in a fire and the base burnt out. This plant is native of Perth and can withstand extreme heat and drought conditions and is protected by the government.

Trish had a beautiful garden what took me by surprise was the hibiscus tree that was at least 15 feet high and spread at least 10 feet loaded with flowers. The carport and the Pergola, situated in the rear of the house was covered with Bougainvillea

bushes that creped over and made a colorful canopy and shade. Crotons in pots of various shades of color surrounded the patio and Rose bushes mostly in pots place tastefully in the garden. But the most beautiful flower of all was the “Kangaroo Paw” which had its name caused it looked like the paw of a kangaroo. Another plant unique to Perth was the “Stag Horn” and the “Moronas” which were in Diane’s parents home. Trisha’s home was air-cooled and not air-conditioned. A water-cooling unit was installed on the roof of the house and water pumped in and a heat exchanger would drop the temperature in the home to the low twenties. Trish was sure to keep a good stock of beer and local favorite was Swan Lager Beer. Some of the gang from the airport came back to Trisha’s and we sat in the shade of the Pergola drinking beer. Like clockwork, a cool breeze would blow into Perth from the south every day at 4 PM and they nicknamed it the “Freemantle Doctor”. Freemantle was a little town about an hour south of Perth and for years was the port of Perth. Most homes in Perth have a bore well to provide water for the garden but the water is not good for drinking. You know a home has a bore well for the walls of the house are stained red with a chemical that in the water when the sprinkler is used to water the lawn and garden

Trish had taken some time off from work and with a boyfriend Robert; we travelled to Albany, the southernmost part of Western Australia. We travelled through Mandurah, Molly Island, and Shannon National Park. Here we visited a forest that had Jarrah trees that were 300 feet tall and produced a red timber greatly desired for furniture by the Elite society of Australia. The scenery and beaches along the coastline to Albany was breath taking. On our return to Perth, Bob took me on a

small catamaran and I learned to sail with a few lessons. Trish and Ellie took me to lunch to a five star hotel on Scarborough beach and the feature of the day was all-you- can-eat Prawns. The presentation of the food was exquisite, with watermelons carved into gorgeous flowers; lovely vegetable sculptures. I feasted on the prawns and craw fish tails cooked in a Cajun Jambalaya sauce, saving space for desert to follow. The girls excused themselves for a trip to the powder room while I went for seconds to the desert table. We ordered coffee and I asked for the bill and the girls insisted on paying for the meal. I demanded the waiter to give me the check and to my surprise, it was only \$4.50. The girls sneaked to the cashier on their way to the powder room and settled the tab and all that was left on the bill was the coffee. I had a hard time paying for anything including gas for the car. I was spoilt rotten and really pampered. Trisha's mum knitted me a sweater and Dianne's grandmother a beautiful scarf. Trisha's uncle who was a bachelor and lived in the same complex that Trish lived in would polish my shoes every morning. Trish would do my laundry and put it out to dry and when we got home, her uncle got all my laundry ironed including my underwear.

When I met Dianne in England in 1971, she was one of the gang and ate in the greasy spoon with all of us and showed no signs of money power or being wealthy. Later, when I met her parents in Toronto, they were very down to earth but little did I know they were millionaires. They had home on City Beach in Perth, which is millionaire's row, and were planning to build another on land they purchased for their two girls. They both drove Mercedes Benz cars and had an indoor salt-water swimming pool in the house. I spent a day with them and Charlie

took me too his yacht club and one of the members offered to take me out on his yacht for the afternoon. There was a myth that the Aussies did not take to kindly to foreigners, but I saw none of this and was treated with the greatest respect.

I packed a bag and headed up north of the city to spend a few days with Sonny and his family. There were seven Goan families from Tanga that immigrated to Australia and all of them ended up in Perth mainly due to family connections. They organized a potluck dinner party for me and I had not seen most of them since I left Tanga in 1969. The kids were all grown up now and some even married and amazingly most of them remembered me as I always gave them a hard time. The sad thing was most of them were not able to get jobs in their field of work and took anything to keep afloat. Sonny worked in a factory and other in hospital as orderlies. Still everyone seemed happy as they all had peace of mind and good schooling for their kids. Sonny the gambler organized a card game and managed to get five players and we had an all night game for old time's sake. There was not enough time to do and see everything that I wanted to do and promised Sonny that I would return some day.

There was a lot of excitement in Perth for the "Americas Cup" was taking place, as Australia was the hosting the race after being held in the USA for the past 100 years. The Americas Cup is a world Class Yacht race held once every four years and the Americans were the only winner in a hundred years. Australia won the cup four years ago and they would now host the race it until another country would win the cup. I got to learn so much of the yacht terminology and about the sails such as the spinnaker and the Genoa and was glued to the television at home. There was Yacht fever in the city and the race was

televised in all the pubs. Sadly, the Australians won only one of the four races and the cup went back to the USA. The 26-hour journey back home was a killer without a break. The flight took via Sydney, Fiji, Hawaii, and Vancouver and then to Toronto.

Chapter 29

On March 05, 1989 I became uncle for the fourth time; Tina and Justin brought a new baby boy, Brendan into the world. My sister and brother-in-law were visiting Toronto that summer and I planned to take a holiday with Jesse someplace down south. Together with my sister and her husband we chose to travel to Venezuela to the sea resort of Puerto Cruz for a week. We took the plane to Caracas and then a bus ride to the resort travelling through the lush green of the rain forest that was picturesque and very beautiful. Everything seemed so inexpensive at the resort and the accommodations were very clean and comfortable. We took a visit to the little town of Puerto Cruz where we must have purchased at least 20 pairs of leather shoes between us that sold for an average of \$5 a pair. A bottle of French brandy produced under license was less than \$ 3, and gasoline was just 5 cents a liter. Apparently there was a riot in Venezuela not long before our visit because the government raised the price of gas to 6 cents a liter.

For years now, I had been spending the American Thanksgiving with the Birkmeyer/Gonsalves families. A classmate of Leslie, Avito Remedios who was in senior manager for his company based in Dubai would attend the medical convention that was held in Chicago just after the Thanksgiving weekend. Avito would plan his trip to arrive in Chicago and be in time to join the Gonsalves family for Thanksgiving and every time we met, he invited me to visit him in Dubai. In December of 1989, I travelled to Goa and using Emirates Air as my carrier and stopped in Dubai for ten days. Avito was a gracious host and took me around the UAE, as his job required him to service

Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai. Today, Dubai is the center stage of the world for its majestic skyscrapers and seven star hotels, but back then, Dubai was just a cluster of shopping centers that were based on the same style as the Canadian ones. I visited four of the seven Emirates. The highlight of the stay was a desert safari in a four-wheel vehicle climbing the sand dunes and stopping in the middle of the desert in a Bedouin tent to be entertained by a belly dancer and being served hot Turkish coffee with Halawa, a Middle Eastern sweet.

I stayed with Nico in Goa and went through the same routine as in the past visits. I took a round-robin trip to Majorda, Verna and Margao to visit the relatives and friends and stayed mainly in the north in Mapuca. Most of the girls I met at Glenda's party had now moved out of Goa and were now living in Bombay and the Persian Gulf. Raymond's sister, Alina and brother-in-law Joe were entrepreneurs. One of their projects was running a shrimp farm. They converted two large paddy (rice) fields into one large giant pool, the size of a soccer ground and about five feet deep. The land was close to the ocean and at high tide; seawater would come right up to the banks of this man-made pool and fill it to a certain level. The gate would then shut to hold the water in and large, high-speed pumps would top up the pool to the required level. Thousands of baby shrimps from nurseries are shipped by air from Thailand and other parts of Southern India to be cultivated in the pool. When the shrimp grows to the required size, (Joe would wait for the moon phase so as not to harvest the shrimps when they are molting) the shrimp are harvested. The buyer would then send a truck loaded with ice to pick up the shrimp. I was privileged to be part of the team to harvest the shrimp and we started draining the pool at sundown

to avoid the high daytime temperatures. A catch net is located at the gate of the pool and the gate is opened. When enough shrimp fills the net, the gate is shut and the shrimp that is caught in the net is loaded into a trough of ice-chilled water. Here the shrimp is stunned so it does not die slowly as it would otherwise affect the quality of the product. The shrimp is then sorted into the different sizes, and this is where I helped. The shrimp are handpicked by size and put into the relative boxes. The sorting went on all night until dawn, with mosquitoes biting and a Chai Walla (Tea boy) serving hot tea throughout the night. By dawn, the pool was drained, but some of the shrimp were stranded in little pockets of water, and had to be handpicked. Hundreds of sea birds circled the pool to feast on the shrimp and my job now was to drive the birds away by lighting firecrackers. The buyer loaded his truck and settled the accounts and was on his way to his processing plant. There were many kilos of smaller size shrimps that the buyer rejected and these were taken away and then sold to the neighborhood restaurants, family and friends. Staying as a guest of Joe and Alina meant that there was shrimp on the menu for the next few days, cooked in different ways. My favorite was the masala-fried shrimp with a cold beer. Raymond's mum prepared some shrimp mole (a pickle) and offered to give me a jar on the condition that I took one for her son in Canada. Needless to say, I said "sure," since I had an almost empty suitcase on my way back home.

My youngest sibling, Annette spent 18 years in Germany and wanted to be with her brothers in Canada, she was a nurse and applied for immigration and landed in Canada in 1990. This was great, as Jesse had company and the whole family with the exception of one sister was now in Canada. Jesse bought his

second new car, a Toyota Camry with all the bells and whistles and secured a permanent job with the city of Toronto that gave him free underground parking right beside the elevator and next to the mayor's parking spot. Toronto is noted as being one of the best cities in the world that offers handicap access for its people. Every road pavement has wheelchair access and old office buildings are forced by law to install ramps. Heavy fines are in place for people who abuse the allocated parking facilities.

Joe Barretto and his wife Jean were friends of mine in England and immigrated to Canada at about the same time as I did. Jean decided to spend Christmas of 1991 with her parents in London. Joe refused to spend three weeks with the in-laws in London and I suggested that he visit his sister in Perth and I would tag along and keep him company. He jumped at the idea and so it was planned that Joe would spend Christmas with his family and in-laws in London and then we would meet in Amsterdam on the 27th of December to take a flight to Perth via Singapore on Singapore Airlines. I spent Christmas with Jesse and the family and rendezvoused with Joe in Amsterdam as planned. I had never been in an airplane for 13 hours nonstop and the flight to Singapore was a killer. But the journey was made easier thanks to the wonderful service of the Singapore Airlines flight crew, which was then rated to be the best among all airlines. Singapore was rated to be one of the cleanest cities in the world and I fully buy that. The airport was filled with hundreds of various species and colors of orchids and for one moment, I had to touch a flower to check that it was not artificial. There wasn't a scrap of paper on the roads for the government imposed heavy fines if people were caught littering. Elevators in residential buildings were installed with sensors to stop

in the event someone urinated in the car. Chewing gum was banned and not sold in the country, since many people were not disposing off their used gum sensibly. We took a tour of the city and did some shopping to take to Perth for Joe's family. After a couple of days, we left for Australia and arrived at Perth International in the early hours of the morning on New Year's Eve, in time for the New Year's bash that evening. I spent New Year's Day with Joe and his sister and later moved to Sonny's place and visited all the old pals that I met a few years back. Sonny lent me his car and I drove south visit Trish, Ellie, Charlie and the other entire group of Aussie friends on the south side. Trish had a common law husband, Robert and was blessed with a gorgeous daughter, Lauren who was just adorable. She was three years old, had lovely, curly gold hair. I nicknamed her Goldilocks.

This visit was different from the previous ones, as I spent my time with all my friends at their homes cooking and grilling steaks and shrimps on the barbie. I stayed away from the casinos, the fancy restaurants, and tourist hangouts. This time I was able to spend time with the folk I missed on my last trip. After a great time in Perth, Joe and I headed home via Singapore, and this time made another 3-day stop. We took a day trip to Malaysia via a causeway that was recently built and spent the day sightseeing and enjoyed a superb Malaysian lunch. Back in Singapore, we visited the gold market and I bought a 22-carat gold chain at a bargain and Joe treated his wife with a pearl necklace. In Singapore, there is an open food market where vendors sell cooked food. The beef Satay with peanut sauce, and the shrimps with chilly was outstanding, and the best I ever enjoyed. The flight to Toronto via Amsterdam was long and tiring and I vowed I would never take a nonstop flight that long

again.

Chapter 30

My Buddy Les from Chicago was blessed with three beautiful daughters. His greatest wish was for his girls and American wife to visit Zanzibar, his homeland and place of birth. The last time Les visited Tanzania was in 1972 where we met for the first time in the Goan social club. He invited me to join him and his family, but I was not too keen on making the trip as I had no family left in Tanzania and would rather spend my money on some other exotic destination. With a little coaxing though, I agreed to join Les and shopped for fares to Tanzania. The best fare available was out of Toronto International airport. So Les decided to make the 8-hour drive to Canada with his family. We boarded a KLM flight to Amsterdam and were met there by my sister and brother-in-law who joined us on our trip to Tanzania. We headed out on the seven-hour flight to Kilimanjaro International Airport. When the plane was less than an hour from landing, the captain announced that there was a herd of elephants on the runway and we needed to kill some time to let the elephants wander away. He got permission from his superiors to circle Mount Kilimanjaro and boy, we were given the treat of a lifetime. He told us that we could see the mountain from the right windows of the plane and to be courteous and allow fellow passenger to get a view of the mountain as well. It was a cloudless, clear day and the view the mountain from above was awesome. The rim of the crater on the mountain that I have climbed when I was 17 years old was crystal clear. The view of the mountain from above is called the “Falcons head” as it distinctly resembles a Falcon. The inner hub and outer rim of the crater form the shape of the eye and the outline very much looks like the head

of a bird. A photograph of the mountain located in the album in this book has a vivid picture of what I have just described.

We were met by Christopher and Elaine Pereira at the airport, who welcomed and accommodated us at their home. They had a beautiful four-bedroom home and a fantastic garden. Christopher was a commercial pilot who flew tourists around in a twin-engine Comanche Aircraft into the game reserves near the various lodges. We went on a safari in the game parks in a mini Safari van that had sliding rooftop for a better view of the animals. The Safari vans were also very much cheaper and more fun, as you enjoyed the countryside and saw a lot of wildlife on your way to the lodge. After a days tour of Arusha, we left on a safari that would take us to our first stop “Lake Manyara” which is famous for the flamingos. The lake had some algae and crustaceans living in the shallow waters, that flamingos like to eat. Thousands of birds flock here to feed and make the lake look like a sea of red. There is a tree in the reserve by the lake that lions like to climb and sleep on the branches of after they feed, but we were not lucky to see them. I had seen the lions here a couple of times when I lived in Tanga on previous trips to the park but didn’t own a camera and have no photographs. We checked in at the Ngorongoro Lodge, which is situated on the rim of the crater for the night and enjoyed a European style dinner, much to the surprise of the Americans. We were now in the game reserves, way out in the boonies and far from city life. The view from the hotel was breathtaking, as the crater is about seven hundred feet below and about 10 miles wide. The following day, a four-wheel drive vehicle took us down to the bottom of the crater, which I believe is considered one on the natural wonders of the world. You find all kinds of animals in the crater from Lions, Zebras,

Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, Wildebeests, Leopards, Cheetahs, Elephants and various types of deer. Legend has it that there is a magnetic pull that drives the animals into the crater. This was tremendously exciting for everyone even though I had done this several times before. We even saw a baby Rhinoceros that was as cute as it was ugly.

The third leg of our journey took us to Serena Lodge in the Serengeti and we feasted our eyes on all kinds of wildlife. Back in Arusha, Mervyn and Pervyn entertained us with a grand dinner in their huge, ranch-styled home. They were, incidentally, owners of the safari tour company that took us to the game park. Mervyn, Pervyn and Les grew up in Zanzibar and went to the same school and church and were wonderful hosts. Christopher had to pick up a fare in Dar-es-Salaam who was bound for Arusha and the game parks in his plane. He offered us a free ride to Dar-es-Salaam in his plane as he was travelling empty. It was a treat to fly in a private plane and the flight time to Dar-es-salaam was just short of 80 minutes.

Our next stop was the island of Zanzibar located just off the coast of Dar-es-Salaam. It was cheaper, easier, quicker and more convenient for a party of eight to charter a plane for the 18-minute flight to Zanzibar than using the schedule service. We chartered a plane, landed in Zanzibar and were greeted by a friend of Les, who took care of our hotel reservations. He owned a Peugeot commercial pickup truck and was our ride to the city center. "Welcome to Zanzibar," I said to the kids who thought this was just fun, for it was the first time they travelled in an open vehicle and did not have to wear seat belts. For Les, this was nostalgic, as this was the first time he returned to Zanzibar since he left home as a 16 year old. He was sad to see the town

so dirty and the houses dilapidated and not painted. The house in which he lived in had collapsed, probably from neglect and nothing looked like what it was before. His wife and kids teased him because he always bragged about his homeland and now it looked like nothing he pictured it to be. We stayed in a hotel that was converted from an old Arab prison. It was poorly furnished and sub-standard. There were a total of 12 guests registered in the hotel and it took over 90 minutes for the kitchen to serve eight of us a breakfast of bacon and eggs. Les got pounded for everything that went wrong in Zanzibar. We took a trip to Prison Island in a dhow and the beach was just fantastic. There were giant tortoises on the island that weighed over 300 hundred pounds and were over 100 years old and were protected by the government. Prison Island was Zanzibar's version of Alcatraz in times gone by, as prisoners were held on the island with very little chance of escape. We took a "spice tour" that was so informative even for me after having grown up in Dar-es-Salaam. We were shown Cinnamon trees and how the bark was harvested for our tables. We saw Cardamom bushes, pepper, Cocoa, Banana, Coconut, Papaya and various other species of exotic fruit like the Durian, the Saputo and Rambutan. When I was growing up, I knew the fruits only by their African names as Durian were called Doriani, Saputo was called Chikoo and Rambutan was called Shoke-Shoke. One of the members of the tour company cut some pineapples and served them on a banana leaves using the bonnet of the car for a table. But most interesting of all was the nutmeg tree that resembled a cherry tree and had fruits that looked like plums. The guide took a knife and cut the soft flesh of the nutmeg fruit and twisted the flesh to reveal a hard nut. This was the nutmeg as we see it in our Supermarkets. Around the

nut was a wafer thin membrane that you peeled off and this was “Mace” which apparently, is far more expensive than the nutmeg as it is used as a hallucinatory drug. We left Zanzibar on a Russian made hydroplane for Dar-es-Salaam for the final leg of our tour. After a wonderful and memorial holiday in Tanzania, Zanzibar and the wildlife safari, we returned to Toronto after seeing my sister off in Amsterdam.

My buddy Raul, who I had known in Moshi, Tanzania, was ill and losing weight and the doctors could not confirm his illness. Within three weeks of my departure for Tanzania, Raul took a turn for the worse and when I returned to Toronto, Raul was on his deathbed. I visited Raul in the hospital the next day and was shocked to see him, for he was now just skin and bone. Two hours after I left the hospital, Raul passed away peacefully and I was sad to lose a good friend with whom I had spent some good times in Moshi and in Toronto. He was just 58 years old at the time of his death.

Maurice and I had a pact with each other that who so ever got married first, the other would be the best man at the wedding. Maurice was involved with a woman who I really did not approve of for various reasons, but he decided to get married to her anyway. Love is blind, as they say and the wedding date was set for the 23rd of October. The service was held at the registry of the Justice of the Peace in Surrey, England. I flew to London for a week and stood as best man as planned. I met a nice lady at the wedding and Maurice had a strange feeling I would follow in his footsteps. This was my advice to him: “The screw you get is not really worth the screwing you will get later.” I had a fun time in London, especially after the wedding and returned home to get ready for the American Thanksgiving Holiday.

Chapter 31

On February 21, 1994, Doris and Oscar De Mello became proud parents of their first baby girl and I was honored to be asked to be Godfather to Jessica Maria De Mello. Jessica was my fourth Godchild and now I had two girls and two boys. I felt very special to be asked, as between Oscar and Doris, they had eight siblings and tons of cousins and friends to choose from. I accepted the honor. The christening was followed by a grand reception. Doris who is a very talented pastry chef and cake maker, created a work of art by making a chapel solely of fondant icing and placing it on top of the christening cake.

I worked for the same company NTI Business Systems since my arrival in Canada and for 22 years. In 1995, NTI down sized the company and finally sold the business to a company that was mainly interested in the customer base for all they dealt with was photocopiers and high-end fax machines. The typewriter business was slowing down, so, together with two of my colleagues, we decided to go into business for ourselves. We set up a company and called Tristar Business Systems. After two years, I decided to bail out mainly due to the fact that it was impossible for me to take vacations and running a business with partners had its pros and cons.

1996 was the year I turned the big “50” and I started planning my birthday bash as early as Christmas of 1995. I printed my invitations and invited over 300 guests to a party held in a banquet hall. I was surprised at the overwhelming response of the out of town guests that accepted the invitation and made the party so very special. There were a total of 315 guests at the

party including my family. Two came in from Tanzania, my sister and brother-in-law from Germany, two cousins, Maurice and his wife from England, two from New York, two from Delaware and sixteen from Chicago. My good friend and professional musician Francis de Mello played his one-man band and I had an open bar for the 10-hour function. My brother Justin and his son Shaun prepared a slide presentation and surprised me as they took old pictures from my albums and projected them on a wall. I surprised my sister and brother-in-law with a 29th wedding anniversary cake as they got married on my 21st birthday. It was a fun filled day and many of the guests called and complimented me for the great time they had.

In the summer of 1996, I helped a friend set up his company and wound up running his shop, dispatching service calls, preparing payroll and managing the office for almost two years. Canadian Airlines was running into financial trouble and was restructuring at the end of 1997. I had a bank of over 150,000 air miles points with them. I was concerned that if they went belly-up, I would lose all the miles that I collected over the years. I decided to fly to Australia for six weeks. For 100,000 air miles, I qualified for a business-class ticket to travel all the way to Perth in Western Australia. The comfort of traveling business-class for such a long distance made the flight very enjoyable. Moreover, you are allowed to use the business class lounge at the airports on route and enjoy the privilege of using the showers, comfortable sofas, delightful snacks and a free open bar. In the past, I was fortunate to travel business-class to England once as the aircraft was overbooked and my ticket was upgraded. I travelled all the way to Perth with the regular stopovers on route and met with the same old gang. This time I was particularly happy

for the events in Sonny's family life. Sonny's oldest daughter, Vanessa got married and had a baby making, Sonny a proud grandfather. He won a jackpot at the casino, bought a new car and moved into a new house. He treated his family to a trip to Goa and Bali in Indonesia and gave up his job to work for his brother Danny. Danny on the other hand, struggled in Australia since his arrival there in the early Seventies; just making ends meet. He invested in a gas station and then opened a second with the help of his now grown-up son. He had now acquired oceanfront land with the view of building luxury housing and a strip mall. Danny opened a mini petting zoo and Sonny looked after the animals and the operations of the place. They had a couple of Shetland ponies for the kids to ride, wombats, kangaroos, joeys, dingoes, emus, parrots, camels and lot of other creatures. I was really happy for Danny and Sonny to have success after the long struggle.

When I was in my early twenties, I had a passion for fine art and had acquired several paintings from the local native artists. In particular, there was a local black artist by the name of Kiswanta, a gifted natural artist who had never been to school of any kind, let alone art school. There was a British artist by the name of David Shepherd who was based in Nairobi, Kenya whose paintings sold for a lot of money. Today, some of his originals hang in Buckingham Palace and in the palace of the Sultan of Brunei. In 1968, his limited edition lithograph prints sold for my one-month's pay. In the early eighties, on my visits to London, I visited the David Shepherd foundation in Surrey and was disappointed to find out that they were sold out of the African wildlife prints. However, I met a Goan artist in London who lived in Kenya, who had a gouache painting of Cheetahs

drinking by the pond. It was just beautiful and I had to get it. I paid him six hundred English pounds for the painting. The word gouache is derived from an Italian word “Guzzo” which is a technique of oils and water base to a board and not a canvas. On a previous trip to Calgary, I purchased a beautiful oil painting from a young lady who painted a scene that looks like a street in France, using only her mouth. The lady was born armless due to the drug Thalidomide that her mother took when she was pregnant with her.

During my trip to Perth in 1996, I was reading the local newspaper and saw an advertisement for the sale of David Shepherd prints. My jaw dropped and I said, “This can’t be real.” I called the vendor who confirmed that they were genuine and went that evening with Sonny to look at the art. I went crazy when I saw the prints and purchased nine prints from her. The poor lady had inherited the prints from her aunt who had a store in Nairobi, Kenya and had no idea of the value of the artwork. I got the painting for a song and when I got back to Canada, I wrote to the David Shepherd foundation that advised me to insure all the artwork for at least eighteen thousand dollars.

Trisha’s daughter Lauren was a beautiful 8 years old and liked to pose for photographs. She was crazy over Leonardo DiCaprio and must have watched the movie “Titanic” a hundred times over. After spending a month in Perth and spending quality time with all my pals, I headed on to Brisbane to visit Nico’s brother, Frankie and Fatima. Brisbane is in the province of Queensland in my opinion, the most beautiful city in Australia. The climate is subtropical and Mango and Saputo trees are common in gardens. The city is surrounded by hills and is very green compared to Perth and Sydney. The beaches on the Gold

Coast are world famous and crowded with surfers. I visited a bird resort and sanctuary where wild parrots, with no fear of humans, would fly in and feed right out of your hand. I got a kick out of seeing wild parrots and cockatoos sit on hydro lines like we see pigeons and sparrows in America. Sometimes flocks of Galas, Parakeets and Budgerigars would swoop down and feed on your lawn. I have never seen such colorful birds, not even in zoos or in Africa. We took a drive up north of Brisbane towards Darwin and almost hit a kangaroo that darted across the road. It was a Big Red and would weigh approximately 300 pounds. Many cars have to be written-off if they collide with a kangaroo and lot of vehicles have a metal protection frame installed in front of the car to save damaging the vehicle. Frank and Fatima showed me a really good time and I headed home after a wonderful two-week stay in Brisbane.

Back in Toronto, my younger sister Annette took ill and suffered a nervous breakdown and developed an acute case of depression. I felt that this was a big burden to Jesse, as they shared an apartment. We came up with the idea of buying a house and living together. We bought a four bedroom detached home with a two car garage in the suburb of Mississauga. Since the house was still under construction, we were able to choose the type of flooring, the kitchen cabinets, and bathroom fixtures and color scheme. The master bedroom was 25 x 15 feet with a 6 x 8 feet walk-in closet. Right beside the closet was an ensuite six-piece bathroom. The bathroom had a Jacuzzi, a stand-up shower, a toilet, a bidet and a two-sink pedestal with a huge wall-to-wall mirror. The second bedroom was 12 x 15, with a three-piece ensuite bathroom while the two other bedrooms were 12 x 12 feet. The house was 3,900 square feet and had an open concept,

and in my opinion, a beautiful set up. Most Canadian homes have basements that are the floor plan size of the house. The furnace and hot water boiler were located in the basement and we converted the basement into living quarters, as the ceilings were over 8 feet high. A three-ton air conditioner on the side of the house would cool the entire house in the summer.

Chapter 32

I survived the last century and on entering the new millennium, I decided that I had to have a new car for the event. I purchased a new Toyota Camry CE and once again enjoyed the luxury and smell of a brand new car

I used to shop at a huge German bakery factory outlet called Dimpfmeier for three reasons. The bread was fresh right out of the oven, the bread was inexpensive, and there was a choice of over a hundred different bread and pastries. I used to buy my bread and pastries and then sit in the café of the bakery and enjoy a German doughnut called a Berlina. They had a huge espresso machine and I thought it must be the largest espresso machine in the world. It had to be five feet wide and had eight coffee grinders. At a press of a button, the coffee would grind as programmed by the customer and then pour a beautiful coffee with a lovely crema on the top. I used to order a pressure-brewed coffee made by the machine with a bean that was roasted and imported from Germany, and this was to die for.

On one occasion, I met a technician who was servicing the machine and I casually asked him where the old, used coffee went. He pulled out a bin and showed me the old coffee in the form of little pucks. He later joined me at my table and asked me what I did for a living. I told him that I was in-between jobs and he invited me to visit his office located on the Lakeshore of Toronto for a chat and a coffee. I made an appointment to visit him the following day and he showed me the various espresso machines he marketed. I was very interested in these electro-mechanical machines, and he showed me to his workshop and asked me to remove a steam boiler from one of the machines.

Meticulously I opened the covers and machine parts and in a very soon had the boiler out of the machine. I was asked to re-assemble the machine and fire it up. The machine came on and worked like a charm with no steam leaks. Rene, the boss, offered me a job with a three-month probation period. I accepted the job offer and started work the next day. Within a week of shop training and reading the manuals, I went out on the road to fix a machine of a customer in his premises. And bingo, I completed and fixed the machine. There were times when I got stuck on a call and after some coaching on the phone with Rene, the machine would be up and running. I must admit I had a success rate of over 90 percent fixing machines without supervision.

I enjoyed the new job, and had to travel long distances to service machines. Over time, and due to some business complications in the office, we were down to one technician from three and my workload got even heavier. In two years, I had clocked over 120,000 kilometers on my car and decided to buy a new car mainly to get the tax breaks on my car allowance. I purchased a new Toyota Camry LE and I averaged fifty thousand kilometers annually driving for the company. I was the only technician in the company, beside my boss who also took care of the administration and sales. I was on call every weekend and on long weekends and taking a vacation was now difficult.

In the summer, I went to England for a week and got a chance to meet my old colleague's daughters, Joanne and Suzanne, together with his grandchildren Louise and Charlie. I was unable to meet him as he was very ill and did not feel like visitors. I visited my old classmate Carrie who was now suffering from acute rheumatoid arthritis and struggled to walk. He needed two walking canes and his furniture in the house had to

be adjusted to accommodate his condition.

In September 2003, I visited Cuba for the very first time and stayed in a five star hotel located in the province of Holguin. Roma and Ignatius decided to tag along and we had a blast, for it was just like old times in England. We enjoyed the hotel, the people and the entertainment every evening. The white sandy beaches were pristine with crystal clear waters and the chefs at the beach restaurant eager to please and accommodate your every need. In September we got the off-season rate and paid \$800.00 for a week per person. This included all the meals, a twenty-four hour open bar, all transportation and taxes to and from the hotel. The only time you needed money was to tip the staff for the excellent service they provided. It was a fantastic holiday and I had made up my mind that I would definitely return to Cuba.

In the summer of 2004, I travelled to Calgary, Alberta for the wedding of Cheryl. Cheryl was the daughter of Hubert and Greeba. I saw Cheryl grow up from a baby, as I also happened to be at her baptism when I first arrived in Canada. The visit to Calgary was also very fruitful as I met a lot of my boyhood friends from Tanzania who had immigrated and settled in Calgary.

Things at work started looking good. We hired a technician who was a new immigrant from Bulgaria. I now could attend parties and B.B.Qs organized by my family and friends as I was on call only every second weekend. Business was getting better and we were getting busy. We desperately needed another technician and we advertised again in all the coffee magazines and local papers.

In the spring of 2005, I travelled to Cuba for the second

time. This time I had female company on the trip. My friends Diana and Doreen Mendoza were visiting from England and I convinced them to travel to Cuba. We stayed in an all-inclusive resort in Santiago de Cuba for a week and after a lovely vacation we returned to Toronto. We got adventurous and decided to travel to Chicago for a few days and stayed with Les Gonsalves. We drove to Milwaukee and stayed in Jo Birkmeyer's beautiful beach home located on Lake Michigan.

I was turning a new milestone of 60 years on April 1, 2006 and so I planned a destination birthday bash In Cuba. I got a group of sixteen to make the trip, including my brother Jesse and sister Annette and got an all-inclusive package in Cayo Coco Cuba. I carried an acoustic guitar along and we had a ball. Raymond D'Souza played the piano at the lobby bar, Steve on the guitar and I shook the maracas and tambourine and entertained the guests and staff at the hotel. Maurice, an avid fisherman along with Roland, enjoyed fishing on the pier.

The chef prepared a special dinner for my birthday and on another occasion cooked a huge Red Snapper fish and garnished it with olives and cucumbers. I gave the chef some red masala and he cooked baby shrimp and mushrooms and stuffed the fish.

Back in Canada, at a trade shows in September, I met a young man who visited the booth and happened to be a coffee machine technician. After a little chat, I invited him to visit the office for a formal interview and hired him in the fall of 2006. Now that we had two technicians to run the workshop, I felt it was time for me to hang up my boots and pack up the job at the end of the year. I told my boss Rene that I wanted to retire but I would work part time and help out the team. I decided to do what I liked most and travel the world and not have to worry

about returning to work after two weeks of vacation. I had saved a little nest egg and with my Canadian pension, I would get by. So in January 2007, I tendered my notice and resigned from the company.

With all the time in the world, I decided to travel to Goa and sell the property I had inherited from my dad. I took a flight to London and stayed with Maurice. Later, I moved in with Diane and Doreen in Surbiton, Surrey. I invited my old colleague's wife Irene and the two daughters to a home cooked Indian dinner at Diane's home. Meeting Irene and the girls was really nostalgic as the girls; Joanne and Suzanne kept in touch with me for the past 35 years. They were just eight and ten years old when I left for Canada. I received a Christmas card every year with a photograph of the family. I prepared a lovely dinner with the help of Diane's mum, Libby and I was glad the kids enjoyed the spicy food.

Raymond's sister was celebrating her 25th wedding anniversary in Goa and Maurice and his cousin planned to attend the ceremony. Diane got excited and asked if she could join us. The four of us spent three weeks in Goa. I stayed a week longer as I needed time to settle the sale of the property, which happened to be a lucrative piece of land.

Alina and Joe had a grand anniversary reception and invited just over three hundred guests. My old school teacher Lydia and Nico's wife Anita (both widows) were invited to the function. Alina invited Diane to the party, as she was a guest travelling with us. The party was held in the garden of a major restaurant and under the stars. The setting was romantic with tables dressed in damask tablecloths. The chairs were draped in white cover and secured with pink ribbon. There was a stage with an

eight-piece band and of course, an open bar.

Later in the week, a mini reunion of the class of 64 was planned. After 43 years, we met at a restaurant for dinner. Lydia, our class teacher still looked stunning for an old girl. At the dinner were Ray D'Souza, Crescent Da Costa, Yvette De Silva and their spouses. Forty three years had taken a toll on all of us. Some had body parts missing or replaced, hair and teeth dropping off and medical issues.

The same year, Doreen from London, joined me to travel to Holguin, Cuba for a week in September. Cuba is a fun place for an inexpensive destination and always me especially, as now I have to count my pennies as a retired person. Once the doors open to the Americans, I'm sure the prices will soar as they have in the Caribbean.

Les and I took a trip to the Grand Canyon. We met at the airport in Phoenix, Arizona and stayed with Les' college friend. After a couple of nights with KC and his wife, we rented a car and drove through Sedona to the Grand Canyon. The canyon is over 200 miles long but is spectacular in two states, Arizona and Utah. I believe that the canyon is one of the most amazing creations of nature I have ever seen in my life. We travelled for 25 miles along the canyon gorge and stopped at all the vantage viewing points listed on the canyon map. Our destination was Las Vegas, Nevada. On route, we stopped to visit the Hoover Dam. You have to marvel at the construction of the structure as it was built in the nineteen-thirties with construction machinery and equipment not as sophisticated as today. We spent a day and night in Vegas and visited the casinos. You have to book way in advance to get tickets for the popular shows. Nevertheless, we managed to catch a great magic show and performance

though; I really wanted to see “cirque du soleil.”

Our last leg of the trip was to Los Angeles, California. We stayed with a childhood friend, Mario Rebello who had kept inviting me to visit him. In every Christmas card was an invite and I eventually kept my promise. We visited the famous places that we saw on television and read about. We went to Rodeo Drive, Sunset Boulevard and the Chinese theater. We passed many beautiful homes of the rich and famous in Hollywood.

I went back to Goa in February of 2006 to finalize the sale of my property. I was not able to complete the sale, as there were some family issues and had to put the sale on hold. The folk from Zanzibar had a reunion in Goa in February that I attended and met many friends from Toronto, London, Tanzania and Goa.

Maurice got Goa fever and decided to fly to India. Then the two of us headed off to Thailand for a week. Bangkok was a clean place and full of beautiful ladies of the night. True authentic Thai food was very tasty and inexpensive compared to the food by chefs in Toronto who try to duplicate the menus. Shopping for name brand knock-off clothing and watches was unbelievable. The tour of the floating boat market was unique. The highlight of the trip was a visit to a temple to see the statue of the Golden Buddha. The statue was made of five tons of pure gold and placed at the alter of the temple. The statue is priceless and surprisingly, was guarded by just two people. Hundreds of worshipers placed offerings of flowers and burnt sticks of incense at the feet of the Buddha. We took a trip to Pattaya, which is considered the sin city of Thailand and experienced the night-life of the city that does not sleep.

In April of 2008, I took a trip to Santa Clara in Cuba and stayed in a five star hotel that only cost \$640.00 a week, all-in-

clusive. Cuba had just lifted the ban on Cuban nationals to be able to stay in the holiday resorts. Until then, Cuban nationals could not book or stay in the resorts even if they had the money to do so. I met a young Cuban in the hotel who hailed from Varadero and invited me to visit him and promised me a good time as he worked for the government in the hospitality business in a management position. He explained that he was unable to accommodate me, even though he had a large home and means to do so because of the policy of the government. He would need permission from the authorities. Fortunately I did not plan a trip in August, as Cuba was hit by a deadly hurricane named "Ike" that did huge damage to Cuba.

In September, I went to Varadero and met my Cuban friend Lizaro, who took me to his home for the day to meet his family. By Cuban standards, he had a terrific home and it was tastefully furnished. He has the use of the company vehicle as he was in a management position. Evidence of damage done by Hurricane "Ike" was very visible, even though the eye of the storm was some 500 kilometers away. Lizaro organized a day trip for me to Havana with a personal English-speaking guide who was very knowledgeable and big help. I got to eat a delicious tropical fruit called "custard apple" which we got in Tanzania. The botanical name for the fruit is Cherimoya while the Cubans called it "Annon." In season, another fruit I got to enjoy was Sapodilla. In Cuba this fruit is called a "Nispero" while in Africa, we knew it by the Indian name "Chikoo." Cuba is world famous for its antique automobiles, especially the American makes. I had fun photographing these vehicles and amazed at how they were still on the road as regular traffic.

Later that year in October, Les and I took a trip to the

Dominican Republic, to a resort in Punta Cana for a week. Les travels 80,000 kilometers a year on his business trips and had a busy and challenging schedule with his job. It was comforting to see him so relaxed with no cell phones and customers calling at all hours, day and night. We had a great time and decided to plan another holiday the following year. With the American embargo placed on Cuba, American citizens are forbidden to travel to Cuba unless they get permission from the federal government. Les envies my visits to Cuba and hopes that the U.S. Government lifts the ban on travel to Cuba. There are beautiful places to visit in the U.S.A. and our next destination will probably be South Dakota to visit Mount Rushmore, where the heads of four presidents are carved in stone. South Dakota is also the home of the "Bad Lands," where a lot of battles were fought with the native Indians in American history. Apparently the scenery is awesome.

In June 2009, I went to Holguin, Cuba and stayed at the Playa Pescaro hotel for a week. It was one of those all-inclusive deals that I like to take advantage of. The highlight of the holiday was a deep-sea fishing trip. One of the tourists on board from England caught a 120-pound Blue Marline. There was tremendous excitement when the fish was hooked and the English man fought with it. We all stopped fishing and waited for the fish to be hauled on board. The English man wanted to toss the fish back but the natives refused to let him do so as they said that it was food for them and this fish could feed all the crew and their families. Cuban workers are poorly paid and the average salary of the workers is \$15 U.S. a month.

On July 1st 2009, I left for Edmonton, Alberta to meet my classmate Kamala, and Angelo, and attend the wedding of their

daughter. Five days later I travelled to Calgary to visit Francis and Vicki. A surprise party was organized for me complete with a welcome cake. Francis and Vicki were the very first people I met in Canada and they are mentioned in the beginning of this book. In time, they had two daughters with one getting married and moving to Calgary. Vicki and Francis made the hard decision to relocate and move to Calgary to join their girls. Hubert and Greeba also ex Toronto people were invited to the welcome party. During my stay in Calgary I met with many of my ex neighbors and friends from Tanzania.

Maurice booked his vacation to Canada and we had planned to travel on to Cuba and visit a fishing town called Gibara. Maurice arrived on the 3rd of October and we left for Cuba on the 6th. Maurice, an avid fisherman, brought along his sophisticated fishing gear, all the way from England. We booked a deep-sea fishing trip and caught six 10-pound Tunas. Maurice was hoping to land a Blue Marline like in the photograph of the fish caught by the English man on one of my trips. I rented a car for the first time in Cuba and found it interesting to drive, as there were almost no road signs. Then, there are animals you have to deal with. Cows, goats, sheep and dogs are not fenced or tied and stray onto the roads. The biggest worries are the horse-driven carriage mode of transportation in Cuba that you have to deal with.

On November 26, I made the usual trip to Chicago to spend thanksgiving with the Birkmeyer and Gonsalves families. This would be my 32nd time to spend thanksgiving in Chicago after living in Canada for 35 years.

There are two places on my bucket list that I hope to fulfill. A visit to Machu Picchu in Peru and a visit to China to see the Great Wall.

Chapter 33

In the last printing of my memoirs, complete with over 200 pictures, I was extremely disappointed as the printer used an unedited version of copy for the press. It was too late to stop the press, as I did not have a copy to proofread before printing. It was going to be lot of money to reprint the book and I made the decision to give out copies of the book to my friends with all the errors and explain the situation.

Well, it is now many years later, and a lot of water has passed under the bridge since then. Many of my friends have asked me how I passed my time in my retired life. It is simple; I'd rather be travelling to the many destinations on vacation than work in an environment that is monitored for one's time. I was a field service technician and this meant travelling to different coffee shops to service machines. Driving and parking in the city of Toronto became a nightmare and traffic in the city has just gone bonkers with the influx of new people moving to the city. Needless to say, real estate prices have gone wild and it is almost impossible for young people to own homes. I am glad to be out of the hustle and bustle of the city.

January 2010 started off with a visit I made to Chicago to celebrate Leslie Gonsalves' 60th birthday. He threw a big bash at his home and invited around 50 family and friends. I helped with preparing the snacks and food. The highlight of the evening was toasting the birthday boy with a glass of Louis 13 Cognac. The price of the Cognac today is just short of \$3,000.00 for a 70cc bottle. The Cognac is aged from between 40 and 100 years in Oak barrels and the baccarat crystal bottle that it comes in

has a value of \$ 400.00. Leslie bought this bottle at a charity auction at an undisclosed price.

In the summer of 2010, I went to London, England and met up with the friends that lived in North London. It was good to see them again. They all had aged and had turned bald and grey. My old boss, Peter Hawker drove to Surrey and took me to his prestigious Golf Club in Weybridge. He proudly introduced me to some of his member friends and told them I worked for his company many years ago. I met two of my old classmates, Carrie and Mathew, together with their families.

In October of 2010, my cousin Valentine and his wife from London visited Toronto and celebrated Thanksgiving with me. We had planned a visit to Cuba together, so when he arrived, I informed a few of his classmates who lived in the city of our plans. Eight friends joined us on the trip to Varadero, Cuba. We had a swell time, including a day trip and tour visit of Havana.

In the summer of 2011, Cathy and John Chiappetta, together with their son Daniel visited Les in Chicago and then went to spend “Shamba Week-End” at Jo’s cottages on lake Michigan near Milwaukee. It’s a party and boogie weekend with lots of food and booze. Jo and Bob own two cottages located side by side on the lake. The ladies and kids get to stay in the houses while all the boys camp on the lawns. Jo actually brings a “Porta Pottie” and sets it up in the compound since there are so many people and only two toilets.

In September of 2011, my friend Charles D’Souza turned the big “50” and decided to spend his birthday in Mexico. His family and a few friends traveled to Mexico and stayed in an all-inclusive resort on the Mayan Riviera for a week to celebrate with him.

In October, Les had the urge to go to Punta Cana. So together with friends Colin and Hilda from Rhode Island and Raymond and Ludy from Edmonton, we went to an all-inclusive resort in Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic. The hotel was wonderful but the beaches could not compare with those of Cuba. Raymond brought his saxophone and Collin his guitar and jammed in with the band at the hotel. We had a sing along on the beach and the tourists there joined in the fun.

On January 17, 2012, I went to Santa Lucia Camaguey, Cuba, for the third time and stayed in the same hotel as before. As the staff members were familiar with me, I got excellent service and had a fun time. In April, I returned to the hotel and celebrated my birthday in the hotel. The management and chef prepared a large beautiful cake and brought it up to the dance stage in the evening. The band sang “Happy Birthday” and it was a memorable time. Cuban friends invited me to lunch in their home and prepared a delicious meal and invited some beautiful girls for me to meet. In June, it was back to Santa Lucia again for a week.

In July of 2012, Les and I were invited to a wedding in Iowa U.S.A. I travelled to Chicago and left my car at Les’s home and drove with Les to Iowa for the wedding of Jessica, Tony Antao’s daughter.

I was driving fuel-efficient vehicles mainly due to the fact that I used my car for work and received a car mileage allowance. I drove approximately 50,000 kilometers a year and fuel economy was important. As a retired person, I did not drive a lot and decided to treat myself to a luxury car and purchased a Lexus ES 350. The car had a superb ride and the comfort was incredible.

In October 2012, Valentine and Irene were back again and

this time joined their class of 64 to a trip to Punta Cana. The group totaled seventeen and we all had a good time.

In December 2012, at the Christmas luncheon, my nephew Shawn announced his engagement to Ivona. Ivona is of Polish origin and immigrated together with her family to Canada when she was a little girl. The couple had been dating for a while but this was news to us as they kept everything hush, hush.

In March 2013, I went back to Santa Lucia and stayed in the Manayabo hotel for the 6th time. One of the bar managers was a proud father of a beautiful baby Jennifer who had gorgeous blue eyes. I was asked to be Godfather to the child and I accepted. This was my fifth Godchild. The Godmother turned out to be a person from Kingston, Ontario. In July, the family celebrated Jennifer's 1st birthday. They had a big bash and I traveled to Cuba for the event. I took large Mylar balloons and birthday decorations from Toronto. They invited 45 kids and had two clowns put on a show. Sharon, the Godmother and I prepared loot bags, mainly filled with trinkets and little kiddie gifts from Toronto. There was a large 110-pound pig on a spit roasting on a slow fire. There was lots of booze and it was a great party.

September 2013, I was back in Santa Lucia and this time I booked my stay at a different resort. This resort was much larger than the Manayabo and had two swimming pools. There were two discotheques close to the hotel and there were many beautiful young ladies dancing to the loud Salsa music. I had a great time at the disco and went there every night after the entertainment shut down at the hotel.

December 2013, I was back in Santa Lucia and again in a different hotel. I stayed at the Bravo Caracol and I enjoyed the hotel as it was small and I did not have to walk too far to get to

the different venues.

January 2014, I chose to venture to another place after so many trips to Santa Lucia. I stayed at the Rancho Luna in Cienfuegos for a week. Again, it was a fun week.

April 1st, 2014, I spent my birthday in Chicago with Les and his family. I started running away from Toronto for my birthday, as I got tired of entertaining with the open house policy I had done for so many years. Now, living in a condo made it difficult space wise, and because of the noise that would disturb the other residents. Later that month, I went to Santa Lucia again. This time, a young lady there, took a liking to me and followed me from Cienfuegos and met up with me in Camaguey. She was pushing for a serious relationship and I backed away after the weekend trip.

On June 14, 2014, my nephew Shawn and Iwona got married at a church on Royal York Road. A grand reception followed, with around 300 guests. Family and friends had travelled from Poland to attend the wedding. In the condo complex that I lived at, there was a major renovation going on with many Polish construction workers. I wrote down a speech in English and asked one of the workers to help translate it into Polish. I asked him to write it in phonetic style so I could read it in English. During the speeches, I walked to the podium and said: "PANIE I PANOWIE" which, in English is "Ladies and Gentlemen." The Polish crowd went crazy, not expecting me to speak their lingo. The rest of the folk did not understand a word of what I said.

I lost count of the number of times I went to Santa Lucia, but I know that I made a trip in September and in December, for I have stamps in the passport that indicate this. Cuba became a

second home to me. The people there were wonderful and the country was very safe in all respects with no violence and no drug problems at all. Unfortunately, because Cuba has a communist government, the salaries of the people are very low. A qualified doctor would earn an average of \$60.00 U.S. a month while a nurse would earn \$25.00 a month. The average salary of workers in the hotel was \$15.00 a month. However, their food is subsidized and people do not starve. Medical care and education, including college and university is free. Cuba must have the highest number of doctors, dentists and engineers per capita in the world. Clothing is very expensive and the people are grateful to tourists who gave them their used clothes after their holidays end. The average flying time to Cuba is 3 hours 30 minutes, so travel is a breeze. I learned to speak Spanish on the Internet, and over time I have become quite good with the language. Although my lingo is poor, most people could understand what I was trying to say. My cell phone has a translator App when I get stuck for a word or translation.

In January 2015, I met and fell in love with a beautiful young lady in the town of Maniti located in the province of Holguin, Cuba. She was a single parent with two adorable children. Her son, Christian was 7 years old and her daughter Wendy, was 3 years old; just adorable. I would now shop for clothes and toys for the little ones to take on my next trips to Cuba. It was a nice feeling, as they waited for my visits to Cuba. I felt like a mini Santa Clause and remembered the trips I used to take to India in the years gone by; suitcases loaded with gifts and goodies.

I spent my birthday in April 2015 at the Hotel Covarrubias in Holguin, Cuba. I travelled with my friend Fatzz from Toronto. I also invited my girlfriend and the kids to spend some time with

me at the hotel and they all had a ball. The hotel was located on a secluded area with no local people within 30 kilometers of the hotel. Many of the Europeans would bathe in the nude to get a tan all over.

In April 2015, I treated myself to a birthday gift, as no one else would do so. I sold my Lexus and purchased a new Mercedes Benz model 250C Fourmatic Sports car. It was in a sleek metallic silver color with all the bells and whistles. A great car to show-off in. But I was disappointed a little when I compared it to the Lexus I had. The ride in the Lexus was smoother compared to the Benz as the Benz had a sports suspension.

On January 30, 2016, I become a great-uncle for the first time. Shaun and Iwona brought a new baby boy, Aaron into the world. Aaron is the first grandchild of my brother and also the first grandchild in Iwona's family.

I lost count of the trips I made to Cuba and the United States. I've even stopped taking photographs, except of people I meet. Age is catching up with me and after a mild heart attack, I have slowed down. I have to control my drinking habits and I get tired very easily. But life has been wonderful to me and I am grateful for it.

The Elephant Hunt in Tanzania

By Xavier Sequeira

In late 2009, The 55 Plus Goan Association invited Canadins with Goa at heart to send in short stories to be pulished as an anthology. Forty individuals participated and submitted their stories and the book “Goa Masala” was printed and published. My contribution “The Elephant Hunt in Tanzania” was one of the stories in the book. It is a true account of a hunt to bring down an elephant that was eating and destroying the corn crop of my friend Danny Vaz. Here is my story:

My father was a pioneer in the tiny town of Iringa. He rarely talked about his early escapades; how he left a stress-free life in Goa to seek his fortune in what was then, “Darkest Africa,” with very little money and an unquenchable spirit of adventure. My mother, however, would regale us for hours with tales of times gone by.

On Sunday mornings after early Mass and breakfast, Dad would shoulder his 12-guage twin-barrel shot gun, hop on his bicycle and ride to the outskirts of town, about ten minutes away, to hunt for small game and fowl. He was usually returned by lunchtime and always brought home a small deer or a brace of guinea fowl. Dad never owned or drove a car. His bicycle was his hunting vehicle!

Dad’s passion was elephant hunting. He was good at it. It was not sport, it was business. He got the required special permit which allowed the holder to hunt no more than five elephants. An elephant hunting permit had a higher premium than regular game hunting permits. Hunting rules were strict. There were

designated hunting areas and an embargo on shooting females of all species, except rabbits and birds or under special circumstances. Owing to over population, the government often needed to cull wild game and would issue culling licenses for different species in controlled game area. If wildlife threatened livestock, crops or humans, they would be culled. Dad owned a high powered 0.404 rifle, with special soft-nosed bullets for elephant hunting.

Interestingly, Oswald used the same caliber gun to kill President J.F. Kennedy.

Mother related how Dad once left with five porters to carry his hunting and camping gear on a one-week elephant hunt. They travelled by bus and then on foot to the designated controlled game area. Mother got quite worried when Dad didn't return as expected after a week. Two weeks went by and he still hadn't returned. She started to panic, as she was sure something had happened to him – he could have been killed by a denizen of the wilds. How would she look after four young children with no income? At the end of the 3rd week to her relief, Dad returned with four large tusks that mother said fetched a considerable amount of money.

As I grew older, I wanted to approach life with the same courage and sense of adventure as my Dad and I longed to follow in his footsteps and hunt big game.

In my early twenties, I met Sonny Vaz who lived in Moshi in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. Sonny hailed from a family of big game hunters. He was a diminutive 5'3" and probably weighed no more than 95 pounds, wet and fully clothed. He owned several hunting guns. His most powerful rifle was a 5' long Remington BSA .375. He was just slightly taller than this

lethal weapon which was powerful enough to bring down a full grown elephant. Sonny once told us that he had shot two elephants with tusks weighing an average of 115 lbs each. Looking at this tiny man, we laughed as it seemed quite preposterous.

Like me, Sonny was an avid card player and we played gin-rummy for small stakes every week. Over the months we became close friends.

Sonny took me hunting and I shot zebra, impala, guinea fowl and wildebeest. Then there were times Sonny and I would sometimes lie under a huge acacia tree a few miles out of town just before dusk and wait for the wild green pigeons to roost. As they perched, we would drop them one by one and bring home enough for a tasty meal for all of us, including the household help. I soon became quite adept with a hunting rifle; my hand was steady and my aim true. Sonny promised that he would soon take me elephant hunting.

Sonny's brother Danny owned and operated a maize farm close to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area next to the famous Serengeti National Park. Danny had installed a 3-foot high electric wire fence to keep the wild life from raiding his corn. It was fascinating to observe the intelligence of the pachyderm. Initially, when elephants approached the fence and were zapped on contact, they quickly retreated like all other wild life that tried to get at the corn. After awhile however, the canny elephants carefully and gingerly lifted their massive legs high enough to avoid touching the electrified fence as they marauded the corn field. An average elephant can eat about 300 lbs. a day so a herd could wipe out acres juicy corn in a very short while.

Danny's crops were frequently destroyed by a particular herd of elephants so he approached the authorities for permission to

shoot the leader, an old matriarch that led the herd onto his farm. The busy game rangers only gave priority to cases involving wild animals attacking humans – not crops. Sonny and Danny were registered hunters in the Arusha and Moshi District Council, so they obtained special permission to solve their elephant problem themselves. They maintained surveillance at both ends of the farm and regularly scouted around in their jeep looking for the marauding herd.

I was excited when Sonny invited me to join him and he figured that I would most likely have an opportunity to bag my first elephant - the canny matriarch that led the herd. We set off that evening in the jeep. Sonny had his trusted .375 and another smaller back-up rifle in the event of a charge. I took along a half pint of Johnnie Walker to calm my nerves. There was much excitement and I hoped that Danny would not spot the herd at the other end of the farm before us. Two hours later, we spotted the elephants at our end of the farm, already inside the fence. There were fourteen or fifteen females and a small calf ripping at the corn and yes, the unmistakable old matriarch was with the herd. Sonny radioed the farm house to turn off the power on the electric fences to enable the elephants to scramble out of the farm after their leader was shot. The big leader was in the centre of the herd and we later learnt that she usually positioned herself where she could protect a baby calf from predators. She picked up our scent and sensing danger, her big ears flapped. Elephants have very poor eyesight but their sense of smell is very keen.

At first, we did not see the calf hidden among the corn stalks. Sonny let me use his .375 and reminded me exactly where to aim, a spot just below the ear, which would kill instantly. He

warned me not to hit any of the younger females as Danny would be in big trouble. Besides, not solving his elephant problem, he could lose his farm and his license. Furthermore, I didn't have a firearms license which could complicate matters further even though this was a private farm and not patrolled by game wardens. I waited patiently for the large matriarch to move away from the center and away from her nearby companions. It seemed to take forever. Ten minutes later, Danny rendezvoused with us and now I felt safer in the event of a charge as there were two extra guns to cover me.

Eventually, my quarry came into full view for a perfect shot. Sonny gave me the go-ahead while he covered me with the other rifle in case I did not drop the elephant dead with my first shot. I felt a tremendous rush of adrenalin as I took careful aim and gently squeezed the .375's trigger. The blast of the rifle echoed across the plains as the lethal bullet shattered into the brain, exactly where I had aimed. The dying matriarch raised its trunk and trumpeted as if to warn the rest of the herd and then the five ton beast slumped to its knees and slowly crumbled on its side. It was a good shot as she died instantly, but then I felt no elation as I saw the proud majestic matriarch crumple with my single bullet. What right did I have to destroy such a magnificent animal? A great sadness enveloped me. I still feel this sadness whenever I recall that day when I shot my first and only elephant, as I vowed that I would never hunt again. The herd scrambled and left the farm. They are intelligent animals and knew that they were trespassing.

The carcass of the now dead matriarch was used to the full.

The legs were sent to a taxidermist to be made into stools; the ears would be cured and turned into rugs. The tail hair was

used for ornamental bangles and good luck charms. The nearby villagers enjoyed the meat and there was enough to feed the whole village for a few days. The ivory tusks were handed over to the game rangers as it was government property. The herd would move on and another matriarch would lead the herd to new foraging grounds.

One might moralize about wildlife conservation but this is the age-old tussle between man and beast. The corn crop was Danny's livelihood and he had a family to support.

About the Author

XAVIER SEQUEIRA was born in the southern highlands of Tanzania. He grew up in Dar-es-Salaam and attended the Goan School in the suburbs of the city. He worked in a management position with a British company. His passion for automobiles and hunting led him to drive in various East-African motor rallies and hunt elephants and other game. He later moved to London, England where he lived for 5 years until he immigrated to Canada in 1974. He is now semi-retired and enjoys travelling.

Countries and major cities I have visited

AFRICA

TANZANIA

Towns cities: Dar-es-Salaam,
Tanga, Moshi, Arusha, Mwanza,
Bukoba, Musoma, Tabora,
Shinyanga, Iringa, Mbeya,
Njombe, Morogoro

Places of interest:

Mount Kilimanjaro,
Serengeti National park,
Ngororo Crater, Lake Manyara,
Williamson Diamond Mines,
Olduvai Gorge.

KENYA

Towns cities: Nairobi, Mombasa,
Nakuru

Places of interest: Masai Mara
national Park, Flamingos at
Lake Naivuru, The Rift Valley

UGANDA

Kampala, Entebbe

ZANZIBAR

Zambia, Lusaka

EGYPT

Cairo – pyramids (Bird's eye view
from the aircraft)

EUROPE

ENGLAND

London, Manchester, Birmingham,
Leicestershire, Brighton

WALES

Cardiff

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh, Glasgow, Loch Ness

DENMARK

Jutland, Copenhagen, Tivoli
gardens

SWEDEN

Helsingor
Denmark
Jutland, Copenhagen, Tivoli
gardens

SWEDEN

Helsingor Stockholm

FRANCE

Paris, Calais

Belgium
Brussels, Ostend,

GERMANY

Frankfurt, Aachen, Munich,
Düsseldorf

NETHERLANDS – HOLLAND

Amsterdam, Rotterdam

ITALY

Rome

GREECE

Athens

MIDDLE EAST

United Arab Emirates
Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah

INDIA

Bombay, Goa, Delhi, Agra,
Madras, Bangalore, Mysore
Places of interest: Taj Mahal,
Basilica of Bom Jesus, Brindavan
Gardens, Mysore palace

THAILAND

Bangkok, Pattaya

SINGAPORE

MALAYSIA

SOUTH AMERICA

VENEZUELA

Caracas
Puerto Cruz

AUSTRALIA

Sydney, Canberra, Perth,
Freemantle, Brisbane, Melbourne,
Great Barrier Reef

CANADA

British Columbia
Vancouver, peach land,
Okanagan Valley

Alberta
Calgary, Edmonton, Banff, Lake
Louise, Jasper Park, the Rocky
Mountains

Ontario
Toronto, Niagara falls, Windsor,
London, Sudbury, Ottawa,
Saulte Ste. Marie

Quebec
Montreal, Quebec city,

New Brunswick

Fredericton, Magnetic hill,
Shediac

Nova Scotia

Halifax Peggy's cove, Cabot's trail

Prince Edward Island

Charlottetown

U.S.A.

Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee,
Green Bay, Buffalo, Newark,
New York, Cleveland,
Columbus Ohio, Florida,
Disneyland, Orlando, Tampa,
Los Angeles, Hollywood,
San Francisco, Reno, Las Vegas,
Phoenix, The Grand Canyon,
Boston, Atlanta, Cincinnati,
Kentucky, Iowa, Tennessee,
North Carolina, South Carolina

Airlines that I have travelled on

Air Canada	Air France
British Airways	Emirates Airlines
Canadian Airlines	KLM (Dutch)
Canadian Pacific Airlines	Czechoslovakia Airlines
Ward Air	Lufthansa
Air Transat	Jet Airways
Can jet Airways	Indian Airways
Sun wing Airlines	Kingfisher Airways
United Airlines	Air India
American Airlines	Singapore Airways
Pan American Airlines,	Cathay Pacific Airways
Southwest Airlines	Quantas Airlines
US Air	Ancette Airways (Australia)
Northwest Airlines	Japan Air Lines
Air Tanzania	Sabena Air Lines
Kenya Airways	Swiss Air
East African Airways	Egypt Air
British Overseas Air Corporation	Canada 3000
(BOAC)	Air Tanzania
Freddie Laker Airlines	Air Kenya
Caledonia Air	Cubana Air
Alitalia	

Photograph Album

The following pages are a collection of photographs that may help illustrate some of the events, people and places that I mentioned in the preceding pages.



*The Sequeira family photo taken in 1964.
Back, left to right: Clement, Justin, Anette, Jesse and Xavier.
Front, John, Virgilia and Luíza.*



My parents, John and Luiza Sequeira.



Dad and mum with Xavier.



Jesse



Justin



Xavier and Justin



Clement and Mary with John Paul



Dad with John Paul



Leaving for England –1972



Xavier, Anette and Justin – 1974



Xavier, Jesse and Justin – 1974



Fruit from our trees back home



Our home



Class of 1964 – Cellie, Crescent, Xavier, Shamim, Melba, Melville, Carmen, Fernando, Mthew, Zulficar, Mr. Honono, Siad, Leoncio, Godfrey, Harivadan



Old Goan Institute used as a school – 1953



Mrs. Lydia DeSouza nee Carvalho



*Dad's ancestral home in Majorda, Goa
Left – 1975, Right – 1976*



Mount Kilimanjaro crater from the KLM aircraft

The Motor Rally Days



*Replica of the stove my mother used
in 1945*



Goan school



Sonny Vaz



Tusks from Elephant shot by Sonny



Hunting Impala on Sonny's farm – 1972



Laury-Anne's Christening



Jess, Irene, Valentine in in London



Picnic in London – 1972

Fatima 1973





Nico, Anita and Billy – 1978



Nashon, Nico, Anita and Billy



Ray, Vivien and Lara 1975



Hubert and Greeba



With Maureen – 1975



Roma and Ignatius – 1972



Thames Typewriter Company – 1973



*Thames Typewriter Company gang:
Jack, Ray, Phil, Peter, Doris, Elsie – 2000*



*Lunch at Peter Hawker's home in Wey
bridge, Surry – Summer 2000*



*Joanne, Dave and
Suzanne Sells*



Cathy and John in Kenya



Christopher's plane at Dar-es-Salaam Airport



Hand -driven pontoon boat



Thish, Dianne, Sonny and Phulu



Trish and Shaun



Thish and Elie



Thish, Irene and Lauren



Xavier's 50th birthday party





At Jesse's 70th birthday



Raymond's 60th birthday party. Suri and Maurice



*Classmates at dinner in Porvorim, Goa 2007
Xavier, Raymond, Lydia (teacher), Yvette and Crescent (after 43 years)*

Chefs Xavier and Les Gonsalves



*Les and Xavier
at the Grand Canyon 2007*

Punta Cana with Les

Thailand with Maurice





Xavier, Tony, Bosco and Charlie



Rene, John and Cathy



With Godchild Jessica – 2009

To all the girls I used to know...

