

## A Long Way To Go

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I AM SITTING at this restaurant table.<sup>1</sup> Brian brings me a cuppa coffee. “Thanks Brian,” I say. My restless Uniball pen is in hand, and a flurry of blank A4s is anxious to receive some math calculations about something called global horizontal irradiance.

Four middle-aged men arrive, looking like they’ve arrived. Brian hovers, looking like he hasn’t. They sit down at the adjacent table.

“Howzit my boy!” “Howzit. How’re you doing?” “No fine.” “Great, eh.” And so on.

And then it begins.

“These f\_\_ng people, eh. They can’t f\_\_ng run a f\_\_ng country.”

“You’re so f\_\_ng right, eh!”

“They must f\_\_ng just sort their crappy sh\_t out, man. f\_\_k.”

Brian arrives with their coffees and coffee lattes. But wait! I thought Brian was a visible person.

And it begins again.

“Hey, we’re going f\_\_ng hunting again in May. I’ve f\_\_ng got all the rifles and sh\_t. The oke’s farm’s got f\_\_ng everything, eh. Blesbok, Springbok, Guinea Fowl, Wilderbees, the lot, eh. So you pay upfront. And then you can f\_\_ng shoot whatever you f\_\_ng like, eh.”

“No sh\_t, really?”

“Hey, wanna come?”, as he turns to his mate oke on his right. The mate oke is busy phone fiddling, with the mate oke’s phone resting comfortably on his voluptuous tummy.

“Me? Ja sure, man. Cool. But can I bring the wife?”

“Of course! Bring the wife.”

“Last time I was at the farm, I f\_\_ng shot a f\_\_ng Blesbok. In it’s back, eh. It was squealing like a f\_\_ng piglet, eh. And its squealing disturbed some Springboks in the bush. So, yussis, I shot two of them too. What a f\_\_ng jol, I tell you!”

Laughs. And more laughs. And sips of coffee and coffee latte. And the mate oke resumed his phone fiddle, like one moment becomes the next moment.

And in that moment, how I wished I could have made them all squeal. Like piglets. I said cheers to Brian, who had become a visible person again, and left. Then I wept.

We have a long long way to go.

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<sup>1</sup>I declare this to be my own work, entirely. In particular, no AI was used in any research, analysis, synthesis, writing, nor typesetting of this work. In short, AI was not recruited at any time in this work. Errors and inaccuracies are therefore proudly my own.