

## **‘The locum cardiothoracic SHO, I presume?’**

After seven years in the bush, I had found him. The legendary South African doctor, whose exploits were part of junior doctor folklore in the UK. He was sitting having lunch in a hotel in Centurion, to the south of Pretoria, having been a speaker at an infection control gathering. In fact I knew Jan ven den Ende quite well from malaria meetings (which our hospital sees a lot of — the malaria that is, not just the meetings), but never suspected how famous he was. I thought he was merely a Professor of Pathology. But on this particular occasion there was a good lunch, and out came the story.

While doing a locum SHO job in the UK for a cardiothoracic surgical firm in 1969, he attended a woman who had been stabbed in the right chest with a breadknife by her husband. He treated her with a chest drain, transfusion, tetanus prophylaxis and penicillin, and admitted her. She was seen the next day on a ward round by the consultant, who was indignant that he had not been contacted, so that he could explore the chest wound.

‘And how many chest drains have you put in then?’

‘Between ten and twenty every weekend on call for the last two years, sir.’

‘Next patient!’ said the consultant.

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