

Return of the Info exile

**STORY AND PICTURE
BY HILTON HAMANN**

DR ESCHEL RHOODIE, former head of the department of Information at the time of the Info scandal and once South Africa's most wanted man, is coming back to live in South Africa after more than 10 years in exile.

He said this week from his home in Atlanta, Georgia: "Yes, I am planning to come home."

"My self-imposed exile actually came to an end when P W Botha's dictatorship was snuffed out at the end of 1989."

"As far as I'm concerned he was the last major figure in the Information scandal, of which he was part, but which he used to stage his creeping, in-house, political coup d'état against Connie Mulder and B J Vorster."

Dr Rhoodie, who fled the country at the height of the Info scandal in 1978, was brought back from France in handcuffs.

His extradition was based on an 1876 Franco-British convention. He was provisionally sequestered, charged with fraud, found guilty and then had the conviction set aside on appeal.

The former government high-flyer and Georgia state tennis champion in

Rhodie plans his SA comeback — as bridge-builder for Mozambique

his age group, will once again be responsible for selling government policies, though this time it will be Mozambique footing the bill.

"The government of Mozambique asked me to prepare a five-year programme on how to build bridges to the West," said Dr Rhoodie.

Image

"They asked me to advise them on how to publicise the new democratic image of the country and how to go about encouraging foreign investment and trade."

The blueprints have been approved by Mozambique President Joachim Chissano and the ruling Frelimo Party. The plans will be activated as soon as funds are raised.

Dr Rhoodie also confirmed he had been approached by representatives of European coun-

tries and important US business interests who were considering providing funds for him to establish an English language newspaper which would become a mouthpiece for Southern African Development Co-ordination Committee countries.

"But there is nothing concrete at this stage," he said.

"Everybody is waiting for the conflict in Angola and Mozambique to end and for South Africa to progress far enough along the road of meaningful power-sharing and to become a member of SADCC before any money is going to be put on the table."

"With regard to South Africa joining the SADCC, I believe it is only a matter of time before we see it," said Dr Rhoodie.

Exactly when the former Info supremo will return is not yet certain, but Dr Rhoodie confirmed

he would be in Cape Town and Johannesburg sometime next month to look for a suitable home.

"I write a quarterly foreign investment risk analysis for a European principal," he said.

"My contract will be renewed this April for a further five years. However, I will now concentrate on Africa south of the Sahara — something I can do just as easily from South Africa."

"I also have to complete my new book, *Cultures in Conflict*, which will be published in the US, hopefully in August."

Clients

Both his wife, Katy, and two children are anxious to return to the land of their birth. However, the children's ties with the United States will be more difficult to cut.

Annemarie is a successful business consultant with an impressive portfolio of corporate clients. Young Eschel has completed a BSc degree in aerospace at the University of Texas and recently a BSc in computer science magna cum laude at Kansas State University.

"They will probably continue to work in the States for a few years before returning home," said Dr Rhoodie.



HIGH FLYER
... Rhodie is all set for another senior government post, this time putting Mozambique on its feet