



A-where-to?

Redeye received this email which partly reflects how far we have come (or not) in the last ten years

I wanted to leave a message for a colleague in Cape Town.

'Please ask him to phone me in Polokwane', I said.

'Where?', his secretary asked sounding as if she had bitten into a lemon 'Polokwane, where's that?'

'Between Mokopane and Makhado in Limpopo'.

'Where is this?' she asked patiently.

I could hear she thought she had a joker on the line.

'Well "I explained" you drive from Tswane past Bela-Bela and Modimolle through the tollgate. Continue past Mokopane but watch your speed as speed traps make lots of money from those traveling too fast. Polokwane is just after Mokopane but if you reach Makahado you have gone to far.' I am not quite sure how we ended on the road route when all I wanted was a telephone call.

'Just hold it right there sir?' she interrupts. 'Where is Makhado?'

'Between Polokwane and Musina' I said, trying to be helpful.

'Excuse me sir but where is Musina?' getting slightly hysterical.

'Musina is between Makhado and Harare' I said gently.

'Do you live in Harare?' She asks as if she had suddenly seen the light.

'No' I said. 'I am trying to explain where Polokwane is'.

'In Zimbabwe' she asks hopefully.

'No in Limpopo' I corrected her.

She gave a helpless sigh and said 'Please can we start again?'

I think at this stage she thought she was live on air with Leon Schuster and became a bit wary 'Where is Tswane?'

'That's easy' I said. 'Between Bela-Bela and Egoli'.

'No sir I mean the town'.

'So do I' said I.

I could hear she was now into soapies while I was still on the road so to speak. 'Egoli is on the other side of Tswane when coming from the direction of Bela-Bela' I said 'Excuse me, have you perhaps had to much to drink?'

'No', I said 'I am not drunk, they changed the name'.

'Do you mean someone has changed your name?'

'No not my name, the town's name' I corrected her.

'What towns name?'

'Pietersburg'.

'You live in Pietersburg!' she cried, and I could hear the dawn of understanding.

'No' I said. 'I live in Polokwane formerly known as Pietersburg.'

'No shit?' she asked.

'No shit' I confirmed.

'So you are phoning from Polokwane previously know as Pietersburg?'

'Exactly', I confirmed.

'Now ... what were all the other names you mentioned?' she asked.

I realized this lass needed a lesson in the geography of our country pretty quick so I explained:

'Egoli was Johannesburg. Tshwane is Pretoria. If you travel North you pass Bela-Bela, formerly Warmbaths, after that Modimolle that was Nylstroom and Potgietersrust that is Mokopane now. After Mokopane you get Polokwane that was Pietersburg then Louis Trichardt that became Makhado. After you have passed Makhado you get Musina that was originally Messina.'

'And Musina is by the Limpopo!' she said triumphantly.

'Yes,' I said 'but the Limpopo I was speaking of is the province'.

'What do you call the river then?'

'Limpopo' I said.

'Bloody hell!'

LS

Do you have room to complain about your working environment?

