
EDITORIAL

When the gallows are inevitable

Four hundred and fifty of us were in the banquet hall, the guests of a pharmaceutical company. The venue in Sun City, at the 8th Family Practice Congress was prepared with great care, so also the menu and the evening's entertainment. The room darkened and an enormous screen lit up presenting . . . Shakespeare himself. He skilfully gave a most remarkable commentary on the characters in his various plays. We were spellbound, stunned by the superb use of technology and the scholarly analysis presented by the maestro himself, as it were.

After a considerable passage of time there was a subtle change. There seemed to be a change in quality. It was the same commentator that started off in such a scholarly fashion. It was the same voice that had almost imperceptibly slipped into discussing the virtues of a new product. Then, quite brutally, followed a lengthy presentation of the necessity of using this product to save our globe from disaster.

A handful of people found themselves outside, unable to cope with this level of propaganda at an evening where convention had it, that a few mentions of a company's name was to be expected. It was *our* evening after all. We were dejected, perhaps because so few had felt uncomfortable enough to leave the banquet.

A cup of coffee helped to share our time and thoughts. One of us remarked that the words of Rosencrantz sum it all up. He and Guildenstern had been caught as they had agreed to do their "gentil dirty work" to deliver Prince Hamlet to be

assassinated. On the gallows he spoke the words we were fumbling for, "there must have been a moment when we could have said no!"¹

Sam Felsen

Reference

1. Stopard, Tom. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. The Play. London: Faber and Faber and Shakespeare "without whom we are lost for words".