

## HUBRIS OR NO HUBRIS, LET THE FEVER GO ROUND

21<sup>st</sup> August, 2000

Two presentations in the media attracted my attention recently. One was the article by Waziri Adio in his Postscript column titled “***The House, Hubris and Honour***”. I did not quite know the meaning of Hubris, so I consulted The New Websters Dictionary of the English Language (1997 Printing) which explained that, **hubris** (noun) means: “**scornful, overweening pride**” (Gk. Tragedy) transgression of the divine or moral law through ambition or one of the passions ultimately causing the transgressor’s doom.” I shuddered that for a simply sounding six letter word, hubris certainly means a lot. The article was illustrated with a rare picture on Hon. Ghali Na’abba tight-lipped and staring like an enraged about to charge pit bull. (I request that you kindly use the same picture to illustrate this rejoinder).

After reading Waziri, I was fuming and in total agreement with all his arguments. Already my mind had been prepared to accept the crucify him anthem by the cover story in ***TheNews*** magazine which had called Na’abba tight-lipped and staring like an enraged about to charge pit bull. (I request that you kindly use the same picture to illustrate this rejoinder).

Like I was saying after reading Waziri, I entered the inside pages. By the way I belong to those odd people who start reading newspapers from the back page, I eventually got to pages 14 and 15 which carried an advert signed by one Eziuche Ubani, Special Adviser to the Hon. Speaker on media Affairs. I very reluctantly read through the advert, very reluctantly because I had the Speaker and his House of Rerepresentatives had o defence to the plethora of accusations contained in ***TheNews*** magazine story and the further indictment by a respectable columnist of Waziri Adio’s standing confounded the case of the House and the Speaker. Since I was certain that Adio must be privy to some incriminating details which he sued to reach the conclusions as in “Hubris”, but my training as a lawyer and a gnawing prompting of a latin maxim **Audi Alterem partem**” (Let the other side by heard) finally persuaded me to reluctantly read the advert by Ubani titled “**If Democracy must thrive.**” And I thank God I read “**If Democracy must thrive**” which was the second presentation of note.

Apart from a seriatim disavowal based on clear that’s and details of each and every allegation by ***TheNews*** magazine and sundry other papers, “If Democracy must thrive” raised an alarm “that the recent crises in the legislature is part of a grand design to emasculate this arm of government in the country. Yet, parliament is the sine qua non of democratic governance anywhere. If weakened, dictatorship is just around a door away” The import of this statement hit me in the figurative solar plexus. But the impact was to really sink in after I read this week’s ***TheNews*** which again had had Na’abba on the cover with the headlines reading something like “**I Cannot be Probed**” says

**Na'abba.** In the inside pages, Na'abba was interviewed and all the allegations **TheNews** carried in the previous editions were presented and he answered them one by one. Something struck me and that was this fact that "**TheNews** never attempted to interview the Speaker before they carried "**The Rogue in the House**" cover story. It was clear that a conclusive statement like "**The Rogue in the House**" could never have become the caption for that cover if "**the Rogue**" had been allowed to defend himself. But defending himself would clearly defeat the intendments to the scripters of that screamer, so call him Rogue first, sell your papers then go and find out if he is actually a rogue or not, then use the most provocative out of context excerpt of his defence for the follow-up edition. Any hack propagandist can do this script, it does not require a genius or a Waziri Adio. But what, does it portend for democracy and the institutions of democracy?

Let us not miss the point of Waziri Adio in "The House, Hubris and Honours, "If I may attempt to crudely summaries his conclusion; it says simply: Mr. Speaker submit yourself to a probe; anything to the contrary or a variation thereof is sheer "hubris" Waziri calls it the "probity fever."

Ziggy says, hubris or no hubris let the fever go round. This probity fever must not be focused only on the legislature which to all intents and purposes is being projected by the wizards of smear as the ulcer in our perfect body. The legislature as we know it means The Senate, the Federal House of Representatives, the State Houses of Assembly and the Local Councils' legislatures. The uppermost house of the legislative arm – the Senate – has been subjected to the probity fever in the now infamous Senate Contract Scam or Senategate as you may prefer; it is only fair and balanced for the searchlight to be beam will be projected on the uppermost level of the Judiciary/The Supreme Court after this full cycle, the House of Representatives must now take its turn and all the other levels in all the other arms will go the whole hog. Any argument to the contrary will appear to be a witch-hunt intended to destabilize, denigrate and demolish the legislature as an institution.

I do not think the target is just Na'abba because Na'abba is been used as an epitome of the institution called the House of Representatives, and since Na'abba appears to lines, then destroy Na'abba as the last bastion of legislative resistance and structure and the house will come crumbling down. If the destruction of the House of Representatives (as we can presume that the Senate has been fatally struck) will cleanse our country, so please let it be. But you and I know that our endemic corruption is not resident in the legislature; indeed it is nascent only in the nascent legislature and that is why the joke about town amongst the business and deals circle is don't do deals with legislators otherwise the whole world will hear because they do not know how to steal, because like loud politicians they are, they chop and talk, unlike their counterparts in the other arms who chop and clean mouth."

Is this writer endorsing corruption within the legislature? God forbid and as I sign this, I am sure that all who know me can vouch for my integrity, but the fact is that tyranny abhors checks and balances; the legislators and their leadership at this point must be suffering a persecution complex, some of their woes may be self-inflicted but we must all protect something bigger than Na'abba, that is Democracy, the right to choose. Those who are sailing Na'abba are trying to force from outside through vulgar, abuse, raw intimidation, blackmail, unscrupulous, wicked and unconscionable sloganeering a change in the leadership of the House of Representatives. They are like that person in the Bible whom our Lord and Saviour told to go and remove the log in his eyes before the mite in another's. The statistics are clear, the legislature has appropriated to itself just about 2% of the entire budget; will the press please start a campaign for the other innocent, angelic, crystal clear and corruption-free beneficiaries of 98% of the budget to subject themselves to the probity fever; and I submit once more, hubris or no hubris the fever should and must go round – let us cleanse this land, not just extirpate the legislature, then go to sleep and business will continue as usual. God forbid.

Chibuzo N. Ziggy Azike, Ksc  
Lawyer and Politician  
10, Chilaka Close  
Surulere, Lagos