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Lisa Hughes,
Vice-president
The New Yorker
4 Times Square
New York, NY 10036

By Email: Lisa_Hughes@newyorker.com

Dear Ms Hughes,

**REQUEST FOR PERMANENT WITHDRAWAL AND AN APOLOGY FOR
PUBLICATION OF DR. JARED DIAMOND' ARTICLE ENTITLED
"VENGEANCE IS OURS: WHAT CAN TRIBAL SOCIETIES TELL US ABOUT
TO GET EVEN?"**

I write this letter in response to Dr. Diamond's article '*Vengeance is Ours: What Can Tribal Societies Tell Us About To Get Even*' published by your magazine, *The New Yorker*, in the Annals of Anthropology section on 21 April 2008. The purpose of this letter is to point out that:

1. The contents of the articles concern me as a member of the Handa clan paternally, and the Henep and Ombal clans maternally, and the alleged facts are false and inaccurate so I am obliged to respond.
2. Since Dr. Diamond is a highly respected writer whose works are widely read in academia in Papua New Guinea (PNG), it is for the sake of my clans' recorded history, and my personal reputation, that I point out to the errors in the article as being based on wrong and inaccurate information.
2. Mr. Daniel Wemb, from the Hup clan, a sub-clan of the Handa major clan, claims that Diamond's article is inaccurate, and published without his permission, or verification, constructed from conversational dialogue he had with him (Diamond) that was general in nature, bits and pieces of unverified stories from many tribes, and not meant to be written as historical fact as Diamond does in his article. Daniel Wemb also denies quotations in the article that are attributed to him.
3. The articles portrays members of the Handa clan as those who like committing murder, rape and such other heinous crimes, which are not only false and tarnishes our good name and reputation, but also likely to cause baseless prosecution against any members of my clan by the police force of Papua New Guinea.

4. For the sake of his profession, good name, and standing in the academic community in PNG, and others around the world who enjoy his stories, that Dr. Diamond and the New Yorker to withdraw the article from circulation and further publication, including for their subscribers and audio file customers.

IDENTITY AND CONNECTION BETWEEN PERSONS, NAMES AND CLANS

1. I am a member of the Handa clan Diamond refers to in the article above. I am a lawyer with seven years private practice in PNG before I left for PhD studies (2006-June 2009) at the School of Law, James Cook University, Queensland, Australia. I came across Diamond's article in the course of my research, a thesis I am writing on development and natural resources laws and policy in PNG.
2. Diamond's article describes that members of my clan like myself are taught from an early age to hate our enemies, extol revenge or 'payback' killing, and generally indulge in lawless deeds. This is wrong and totally false.
3. The Handa, Henep and Ombal clans are kin-based clans, and so their members are easily identifiable by other people outside of these clans.
4. In PNG, individual identity is attached to names of kin-based clans. For examples, my name 'Mako' is the name of a river owned by the Handa clan. The name 'Henep Isum' mentioned by Diamond in the article uses his kin-based clan name 'Henep', while his given name is 'Isum Mandingo'. Individuals from other clans, and even politicians, use their clan names as personal names for identity. For instance, in the PNG national government elections in 1992 and 1997, the regional governor for Southern Highlands Province (SHP), namely, 'Nipa Dick Mune' (now deceased) used 'Nipa' which is his clan name, while 'Dick Mune' were his given names.
5. The pervasive use of clan names give us identity in our country. When a clan like 'Handa' is published and mentioned as Diamond did, it is read and understood as referring to the individual members of that clan. I am a Handa, and other clan members would address me as 'Handa Mako' or 'Handa John' or 'Handa John Kuwimb'. Handa is my formal and 'diplomatic' name that confers an individual and distinct identity. The same applies to other members of the Handa and other clans.
6. Since members of a clan are easily identifiable and known by other clans, our pride and dignity or shame and indignity hang on the fame and dignity of our clans. Clans compete with other clans just as individuals compete against individuals for prestige, wealth and dignity. Clans that cause tribal fights are known as 'trouble makers' and held in contempt by other peace-loving clans. Likewise, peace-loving clans are known by their actions and upheld in esteem.
7. For this reason, Diamond's misinformed assertions about the 'Handa' are applicable to individual members of that clan, and also members of the Ombal and Henep clans.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE DIAMOND ARTICLE

1. The Handa Clan (my paternal clan), and the Henep and Ombal Clans (my maternal clans) are situated on the border between the *Wola Tribe* who speak the *Angal Heneng* Language, the *Huli Tribe* who speak the *Huli* Language, and the Kutubu who speak the *Foe* and *Fasu* Languages.
2. Huli is in the North-west of Handa-Henep-Ombal, Wola in the South and Kutubu in the West of these three clans. The *Kandeps* live directly in the North, and the *Mendis* directly in the East. Kandeps speak the *Enga* Language. The current PNG government minister for transport, Don Polye, who holds a degree in engineering, is a member for the Kandep Open. The Mendis speak the Angal Heneng Language with slight differences in dialect.
3. The Papuan Patrol of the Australian colonial Administration first discovered Southern Highlands Province in 1935. They came from the Gulf Province through the Kikori area up to Mount Bosavi and the Lake Kutubu area.
4. Jack Hides and Bob Marley, two Australian field officers made first contacts with the Hulis in 1935 and traveled from there to Margarima, through my village, and then moved towards Nipa, the Wola territory. They then floated on rafts down the Erave River to Kikori, and later on to Port Moresby.
5. PNG's first oil project is in Lake Kutubu and first gas project at Hides, a mountain ridge in the Huli territory that is named after Jack Hides.
6. These first colonial government contacts had no impacts on the Handa and Ombal tribes until 1961.
7. In 1961, Victor Schlatter, an American Linguist missionary from the Apostolic Christian Church in the United States, established a mission station near a little creek called *Till* in the Angal Heneng Language at Nipa. The Australian colonial government had by then set up a district headquarters at Nipa.
8. From this mission station, the Apostolic mission extended slowly to the neighbouring villages on the Nipa side as well as on the Margarima side.
9. Meanwhile, Murray Rule, an Australian missionary established a mission station at Tage Point at Lake Kutubu (where Diamond spoke to Daniel). From there Murray too slowly moved up to the Baguale, Homa Paua, Agu and Sebiba Villages – that is, towards the Huli areas in the North-west, and Margarima in the North from Lake Kutubu.
10. Sebiba is the official colonial government name on the Common Roll for electoral purposes covering the **Handa** clan, the Ak clan, the Hualal clan, and other clans.
11. Daniel's father, Wemb, was one of the very first persons, if not the first person, to be sent to the Christian Leaders Training College (CLTC) located at Banz in the Western Highlands Province by the Apostolic mission established by Victor Schlatter.

12. Wemb was one of the first persons to speak the English Language, worked as a senior pastor after his studies, but later "back-slided" after he married a second wife. Daniel is from the first wife.
13. Wemb Akop (Daniel's father) married a woman from the **Waul Aol** clan of **Koarte** Village located about 500 metres from Nipa district station.
14. Wemb and his family live in **Suma** Village on the Nipa side. The Okuk Highway runs through this village. All the Wemb children including Daniel lived all their lives in Nipa; they never lived in **Hopang**, which is their father's village in Margarima. **Hopang** is a **Handa** land inhabited by the **Hup sub-clan** of the Handa major clan, and it is the last village near **Sebiba** bordering Lake Kutubu and Margarima. From Hopang, one can walk through thick rainforest jungles down to Agu, and from there to Yalenda or Baguale and on to Lake Kutubu.
15. The Catholic Church began to establish more churches in the Margarima district than the Apostolic mission. The **Handa**, **Henep** and **Ombal** clans, being situated on the Margarima side bordering Nipa, their Christian population was evenly split between the two churches. Recently, however, most have joined the Apostolic church, which has been localized and changed its name to Goodnews Christian Church.
16. The first primary school near the Handa clan was established in 1973 on the Nipa side at Ungubi, now named Kundi, by the Apostolic mission. The Catholic Church also established a primary school in 1973 on the Margarima side at Songura, located between Solpaem Village in the north, and Ombal in the south.
17. George Lek Kuwimb, my brother who is now a motor mechanic instructor at Nipa Technical College, was among the first to enroll at Kundi Community School on the Nipa side in 1973. He later transferred to Songura on the Margarima side.
18. George transferred to Songura because our mother is from the Henep and Enja clans who are located near Songura. Our one maternal and two paternal aunts also live at Henep. One maternal aunt lives in Ombal. We stayed with them to go to school at Songura. The Kundi School was separated by the Wagi River which has a swaying cane bridge linking our side with the Nipa side, as well as thick swamps, too deep at several places for children at our then ages to walk through easily.
19. I enrolled at Songura in 1978, entered St. Joseph's Tari High School in 1984, and after completing year ten there in 1987 went to Passam National High School in the East Sepik Province to complete years 11 and 12 from 1988-1989 before enrolling for a four-year law degree program at the University of PNG in 1990.
20. My house is located at Henep Village. I planted a number of gardens at Henep and they are there to this day under the care of my first cousins – children of my paternal and maternal aunts I referred to above.
21. In 2002, I built my house (with bush materials, a grass-thatched-roof house) at Henep, which is still there to this day.

22. The **Handa, Henep, Ombal and Solpaem** clans NEVER fought each other in all those years of my life, and NEVER in the entire history of these clans other than the 1993 K2 war (referred to below), the subject of Diamond's distorted article.
23. The simple fact is this: my brothers (George and Philip Kuwimb) and I would not have lived in tribal enemy land, travel through enemy territory for ten long years to go to primary and high school if Diamond's story was true. There were other Handa children too who went to school with us, like Paul La'a, a former policeman, and political candidate. Handa children would have sought the Kundi community school if the Ombal, Henep and Solpaem were, in fact, historical enemies of the Handa as Diamond wrongly claims.

TRIBAL FIGHTS OF THE HANDA CLAN

1. From oral history, the Handa clan had fought, on different occasions, and for different reasons, 13 tribal fights with different clans in their entire history. *None of these 13 fights were with the Henep, Ombal or Solpaem. None of these fights continued for three to six years as Diamond records. They were short fights.*
2. About three fights were with the Hulal, and Yup-Towenz clans on the Margarima side, and the rest with various clans on the Nipa side.
3. One of the fights was with the Suma clan on the Nipa side where Daniel Wemb and his family live. Wemb and his family live in Suma village on Wemb's maternal land. The Handa-Suma war was fought before I was born in 1968, 1969 or 1970 (mum and dad never kept record), so that was a long time ago, say approximately more than 40 years ago. That applies to all the other fights. *No tribal war was fought in my life time apart from the K2 war (below).*
4. When the Handas fought the Suma, the some members of the Henep clan, the Sanal sub-clan, supported the Handa.
5. In the 1993 K2 war, some members of the Suma who supported the Handa clan burned down houses and destroyed the Henep Village. Members of the Handa clan who led the war party in the K2 war did not destroy Henep Village because they know that the Handa and Henep are traditional allies. It was the Suma who came behind the Handa and caused the destruction. Henep Isum, whom Diamond describes as owner of the fight, was infuriated by them burning him out and defended his land; otherwise he would not have been involved, and he is not the 'owner' of the fight or an Ombal tribe member as Diamond wrongly claims.
6. Since the K2 war is the only fight the Handa fought in my lifetime against the Henep and Ombal, I now provide the details of that fight in the next part below. The same victims names in Diamond's fictional "pig in a garden fight" are the same names of the real injured and dead in the "2 Kina" conflict.

THE TWO KINA (K2) FIGHT

1. I remember very clearly that the **K2 Fight** between the **Handa** clan on the one side, and the **Solpaem, Ombal** and **Henep** clans on the other, started sometimes in January-February 1993.
2. I am certain of the date because the news of the fight was relayed to me by Pastor Tim Tanda, my maternal uncle from the Ombal clan.
3. Tim Tanda was posted by the Goodnews Christian Church (GCC), formerly the Apostolic mission, to plant a church in Port Moresby in 1989. I joined him while I was doing first year law in 1990. I lived with him at his house at Gerehu, a suburb in Port Moresby, located not far from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).
4. Tim relayed the message of the fight as I was preparing to attend registration for my final year studies at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).
5. Jared Diamond's opening sentence of his article that "In 1992" is wrong.
6. The K2 war was caused as a result of the failure to amicably resolve a dispute between Song Sowal of the Ombal-Solpaem clans, and Kor Ungurip of the Handa clan.
7. First let me explain the meaning of **K2**, which means **Two Kina**. **Kina** and **toea** are the names of **notes** and **coins** of the PNG national currency like dollar and cents in the US or Australian currency. Based on the PNG exchange rate in 1993, a Kina was equivalent to a US dollar.
8. I remember the currency value because in 1993 I travelled to the United States (US) and Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada, with a team of four law students and a Canadian law lecturer to participate in the prestigious Phillip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition in Washington D.C. We had to change PNG currency into US dollars and I remember well the exchange rate then.
9. PNG's fixed currency exchange regime was suspended in 1994 as a condition of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan package obtained by the PNG government to meet its budgetary shortfalls caused by the Bougainville conflict that started in 1989 over the Panguna Copper Mine.
10. Song Sowal went to school together with me from Grade 1-6 at Songura Community School. He was my classmate. He was shy, timid, quiet and soft-spoken. He failed his year six national examination, so he did not make it to high school. Later in life he drifted into Mount Hagen, the headquarters of Western Highlands Province (WHP), where wage-earning opportunities by working as cash-crop plantation labourers are readily available.
11. Kor Ungurip attended the Kundi Community School on the Nipa side, but failed to complete it from year 1-6. He also drifted into Mount Hagen seeking employment opportunities as a general labourer.

12. Kor Ungurip's grandmother is from the **Larop** Clan, and his mother from the **Waal Aol** (pronounced "Wall All") Clan, both on the Nipa side.
13. Song Sowal is from the **Solpaem** Clan, located on the other side of Songura Community School, but he lives with the Ombal on his maternal land, just like I live at Henep.
14. Somewhere in Mount Hagen, Song Sowal and Kor Ungurip were members of a team of five gambling money by playing a card game called "Queen".
15. In the course of that game, a K2.00 belonging to Song Sowal went missing. He asked around but no one found it. He then accused Kor Ungurip of stealing it. An altercation ensued between the two and their supporters. Kor landed a punch on Song's jaws, allegedly fracturing it.
16. Because Song and Kor failed to settle their individual dispute, and since Song was hurt, it became a clan/tribal issue, no longer an individual matter.
17. I later asked an independent observer from the **Tabul** Clan, namely, Hanal, who was in Mendi and who accommodated Song during his hospitalization at Mendi hospital whether Song's jaw was indeed broken. Hanal said although there may have been a small fracture on one side of the jaw, Song was pretending that his jaw actually broke. In fact, he could see Song eating normally in secret when no one could observe him.
18. Since Song's jaw was not broken, the Handa alleged that it was the Henep Clan who conspired with the Solpaem Clan not to reveal the true medical condition of Song in order to strengthen their claim for certain number of pigs and cash money in compensation.
19. Sometimes in the past but less than two years ago prior to Song's jaw fracture, the Handa Clan demanded 20 pigs as compensation for breaking the jaw of Hape La'a by a Pusi Wila (now deceased by electrocution at a tea plantation in Mount Hagen).
20. Pusi Wila was attempting to flirt with a Handa girl as she was walking home from Kanz Village of the Ombal clan where she went to witness a baptism ceremony conducted by the Goodnews Christian Church at the Samem creek.
21. Henep is located between Handa and Ombal. Handa people have to walk through Henep village to and from their village. Hape La'a was one of those who received baptism. The girl was not interested in Pusi Wila and she resisted his advances. Hape La'a intervened to protect his clan sister. An altercation occurred between the two factions.
22. Pusi Wila landed a mighty punch on Hape La'a's jaws, completely shattering it. Hape La'a came to Port Moresby General Hospital for sophisticated stitchery and I saw it.

23. The Handa threatened the Henep with war if their demand for 20 pigs was not paid. The Henep complied and paid 20 pigs. A precedent had been set. In a similar incident in the future, 20 pigs would be the standard compensation rate.
24. When Song's jaw was fractured, though not as badly as Hape's, the Chairman of the Village Court Magistrate, Moses Paken, from Henep (my maternal uncle now deceased), is alleged to have influenced other magistrates and village court officials to follow the Hape-Pusi precedent.
25. Isum was then a leader of one of the sub-clans of the Henep clan, and a Village Court Peace Officer.
26. **Em Halip** is councilor of the Ombal Clan. He is my maternal uncle just as **Moses Paken**, Chairman of the Village Court Magistrate. The councillor of Solpaem, **Tik** (pronounced tick), was married to my maternal aunt. The Handa allege that these leaders from my mother's side must have conspired to demand the exact amount of pigs the Henep paid for Hape's jaws.
27. The Handa clan was prepared to meet the demand. George Lek Kuwimb (my older brother), and Jim Yalip, a primary school teacher from the Handa clan, bought two large pigs. In fact, Jim bought the head pig worth K1,000.00, and George contributed the second in line.
28. Jim and George were then working in Tari in the Huli territory. They drove home on a Sunday and left the pig in our village. They then met Ungurip, Kor's father, and advised him to collect all the pigs contributed by the Handa clan for the compensation. Ungurip should then go to the Village Court for determination and order on the number of pigs payable.
29. Since village court matters are heard every Thursday, many Handa clan members led by Ungurip went to Soar, a village between Handa and Henep, where the Village Court is situated, to hear the matter on a Thursday.
30. Meanwhile, the Solpaem and Ombal fully armed themselves with bows and arrows and divided into two. One group followed the main road on which 4-wheel drive vehicles can travel, and the other group followed the bush track.
31. My first cousin, Aolli Senge, was home then at Handamanda village. He saw the armed Ombal and Solpaem men coming, so he called to them that they had pigs and money ready for compensation so they should turn back. The Solpaem and Ombal heeded. They turned back and followed another bush track that the Handa use to go to the Village Court at Soar.
32. The 4-wheel drive road comes all the way from the main Highlands Highway (Okuk Highway) to Songura, from there to Ombal, through to Henep, then to Soar and ends at Hombala Village of the Handa.
33. The village where Aolli Senge (para 32) diverted the Ombal and Henep is called Handamanda. It is located on the Handa mountain ridge. Hombala is down the valley of that mountain ridge.

34. Most of the Handa men took the main road to go to the village court. As they approached Soar Village, they saw fully-armed Ombal and Solpaem warriors heading for their village. They had left behind the Village Court by about one kilometre.
35. Mawe Hond, leader of the Handa clan, and a village court magistrate, shouted to the advancing Ombal and Solpaem warriors to turn back to the Village Court to deal with the issue.
36. The Solpaem and Ombal refused. They kept advancing, heading straight for Hombala Village and the Handa territory. Either to frighten them, or to force them to turn back, Mawe Hond fired some arrows not aiming at anyone but miss-firing them deliberately as warning shots.
37. The Ombal and Solpaem responded. Arrow exchanges escalated and the K2 war began there and then.
38. Fighting lasted for about three months, but hostility before settlement dragged on for another three months before peace was restored. During the fight many men received injuries on both sides, but only four died-- two on each side.
39. The Handa, Henep, Ombal and Solpaem live and intermingle together like one big tribe today. There is genuine peace and unity between these clans now.

DETAILED RESPPONSE TO DIAMOND'S ARTICLE

The methodology adopted here is to respond to Diamond's article by following paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1

In 1992, when Daniel Wemp was about twenty-two years old, his beloved paternal uncle Soll was killed in a battle against the neighboring Ombal clan. In the New Guinea Highlands, where Daniel and his Handa clan live, uncles and aunts play a big role in raising children, so an uncle's death represents a much heavier blow than it might to most Americans. Daniel often did not even distinguish between his biological father and other male clansmen of his father's generation. And Soll had been very good to Daniel, who recalled him as a tall and handsome man, destined to become a leader. Soll's death demanded vengeance.

1. The very first words, "In 1992", is definitely wrong. It was in 1993.
2. Soll was not tall. Soll was not destined to become a leader.
3. Tribal obligation is hierarchical and follows a descending order where the closest relatives have more obligations than those further down the line.
4. This means in Daniel's case, he is from the **Hup sub-clan** of the Handa clan, whereas Soll is from the **Ken sub-clan** of the Handa clan. Although they are close, they are not so close as members of the same sub-clan within a clan. Members of the same sub-clan have much heavier obligations than those of other sub-clans in raising children, avenging death, etc. This difference is obfuscated in Diamond's generalization.

Paragraph 2

Daniel told me that responsibility for arranging revenge usually falls on the victim's firstborn son or, failing that, on one of his brothers. "Soll did have a son, but he was only six years old at the time of his father's death, much too young to organize the revenge," Daniel said. "On the other hand, my father was felt to be too old and weak by then; the avenger should be a strong young man in his prime. So I was the one who became expected to avenge Soll." As it turned out, it took three years, twenty-nine more killings, and the sacrifice of three hundred pigs before Daniel succeeded in discharging this responsibility.

1. The obligation is not mandatory. It is voluntary. A son might weigh out all the circumstances and call a fight to stop in order to avoid further responsibility, like paying compensation to those who die or suffer injury while providing support. Risk and debt obligations are important factors that may influence decision on revenge killing.
2. It is not true that it was Daniel's obligation to avenge Soll's death. Soll has adult brothers from the same parents. In the absence of immediate brothers, it would be the responsibility of the Ken sub-clan to avenge, not the Hub sub-clan.
3. Daniel denies making the quotation attributed to him. I believe him because words like "prime" and "avenge" is beyond Daniel's level of conversational English.
4. The fight did not last three years. This is totally false!
5. "Twenty-nine more killings", implying in addition to previous killings, is false.
6. The "sacrifice of three hundred pigs" is false. Who killed the pigs? Whose pigs were killed? These are critical questions that the article fails to deal with. How wealthy is Daniel to raise such large number of pigs? A wealthy man in Nipa managed to kill 50 pigs at once and only once; a business man in Mendi killed 100 pigs in 2007; but these are the exceptions. Daniel denies this. I believe him because Daniel has not, and cannot afford to kill 300 pigs.

Paragraph 3

I first met Daniel half a dozen years after these events, while he was working for the Papua New Guinea branch of ChevronTexaco, which was then managing oil fields in the Southern Highlands, about thirty miles from Daniel's home village. The fields, where I was doing environmental studies, lie in forest-covered hills near the beautiful Lake Kutubu. The weather is warm but wet—the region gets hundreds of inches of rain a year. As the driver assigned to me, Daniel picked me up an hour before dawn each day, drove me out along narrow dirt roads, waited while I jumped out every mile or so to record birdsongs, and drove me back to the oil camp in time for lunch. He was slim but muscular, and, like other New Guinea Highlanders, dark-skinned, with tightly coiled dark hair, dark eyes, and a strongly contoured face. From the outset, I found him to be a happy, enthusiastic, sociable person. During our hours together on the road, we enjoyed sharing our life stories. Despite some big differences between our backgrounds—Daniel's Highland village life focused on growing sweet potatoes, raising pigs, and fighting, and my American city

life focused on college teaching and research—we enjoyed many of the same things, such as our wives and children, conversation, sports, birds, and driving cars. It was in these conversations that he told me the story of his revenge.

1. Daniel was working for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) located at formerly Chevron, now Oil Search Limited's (since 2002) camp at Kutubu.
2. Daniel's village life focused on...fighting... is ridiculous. Daniel was not involved in the K2 fight or any fight. No other Handa fight was fought in his lifetime that he would be focused on fighting. Generally, Highlanders do not like fights and do not focus on fighting. No human being in their right frame of mind would love fighting and thus focus on fighting. Daniel denies providing this statement.

Paragraph 4

Daniel's homeland and other parts of the New Guinea Highlands have been of interest to anthropologists ever since the nineteen-thirties, when Australian and Dutch prospectors and patrols "discovered" a million stone-tool-using tribes people previously unknown to the outside world, and began to introduce them to metal, writing, missionaries, and state government. Since then, changes have been rapid. When I first visited New Guinea as a scientist, in 1964, most Highlanders still lived in thatched huts with walls of hand-hewn planks, and many wore grass skirts and no shirts; now many huts have tin roofs and most people wear T-shirts and shorts or trousers. And yet Highlanders still inhabit two worlds simultaneously. Daniel's loyalties are first to his Handa clan and to his Nipa tribe, and then to his nation of Papua New Guinea, which is attempting to weld its thousands of clans and hundreds of tribes into a peaceful democracy.

1. The Handa clan does not fall on the Nipa side; it is on the Margarima side of the region.
2. Daniel lives on the Nipa side in Suma Village where his father's maternal relatives live. That is different from the implied suggestion that the Handa clan belongs to the Nipa tribe.

Paragraph 5

State government is now so nearly universal around the globe that we forget how recent an innovation it is; the first states are thought to have arisen only about fifty-five hundred years ago, in the Fertile Crescent. Before there were states, Daniel's method of resolving major disputes—either violently or by payment of compensation—was the worldwide norm. Papua New Guinea is not the only place where those traditional methods of dispute resolution still coexist uneasily with the methods of state government. For example, Daniel's methods might seem quite familiar to members of urban gangs in America, and also to Somalis, Afghans, Kenyans, and peoples of other countries where tribal ties remain strong and state control weak. As I eventually came to realize, Daniel's thirst for vengeance and his hostility to rival clans are really not so far from our own habits of mind as we might like to think.

1. "Daniel's method of resolving disputes" suggests Daniel is a leader who resolves disputes violently or by payment of compensation. Daniel is not a leader of the Handa clan who resolves disputes in this manner. This is not true.

2. In fact, Daniel was never involved in either the actual K2 war, or the compensation payments, and for that matter, in any dispute resolution involving the Handa clan. I have not seen Daniel involved in any conflict resolution process among the Handa clan.
3. "Daniel's thirst for revenge and his hostility to rival clans" depicts Daniel as a criminal and socially deviant person. Tribal wars are the ultimate means of conflict resolution when all other means fail. No one loves tribal wars. This characterization of Daniel is wrong. I know Daniel does not thirst for revenge or hold intense hatred of his rival clans. Daniel denies making such a statement about himself.

Paragraph 6

The war between the Handa clan and the Ombal clan began many years ago; how many, Daniel didn't say, and perhaps didn't know. It could easily have been several decades ago, or even in an earlier generation. Among Highland clans, each killing demands a revenge killing, so that a war goes on and on, unless political considerations cause it to be settled, or unless one clan is wiped out or flees. When I asked Daniel how the war that claimed his uncle's life began, he answered, "The original cause of the wars between the Handa and Ombal clans was a pig that ruined a garden." Surprisingly to outsiders, most Highland wars start ostensibly as a dispute over either pigs or women. Anthropologists debate whether the wars really arise from some deeper lying ultimate cause, such as land or population pressure, but the participants, when they are asked to name a cause, usually point to a woman or a pig. Any Westerner who knows the story of Helen and the Trojan War will not be surprised to hear women named as a casus belli, but the equal importance of pigs is less obvious. However, New Guinea Highlanders, whose main food staples are starchy root crops like sweet potato and taro, are chronically starved for protein, of which the island's dark, bristly pigs traditionally furnished the only large source. As a result, pigs are prized symbols of prestige and wealth. Peaceful competition and ostentatious displays involve pigs, and they are also used as currency for buying women. Pigs are individually owned and named, and, as piglets, they are sometimes nursed at one breast by a woman nursing an infant at her other breast.

1. This paragraph makes some outrageous and unfounded claims. As I said earlier, the Handa and Ombal clans NEVER fought before other than the K2 war.
2. The assertion that a fight goes on forever until whole tribes are wiped out or chased away, or stopped for political considerations, is inaccurate and sensational. Many complicated reasons are involved in causing and resolving tribal conflicts. The length of tribal wars differs from area to area.
3. The original cause of the actual war is not over a pig that ruined a garden. Whose pig ruined whose garden? When did the pig ruin the garden? Daniel said he remembers telling Diamond a general statement that in some places, a tribal fight can erupt over a pig spoiling someone's garden. But he did not say that the Handa-Ombal war was caused by a pig digging up a garden.
4. I doubt whether most Highland wars were caused by women or pig. It would be true to say that most wars are caused over land disputes or wrongful death. There is no solid evidence on this apart from oral stories, which differ from clan to clan all over the Highlands region.

5. "Buying women" is not an accurate word because bride prize exchanges are seen as cementing relationships rather than buying women in the economic market sense of the word.

Paragraph 7.

A typical Highland village is a cluster of huts housing between a few dozen and a few hundred people plus their pigs, traditionally surrounded by a fence, and situated a mile or a few miles from the next village. A village's pigs are taken out to forage during the day, and are prone then to wander into people's vegetable gardens, breaking down or digging under fences erected to keep them out. A single pig can root up and ruin an entire garden in a few hours. If the intrusion happens at night, or if the offending pig is not caught in the act, it is virtually impossible to prove which particular pig was responsible.

1. The questions I raised in No.3 under paragraph 6 is partly answered in this paragraph. It was an Ombal garden ruined by a Handa pig. This statement is false.
2. This paragraph is totally wrong on the origin of the fight. I ask why *The New Yorker* or Diamond failed to verify the facts before publication.

Paragraph 8

That was how the Handa-Ombal war began. An Ombal man found that his garden had been wrecked by a pig. He claimed that the offending pig belonged to a certain Handa man, who denied it. The Ombal man became angry, demanded compensation, and assaulted the Handa pig owner when he refused. Relatives of both parties then joined in the dispute, and soon the entire membership of both clans—between four and six thousand people—was dragged into a war that had now raged for longer than Daniel could remember. He told me that, in the four years of fighting leading up to Soll's death, seventeen other men had been killed.

1. Who was the Ombal man, the owner of the garden? Who is the Handa man, the owner of the pig? If Diamond comes to investigate, he will find none.
2. A "war that had now raged for longer than Daniel could remember" is a total fabrication.
3. Daniel denies stating that 17 men had been killed.
4. There was no fight between the Handa and Ombal that lasted for 4 years. This is a fabrication.

Paragraph 9

Soll was killed in a so-called "public fight"—one fought in the open between large groups of warriors separated by a considerable distance. With the air full of arrows and spears, it is often impossible to tell who was responsible for a kill. Even if the side achieving the kill does know, it is always careful to keep the killer's identity secret. For that reason, the target of Daniel's revenge was not Soll's killer but another Ombal man, named Henep Isum, who had organized the fight for the Ombals. By accepting the official role known as "owner of the fight," Isum took responsibility for the killing, and Daniel became the owner of fights to kill Isum. Isum suited Daniel's needs perfectly, because he was tall, handsome, and marked as a future leader, just as Soll had been. By killing Isum, Daniel would exact appropriate revenge for Soll's death.

1. Henep Isum is not an Ombal man. He is from Henep.
2. His first name is not Henep, but Isum. Henep is his clan name.
3. Henep gives the identity that Isum is a member of the Henep clan.
4. Isum never accepted the official role known as “owner of the fight”. This is a false claim.
5. Daniel never played any role or took up any responsibility as “owner of the fight”. This is a false claim.
6. Daniel is not the “owner of the fight.” He is a member of the Handa clan from the Hup sub-clan who never took part on the K2 war. The actual owner is Kor Ungurip, of the K2 war and not Diamond’s fictional pig/garden war.
7. This paragraph endangers Daniel’s life because he is identified as the one plotting to maim or kill Henep Isum, who received an arrow in the neck area in the K2 war.
8. Isum is still alive. He was injured, but not paralyzed, in the K2 war. Isum was not marked as a future leader as reported, but already a well-regarded leader and a Village Court Peace Officer of the Henep clan.
9. Any of Isum’s relatives reading this article, especially this paragraph will see Daniel as the culprit who harmed their father, relative, or leader, and it would indeed cause anger and hatred against him, even to the point of endangering his life.

Paragraph 10

Daniel explained to me that Handas are taught from early childhood to hate their enemies and to prepare themselves for a life of fighting. “If you die in a fight, you will be considered a hero, and people will remember you for a long time,” he said. “But if you die of a disease you will be remembered for only a day or a few weeks, and then you will be forgotten.” Daniel was proud both of the aggressiveness displayed by all the warring clans of his Nipa tribe and of their faultless recall of debts and grievances. He likened Nipa people to “light elephants”: “They remember what happened thirty years ago, and their words continue to float in the air. The way that we come to understand things in life is by telling stories, like the stories I am telling you now, and like all the stories that grandfathers tell their grandchildren about their relatives who must be avenged. We also come to understand things in life by fighting on the battlefield along with our fellow-clansmen and allies.”

1. We are not taught from early childhood to hate our enemies. In fact the converse is true because we are taught that if you hate someone, your hatred would endanger your life.
2. Natural death and death in war are equally remembered.

3. Daniel denies comparing the Nipa people with elephants because our traditional comparisons are with animals, plants or things found in our region. Elephants are never found anywhere in PNG.
4. We remember things from oral history repeatedly told and retold at various places on different occasions; not because we have long memories like elephants.
5. Daniel denies making the long statement quoted to have been made by him.

Paragraph 11

Though we might wonder how Daniel's society came to revel in killing, ethnographic studies of traditional human societies lying largely outside the control of state government have shown that war, murder, and demonization of neighbors have been the norm. Modern state societies rate as exceptional by the standards of human history, because we instead grow up learning a universal code of morality that is constantly hammered into us: promulgated every week in our churches and codified in our laws. But the differences between the norms of states and of Handa clan society are not actually so sharp. In times of war, even modern state societies quickly turn the enemy into a dehumanized figure of hatred, only to enjoin us to stop hating again as soon as a peace treaty is signed. Such contradictions confuse us deeply. Neither pacific ideals nor wartime hatreds, once acquired, are easily jettisoned. It's no wonder that many soldiers who kill suffer post-traumatic stress disorder. When they come home, far from boasting about killing, as a Nipa tribesman would, they have nightmares and never talk about it at all, unless to other veterans.

1. The Handa clan, or for that matter, any other clan, do not boast about killing.
2. We do not revel in killing. Killing is the last resort when all attempts to resolve conflicts fail. No one likes tribal fights; they cost too much in lives and money and disrupt the community.

Paragraph 12

Then, too, for Americans old enough to recall our hatred of Japan after Pearl Harbor, Daniel's intense hatred of the Ombals may not seem so remote. After Pearl Harbor, hundreds of thousands of American men volunteered to kill and did kill hundreds of thousands of Japanese, often in face-to-face combat, by brutal methods that included bayonets and flamethrowers. Soldiers who killed Japanese in particularly large numbers or with notable bravery were publicly decorated with medals, and those who died in combat were posthumously remembered as heroes. Meanwhile, even among Americans who had never seen a live Japanese soldier or the dead body of an American relative killed by the Japanese, intense hatred and fear of Japanese became widespread. Traditional New Guineans, by contrast, have from childhood onward often seen warriors going out and coming back from fighting; they have seen the bodies of relatives killed by the enemy, listened to stories of killing, heard fighting talked about as the highest ideal, and witnessed successful warriors talking proudly about their killings and being praised for them. If New Guineans end up feeling unconflicted about killing the enemy, it's because they have had no contrary message to unlearn.

1. Daniel's reported intense hatred, if publicized as it is, endangers Daniel's life. Daniel is cast as a threat to the Ombal, and so the Ombal would be required to do something, in advance, to prevent him from acting.
2. The comparison between international European war and tribal fights is too farfetched. Killing of enemies are never paraded; some old men who speared

their enemies told me of nightmares. Killing is not fun at all as the article seem to suggest.

Paragraph 13 - 14

Normally, a clan first tries to obtain vengeance within three weeks. During that period, the situation is tense, and people feel especially aggressive. As Daniel described it to me, a clan has four rapid-response options: ambush parties deployed along public roads; a special type of long-range arrow; surprise attacks on enemy houses at night; and sorcery and magic. Daniel, however, was unable to pursue any of these courses, because at the time of Soll's death he was in the coastal town of Madang, about two hundred miles from his homeland. He didn't even receive the news until two weeks later, after which the journey home took him a further week. A consequence of that delay which evidently upset Daniel was that he never got to see Soll's corpse; he saw only the site where Soll was buried.

Once home, Daniel assumed his role as owner of the fight and quickly organized efforts by his demoralized relatives to take revenge. On the first day of the resulting fight, Daniel was wounded. "I was advancing in battle with my biological father, who was holding a shield to protect me, while I myself held the weapons," he told me. "As my father and I went up a hill towards a stone quarry from which the Ombal enemy was throwing stones as well as spears, a stone hit my father on his leg. So I took the shield to protect my father, and I told him to go faster. That was when I was left unprotected, and an Ombal spear struck me on the back of my lower left leg." He showed me an inch-long scar and explained apologetically, "If, in a fight, you receive a wound on your forehead, then you are considered to have done well, but if you only have a spear wound on the back of your leg, like this one of mine, then you are viewed as not having fought well."

1. Daniel denies the story in this paragraph.
2. I repeat that Daniel is not the owner of the fight.
3. Daniel said he told Diamond his leg injury was obtained in a completely different conflict—the only one where he ever lifted a bow and arrow —when he was a young teenager.

Paragraph 15

All in all, Daniel's first attempt at quick revenge was a failure, and so the war entered a slower, more complex and costly second phase, involving alliance-building, negotiation, and incessant plotting. Daniel's clan realized that it would have to enlist supporters from other villages. The selection of allies posed tricky and dangerous problems. The New Guinea Highlands are full of aggressive men seeking revenge for their own reasons, and skilled at using treachery to achieve it. Whenever a battle takes place, men not hired by either side are likely to present themselves, hoping for the opportunity to kill an enemy of their own. "You have to make sure that the men that you hire as paid killers or allies are real enemies of your target, bearing grievances of their own from years ago," Daniel said. "If you make the mistake of hiring a man who actually does not consider your target to be his own enemy, he may seize the chance to kill you, then go to your enemies and claim a reward."

1. This paragraph referring to first and second phases of the war are false. Daniel was not involved in organizing various phases of war between the Handa and Ombal.

2. New Guinea Highlands are full of aggressive men is a sensational, harmful and unfair generalization.

Paragraph 16

Another factor complicating the plans is that, if two people die in a fight, there will be at least two owners of the next fight to avenge those two deaths. In the case of Daniel's campaign, there were actually three owners, because, in the fighting in which Soll was killed, another Handa man, named Fukal Limbuzu, was also killed, and a man called Wiyo was speared in the eye and blinded, which was regarded as equivalent in gravity to being killed. Hence Daniel and the brothers of Fukal Limbuzu and of Wiyo became from the outset the three Handa owners of the next fight. Meanwhile, the Ombals, too, had their own motives for revenge, because an Ombal man named Sande had been killed in the same fight as Soll, and Isum himself had been wounded.

1. Limbuzu was wounded first. He came to Port Moresby and I saw his wound. He was healed because he had a scar where the arrow pierced through. After some time he went home. It is alleged that he slept with his wife, which caused internal tear as he had to use his muscle. He died eventually and this is counted as being killed in the war, although he died after the war ended.
2. Soll was also wounded but eventually died in similar circumstances and for similar reason as Limbuzu. He too is being counted as being killed in the K2 war.
3. Wiyo is the son of a Handa woman married to the Ya clan near Kundi community school on the Nipa side who was wounded on the eye when he came to fight in support of his maternal uncles.
4. On the Ombal side, two people were killed. Sande was shot and died instantly.
5. Constant reference to Daniel as owner of the fight is false.
6. The connotation that Daniel had a plan is also false.

Paragraph 17

Daniel engaged more than two hundred men as allies for his own revenge agenda: about seventy from each of the three neighboring villages of Ingin, Komea, and Poya. Naturally, the Ombal clan was simultaneously trying to enlist allies for its cause. Eventually, out of the fourteen neighboring clans, five (the Aralinja, Ungupi, Tapol, Sandap, and Ak clans) decided to join the Handa; four (the Henep, Inga, Solopen, and Mungan clans) joined the Ombal; and five (the Yup, Ulal, Twen, Hukup, and Tang clans) opted to remain neutral.

1. "Daniel engaged more than two hundred men" is false. Daniel never engaged such a large number of men in the fight.
2. Hulal and Yup-Towenz clans are traditional enemies of the Handa, but during my lifetime they never fought. We live in peace today. These clans are on the Margarima side.

3. Ungubi and Haralinja are not clans but names of villages where many clans live, so the facts are wrong. These villages are on the Nipa side.
4. All the clans in Ungubi did not support because some clans from that village are tribal enemies of the Handa. No war was fought in my lifetime though, and there is peace between the Handa and those clans to this day.

Paragraph 18

Hiring, supporting, and rewarding all those allies was a complex logistical operation. Daniel had to feed them during the actual days of combat, to arrange for houses in which they could sleep, and even, as he delicately phrased it, "to provide ladies for the warriors when they were homesick." Daniel estimated that, in the three years that it took him to get his revenge, he had to furnish about three hundred pigs. By custom, the pigs to be slaughtered during that long phase of preparation should be not one's own but, rather, stolen from the enemy clan. Yet Daniel had to be careful to steal only Ombal pigs and not to make the mistake of stealing pigs from other clans; otherwise, he would acquire new enemies. Ombal pigs were stolen either by day or at night, with the treacherous help of three Handa women who had married into the Ombal clan, and who hid occasionally from their Ombal husbands and in-laws and advised Daniel where best to steal Ombal pigs. In a small village, it isn't easy to slip away unnoticed, and the women might have been killed if their treachery had been detected. The Handa men arranged to meet their kinswomen at secret places close to Ombal villages; though this increased the risk of the Handa men being caught, it made the women's absences as brief as possible. I asked Daniel whether, conversely, any Ombal women who had married into the Handa clan might have been equally treacherous. He answered, "If we had found that a woman married into our clan was squealing, we would have tied her up and burned her with hot wires and hot pieces of wood. That was our plan, but in fact we never found any woman married into our clan who squealed; they all remained loyal to us, not to their blood relatives."

1. Daniel lives in Suma Village in Nipa on the Highlands Highway. He did not feed, house or accommodate any of these fighters. This is simply not true.
2. Daniel did not plan logistics or plan the war as suggested. This is false.
3. No women are provided as "comfort ladies" as the Japanese did in Asia during World War II. This is simply not true. It is a taboo against warriors sleeping with women during tribal wars.
4. It never took three years to fight.
5. Daniel never paid three hundred pigs. No single man can contribute this number of pigs in a tribal war that is publicly fought. Even if one is the "owner of a fight", they are supported by other clansmen.
6. Daniel is portrayed like the Hollywood movie star "Rambo" or "Superman" or some sort of hero in the whole story. This is inaccurate and wrong.
7. Betrayal of their husbands by Handa women and vice versa is false. This did not happen during the K2 war. This is simply not true.
8. No woman was ever burnt with hot wires or burning wood. Again, false.

9. Daniel denies making this statement. I believe him because Daniel lived all his life in Nipa and he does not even know who the Handa women married to men on the Ombal, Henep and Solpaem side, or the women from that side married to the Handa side.

Paragraph 19

Intermarriage complicated Daniel's preparations in other ways, because it created restrictions on who was permitted to kill whom. Because the three female relatives of Daniel's had married into the Ombal clan, Isum had become Daniel's relative by marriage—Daniel referred to Isum as an uncle—and so Daniel was not permitted to kill him, or, indeed, any other Ombal clan member, by his own hand. Yet hiring killers to kill Isum was permissible. "By killing Isum or arranging for Isum's killing," Daniel explained, "I would lose Isum as an uncle, but that would be worth it, because I would gain my revenge."

1. This story is sensational because it is self-contradictory. If Isum is Daniel's uncle as alleged, he would not hire someone to kill him. We don't do that in our culture. Daniel denies this story, and I believe him.
2. Daniel never hired anyone to kill Isum.
3. When this paragraph and the whole story is read by Isum and his relatives or anyone from the Henep, Ombal and Solpaem clans, it is sufficient to engender hatred and hot anger against not only Daniel but the entire Handa clan, and is capable of causing another warfare. (Students from this area attending university would have access to this New Yorker article. Lecturers could include Diamond's articles in coursework discussions. Diamond is well known and his writings studied, especially on PNG issues. An anonymous peer-reviewer just cited Diamond's article in feedback to me regarding revisions in my possible publication in a journal article needed for me to obtain my PhD in law. The reviewer cited as fact Diamond's false claims of violence by the Handa and even implies I was dishonest for not mentioning this "fact" published by Diamond in The New Yorker.)
4. The statement that Nipa fighting is unannounced is not accurate. Tribal fights are announced but it is unannounced during the fighting days. Either side can call off a fight anytime publicly. Tribal fights have causes, beginnings, interval breaks and endings. It is not like a guerilla warfare or terrorism that strikes unannounced at any time. We are not some unprincipled people without norms and morality attacking one another endlessly.

Paragraph 20

No Comments.

Paragraph 21

Daniel emphasized the importance of distinguishing between long-range public fights and close-range private ones. He contemptuously described the former as a "small boys' game shoot." As he explained it to me, "Public battles are open not just to experienced fighters but also to new trainees, new allies hired to

come and gain confidence, and fun-seekers. In a public battle, the fight-owners have the opportunity to see who really are the best marksmen, with the necessary experience to make quick but correct decisions." Such warriors are selected for the much more dangerous task of private fights, in which hired teams of stealth killers prepare ambushes. "That requires nerve, judgment, and presence of mind, to select the right target, and not to panic and shoot the first man who moves into a shootable position," he said. "Boys and young men are prone to make such mistakes and hence are excluded from the stealth parties."

1. Daniel denies making the sentences in quotation marks attributed to him. I believe him because his level of English would not enable him to construct such sentences. For example, the word "hence" and "stealth" are words Daniel would not use in a normal conversation.
2. Tribal fights are fought in collective defence of the clan or tribe, and not "fight owners" deciding and choosing marksman, planning etc. The only responsibility of "fight owners" is to meet compensation demands made by clan members who die or suffer injury in the fight.
3. Distinguishing public and private fights is false. Tribal fights are tribal fights; not private or public.

Paragraphs 22 - 24

No comments

Paragraph 25

In the three years following Soll's death, there were six battles. (A public fight is counted as a battle only if a man is killed.) In any given battle, different participants and their hired allies were pursuing different agendas. While Daniel's agenda was to avenge Soll, his co-owners of the fight on the Handa side were out to avenge Limbuzu's death and Wiyo's blinding; the Ombals aimed at avenging Sande's death and Isum's wounding in the same battle in which Soll and Limbuzu had been killed; and both sides sought vengeance for accumulated unavenged deaths and maimings and woundings from earlier battles. In total, about thirty people were killed in those six battles.

1. False! Handa and Ombal never fought six battles, and the K2 war did not last even a year.
2. "about thirty people were killed in those six battles" – absolutely false!

Paragraph 26

In the sixth battle, while a public fight was raging, the Handas sent out several groups of stealth killers—one that went up to the north end of Karinja Village, another that went down the main road, still another that went down along the side of the river, and so on. Daniel described what happened next: "Isum was in the public fight, with his bow and arrow ready for a long-range battle, and he was shooting and dodging arrows in the open. He was concentrating on that public fight, looking at our men far away in the open, and he wasn't prepared for our attack from behind and nearby by one of our hidden parties. It was our group that had gone down along the side of the river that got him. Only one arrow hit Isum, but it was a bamboo arrow, flat and sharp as a knife, and it cut his spinal cord. That's even better than killing him, because he's now still alive today, eleven years later, paralyzed in a wheelchair, and maybe he'll live for

another ten years. People will see his constant suffering. Isum may be around for a long time, for people to see his suffering, and to be reminded that this happened to him as proper vengeance for his having killed my uncle Soll."

1. First, this paragraph is false. Second, this paragraph is sufficient to endanger Daniel's life, as well as cause inter-tribal conflict.
2. Isum's relatives will not take this story kindly. It is like "adding salt" to his wound.
3. Daniel denies making the sentences in quotation marks. I believe him because words like "vengeance" would not be used by Daniel in a normal conversation.

Paragraph 27

When I asked Daniel how he felt about the battle in which Isum became paralyzed, his reaction was unapologetically positive: a mixture of exhilaration and pleasure in expressing aggression. He used phrases such as "It was very nice," and his gestures projected euphoria and a huge sense of relief. "I felt that it was a matter of 'kill or else die by suicide.' I was prepared to die myself in that fight. I knew that, if I did die then, I would be considered a hero and would be remembered. If I had personally seen the arrow go into Isum, I would have felt emotional relief then. Unfortunately, I wasn't actually there to see it, but, when I heard that Isum had been paralyzed, I thought, I have everything, I feel as if I am developing wings, I feel as if I am about to fly off, and I am very happy. After that battle, just as after each battle in which we succeeded in killing an Ombal, we danced and celebrated and slaughtered pigs. When you fight with thinking and finally succeed, you feel good and relieved. The revenge relieves you; now it can be your turn to help someone else get his own revenge."

1. I repeat the same comments immediately above. This paragraph is dangerous for Daniel and the Handa clan. Isum is alive and he and his people will not take this too kindly.
2. This is false. However, this false story could cause provocation. Traditional norms prohibit the revelation of those who shoot and kill or injure their enemies. This article flagrantly violates that principle.
3. The non-disclosure principle is for good reason: to restore and maintain peace. This article is destroying that principle.

Paragraph 28

I repeat the immediate comments above in relation to this paragraph.

Paragraphs 29 – 30

But it continued to concern Daniel, who was now, of course, a target for Ombal revenge. He told me that Ombal men tried for several years to kill him and three other Handa clansmen who had been fight-owners, but they never succeeded. "The four of us were too tough for the Ombal people to kill," he boasted. I asked him whether he had feared for the safety of his wife and young son, who were surely not too tough to kill.

Daniel explained that he worried about his son but not his wife. She was not a Handa, and, if the Ombals had made the mistake of killing her, they would have acquired a whole new set of enemies.

Fortunately for Daniel and his son, several years later a shift in clan enmities and alliances, typical of Highland clan politics, ended the whole Handa-Ombal cycle of revenge killing and united both clans against a common enemy. To the west of Daniel's Nipa tribe is the land of the Huli tribe and language group. Even by the aggressive standards of the New Guinea Highlands, the Hulis are notorious. (Once, within a few minutes of my arriving with a colleague at a Huli camp on the extinct volcano Mt. Sisa, to carry out a biological survey, at the invitation of the Hulis themselves, one man grabbed an axe and threatened my colleague. Fortunately, my colleague had once been a London policeman, and so had been trained to respond to armed assailants while he was unarmed; by standing firm, he cowed the man into backing down.) Given the pride that the Nipas take in their aggressiveness, it's no surprise that they eventually came into conflict with their Huli neighbors.

1. Geographical descriptions wrong. Daniel has no personal involvement in the fight.
2. Daniel lives in Nipa; the fight was in Margarima; two separate districts altogether who share boundaries.

Paragraph 31

Although the underlying nature of the conflict was traditional, its immediate cause and some of the weapons used were modern. In a Papua New Guinea national election, a parliamentary seat in a district shared by Hulis and Nipas was contested by a Huli candidate and a Nipa candidate who happened to be from the Handa clan. Faced with the Hulis, the Handas and the Ombals buried their differences: the Ombals voted for the Handa candidate and received a big cash payment from the Handas for doing so. But the Huli candidate, as Daniel put it, "won the game," and the Nipas, considering this "a personal problem," responded by blocking highways on which supplies reached the Hulis, stopping vehicles, and killing Huli men they found in the vehicles and raping Huli women. In the fighting that followed, warriors on both sides used not only bows and arrows but also guns, most probably stolen from a government armory. Tension between the Hulis and the Nipas has continued to this day.

1. Totally wrong! Cause of the fight was as explained earlier, a K2 war.
2. No modern weapons were used – again total fabrication.
3. Hulis and Nipas do not share a parliamentary seat – totally wrong!
4. Handa clan is in Margarima, not Nipa. Totally wrong!
6. The Nipas did block roads against the Hulis, but this is related to a national election conducted in 1997 in which a regional seat candidate, Anderson Agiru, won. Relatives of the losing candidate from the Nipa side caused the road blocks. That event is not related to the K2 war.
7. Paul La'a from the Handa clan contested the Komo-Margarima seat in that election, but lost to a Huli man. In order to consolidate Paul's votes against the Huli candidate, the Solpaem, Ombal, Henep –Handa fight was settled.

8. One seat, the Regional Seat, is like an election for the Governor of California, in which a Huli man won and the Nipas retaliated by blocking roads. The Handas and Ombals were never involved in that political fight. That has no relation or connection to the K2 war. The Open Seat that Paul La'a contested and lost to also a Huli man is for a smaller electorate. Peace was restored as an election strategy to consolidate votes for Paul.
9. The Handa and Ombal clans are located some 6-10 kilometres away from the road the Nipas blocked. This is to say that the Highlands Highway that connects and services the Nipa-Huli area is quite far from the Handa-Ombal territory for members of these clans to travel through other clans' territories in order to block the roads. It did not happen.
10. Normally police raids takes place along the Highway involving looting and burning of houses and destruction of food gardens serving unauthorized form of 'collective punishment' for armed hold-ups, so clans living along the Highway would not allow anyone to conduct such blockades.
11. In fact, the blockade conducted by the Nipas against the Hulis resulted in looting and burning down of houses of people along the Highway on the Margarima side bordering Nipa. The raids were made by Nipas in their hot pursuit of the Hulis. Margarimas were innocent victims in this conflict. It is an outrageous insult to say they were involved in raping women and violence on the highway.

Paragraph 32

Since then, the Handas and the Ombals have maintained their alliance and peace agreement. Daniel, after spending the first twenty-eight years of his life being taught to hate the Ombals, constantly fearing ambushes by them, plotting and paying for ambushes against them, and fighting in wars that killed dozens of Handas and Ombals, now feels safe visiting Ombal villages, sleeping there overnight, and playing in Ombal-vs.-Handa basketball games.

1. This paragraph misrepresents Daniel, and for that matter, any Handa man, as being taught from an early age to hate our enemies. This is in fact the complete opposite. We are taught to smile at our enemies and be good to them to keep our lives.
2. Dozens of Handas and Ombals were not killed. Ambushes and plotting are false.
3. I have not seen, as anyone from Handa or Ombal seen Daniel playing or attending such basketball games. False!

Paragraph 33

Daniel seems satisfied with these developments. Once he said to me, "I admit that the New Guinea Highland way to solve the problem posed by a killing isn't good. Our way disturbs our day-to-day life; we won't be comfortable for the rest of our lives; we are always in effect living on the battlefield; and those feelings go on and on in us. The Western way, of letting the government settle disputes by means of the legal system, is a better way. But we could never have arrived at it by ourselves: we were trapped in our endless cycles of revenge killings."

Daniel denies making the quotation attributed to him.

Paragraphs 34 – 35

Nearly all human societies today have given up the personal pursuit of justice in favor of impersonal systems operated by state governments—at least, on paper. Without state government, war between local groups is chronic; coöperation between local groups on projects bringing benefits to everyone—such as large-scale irrigation systems, free rights of travel, and long-distance trade—becomes much more difficult; and even the frequency of murder within a local group is higher. It's true, of course, that twentieth-century state societies, having developed potent technologies of mass killing, have broken all historical records for violent deaths. But this is because they enjoy the advantage of having by far the largest populations of potential victims in human history; the actual percentage of the population that died violently was on the average higher in traditional pre-state societies than it was even in Poland during the Second World War or Cambodia under Pol Pot.

Daniel seemed to recognize this when he concluded that, despite his former passionate waging of war against Ombals, the Western state system of adjudicating disputes is preferable. Why, then, didn't New Guineans give up a way of life that obviously made their lives miserable? A striking feature of New Guinea's history is that New Guineans traditionally practiced unchecked violence against each other, yet they offered only limited resistance to the imposition of state government and the ending of that violence by European colonial powers. That wasn't just because Europeans had guns and New Guineans didn't; the number of armed Europeans involved in "pacification" was often absurdly few. Daniel's view points to another reason: as more New Guineans were exposed to the benefits of state-administered justice, they saw that they were better off living without the constant fear of being killed, though, of course, no tribe could ever have followed that course of peaceful dispute adjudication unilaterally.

Daniel's "passionate waging of war" – no one is passionate about waging war, so this is a wrong perception to hold of Daniel's character, or by implication, anyone from my clan and those from the other named clans.

Paragraph 36-39

No comment.

Paragraph 40

I asked Daniel why, on learning of Soll's death, he hadn't saved himself all the effort and expense, and just asked the police to arrest Isum. "If I had let the police do it, I wouldn't have felt satisfaction," he replied. "I wanted to obtain vengeance myself, even if it were to cost me my own life. I had to ask myself, how could I live through my anger over Soll's death for the rest of my life? The answer was that the best way to deal with my anger was to exact the vengeance myself."

1. No one knows who shot Soll. It is false that anyone blames Isum for his injury.
2. Daniel denies making the statement in quotation marks. I believe him because it is not in Daniel's conversational English to make such a statement in quotation marks.

Paragraphs 41-51

No comments

Paragraph 52

Daniel concluded his story in the same happy, satisfied, straightforward tone in which he had recounted the rest of it. "Now, when I visit an Ombal village to play basketball, and Isum comes to watch the game in his wheelchair, I feel sorry for him," he said. "Occasionally, I go over to Isum, shake his hand, and tell him, 'I feel sorry for you.' But people see Isum. They know that he will be suffering all the rest of his life for having killed Soll. People remember that Isum used to be a tall and handsome man, destined to be a future leader. But so was my uncle Soll. By getting Isum paralyzed, I gained appropriate revenge for the killing of my tall and handsome uncle, who had been very good to me, and who would have become a leader."

1. Isum is not in a wheelchair; absolutely false!
2. This paragraph is capable of infuriating hatred for Daniel. The effect of this paragraph and the others dealt with above, Daniel is portrayed as a man full of hatred on a mission to avenge his enemies, and one who enjoys watching Isum suffer in his present condition.
3. I repeat that this kind of words in this paragraph is sufficient to engender new hostility between Daniel and Isum or his relatives, and by extension, between Ombal and Handa clans.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1. Given the fact that Isum is alive, the outrageous statements attributed to Daniel rejoicing over Isum's condition are indeed serious and could inflame hatred and cause hostility not only against Daniel but also between the former tribal enemies.
2. When I spoke to Daniel by phone to verify whether he made the statements published in Diamond's article, he was in hiding in another town for fear of his life because Isum and his relatives, and members of the Ombal, Henep and Solpaem have heard about the article that Diamond published.
2. The Handas and Ombals were never tribal enemies other than the three to six month's old K2 war in 1993.
3. Members of the Handa clan are now portrayed as lawless and developed a 'gun culture' that threatens the peace and security among its former tribal enemies.
4. The cause of the Handa-Ombal war is totally false!
5. The article borders on myth, fantasy, sensational journalism, misrepresentation, lack of in-depth local knowledge, ignorance of the Wola-Huli culture, and distortion of Handa-Ombal history.

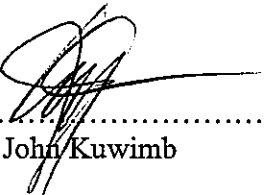
SUGGESTIONS

I suggest that:

1. Diamond and the New Yorker issue an apology for the publication insinuating the members of the Handa clan as lawless, taught at an early age to hate, and commit heinous crimes without regard to law, order or morality.
2. Withdraw from publication and circulation the article in all versions (digital, audio, etc).
3. That Dr. Diamond consider the impact it would have on his professional reputation should he allow this factually untrue article to remain.
4. That some form of compensation be considered for Daniel since he has left employment and is hiding in another part of the country for fear of his life.

Please kindly favour me with a response on the above postal or email address. Copies of this letter are sent to Dr. Diamond and the Editor of *The Times-Picayune* of New Orleans which published an article on the basis of the original article.

Yours faithfully


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