



### **Consider This**

*(This was written by our Chairman early 2000 )*

Dear old Uncle Joey recently retired after 35 years loyal service with the Mega Corporation.

On his retirement he received a solid gold Rolex watch as a token of appreciation for his years of loyal and dedicated service to the Mega Corporation.

Uncle Joey received a lump sum payout on his pension and decided to donate his old banger to one of his 20 grand kids, who was battling it out at university, and splash out on a brand new Mercedes Benz for himself and the old lady to see out their golden years in style.

The Merc set him back R250 grand, but what the heck, he and the old lady were in great health and had a lot of good years in front of them and that Merc was going to do mileage, visiting all the grand kids around the country once a year for a lot of years.

Being a man of sober habits, Uncle Joey insured his brand new Benz and his Rolex with the Good Guy's Insurance Company, the very same insurance company he had used since buying his first banger 45 years ago and who now covered every aspect of his life.

We all know s..t happens and unfortunately Uncle Joey is making his way home to Edenvale at 10pm on a cold and dark winters night from his weekly game of bridge with the cronies, at the same venue they have played at in Randburg for the last 20 years.

So what's new!!

On this night unfortunately Uncle Joey hits a rock lying on the highway, has a blowout, loses control, whacks the barriers and knocks himself out in the process.

### Scenario 1

As we agreed s..t happens.

Uncle Joey is lying in his Merc out cold

No traffic

No tow truck

No ambulance

No policeman.

Eventually along come five gentlemen of the night who pull Uncle Joey out of his brand new Merc, which now has a broken windscreen and right front headlight, a bent lower control arm and fender, a shredded tyre, damaged rim and front bumper.

They beat Uncle Joey into a deep coma, strip him naked and throw him into a ditch, taking his credit cards, Rolex, wallet and sundry valuable items before manhandling his Mercedes behind a bush off the road, stripping it completely, setting the skeleton alight and burning the remnants of his beloved Merc beyond recognition.

Fortunately, Highway Patrol see the fire in the distance and on arriving at the scene find Uncle Joey groaning in the cold dark ditch, thus saving the old guy's life but nothing else.

Uncle Joey is in a coma for two weeks (bad news for the credit card companies) but has a strong will to live and pulls through. Even though those golden years are gone and will be spent in a wheelchair, paralysed from the neck down, what the heck, at least he is alive.

Where does that leave the Good Guy's Insurance Company? Let's have a look:

1.	Mercedes Benz – Total loss	250 000.00
2.	Rolex GMT Master 11 Gold Watch	130 000.00
3.	Sundry Personal Items	70 000.00
4.	Personal Total Disability	2 500 000.00
5.	Medical Expenses	700 000.00
6.	Credit Cards Limit + Budget	<u>150 000.00</u>
		<u>3 800 000.00</u>

Ouch!!! That really hurts the guys in the claims department of the Good Guy's Insurance Company.

## Scenario 2

Uncle Joey is lying in his Merc out cold.

No traffic

No ambulance

No policeman

However....

Sitting at his spot in his tow truck, 400 metres from the scene of the accident, is that bad, bad, rotten Boomslang van Schalkwyk of Maximum Profit Towing.

Boomslang sits in this same spot everyday from 6am to midnight, day in and day out and has done so for the past five years, making a living for him and his family from the Uncle Joey's of this world. Just another "predatory vulture" supporting himself, his wife and kids from other people's misfortune.

Anyway, on this particular night Boomslang, who has been sitting there for 14 hours sees Uncle Joey drive past, notices the curved arc of Uncle Joey's car lights as he hits the rock and hears the bang as Uncle Joey collides with the barrier.

Not one to hang around when there are bones to be picked over, Boomslang starts his truck and wheelspins to the accident scene. You have to be quick. Vultures have a sixth sense for catastrophes.

He sees the Mercedes in the barriers, covers the accident scene from behind with orange beacons and on goes his hazard bar roof lights to safely secure the accident scene for other unsuspecting motorists, grabs his towing invoice book and pen and sprints to Uncle Joey, chasing after the vultures Holy Grail – the customer's signature which allows him to hook up and tow away his daily bread.

Bummer!! Uncle Joey can't sign, he is out cold. So back to his tow truck runs Boomslang to retrieve his First Aid Kit. I mean, Uncle Joey must be revived, the blood wiped out of his eyes and the cut on his head bandaged to stop the blood running back into his eyes, otherwise how is he gonna sign man?

Having done the necessary, Boomslang hooks up the Merc, loads Uncle Joey in the passenger seat, takes Uncle Joey safely home and drops off the Merc at Maximum Profit Towing's 24 hour secure yard until morning and finally makes it to his own bed at 3.30 in the early morning.

Later that morning after 9 o'clock, Boomslang hooks his prize and takes it from the yard to Top Dollar Panelbeaters, who are an approved repairer of the Good Guy's Insurance Company, knowing Top Dollar will pay him his R995.00 towing fees for last night's tow and a further R275.00 for the second tow from Maximum

Profit Towing's yard to Top Dollar's premises. Even better, Boomslang is going to pick up 10% of the R30 000.00 repair authorized by Good Guy's Insurance Company, as a finder's fee from Top Dollar Panelbeaters.

So how is it looking now for the Good Guy's Insurance Company?

1.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> tows to Top Dollar	1 270.00
2.	1 night's storage to Top Dollar	65.00
3.	Repair costs to Top Dollar	<u>30 000.00</u>
		<u>31 335.00</u>

Do the Good Guy's claims department prefer this scenario? No chance.

How the hell can Top Dollar expect them to foot the bill for the towing and storage. No ways, they're only prepared to pay R750.00 for the tow. I mean, what is this Highway Robbery, who do these vultures at Maximum Profit Towing Company think they are? And for Top Dollar Panelbeaters as well its looking good, they get the repair at R30 000.00. No sir!

Uncle Joey's no slouch, he wants his excess of 10% of the claim worked in, otherwise the Merc's going to his mate Harvey's shop for repairs. So there goes R3 000.00. Maximum Profit Towing get their 10% finder's fee / commission. Kiss another R3 000.00 goodbye (after all, a deal is a deal.)

The Good Guy's only paid Top Dollar R750.00 for the tow so they have to cover the diffs on the tow and storage, which is another R290.00 off his bottom line.

Suddenly that R30 000.00 job is only R23 710.00!

Bummer! Top Dollar Panelbeaters you only managed to make R70.00 but never mind, at least the boss can afford a bottle of brandy to ease the pain.

So now let's go to Maximum Profit Towing and Boomslang van Schalkwyk – didn't they just hit the big time with

1.	A tow for	995.00
2.	Storage of	65.00
3.	Finders fee / commission of	<u>3 000.00</u>
		<u>4 060.00</u>

Totals out at R4 060 for what only amounts to one tow. Not bad? Not good either. Here's how it pans out.

Maximum Profit Towing pay Boomslang R450.00 per tow and half the finder's fee which is R1 500.00 – leaving them with a balance of R2 110.00

This is good! Now they can afford to pay the insurance premium of R1 200.00 on the truck and use the balance to service it. Don't know where they are going to find the rental for the storage yard or the wages for the 24 hour security guards but I'm sure Wagter the watch dog is still chewing on the bone from the dismembered limb left in Boomslang's last tow ten days ago, a write off taxi, which will lie in the yard forever.

At least Wagler doesn't have to be fed for awhile.

And Boomslang?

He heads home grasping his R1950.00 in his grubby little mitt, but has to stop for petrol before getting there, which he does at Piet's Shell Garage. "Maak vol". They oblige, but the petrol attendant is stopped by Piet when he comes to get the invoice and Piet takes the truck keys, goes to Boomslang and insists he hands over the R1600.00 for the petrol Boomslang has had on credit during the last two lean weeks, plus R200.00 for this tank of petrol. His change = R150.00

Uncle Joey returns the free courtesy car to Top Dollar Panelbeaters after three weeks, takes delivery of his good as new Mercedes Benz and is off to the Cape to see the first of the grandchildren.

Is he happy?

So, so. He has his vehicle back, it hasn't cost him a cent and what's more, not a minutes inconvenience thanks to the free use of the courtesy car, compliments of the panelbeater, but gnawing at the back of his mind is a sneaking suspicion that the bloody tow truck driver put the rock in the road to begin with.

### WHAT IS THE POINT?

Here in South Africa in today's climate of terrible road accidents and horrendous crime, a group of private individuals (entrepreneurs) have at considerable expense commissioned the building of tow trucks and established a network superior to anything fielded by the police or emergency services, enabling them to respond promptly to accidents, often saving lives, preserving property and saving the insurance companies, the motoring public and the country billions of rands every year.

During the morning rush hour two cars collide on the freeway, there are no tow trucks to clear the wrecks.

What happens? I'm sure we have all been there. Within minutes there is congestion as traffic backs up, then comes the knock-on effect with more accidents as the traffic continues piling up, snowballing into total gridlock for hours.

How many injuries are sustained, how much damage to property occurs, how many millions of rands in man hours are lost? What is the real cost to our already struggling economy?

Whether the general public, the insurance companies and the authorities like it or not, they have to accept the realities.

The towing industry provides a necessary and invaluable service to the whole country which service is subsidized by the panelbeaters.

We in the industry are not blameless and years of bad behaviour by certain drivers and pure financial piracy by certain operators have accumulated to create today's climate of anti tow truck and panelbeater sentiments, ("but which came first, the chicken or the egg" is beside the point.)

The time has come for all of us in our related industries to unite in an effort to stamp out the pirates and scoundrels, educate our drivers in the true meaning of service and change perceptions held by the public, insurance industries and government.

We need to work together to create a new and true awareness of the meaningful and valuable contributions made by our industry to our country as a whole and in so doing create a better future for ourselves and our families.

