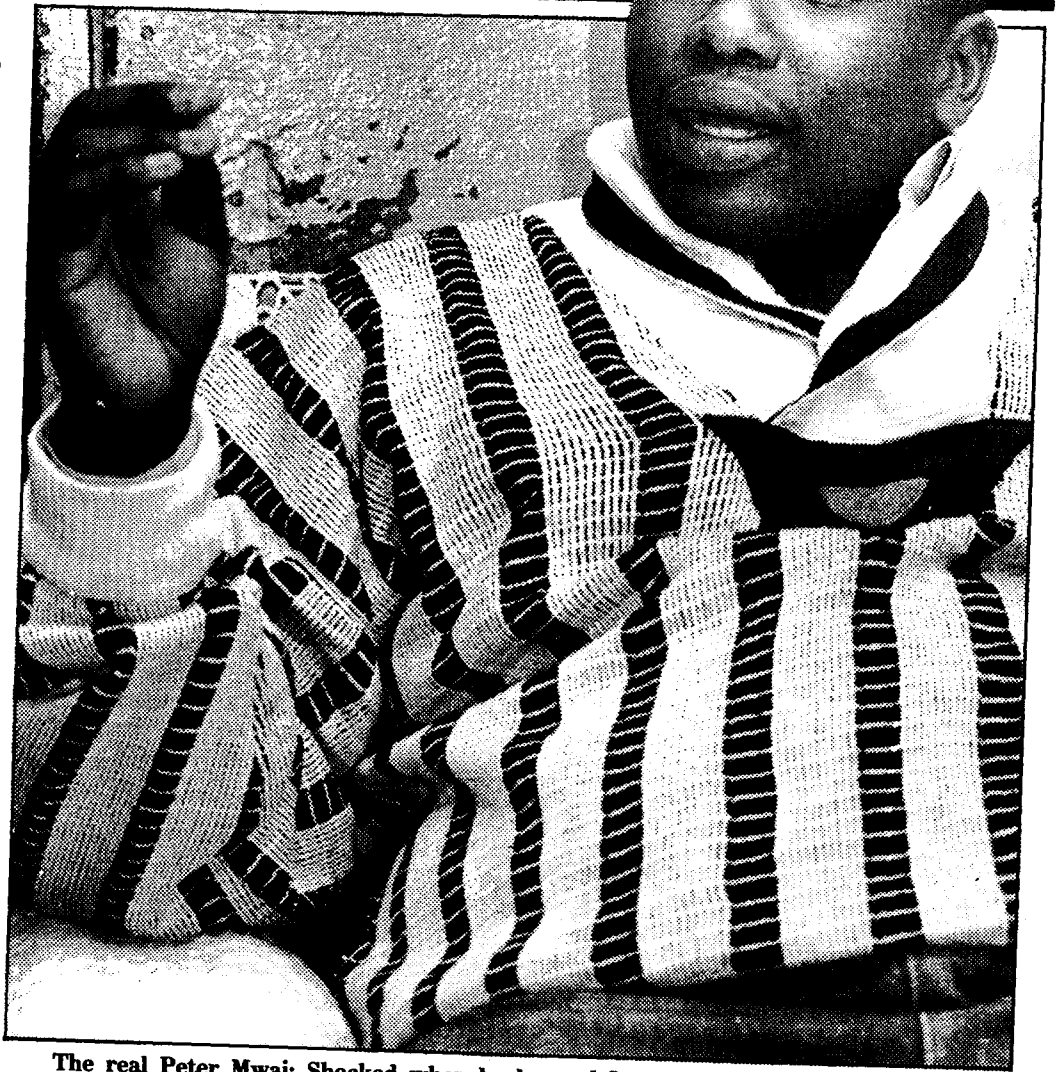


Peter Netu alias Peter Mwai now in custody in New Zealand: Wanted for crimes committed in Germany, Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands.

— Photo courtesy of INTERPOL, Nairobi.

'The Registrar of Persons office said Netu had registered himself as coming from Gathehu sub-location of Magutu location, Mathira division of Nyeri district and was on march 20, 1985 issued with ID no 7802556/70. His clan was shown as being *munjiru*.'



The real Peter Mwai: Shocked when he learned Interpol was looking for him.

The notorious crook posing as Peter Mwai

He was arrested in New Zealand for infecting women with HIV. Although he had a Kenyan passport, Interpol tracked down his history and found he was a dangerous international criminal who was Ugandan but used lost identity documents of a Kenyan working at Gikomba market. *CHEGE wa GACHAMBA* reports:

It is made of the stuff that sends Hollywood film moguls wild with excitement and has the potential of becoming a box office blockbuster. It is a case with all the trappings of a thriller and has a story line to march.

A young man, purporting to be a Kenyan musician called Peter Mwai, is arrested in New Zealand and taken to court after women complain that he is deliberately infecting people with HIV. Interpol's global network goes to work across four continents, trying to identify the man and his past activities.

As they unearth minute details through their meticulous and intricate methods of operation, they discover that the man has an international criminal record of among others, defrauding banks and indecently assaulting women. That he is a casanova, specialising in white women and has a string of girlfriends across four continents. That the man is a Ugandan, and has been regularly fooling Kenyan Immigration officials to get his travel documents, by impersonating a young Kenyan currently working at Gikomba, Nairobi.

And yet this is no fiction. It is a real life drama, whose ongoing court proceedings in Auckland are given regular coverage by the world media.

The Ugandan, whose real name has eventually turned out to be Peter Netu, became a subject of global concern when in view of a pending court case, the Wellington Interpol on October 13 last year wrote to their counterparts in Kenya, Britain, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and

Japan seeking information about a man "...possibly born in Uganda or Nairobi, but claims to be a Kenyan. He travels on passport A094725 issued on April 6, 1987 at Nairobi ...we believe he is wanted for rape and other sexual crimes in Kenya. He is believed to have committed sexual crimes in Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany and is associated with selling of drugs in possibly Britain and Amsterdam."

Describing the man as being "a potential death machine roaming our country with little regard for anyone," the Kiwi police said the man had "to date, without exaggeration, believed to have infected about 100 women" with the Aids causing HIV.

They said they were keen on the man's criminal and HIV history or incidences of his having been expelled from any of these countries.

The New Zealanders then supplied their global counterparts with the subjects picture, fingerprints and a lengthy, thoroughly detailed list of phone calls the man had made over the last two years. The list showed numbers called, dates, time, duration spoken, direct or reverse calls and even charges.

And with these details, Interpol's global tentacles got down to work. They were soon bearing results. Copenhagen found out that the man had in 1986 been arrested in Denmark for being there illegally. He was expelled for three years -until July 1, 1989. However, he was arrested in May 1987 for violating expelling ban and thrown out again.

Netu had apparently retraced his steps back into the country, surfacing with passport number A066347, which he had earlier reported to the Denmark police as having been lost.

P.K. Amdany of Kenya's Immigration Department, later said the man had on August 14, 1985 obtained passport number A066347 in Nairobi, which he later claimed was lost and obtained another one, number A094725, on April 6, 1987 at Kenya's Swedish Embassy in Stockholm.

At the Nairobi Interpol office, section head Grace Kaindi and Peter Muiruri got in touch with the Registrar of Persons, Principal Criminal Registrar and the Immigration Department. The latter confirmed passport number A094725 was genuine and legally obtained; while the Principal Criminal Registrar said the man had in 1988 been arrested in Lamu, and jailed for one year (with three strokes of the cane) for indecent assault on Brenda Ann Cole.

Netu also had a pending bank fraud case. His ID was used to illegally withdraw money from a bank.

The Registrar of Persons office said Netu had registered himself as coming from Gathehu sub-location of Magutu location, Mathira division of Nyeri district and was on march 20, 1985 issued with ID no 7802556/70. His clan was shown as being *Munjiru*.

Interpol investigations portrayed Netu as a casanova of sorts. He went for young white women, striking acquaintances at posh hotels, coastal beaches or night clubs. Most would fall for his yarn and they would swallow

it - bait, line, hook and sinker.

A common line seems to have been the sympathy-evoking story about his being an orphan and only survivor, after his entire family was wiped out, by forces of former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, during the late Seventies' liberation war. And that as a young boy, he had somehow found his way to Nairobi where a sympathetic shop-owning Indian family had taken care of him until he matured.

But none of the women had the finer details: the dates, name of Asian family or location of shop - aspects which Interpol is still keen on knowing.

Most of the girlfriends were identified through telephones he had made to them. Others recognised him from newspaper photographs and said he was Peter Netu.

M.S. Shaw of Oxford, UK, for example, told Thames Valley Police station that she met Netu while on holiday in Kenya in 1985. He visited her in Britain the following year and spent a few weeks at her place. About three years back, he rang her from Auckland.

A worried Shaw told the British Interpol that she had since learning about Netu's ongoing case, done three HIV tests which had all proved negative.

Another woman, Clea Margaret Lucraft, 23, who now lives and works in London told the police that she had met Netu in New Zealand last year.

She said the man used to organise "an African Night entertainment" at Auckland's Cause Celebre night club where he worked. She worked there part-time.

Clea said Netu protested over wearing condoms claiming he had a clean bill of health because he had recently fathered a child (with his wife), and that he had passed the HIV tests required before aliens are issued with (renewal) resident immigration pa-

pers. To her delight, Clea's HIV tests turned negative.

And from Germany, 30-year-old Patricia Mueller told Interpol she met Netu at a hotel in Wellington. He was then with a four-member music group called Bongo Man. She had later returned to Germany, and the two had been communicating.

He was scheduled to meet her at a music concert in Munich in January, but he was by then already in custody. The number of women Netu met were many.

The Ugandan was a keen badminton player whose ambition was to ultimately play at the Olympics, said another Nairobi Indian man, whose son used to play the game with Netu at the Nairobi Premier Club.

The documents Netu used to get his Kenyan ID and passport belonged to Peterson Murimi Kinyua - a hefty, 29-year-old, 5 foot 8 inches tall Kenyan who does informal businesses at Gikomba.

Murimi, who lives with his father at Jericho Estate, Nairobi says he lost his papers - a birth certificate, baptism card, a newly-issued ID card and photocopies of his parents IDs - on August 31, 1984 while returning from getting his ID at the Makadara offices for Registration of Persons.

"I only realised my papers and the new ID had gone missing soon after alighting from Kenya Bus Services route No 59 at Jericho. I reported the matter to the authorities three weeks later and took a police abstract," says Murimi.

The documents were not to be recovered until many years later, when by a strange twist of coincidence, a woman who knew the Murimi family found some of them pinned at the Makadara offices.

And Murimi would apparently not know that his documents had been used to help somebody else acquire an ID and passport until, himself applied for a passport on

February 7, 1990 using his recovered birth certificate.

The Immigration Department had stamped the certificate at the back, meaning it had been used to acquire a passport five years earlier!

"That gave me jolt! I had problems trying to get a new ID. It took me four years to have it renewed after it got lost. Now I was getting back into a bureaucratic quagmire which also bordered on crime because CID and Immigration officers seemed to suspect I assisted him. Naturally, I was dumbfounded and flabbergasted with the number of visits, interviews and subsequent statements I was made to write by the investigating officers," says Murimi.

He had been invited to Sweden by a relative, Felix Nderi Gaita, promising him a hotel job in Stockholm. His family had even staged a successful funds drive for the air fare on February 3, 1990 at Mugoya Estate. Murimi would not get the passport until two years later, by which time all plans about a job in Sweden were in disarray.

The Murimi family was in for another major jolt, when his father, Christopher Kinyua Mwai, late last year received a telephone call from Grace Kaindi of the Nairobi Interpol. "She asked me where Peter was. I told her he was at Gikomba. Then she wondered: 'Are you sure he is not in New Zealand?'" he recalls.

The old man was "taken aback. My son had never gone out of Kenya. I was in for another jolt, when they told me, 'my son in New Zealand' had Aids. Surely, this is how somebody innocent can be arrested, jailed or even hanged!" says the baffled old man.

What followed were visits, subsequent visits and the writing of numerous statements by the Mzee Kinyua, his wife and their son Murimi.

Murimi's birth certificate num-

TURN TO PAGE II