

MY NEW ZEALAND STORY

STOP THE TOUR!

The Diary of Martin Daly,
Christchurch, 1981

Written by **Bill Nagelkerke**

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**BREAK DOWN BARRIERS
DON'T SIT ON FENCES**

—*Words on a protestor's placard,
1981 Springbok Tour*

"Are there any circumstances you could foresee
in which the government would call the tour off?"

"No."

—*The Prime Minister of New Zealand,
Robert Muldoon, interviewed on television*

Sunday, 20 September, 1981

*The Springbok Tour Archive
University of Canterbury
Christchurch*

Dear Sir/Madam,

I've read in the newspaper that you want people to send you their "written memories, experiences and impressions" of the tour to New Zealand by the Springbok rugby team.

Well, after thinking about it for a while, I've decided to send you extracts from my diary. To start with I wasn't going to, because a lot of it is too personal. Stuff that doesn't seem to have much to do with the tour, not directly anyway. Like about the things that happened to our family. I think they would have happened anyway, even if the tour hadn't, but the tour made them all happen sooner, and faster.

But my mate Pete, when I asked him, thought everything counts as part of what happened. He said feelings and family things were just as important as dates and events; you can't really separate them. He's right, of course. And, to be honest, I guess I always knew they were important. Pete suggested that I photocopy the whole diary and cut out any bits I thought were much too personal, so that's what I've done even though it was still sometimes tricky to decide what to take out and what to leave in.

I have to be honest and say that I didn't experience everything first hand. My Uncle Ron, who's a journalist, filled me in on some important bits, and I read the newspapers a lot (blame Uncle Ron for that), which was useful too. I've left most of that stuff in even though it's not, as I said, first hand. At least it's in my own words.

*One last thing. The tour seemed to involve a lot of talking. A **lot** of talking. Shouting, too. I've never heard my family talk and shout and argue so much, especially in the days **before** the tour actually happened. There were loads of silent periods later, after the arguing finished.*

It seems to me that people everywhere tried to use

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words to change each other's feelings, the way they thought about things, the way they ought to think. I reckon that words have been more important this year than they've ever been before.

It meant I didn't end up writing my diary the way I usually do, a few fairly boring paragraphs each night. This year, almost from the start (because things started so early on), it seemed important to try and remember what people actually said. Sometimes I ended up writing down whole conversations, as well as I could remember them. Sometimes it was like writing a story rather than a diary. I thought that later on, when I reread it, this way of writing would help me see not just **what** happened but **why**. Does that make sense to you? Hope so.

Anyway, what finally decided me to send all this to you was because last Saturday, September 12, the final test between the All Blacks and the Springboks was held at Eden Park.

That day was also the anniversary of Steve Biko's death and we – the anti-tour people, that is – had decided to hold our last demonstration.

This is what I wrote in my diary that night:



In the march I was part of the 'Steve Biko Group' as we walked from Cathedral Square to Lancaster Park. We were pretty fired up for this last march, on a day that we called the Day of Rage, and we were planning to break into the park, knocking down the fences if we had to. But we didn't have to. The gates were open and we could just walk straight onto the pitch, nobody stopping us.

The whole thing was really weird. Eerie.

The spectator stands were empty. The place was almost deserted. But less than a month ago, on August 15th to be exact, those stands had been full, as people waited for the first test to begin. I was outside the park, even if maybe I shouldn't have been there at all, and I saw some of what happened.

There had been riot police with long batons, inside the park and outside the entrances, jabbing and hitting and beating. People I knew were being hurt. But today, in the middle of all the emptiness and silence, it was already hard to remember exactly how it had been.

Rereading this entry made me ask myself, what

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if lots of people had written stuff but none of them bothered to send it? Then you wouldn't end up with anything for your archive. There wouldn't be anything to help people remember properly what happened.

So here it is. My 'story-diary', the parts of it that I've photocopied. If you decide it's any use for the archive, please keep it. If not, you can chuck it. Whatever you decide, I'll keep the original. Chances are that one day I'll read it again, all those words that were said and can't ever be unsaid. All those things that happened and can't ever not have happened.

By then, maybe I'll understand a little better how life in 'Godzone' got the way it did, back in 1981.

*Yours faithfully,
Martin Daly
Christchurch*

*P.S. More than once my Dad said that no one would ever want to read any of my diaries so what was the use of writing and hanging onto them? Funny thing is, maybe one day someone, who isn't me, **will** be reading this.*

THE DIARY OF
MARTIN DALY
1981

CHAPTER ONE

Thursday, 1 January, 1981

31.12.80 - 01.01.81

It's pretty late, or pretty early, depending on how you look at it. Through the wall I can still hear the thump of Sarah's current favourite group, the Tom Robinson Band, or TRB for short. Why can't she listen to our own Split Enz, like I do, like everyone else does, instead of this stuff, over and over again?

The words are muffled but I know what they are. I've heard them often enough.

But we ain't gonna take it

Ain't gonna take it

They're keeping us under

But we ain't gonna take it no more

According to Sarah, TRB's music is protest music. And these days Sarah's right into that.

I can't stop yawning. I'm pretty knackered to tell the truth. It's amazing how staring at the box can make a person feel so tired.

Even Mum, who usually crashes by eleven, stayed up watching TV, seeing in the New Year. Dad had been glued to it since 7.30 when TV1 had 'That Was 1980', showing all the highlights of the last year – *sports* highlights, that is. Nothing else of any importance happened in 1980!

I, who love to read newspapers, know better!

After it finished they showed an old film called *Spartacus*, about a slave revolt in Ancient Rome. The revolt is masterminded by a gladiator called Spartacus, played by Kirk Douglas. "Old Dimple-Chin", Dad calls him. Three of us got hooked by it (the film I mean, not the chin), even when Sarah began muttering about how "nothing ever changes." She started going on like this when the black gladiator, Draba I think his name was, got a spear in the back as he attacked one of the top Romans.

I knew what she meant but I couldn't really be bothered, not when it was New Year's Eve and everything was meant to be fun and exciting. Besides, I'm used to Sarah rabbiting on and on about

justice and injustice, and I've got good at tuning her out.

I think Dad was a bit more irritated than usual but he didn't let her wind him up too much. In the end she got bored and stalked off to her room. After a while we heard the beats of TRB coming from behind her closed door. Sarah only came out again when the New Years' Eve Party programme began. We waited for the countdown and wished one another a Happy New Year.

Then we watched the party for a while, too (all of us except Sarah, who went back to her room), before turning the telly off and going to bed.

Before I turn in I have to do my traditional end-of-year/start-of-year diary entry. I always begin a new diary in the same way. First I write the day, then the date, followed by the month, the year, followed by the numbers, old to new:

Thursday, 1 January, 1981

31.12.80 – 01.01.81

It's automatic now (a bit superstitious, some people might say), but I do it because it helps me realise another year's finished, gone, kaput. It really gets it into my head. It's my way of saying "goodbye

old year”, and “hello new year”. Bit pathetic, I know. I don’t like endings that much. People say beginnings are something to look forward to but because no one knows what’s round the corner, it always feels kind of scary as well.

Anyway, this is enough. I’ve already written more than I normally do, and I’m hardly able to keep my eyes open.

Thursday, 1 January

Where to begin!

Sarah’s raving has continued. It’s got worse, too. And today it wasn’t just her, Uncle Ron joined in as well. It’s going to be another late night before I get it all down. It’s never been like this before. I went and had a look at my diaries of the past few years and every one of them had short, boring entries right the way through January. So what’s different? Well, let me tell you...

Morning

The first morning of the first day of 1981 began with

the usual funny feeling of newness. I compare it to what it might feel like being fitted with a pair of fresh legs.

Being a Thursday, and near the end of a week, the day itself didn't seem exciting enough for the beginning of another year. Especially this year, the year I start high school. I've tried not to think too much about it. I'm sure it'll turn out OK but it's a big thing, changing schools, starting off somewhere completely new, being at the bottom of the heap again, not knowing anyone, no one knowing you.

Dad has just put his head round the door to ask me what I'm doing. "Writing my diary of course," I said.

He shook his head and said, as he always does, that he can't understand why I bother. "What's the point? No one's ever going to read it."

I shrugged. I'm sick of saying it's not *for* anyone else to read. It doesn't really bother me anymore that Dad thinks writing a diary is a something of a joke, something for sissies. I've done it for so long now and, really, it's Dad's fault I started in the first place. I should remind him.

Today I discovered that there are at least two things that a group of people should never talk about, especially not during lunch. The first is sports and the second is politics.

Our Uncle Ron (Dad's brother, single) came round to have New Year's Day lunch with us. Uncle Ron lives out in the country in a souped-up bach overlooking Waimairi Bay. He's been a journalist for years and has worked for most of the major papers. Then halfway through last year he went freelance, writing travel stuff mainly. He *loves* travel. And he said he was going to finish the novel he started writing years ago.

"That'll be novel," Sarah kidded him when he told us. (She was in a better mood those days.) "Will it be the Great New Zealand Novel or a lesser variety?"

"Greater than lesser," Uncle Ron joked back, "but less than great, I suspect."

I think Dad's jealous of his brother. He's always telling him how good it must be not to have any responsibilities. Being able to jet off whenever he feels like it. Not having to worry about money all the time.

Uncle Ron doesn't say a lot when Dad goes on

like this. He shrugs and changes the subject. I feel embarrassed by Dad. I mean, I don't think journalism's easy work. And freelance writing's risky. You can't be sure you're going to be paid from one week to the next. I've talked to Uncle Ron about this, because I might become a journalist, too. Over the past year Uncle Ron's been sending me some of his stories, asking what I think of them, even telling me he's happy if I make suggestions for improvement. I really enjoy it. I feel like a teacher wielding a red pen!

Lunchtime

Just before lunch, Dad started talking to Uncle Ron about his favourite topic (Dad's, that is, not Uncle Ron's) – sport. I wasn't really concentrating but I did hear him mention the Veteran Games, which even I knew were on really soon. Then he got onto the tour of New Zealand, later in the year, by the Springboks. Dad's a real rugby-head and I felt sorry that Uncle Ron had to listen to him.

Mum was coming in and out of the room with the lunch stuff, eyeing me to get up and help, which I eventually did. I didn't really want to, but on the

other hand it didn't seem fair to let her do all the work. Sarah was sitting in a corner making sure she didn't catch Mum's eye, or mine. When I glanced over at her, annoyed she wasn't helping, I noticed she was looking agitated. It might have been something she'd eaten last night but I had a sneaking suspicion it was anything but.

The one-sided rugby talk carried on after we'd dished up. Uncle Ron was getting sick and tired of it. So was Sarah. I turned to Mum and our eyes happened to meet. She raised her eyebrows so I knew she had noticed it too. A lunchtime battle was the last thing she wanted on New Year's Day.

Uncle Ron said something to Sarah. I didn't catch what it was until Dad said, extra loudly, that the Springboks were a force to be reckoned with because the All Blacks had beaten them the last time they'd come to New Zealand and the South Africans would be out for revenge.

As Dad paused we all heard Sarah say, "It'd better be banned," and Uncle Ron reply, "Too right."

Dad looked as if Sarah had stabbed him in the back and Uncle Ron had helped push the knife in.

The silence seemed to go on for a long time but probably only lasted a few seconds. Then Uncle Ron said quietly, "She's right, you know. I was in South Africa last year. It's not a country I'd choose to play sport with. Not until they change their policy of apartheid."

"And what were you doing swanning off to a country you hate so much?" Dad said. His voice was quiet too, dangerously quiet.

"*Everyone* knows what's wrong with South Africa," said Sarah, "except rugby-heads who shut their eyes to everything except rugby."

"Sarah..." began Mum.

"It's OK, don't worry," said Sarah. "I'm not going to spoil a nice lunch."

"Neither am I," said Uncle Ron.

"I won't mention whites-only toilets, or whites-only buses, or whites-only restaurants. I won't say anything about the fact that black kids can't learn in their own language. I won't..."

Mum told Sarah to calm down, and Uncle Ron managed to change the topic of conversation.

But it still felt as if there was a storm brewing.

Tuesday, 6 January

I already know, before I've hardly written a word, that this is going to be another *long* entry. At the rate I'm going, my diary will be chocker before the year ends and my arm will have fallen off! Good thing I use an exercise book and not a proper diary with the same amount of space for each entry. Still, if I can't write less I'll have to try and write smaller.

Anyway – today didn't start off too good at all.

Dad usually goes back to work the week after New Year. He's an orderly at the public hospital. Because Dad's pretty well-built (all those years of playing sport, I guess), the old ladies who get admitted with heart attacks and stuff enjoy being pushed around by him. (I don't mean pushed around as in bullied or anything, but trundled along the hospital corridors in their wheelchairs and beds.) I think they feel safe with him, even safer than they do with the young doctors. Dad says the doctors always look half-asleep. Mum reminds him they work ridiculously long hours.

This year things were going to be a bit different. Dad's been planning to have time off work, a few

days here and there right through to the beginning of February. The reason? Well, like I said, Dad's a fanatic when it comes to sports. Rugby mainly, but he'll settle for just about anything that has loads of speed, action and competition. For the last few months he's been getting more and more excited about the fact that the World Veteran Games are coming to little old Christchurch.

The last two Vet Games were held in Germany and Sweden so New Zealand is suddenly leaping onto the world stage, as they say. OK, there aren't as many athletes coming here as went to those Games – we're still pretty far from the rest of the world. All the same, they're expecting over two thousand from forty-four countries. Not a bad turnout.

"It'll be like the Commonwealth Games in '74," Dad said.

"Exactly," I said. "Just a *tad* slower."

I still sort of remember the Commonwealth Games. I was about six then. Dad took Sarah and me down to the games village to get autographs of some of the famous runners. People like Dick Tayler, John Walker and Filbert Bayi. Dad gave us each a small notebook. He'd written 'Sports Autographs' in thick

black marker on the front covers. In my book, under each of the signatures I collected, I added a little note of what day and what time I'd got them.

The truth is, that was the start and end of my autograph collection. Everyone was doing it, and I couldn't be bothered doing the same as everyone else. Apart from enjoying soccer at primary school, I'd never been that mad keen on sports to begin with.

Guess what? The notebook wasn't wasted. I liked seeing what I'd been doing on a certain day, it was a good way of keeping track and not forgetting things. So the autograph book became my first diary. And all because of Dad!

Anyway, I've almost gone and lost track of what I'd been going to write. Which is, that after all the build up, the Vet Games are starting tomorrow. Dad was hoping to go to the opening but he's been told he isn't allowed to have leave. The hospital's really short-staffed, what with people taking their summer holidays. Dad's miffed about that, but because he can definitely go to the closing ceremony, he's trying not to let the decision get to him. At breakfast

though, when he was reading the paper, you could almost see steam coming from his ears.

“Listen to this!” he said.

“What?” asked Sarah, almost as if she already knew what he was going to say. Since New Year, she’s become even more impatient with Dad. And with Mum, too, surprisingly. She’s always been on at Mum to get more liberated but now she’s upped the ante. “It’s as if the seventies passed you by totally,” she’s told Mum more than once.

Mum shrugs it off. She’s happy enough being at home, looking after us. Well, happy with me and Dad. Who’d be happy looking after Sarah?!

Between Sarah and Dad, things are getting seriously bad. They’re starting to annoy each other big time. Sarah may tell Mum off but you know she’s really on her side, almost as if she feels sorry for her. With Dad, it’s as if they’re on opposite sides of their own Berlin Wall.

Dad turned the paper round so we could read the headline.

Taste of Things to Come

It was written by none other than Uncle Ron, and it wasn’t a page of recipes, I can tell you!

Oh boy!

This is how the conversation went:

Me (pretending not to notice the byline): "What's it about?"

Sarah (speaking before Dad can get a word in. So she *did* know what was bothering him): "HART's going to protest at the Vet Games because of the South African team."

Dad: "There *isn't* a South African team, for God's sake."

Sarah: "Everyone knows the New Zealand government's given visas to a bunch of South Africans travelling under Dutch passports."

Dad: "A load of baloney. They're here legitimately. Well, they'll get the sharp end of the stick if they try anything on."

Me: "Who?" (Honestly, I was confused.)

Dad: "Those HART buggers."

I saw Mum tighten her lips. She hates us swearing. Hates conflict of any kind – another thing that bugs Sarah.

Sarah: "Do you even know what HART stands for?" (She was asking Dad, but she was looking at me.)

Dad: "'Course I do. They stand for everything this

country fought two world wars to prevent.”

Sarah: “What?!”

At that point Mum left the room. She knew there wasn’t any point trying to stop them.

Dad: “Commie stirrers.”

Sarah: “Get real. Even you can’t be so naïve.”

Dad (flinging down the newspaper): “It’s not me who’s naïve. It’s not me who needs to *get real*. It’s people like you.”

Sarah: “People like *me*?”

Dad: “Yes, you varsity lot. You should have been at lectures last year, not going to commie meetings all the time.”

Sarah: “You haven’t got a *clue* what you’re talking about. All this crap about—”

Mum: “That’s *enough*.” (She hadn’t gone very far, just next door to the lounge.) “There’s no need to be crude in order to be able to argue effectively.”

For a second that shut them both up. Only for a second. Sarah called out to Mum. “Come back and tell him what it’s all about. *You* know, even if he doesn’t. At least you’re prepared to listen.”

Mum didn’t come back. She said she wasn’t going to take sides. Sarah said there was only one side

anyone could possibly take. She called Dad one-eyed. Then she headed for her room. "And you just fence-sit like a dumb bunny," she threw at me. "Do *you* know what HART stands for?"

"Halt All Racist Tours," I said, making a point of sounding insulted. "I read the paper. I'm not an idiot."

Sarah gave me a look that made me *feel* like a bunny, pinned in a hunter's spotlight.

"Aren't you?" she said. "I asked if you know what it *stands* for, thicko, not what the letters mean. So, where *do* you stand?" she added, before she slammed her door and disappeared, not giving me a chance to answer.

We were in for another round of TRB. I didn't know if I could take it!

Just as well I didn't have to answer Sarah. I didn't actually have a clue where I stood. I'm always reading about what's happening in the world but that doesn't mean I'm always taking sides. Why should I? There are two sides to every story. Aren't there?

Wednesday, 7 January

I wish Sarah and Dad hadn't argued. I wish Sarah hadn't said what she'd said to me, either. The whole thing is making me feel really uneasy. That's what I meant about not liking change. I prefer things to be the same. Predictable.

If that makes me sound like a wuss, well, too bad.

It wasn't on the front page but it couldn't have been worse if it had. Dad came home from work and unrolled the paper. By the time he got to page nine he was starting to froth at the mouth. (Not literally of course, but you know what I mean.)

Protest Clash at Games Opening

Unless he was using a pseudonym, it wasn't Uncle Ron who'd written the article. I managed to read over Dad's shoulder that a group of protestors had staged a mock battle between blacks and whites to show spectators at the Vet Games that life for anyone who wasn't white in South Africa was really bad. Afterwards some of the veteran athletes had climbed up into the stands and tried to rip banners away from protestors. The police had finally kicked

the protestors out of the park.

"I would've kicked them all the way back to Timbuktu," said Dad and quick as lightning Sarah asked him if he knew where Timbuktu was. Dad didn't. He thought it was a made-up name. To be honest that's what I'd thought as well.

"It's in Mali," said Sarah. "Africa, in case you didn't know that either. Mali was a civilisation when Europe was still stuck in the Middle Ages."

"So they do teach you something at that university," said Dad, sarcastically.

Dad has a point, sort of. Since Sarah started varsity she has been different. She and I used to get on all right, most of the time, until Sarah started meeting heaps of new and different people. Dad loves calling them names. 'The bearded corduroy brigade' (his favourite) or 'stirrers'. 'Commie (short for communist) stirrers' is his latest insult.

Sarah just calls them her friends, but it's true, she changed after she started hanging out with them. When she stopped wearing a school uniform, she started wearing badges instead. Badges that said things like 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' and 'Say No to

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Racism' and then, just in the last few months, 'Stop the '81 Tour. Fight Apartheid'.

I'm getting really worried. Once the Veteran Games are over, Dad will start looking forward to the Springbok tour. Because protests against it have already begun, there've been rumours that the tour might be cancelled.

If it is, boy, will all hell break loose in our house!

