

Zapiro zaps the competition

SA cartoonist who was detained by the apartheid regime – and is now being sued for defamation by a high-ranking member of SA's present ruling party – has seen off tough competition from other African cartoonists and won the Cartoonists Rights Network 2007 award for courage.

Cape Town - The 2007 winner of the Courage in Editorial Cartooning Award is Jonathan Shapiro of Cape Town, South Africa. Every year, cartoonists around the world are threatened by terrorists, government officials or affiliated goon squads. For many, the experience is intimidating and traumatizing; for a few, it is one more reason to express the power of truth.

Two of Shapiro's three "Zuma" cartoons are cited in a US\$2 million defamation suit ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma has brought against the cartoonist, editors and South African publishers. Zuma's political pedigree includes resistance organizer, a 10-year prison sentence on Robben Island, exile, ANC negotiator, party official and former deputy president of South Africa. In recent years, Zuma has drawn criticism from the press due to his in-fighting for ANC leadership and the company he keeps. There are allegations of tax evasion, corruption and rape. He has also just fathered yet another child out of wedlock.

Sex 'n shower

The rape case did go to trial and was deemed consensual sex by the court 8 May 2006. However, Zuma's own testimony outraged HIV/AIDS educators and the complainant was intimidated by Zuma supporters when she arrived at or left the court. This former chair of the National AIDS Council testified that he did not use a condom. He said he minimized the risk of infection from the 32-year-old HIV positive woman by taking a shower. Shapiro took Zuma to task.

Thus the lawsuit. Shapiro has received late-night threats by telephone for other hard-hitting cartoons as well.

Refusing to be intimidated, Shapiro countered the lawsuit with new cartoons about the lawsuit. They were published by three newspaper groups.

Shapiro - pen name Zapiro - has been a political cartoonist for over two decades. He has the distinction of being detained without trial for his anti-apartheid activities in the 1980s and threatened by representatives of the current government. He joins an eclectic group of winners of the Courage in Editorial Cartooning Award:

- * Ali Dilem, Algeria
- * Paul Nyemb ("Popoli"), Cameroon
- * The Twelve Danish Cartoonists, Denmark
- * Nik Kowsar, Iran

- * Musa Kart, Turkey
- * Tony Namate, Zimbabwe

Shapiro received the prize on 6 July 2007 in Washington DC.

Source: [Cartoonists Rights Network](#)

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