



Beyond all (reasonable?) doubt

In his well-known book on evidence, *Bewysreg* Derde Uitgawe, Schmidt cites (p 82) the following example from the doctoral thesis of a fellow academic in his discussion of the captioned topic:

"There are three containers; the first contains 100 black balls, the second 100 white balls and the third 50 white and 50 black balls; we select randomly 25 balls from one of the containers and all are white. Although the possibility that the balls were taken from the exclusively black container is eliminated, [the author] opines that it is not proved beyond reasonable doubt that the balls were taken from the exclusively white container, since there is a reasonable alternative possibility, namely that they were taken from the mixed container." [My translation]

Possibility theory teaches that the probability of selecting 25 white balls on a random basis from a container with 50 white and 50 black balls is .000 000 000 5! To put it differently, if the likelihood of the accused's innocence is one in 2 000 million, his guilt

has not been proved beyond all reasonable doubt, according to this example!

Quod emt demonstrandum!

Willem de Bruyn
Johannesburg Bar

Radio quiz

On 23 November 1993 Professor Dennis Davis of the Wits Law Faculty was standing in for one of the Radio 702 presenters. Professor Davis posed the following quiz questions to listeners:

"Who is Michael Corbett

- 1 – The Goalie for Kaiser Chiefs
- 2 – The Minister of Transport
- 3 – The Chief Justice of South Africa
- 4 – The lead guitarist for "Mango Groove".

The first caller opted for "The lead guitarist for 'Mango Groove'", the second for "The Minister of Transport" and the third for "the Kaiser Chiefs' goalie". The fortunate fourth caller eventually gave our learned Chief Justice his due, but upon enquiry by Professor Davis admitted that he had determined the Chief Justice's status by process of elimination.

Craig Watt-Pringle
Johannesburg Bar

Nog 'n paar stories uit Izak Nortje se boek *Stille in die Hof! Shut-up! Voertsek!*:

Marcus Antonius en Berrange

Konstabel David Strauss (B.Com.) was op universiteit lid van 'n toneelgroep en het onder andere die rol van Marcus Antonius vertolk. Soos alle akteurs en (veral) aktrises wat ek later ontmoet het, kon hy maar nie sy verlede afskud nie. Terwyl ons een môre in die menasie besig was met ontbyt, stap hy in en meld sy teenwoordigheid as volg aan: "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones."

Toe wend hy hom na 'n outjie wat met propvol mond probeer om betyds vir diens klaar te eet: "Pickles, wie het so gesê?"

Pickles, wat met sy twee elmoë op die tafel gerus het, vurk in die linkerhand – altwee implemente gerig na die plafon, sluk een van die eiers wat in een van sy kieste bol sodat hy darem effens kon praat, wys met die mes na die persele oorkant die straat en sê: "Berrange."