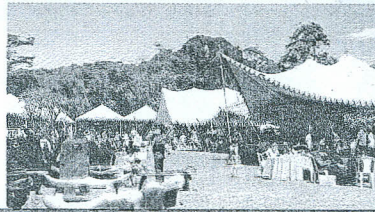


**FAMILY DAY
OUT AT THE
BARGAINBOX**

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FASHION

Love affair
between music
and fashion

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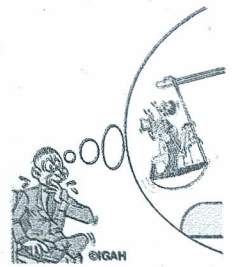
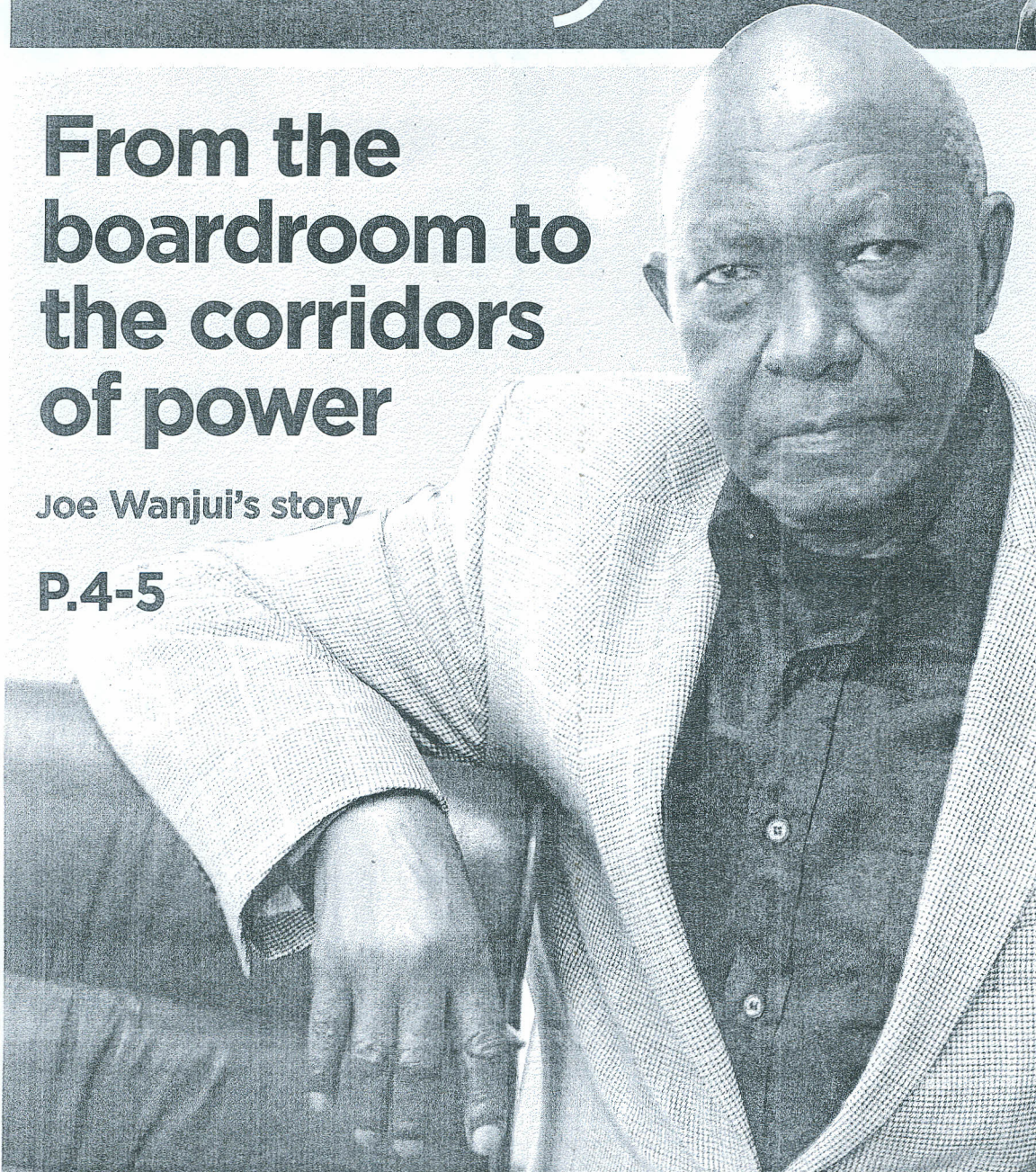
SUNDAY NATION FREE WITH YOUR SUNDAY NATION June 1, 2014

lifestyle

From the boardroom to the corridors of power

Joe Wanjui's story

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Sex makes
for lasting
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**If You Have No Voice,
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MWALIMU ANDREW: POWER HAS NOW GONE TO THE HEADS OF MY RELATIVES PAGE 9

captain and shrewd king-maker



PHOTO | COURTESY
Joe Wanjui's extended family in a group photo taken in December 2009. Inset: Mr Wanjui with his wife, Njambi, in 2009.

by John. The authority who gave John the State House job (President Kibaki) must have felt equally betrayed," he writes.

Wanjui contends that from the experience of his long career as a CEO, he believed that even "whistle-blowing is done with some decorum", blaming his erstwhile "son" for approaching the government job with an "activist's mind".

He further suggests Githongo Jr was not the hero some lionised him to be and could at best be unpatriotic or at worst a spy. "In this day and age, it is not far-fetched to speculate on agencies and powers who would be intensely interested in knowing what happens daily in State House from a high office stationed there," writes Wanjui.

The author says his worst feeling of betrayal came after he read Michella Wrong's *It's Our Turn to Eat*. He is particularly unhappy with the narrative that the TI board, which he was part of, "delivered" Githongo Jr to the "lion's den" of State House as a "sacrificial lamb".

Wanjui takes issue with claims that he and his friends — supposedly part of a group variously referred to in Wrong's book as the "Mount Kenya Mafia", "Democratic Party founder members", "Muthaiga Golf Club members" or "Gema" — "quaffed Champagne" after supposedly fixing Githongo Jr.

The chapter on corruption and Githongo is particularly relevant at a time when the Anglo Leasing scandal that almost brought down the Kibaki administration is back in the limelight. President Uhuru Kenyatta recently allowed the payment of Sh1.4 billion to two companies with links to the controversial contracts. There are reports of further demands amounting to Sh3 billion.

And in the end Wanjui makes it clear there is no love lost between him and Gi-

thongo Jr. He did not attend the younger man's wedding and they have never spoken since Githongo returned to Kenya from self-exile.

"In retrospect, I cannot honestly say my role in recommending John's appointment to government was one of my proudest moments," he notes.

Unlike many of his generation and status who are coy about committing pen to paper to tell their stories, Wanjui has written three books. *The Native Son*, set to be launched on July 28, being the latest.

Family story

He has previously published *My Native Roots: A Family Story* (University of Nairobi Press, 2009) and *From Where I Sit* (East African Publishing House, 1986).

It is in the lush surroundings of a sparsely populated Central Kenya village on the grip of British colonial rule that the story of this man whose influence would decades later straddle corporate and political life begins.

In *My Native Roots*, Wanjui is refreshingly candid that while he is certain his birthplace is Cura village near Kahuhu in Kikuyu division, he does not know exactly when he was born.

"The exact date of my birth is something I cannot record with certainty. I have no official birth certificate. My passport and all my other official documents indicate I was born on May 24, 1937," writes the sixth child of Wanjui Munana and Elizabeth Wanjiru.

He had previously been told he was born between 1936 and 1937, but upon completing high school in 1957 he was required to provide an exact date while applying for a passport. He settled for May 24, which he reckoned would be easy to recall as it was also the designated British Empire Day. Such pragmatism is to be found in almost all major decisions he made in his life.

Wanjui's life stories stress the importance of one's heritage. *My Native Roots*, for instance, goes into detail about his family and the Agikuyu way of life, providing a rich vein of anthropological information.

After a humble childhood that was split growing up between what is now Kiambu County and Njoro — where he lived with his mother and siblings after his parents separated — Wanjui started his basic education in Kahuhu in 1946 and ended it in Nairobi where he had gone to live with his brother James Mbatia. He later attended Kabaa Mission School and Mang'u High School between 1951-1957.

But it is a decision he took after completing high school that some would have considered irrational: he declined a chance to join the prestigious Makerere University in Uganda, the only such institution in the region then, much to the dismay of the British colonialists. Instead, he saw better prospects abroad and applied to Ohio Wesleyan University in America where he was offered a place plus full tuition fee.

Even then he did not have air fare and money for upkeep. It took the intervention



of Robert Stephens, the cultural attaché at the American foreign affairs office in Nairobi, for Wanjui to travel.

He later got Fulbright and African-American Institute scholarships for his studies. But life abroad was not easy, especially for a black man in a country where racial discrimination was rife.

Wanjui says: "America can be an intimidating place, especially for a rural African going there for the first time. One can picture how infinitely intimidating it was for such an African going there in the 1950s."

Strangely, he felt there was more racial discrimination back home in colonial Kenya than in America.

After completing his BA at Ohio Wesleyan, Wanjui applied to Ohio University to study electrical engineering before joining the prestigious Columbia University for a masters of science degree, which he completed in 1964.

While the sole aim of his American sojourn was education, he also ended up finding love in this quintessential land of opportunity. It was during a party in the apartment of a Kenyan student in New York City in 1961, just after Wanjui had finished his undergraduate studies, that he met his future wife. He had earlier briefly met Elizabeth Mukami Githii when she was a student at Loreto, Limuru, and he was at Mang'u.

The twins

"Anyway, I was the school head prefect and was supposed to hold my head high in a girls' school, not get all mushy and romantic," he says.

But things were different in the second meeting miles away. The relationship blossomed and the two got married on December 22, 1962, in New York.

Wanjui and Elizabeth got their first children, twin girls — Wanjiru and Nyathira — on December 10, 1963, two days short of Kenya's Independence Day. The young couple had travelled to America as British citizens — subjects of the colonialists — but returned home on Kenyan passports. And it was a time of socio-economic, cultural and political transition. "Back in Kenya, Elizabeth and I were what could be regarded as the sixties version of the 'Yuppie' couple: young, upwardly mobile, well-educated, ambitious," he writes.

While Elizabeth got a teaching job at Ngara Secondary School and later at State House Road Girls, Wanjui continued to work for multinational Esso (later known as Exxon Mobil).

"Indeed, we found ourselves propelled straight into Kenya's upper middle-class lifestyle — sophisticated, doing well, getting ahead. We were earning good money and had an increasing circle of important friends: ministers, top civil servants, company executives and more," he says.

Wanjui would later leave Esso to head state-owned Industrial and Commercial

Development Corporation (ICDC) as "a national duty".

"It was at ICDC that we launched the first post-independence wave of African-owned enterprises, and a network of indigenous retailers and wholesalers, who changed the face of African commerce in Kenya," he notes.

But in 1968 he joined East African Industries (EAI) as Technical Director. The multinational, now known as Unilever, had popular flagship brands like Kimbo, Cowboy, Omo, Lux, Blue Band, Tretop and Mama Safi. He rose to become the managing director and eventually executive chairman of EAI, serving the company for 19 years before retiring in April 1996. But it was no easy task as he details his battles with government, mostly over price controls, as he sought a conducive business environment.

Wanjui, who ranks as one of the biggest local investors, has been a board member of many organisations, using this to share his expertise and mentor future corporate leaders. He now chairs the UAP board, a company he partly owns. He believes his role in forming the Kenya Association of Manufacturers and the Kenya Institute of Management has helped shape the economy. His involvement in capital venture investment also provides useful lessons.

As his career grew from the 1960s, so did his family. The couple had two more daughters — Jo-Ann Wairimu, born in 1966, and Joyce-Ann Muthoni, born a year later. But the marriage that the young couple thought was "made in heaven" did not last and they divorced in 1972.

"At some point, the relationship began to get frayed. Neither Elizabeth nor I found it easy to put a finger on what exactly went wrong. Was it the pressure of our careers, combined with that of the new life we had suddenly been thrust into? Or was it our own ambitions and fear of failure? I do not know," he writes.

After bringing up the children as a single parent, he later remarried Anne Njambi Kiarie, with whom he has a son, Joseph Wanjui, and a daughter, Jean-Anne Wanjiru. He, however, remained close to Elizabeth until her death in 1998.

Wanjui represents the pioneer African Kenyan capitalist class with a global connection. But at the same time his story tells more of what Kenya could have been — or still could be — with the establishment of institutions to guarantee home-grown entrepreneurship and a friendly business environment.

My Native Roots and *The Native Son* are not just important because they detail the life of a public figure and inspire the spirit of entrepreneurship, but also because of the anthropology of the Agikuyu and the opening of a window to Kenya's history.

The book is available at the University of Nairobi bookshop and other outlets at Sh2,000.

Key events

— His birthplace is Cura Village near Kahuhu in Kikuyu division, he does not know exactly when he was born, but was told it was between 1936 and 1937.

— He married Anne Njambi Kiarie (right) after his first marriage was dissolved.



Joe Wanjui: Family man, industry

The former University of Nairobi Chancellor is one of the pioneer Kenyan decision-makers who have influenced the direction of both business and politics since Independence. He shares his experiences in his latest autobiography

BY TOM ODHIAMBO

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Kenya's political scene would have been more stable today had Raila Odinga been appointed prime minister in 2003, one of former President Mwai Kibaki's confidantes has claimed in a book to be launched next month.

In his new book, *The Native Son: Experiences of a Kenyan Entrepreneur*, Joseph Barrage Wanjui — or simply Joe Wanjui — one of Kenya's most influential businessmen and political advisors, also suggests anti-corruption czar John Githongo may have been working as a spy for a foreign government when he recorded and leaked conversations with senior Cabinet ministers in 2006.

The Native Son is largely framed as "a celebration of the spirit of free enterprise; an insight into the policies and philosophies that drive business, trade and industry", but it also inevitably captures some of the country's most critical political moments.

Wanjui, whose most recent role has been as Chancellor of the University of Nairobi from where he holds an honorary doctorate, has seen four Kenyan presidents since Independence, but his perceived influence during Mwai Kibaki's two terms from 2003 to 2013 is the most storied. In the book, he admits he prefers an advisory role, mostly to ensure a conducive business environment. His disinterest in political office seems to derive from what he thinks is the dishonesty and chaotic nature of "the dirty game" in Kenya. "Matatu politics", he calls it,

However, the author regrets that the Narc honeymoon did not last long with disagreements between the Kibaki and Odinga factions. A contentious Memorandum of Understanding between the two sides, which Kibaki's National Alliance Party of Kenya was alleged to have dishonoured, particularly caused much tumult with Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party turning into the opposition within government.

"It all boiled down to trust — or rather lack of it," he notes.

Wanjui strongly believes that had Odinga been made Prime Minister — even without executive powers — Narc would have remained stable and so would the political scene today.

"I am not a politician, but the ethos of the private sector in which I have worked provides for rewards — or compensation, if you like — commensurate with the work done," he writes.

He believes that even though the then Constitution did not expressly have the PM's position, it would neither have been unconstitutional nor eroded the President's powers.

The author, however, reveals he was part of a team that unsuccessfully attempted reconciliation.

"Long before the breach became final, there were many meetings held in an apartment in Nairobi's Lower Hill area (in Nairobi) when serious efforts were made to patch up the differences and restore the relationship ... Everything from the alleged MoU to the prime ministerial position was put on the table," writes Wanjui.

But the fallout continued into the defeat of the government side in the 2005 referendum, a Cabinet reshuffle that ejected the Odinga faction, the subsequent formation of the Orange Democratic Movement and eventually



The give and take of democracy is always messy. Yet in the end, it is the most liberating factor of all," he writes.

Comparing the Kanu rule to Narc, Wanjui believes a "fundamental difference" between Kibaki and his immediate predecessor (Moi) is that Kibaki is an educated man. He finds it ironic that Moi seemed to have dedicated his time fundraising to build schools and promoting education, but at the same time "showed strange aversion to educated people".

"He was more comfortable surrounding himself with cronies who had barely gone to school like Ezekiel Barngetuny, Kariuki Chotara and Mulu Mutisya," writes Wanjui.

This may have reflected on Kenya's policies for decades, even though he admits Moi is a pleasant man at a "personal level".

"Moi may not have been like (Uganda's Iddi) Amin, but his obsession with political survival and his lack of economic imagination drove Kenya to her lowest post-Independence level, just as Amin did with Uganda," he writes, criticising the killing of investment during the Nyayo era.

Wanjui acknowledges the transformative power of Kibaki's 10 years in office. The new Constitution, eco-

nomics progress, big infrastructure projects, freedoms, regional integration, free primary education, and improved tax collection are among the highlights.

But he does not shy away from tackling head-on one of the most high-profile corruption controversies in Kenya's history. Wanjui is scathing in his description of John Githongo, the Narc anti-corruption czar who would later metamorphose into a whistleblower — or traitor to some.

By way of background, Wanjui also reveals a "little-known secret" about the origins of Transparency International, the respected global anti-corruption watchdog: it was conceived in Kenya before Europe adopted it.

"The concept had germinated during informal discussions held in the 1980s in the Spring Valley suburb of Nairobi where I live. One of my neighbours Peter Eigen was the then World Bank representative in Nairobi," he says.

Wanjui writes that it was during these chat-and-drink sessions, mostly at Eigen's house, that the TI idea was developed out of concern about the high level of corruption in developing countries, which Western governments then seemed to tolerate for the benefit of their companies.

Upon leaving the World Bank, Eigen

led the formation of TI in 1993 with its headquarters in Berlin, Germany.

Among the small Spring Valley group was Harris Mule and Joe Githongo — John Githongo's father.

Githongo senior would later become a founding member of the TI board while Wanjui would be appointed to the advisory council. But the author says forming the local TI chapter was a struggle with the "application gathering dust in the attorney-general's chambers" for five years until 1998. Wanjui admits he was later influential in the appointment of Githongo Jr as a TI director, and treated him more as a son than an employee.

"I knew he was not married and would always urge him to take the plunge. I would also advise him to stop living in rented premises and invest in buying his own apartment since he was being paid a good salary, writes Wanjui.

But this father-son relationship started unravelling in 2003 after Githongo Jr was appointed the Governance and Ethics PS under Narc. As Githongo Jr got to work at State House Wanjui says they often spoke but did not get into the details of the job.

"What I remember him doing most of the time he came along was to mutter something in Kikuyu to the effect that *ni kuhuu* (things are hot) which I took to mean he was encountering resistance in the course of his work," he writes.

Githongo Jr was to later spectacularly fall out with the Narc administration in 2006 over the Anglo Leasing scandal, which he alleged some senior State officials were involved in. He resigned and fled to London fearing for his life. He later leaked to the BBC recorded conversations with then Justice Minister Kiraitu Murungi and released a dossier suggesting high level corruption.

In *The Native Son*, Wanjui does not hide his disdain for Githongo Jr for being unethical by secretly recording conversations with people who trusted him in their "unguarded moments".

"I can imagine the raw, personal feelings of betrayal of those who found out they had been surreptitiously taped

I CAN IMAGINE THE RAW, PERSONAL FEELINGS OF BETRAYAL OF THOSE WHO FOUND OUT THEY HAD BEEN SURREPTITIOUSLY TAPED BY JOHN. THE AUTHORITY WHO GAVE JOHN THE STATE HOUSE JOB MUST HAVE FELT EQUALLY BETRAYED"

comparing the survival-of-the-fittest tactics to the notoriously messy public transport system.

That he was in the engine room of the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) campaigns in 2002 is not in doubt — even serving as chairman of the presidential election board that helped remove Kanu from power.

"It was like the doors of a pitch-dark bunker had suddenly been flung open to let in the daylight. Liberties that had long been unimaginable were now there for the taking," he writes.

Wanjui admits the key role of Mr Odinga in delivering the victory — starting from the "Kibaki Tasha" endorsement to leading the campaigns.

"I personally can vouch for the fact that Raila Odinga was the most energetic campaigner for Kibaki in the 2002 election campaign," he writes.

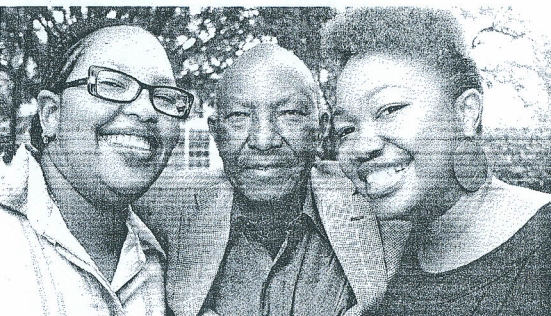
the contentious 2007 elections.

President Kibaki was to later form the Grand Coalition Government in 2008 with Odinga as PM in the wake of the post-election violence.

Nonetheless, Wanjui believes that Kenyans had become so used to Moi's dictatorship for more than two decades that when President Kibaki took over in 2003, they had trouble adjusting to the new reality and kept asking, "Why isn't the President speaking out? Why isn't he reading the riot act to errant ministers? Why doesn't he respond to his opponents? Why is he so quiet?"

This, he suggests, was like the biblical story of the children of Israel who started asking for the chicken they ate during bondage in Egypt instead of God's free manna.

"With time, Kenyans will fully begin to realise that oppression does not equate to order, or liberty to chaos.



Dr Joseph Barrage Wanjui with his daughters Chamie (right) and Ciru on Friday.

WILLIAM OERI: NATION