

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Programme: Bachelor of Communication Science Hons Degree (HBCom.Sc)

Level 1

Examinations

MAR 2024

HJ104: NEWSGATHERING AND NEWSWRITING DURATION: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

- Answer **Three (3)** questions ONLY.
- All questions carry equal marks (100 marks)
- Errors in grammar, punctuation and spellings will be penalized
- Credit will be given for clear, well organized and coherent answers

Section A (Compulsory Question)

1. Write a hard news story of between 400-450 words from the following interview.

This is an edited transcript of an interview between Emmerson Mnangagwa, president of Zimbabwe, and Alec Russell of the Financial Times in Harare yesterday

Q: Do you still speak to the former president? When did you last speak to him?

A: Just before he left for Singapore [in mid December] we chatted. Before he left for Singapore. He said he wanted to go Singapore, I said, Sir, you're most welcome. I will give every facilitation for you to proceed to Singapore. Then that was that. Then the list of people going to Singapore came to me. There were 38. A delegation of 38.

So I phoned back and said, chef . . . That's what we call each other. Boss, you're going for a medical check-up; why do you want 38 people? Then he says, Emmerson, I don't know that list. No one even told me. I never told you? Yes, OK. He says, I don't know that there are 38 people. I know it's myself, my wife, and my family. And we are hardly 10. I don't know where the other 30 . . . I said no, I have a list here of 36 plus yourself and the wife will be 38. So I can't just approve 38 people just for you for a medical check-up; no. You know the new dispensation, I mean, we are trying . . . I have cut down the cabinet. It's a leaner cabinet. And I'm also saying no minister travels first-class and so on. So I'm cutting expenses and that can't be understood if you are going to go for medical check up with a big number. He says, Emmerson . . . He never says Mr. President, he just calls me . . . Just said Emmerson. Emmerson, send me that list. So I called the protocol people. Then they sent the list to him and they reduced the number down to 21. He says I can't reduce any further; this is the number. That's the number that then went. With him, it became 22, but the others were 21. He was then the 22. Then he went . . . But when he went in a 767 it carried these 22 people also to Singapore. Then when I was told I said no, this is not good. If the press hears that we've taken the former president on this huge plane, it's extravagant and so on. And it was published that it cost \$6m. So we then said we must look for a smaller plane to go and pick him back when he finishes. Fortunately when he was there, he then phoned back but he didn't talk to me; he talked to my directors. He said, you see, it's very absurd that the president allowed me to come with a 676 when we're so small delegation. Can you look for a smaller plane to pick me back? This is him. So the message arrived. So I gave instructions to the minister of transport and my officials. Somehow, the communication didn't reach Air Zimbabwe on time. Then they sent again the 767.

Q: But how is he now? He was in power for 37 years, and now . . .

A: Just now he's OK. Because when he came last week he sent me a summary of his medical report showing that . . . Just thanking me for having gone there, and then a small written report by Dr Matenga showing that he had a very successful and satisfactory medical check-up and he is back and he will be going back in April. This time when he goes back we will make sure he goes with a smaller plane as he asked. His history with Mugabe.

Q: When and how did you first meet Mugabe?

A: We've been together for about 54 years when I was a student and also when I went for military training in Egypt as well as in China. He was responsible for sending my group in September '63 for military training in China, where I spent some time in the military academy in Nanjing. Graduated from there, came back to Rhodesia then, and attended the first Zanu conference in Gweru where he was elected secretary-general of the party. Our main task was to recruit young men at the time for military training abroad. We were called the Crocodile Group.

Q: Who called you the Crocodile Group?

A: Reverend Sithole. I'm the only survivor. We received communication from Mugabe that there will be a liberation committee meeting in Dar es Salaam; can you do some sabotage in the country . . . to show that the battle was active in the country. So, as a result of that, I blew up a train. Prison and torture A: I was later captured. I was put in this . . . Butcher House A20, yes. Butcher House A20: it's a room at Harare Central Police Station . . . No, Salisbury Central Police Station. We were then tortured there. What they do is there's a bar . . . See, like, that one doesn't cross. There's a bar from one end of the wall to the other end of the wall. Then there are hooks like in a butchery. Then they put a leg, then one leg goes through the hook, then the hook on the other side of your leg. Then they pull the table away so you have your head hanging down with your legs up there. You are hanging Upside down. Then they hit you and they hit you. So I become unconscious, of course. They take you off, then they say again, you trained in China? I said no. On one occasion they took me to a room; they were foolish. They took me to a room, opened a window on the second floor of the building. A TNT slab, then a fuse with a blasting cap. Then they put the blasting cap into the TNT slab. Then they light it. Now, because I was trained in military engineering, I knew that the size of the TNT, if it blows, we'll all perish. And there was Inspector Beans, Bradshaw, and Smith. These are the guys who are doing this. So they knew that . . . They opened the window. They knew that when the fuse comes and of course before the blasting cap blows, I would throw it away. But I knew that I would keep it. And they know that if it blows, if they allow it to explode . . . they will all die. So, I kept it. Before it could blow, one of the guys jumped and threw it! They said you will go to prison but before that we will castrate you. Then

you go for five years. I said in my mind, if I'm castrated, I'll be in jail for five years, then I'm released. Then I'm nobody. It's better to die a man. Then I said, OK. Of the crimes you listed here, I've done one, two, three. They said, just the one is enough: you will get hanged. That's why I was not castrated. Then I went to court, sentenced to death. But then when they came to the question of age . . . At that time the age of majority was 21, and I wasn't 21. That's how I survived; then I got 10 years' imprisonment. Last year's showdown with Robert and Grace Mugabe A: There was this group called the G40 group, led by the former First Lady . . . using the former First Lady as their means to achieve their objectives. But the man who was an obstacle to their agenda was myself. I was the most senior person after Mugabe in the party and I had so much support and popular among the people, and they knew they couldn't achieve what they wanted to achieve with me in the party and with me on my feet. So, this is what happened. Then they mooted an agenda of rallies. One thing emerged very clearly: that the only two people who would address the rallies, that is the First Lady first, the former First Lady, and then the president. The First Lady began just attacking me from nowhere: that my body language shows that I'm ambitious, the way I dance . . . At the Gwanda rally, I was taken ill. The alleged poisoning A: Then I was airlifted to South Africa, where it has been proved that I had been poisoned.

Q: Did the doctors work out what the poison was?

A: Yes; they say it was called a hard metal arsenic toxin. Arsenic toxin, something like that. That's the class of poison. And it's not easy to come round with it. They say it is colourless, it is tasteless, and the areas where it could be found are possibly two. Three initially, professors in that area eliminated this one, and it was left with two countries. Russia and Israel. So it's possible it came from Russia. They were surprised that I survived because then you've heart attack, what they called cardiac arrest. Then the verdict of death would be death by cardiac arrest. So they kept me, you know, washing this out, I had something like 28 one side, you know, what do they call these sachets? In one side. And then the other side to wash the stuff out. So last week . . . This was in August. Last week I went there. They have now declared that I am now OK. It's not visible anymore. The poison was testable, but not totally clear. But it means it's not testable. That's what they said. So maybe I'm the same club with you.

Q: Have the police worked out what happened? Is there an investigation?

A: Maybe doctors did. It could be food poisoning. There nine categories of food poisoning. All the nine were negative. Which means the poisoning was not food poisoning. Then the second category is three categories. That is from your urine, from your blood, from your tissues. They took those again, and the type of poisons which they could identify, it was all negative. So what was left are these . . . What they say, hard metal poisons. Which, then, they had to seek external expertise to identify. So after about two months, six weeks or thereabouts, they were able to identify the type of metal.

Q: Do you know who did it?

A: I suspect. I suspect as to who did it. They are still good friends of mine. I now suspect that they now know that I know. They now know that I know.

Section B

2. Discuss the view that a journalist should be a detached observer of events
3. Examine the challenges associated with using social media as a source of news
4. Outline the differences between hard and soft news
5. With the aid of examples, explain the differences between packaging a story for print and digital platforms like websites

END OF EXAM