



THE INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 21 February 2001



Dr Sandy Logie

THERE ARE some images that stay in the mind for ever. Even as I watched Dr Sandy Logie holding the hand of a young African man, dying of Aids, in the middle of the Zambian bush in September 1999, I knew I would always remember the moment.

Logie had none of the West's expensive anti-retroviral wonderdrugs, or strong painkillers, to offer the weak, emaciated man sitting under a tree by his dilapidated shack that sweltering, uncomfortable day. That Logie was armed only with rehydration salts and vitamins made his tenderness all the more poignant. Patients back in his native Scotland had grown used to his gentle personal style, but it was accentuated that day by shared personal experience, for Logie was, by then, himself a very ill man, also infected with the HIV virus.

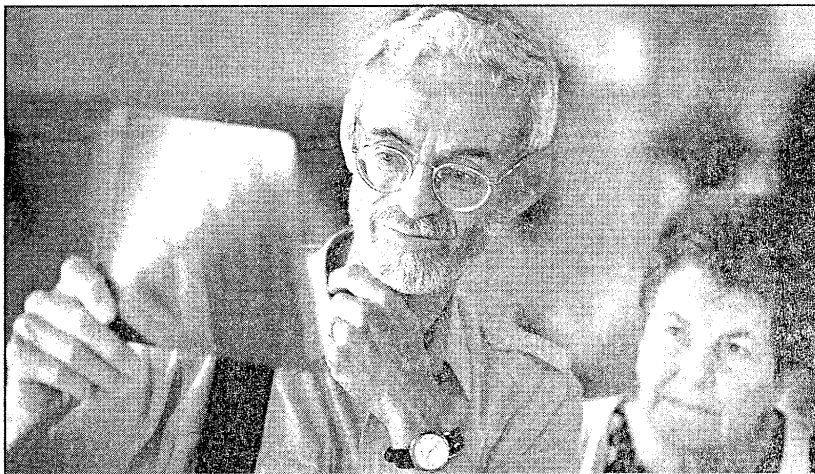
Sandy Logie, a diabetes consultant from the Scottish Borders, became infected with HIV in a Zambian hospital in 1993, during what he hoped would be the first of a series of placements in Africa, after his early retirement from Borders Health Board at the age of 53. There were several incidents that might have allowed infected blood into his system, during his five-week stay in Katete, a rural backwater on the Malawi border, but his fate was probably sealed by an accidental prick with an infected needle.

In strict medical terms, Logie should never have returned to Zambia that September six years later for, despite the First World's new anti-retroviral drugs, his health was

fragile and he was susceptible to all sorts of infection. Logie took his chances to highlight the immoral disparity between the West's "miracle" life-prolonging anti-Aids drugs and the pathetic lack of even basic medical care in poverty-ridden Africa, though that is where the vast majority of Aids victims live.

The risk he took, 17 months ago, was not the first. In 1996 Logie became one of the first British doctors to divulge his own HIV status when he "came out" in the *British Medical Journal*, against the advice of his own health board. Given the prejudice and hysteria around Aids, the board had counselled that as long as Logie, by then operating as a locum, performed non-invasive surgery, no one need know of his condition. Logie decided to brave the inevitable media circus because concealing his HIV status, particularly during bouts of poor health, became an unbearable burden to him and his devoted wife, Dorothy. He never regretted doing his bit to ease the disease's social stigma in Britain and believed that stigma is still playing a huge part in the rampant advance of the virus across Africa.

HIV infection thrust Logie and his wife into the limelight. It was a shock for an unassuming, shy couple who had until the tragic events of 1993 lived rather quietly. Logie was born in 1938 in Aberdeen. He attended Trinity College, Glenalmond, and then Aberdeen University Medical School. He married Dorothy Caie, who would become a GP, in 1966 and they spent their first two



Sandy and Dorothy Logie at St Francis Hospital, Katete, Zambia, in 1999

David Sandison

years of married life working in the Gambia. Their shared passion for Africa was born but their ambitions to work there were postponed when Dorothy became pregnant with the first of three children.

The Logies raised their family in Melrose in the Scottish Borders where Sandy became a consultant, specialising in diabetes. He was the administrative head of the Borders medical service from 1980 until 1992. He greatly improved services for diabetics and was very involved in the British Diabetic Association.

The offer of early retirement in 1992 revived Sandy Logie's African dream. Katete was supposed to be just the start of what was to be a joint enterprise for him and his wife. Tragically, contracting HIV immediately

ruled out further service on the continent; Logie was too susceptible to infection. In fact he became ill towards the end of his 1999 visit to Zambia. He never really fully recovered.

Sandy Logie was a reserved man. He did, however, allude to "night terrors" after his diagnosis, when he lay awake, contemplating his own annihilation. What was so impressive about him – and his wife – was a complete lack of self-pity. They were determined almost from the start to use Logie's condition to focus on the plight of Aids sufferers in Africa and the Third World.

Logie did not feel sorry for himself, only guilty that he had access to medicine that Africans could not afford. But even in September 1999, when the Logies allowed their return

to Zambia to be covered by *The Independent on Sunday* to raise awareness of Africa's plight, they realised that, for Sandy Logie at least, the new anti-retroviral drugs were not a miracle. His age and other health problems made the drugs less effective, and their side-effects were pretty appalling.

"Please concentrate more on Africa than on Sandy," Dorothy Logie implored this week. She was sure that was what her husband would have wanted.

MARY BRAID

Alexander Wylie Logie, medical practitioner: born Aberdeen 5 November 1938; married 1966 Dorothy Caie (two sons, one daughter); died Edinburgh 16 February 2001.