

Thank you... for giving life

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Misleading advertising will always get an Onion - and so will you, e-toll collecting agency ETC, for your dishonest and threatening campaign.



Screen grab from the ad.

It's an indication of what a sick society we have become that when emergency medical teams venture into some areas, their lives are in danger. Not only do some in these communities not appreciate the contribution these skilled, devoted people make to their lives, they see them as targets.

Many do not appreciate what these people do for us... until they need them.

That's the theme behind yet another striking community service ad campaign commissioned by the Western Cape government. Previously, the administration has highlighted social problems like bullying, drunken driving and even texting while walking.



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The latest campaign consists of two videos: one, "The Ode", focuses on a poetic rendering of how important emergency medical personnel are in the province.

The lines of the poem are read out by people who have been helped by the EMS. These survivors – for they would not be here, were it not for the paramedics – range from car crash victims, to a woman with pregnancy complications.

“The Ode” is shot with real people telling real stories in a gritty, reality style.

The second, “The Reunion”, features stabbing survivor Ashraf Solomons from Mitchell’s Plain, describing how, 11 years ago, he was stabbed in the neck and left for dead.

He can barely hold back the tears when he says if it wasn’t for the paramedics (he can’t remember much after the blade went into his neck and tried to stop the bleeding with his shirt before passing out), his young daughter wouldn’t be alive today.

That brings it home ... as does Ashraf’s visit to the EMS station to say thank you – with his daughter alongside him – for his life.

It's real and it makes you think – especially this time of the year, when paramedics are overworked.

Orchids, yet again, to the Western Cape government and ad agency FCB Cape Town.



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The e-toll debacle has been characterised – from day one, five years ago exactly – by misdirection, distraction and downright lies in its marketing.

In the beginning, it was SA National Roads Agency Limited chief Nazir Alli who lead the bulls#it blitz as he and his ANC comrades tried to justify funding the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project through tolling and not through a much simpler fuel levy.

The arrogance and dishonesty were some of the main reasons Gautengers have boycotted the system in droves, with current estimates that only one in four vehicles has an e-tag.

Five years on, the contract for toll collection is up for renewal (hasn't happened so far, and probably won't until the ANC has safely secured the polls next year).

So, suddenly Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) – the company paid billions to bring in the fees (money which goes offshore, in case anyone has forgotten) is lobbying for good burghers to pay e-tolls. And it is using the same dishonesty which characterised the former Sanral regime. (I say former because, these days, Sanral is more open about road funding.)



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Vincent Raseroka 4 Dec 2018



ETC has been saying if people do not pay e-tolls, by 2037, it will take six hours to get from Joburg to Pretoria. The dishonest sleight of hand there is the stance that e-tolls are the only way of funding roads. They are not.

Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (Outa) has calculated if a fuel levy of 10c per litre had been put in place when the roads were built, the project would have been paid off by the end of this year.

“ So, ETC, motorists won't be fooled by your distractions. We never refused to pay for roads; we just refused to accept that e-tolls – an inefficient scheme open to backhanders – was the way. ”

Also, ETC, highway users don't like being threatened. If you don't believe that, count up the number who have bought e-tags.

Misleading advertising will always get an Onion – so will you. No point telling you that you shouldn't do this because it damages your brand image... it is so poor, you surely can't damage it any more.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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