

# **The Lost Opportunity**

**by Brian Judge**

If only he hadn't missed his flight all those years ago. He had often reflected ever since upon how this one big opportunity had blighted his career and life ruining his chances of real improvement and it had been eating away at him. Of course at the time his wife, family members and friends had all sympathised with him but he himself had never really forgotten.

On that morning in 1972 he had been due to go by plane en-route to Mancuna Island in the south pacific for his final interview when he would sign his employment contract for the post of Manager at the General Fruit Marketing Company. Now this was an opportunity of a lifetime and he had been so excited at the prospect. The salary increase, free car, driver and housing with servants, all provided in the package. And to live on a tropical island was his dream come true.



But due to that ‘pile-up’ caused by icy roads on the way to the airport, all had been lost and there would be no connecting flight until the following month. He had sent several faxes explaining the situation but had received no response.

Consequently he had stayed in his then job and remained there until he eventually retired from work last year. His life had been pleasant enough but this one unfortunate occurrence had just kept gnawing away.

What he didn’t know was what actually happened at the time. Soon after the plane on which he was booked to travel landed, the airport buildings had been partially occupied by para-militaries loyal to the recently ousted President. All within, then found themselves to be prisoners in a war zone. Fierce fighting had continued in the vicinity for some days resulting in loss of life and serious injuries involving the combatants, airport staff and the stranded passengers, of which from the original 48, only 17 had survived. And for those there had been sparse medical facilities available.

When the new government took office, the GFM Company was nationalised and one of the first decrees stated that no foreign labour was to be employed.

This revelation he was now reading in an old issue of the National Geographical Magazine he had picked up in his Doctor’s waiting room where he was awaiting a prescription for a rash which had appeared all over his body. He was flabbergasted at the news then wondered how he had not heard about it at the time. But later, while discussing this development with his wife, she remembered that there had been a series of industrial strikes in the media industry that winter involving the major TV Stations plus the newspapers. And by the time these disputes were resolved, the news from this tiny island state they presumed had passed unreported.

So at this late date he realised how much time he had wasted over a lost cause - the position in the fruit company - and that had he made the trip as scheduled, it may well have cost him his life.

‘Your prescription for strawberry rash is ready now!’