

*Filename:* DISTON011124

*Diarist:* Diston

24<sup>th</sup> November, 2001

A letter from a victim of HIV that appeared in the Malawi News dated 27/10/01 says:

“I am a boy aged 26. Help me, in 1996 I was having diarrhea very often. And since I was having casual sex with a certain woman who died of AIDS, my friend told me that I’m also having AIDS since my sexual partner died of AIDS. I wonder because I went to the hospital for blood test of HIV and I was told that I don’t have the infection. I did not confide with that [I was not confident about that] so that I went to Malawi AIDS (MACRO) where I was also tested and I was told that the results were “Non reactive”. What does that mean? Please help me I am depressed.”

Here is what was responded by the news editor:

“This is window period, this is when the virus is not seen. Remember that here in Malawi we don’t have HIV testing machines. The machines that are there just test the anti-bodies that combat the infection.”

25<sup>th</sup> November 2002

PASTORS, SHEIKS HONE SKILLS:

Religious leaders in O\_\_\_ have been called upon to bring about behavioral change in the lives of their faithful in order to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic. Edson Banda, the diocesan chief clinical officer of O\_\_\_ Anglican Diocese, made the appeal when he closed a week-long HIV/AIDS workshop for the leaders and Sheiks at M\_\_\_ Primary School in O\_\_\_. Banda said the pandemic could be contained if religious leaders preach abstinence. He said the scourge is crippling the country’s development by claiming lives of economically productive citizens. Banda told the leaders to encourage their faithful to avoid immoral behavior, which contributes to the spread of the pandemic. “Religion leaders should help the government to combat the spread of the disease,” he said. Speaking earlier, World Medical Fund executive director Francis Nkhoma called on all religious leaders in the country to cooperate in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Nkhoma said HIV/AIDS needs a common initiative among all stakeholders regardless of religious leanings. The workshop was funded by World Medical Fund, a British non-governmental organization which supports orphans, people living with HIV/AIDS, the aged and the needy.

30/11/01 (MBC Radio II FM, 7:30 pm)

On 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2001, we were 6 men at the gate of B\_\_\_ Industries as some men were waiting to collect their wages from the company. There passed a woman and one of the men said that particular woman is an easy goer, she does accept to have sex even without giving her any present. Another man said “I found such a woman at D\_\_\_ in C\_\_\_. I was selling chicken meat at that time and that woman came to that area to visit her sister and borrowed some meat from me worth K20 and that was last year in the year 2000. When I went there for my money, she told me that she did not have money to give me and told me to [do] whatever I wanted with her. She was married with one child and her husband was not with her at that time. I told her that I wanted to have sexual contact with her and she accepted but she told him to buy Chisango condoms. And he bought the condoms. He said that the woman told him that he had to use the condoms because she did not know who is not safe. And the man said that he put on the condoms and showed her, on inserting her, but he said that he removed the condom without the woman’s knowledge, and had sex with her while plain. He said that the woman lit the matches to make sure that he had put on the condom and when the match’s light was off, he then took off the condom. He said that the woman was worried at the end after realizing that he did not use the condom. He said that he has never used the condom even with his wife because he doesn’t see any importance of the condom. That’s why he removed it.”

He is married at N\_\_\_ in C\_\_\_ with four children. The wife he is having is the second one after he divorced his first wife. He said that this was the only time had sex with that woman and they have never met since

that time. He is almost at the age of 32-34. One of the men told him that he did a bad thing because these days there is AIDS and maybe the woman asked for condom use to save his life or that she asked for it to save her own life. And he responded to this by saying that he doesn't mind about AIDS. He said that he was born and what remains is to die, no matter by what means.

I left that group and went somewhere where my friend named Justice got sitted and we were chatting there and he told me that he had his first wife who gave him the infection which he did not reveal and he told me that this happened last year (2000) and he divorced that woman. He told me that he got another woman and before marriage he went to the hospital at R\_\_\_ Central Hospital in C\_\_\_ for HIV blood test together with his wife. He said that he's the one who came up with this discussion to find out whether he is okay after the infection. He told me that he and his second wife were tested and their results were "non reactive." He told me that this is what was written on their results p/sheet/form. And he asked me about what does that mean. And I failed to answer him on that since I don't know what it exactly means technically. And I asked him if he asked the man who carried out his blood test and he said that he did not ask him, he just got the form and left for home. He is working at B\_\_\_ Industries as a general laborer.

Another laborer at the same factory told me that he is intending to marry a certain lady and he earlier on said that he wanted to go for HIV test before marriage but that failed as they started having sex before marriage and they are now living as sexual partners who are planning to get married later on. He is named Matumba. Both Matumba and Justice are lodging at N\_\_\_ working at the same company of B\_\_\_. They are both at the age of 30-32.

In another development, a certain woman in D\_ last year ran away from her husband whom she has got three children with him and went somewhere with a certain farm owner who convinced and ran away with her. The man remained at his home in D\_ and the woman was released by the farm owner where they had gone in November, 2001 and she came back to her former husband and said she was sorry for what she had done. And since the husband wanted to care his children with her, he accepted her sorry and he said that before they got remarried they had to go for HIV test at the hospital and the woman accepted so that both of them went for blood test at the hospital. The wife was tested HIV positive and the man was tested HIV negative. With these results, the husband divorced her instantly.

1<sup>st</sup> December, 2001

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2001 my sister named Mary and my cousin named Elita told me that they visited their friend named Hawa who is married to a man named Samson who is working at B\_\_\_ Industries. This couple comes from U\_\_\_ district. They said that when they found her at her home, she started crying, saying that she was crying because her husband infected her with AIDS. The husband is frequently coughing, having Malaria and growing thin. He was earlier in August, 2001 admitted at R\_\_\_ Central Hospital because of TB and she was the caregiver for a month. And when he was released from the hospital he went back to his job. It was during that time that it was the wife then who developed general body pains and she was crying because of that attack as she was saying that these general body pains came because her husband is having AIDS that he infected her. She told her friends that she wanted to and die at her home as she is thinking that has been infected with AIDS. The husband was divorced by his first wife some years ago as he was movious with other women when he was vending in C\_\_\_. He is now working at B\_\_\_ and is lodging at K\_. After the pay of the month end of September Hawa really left her husband for her husband for her home where she is up to this date. She is not even visiting her husband. The husband has not yet visited her too since she left, making their separation. Your correspondent: Diston.

1<sup>st</sup> December, 01

For your own information, the bag of maize has gone up to K850 per 50kg in August, 2001 from the previous price of K250 per 50kg. The price has gone to K17 per kg from the previous price of K5 per kg. This rise of maize price has led to a heavy problem among the people who were already under the poverty line. As a result, this has led to the breakdown of some marriages, some married and unmarried women to be money-hungry for their survival, leading them to go for prostitution with the well-to-do men, so that they find money to feed their families. Some men have divorced or separated with their wives after failing to support them due to the high rise of the maize price which is the only main food resource to the whole nation of Malawi. This can therefore contribute to a rapid spread of HIV/AIDS to the women of Malawi

including mature girls who don't get support from their parents due to the rise of maize price. The pandemic is going to grow worse in February, 2001 as this is the month when the people of Malawi do experience heavy hunger though the price of maize is cheaper. How worse is it going to be as the price has gone 200% more expensive than before. As of now most of the people are struggling on buying maize husks (Madeya) from Rab processors as their food. And the bag of maize husks is going at K125 per 50 kg. And due to a great number of people that are coming at these centers, some people are spending two to three days at the centre before they buy the husks after living their homes foodless. The problem is certainly going to grow worse in January-February, 2002. –By Diston

NB: Some people in the rural areas are taking up to two days without eating “nsima” due to lack of funds to buy maize flour. Meanwhile, people's salaries have not been considered since the rise of maize price.

2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2001

There is a certain company in C\_\_\_ that manufactures biscuits names Bakemans. From 1990 to 2001, this company had a foreman named Janna and a personnel manager named Mainala. These two men during their service at this company were having sex with every woman who could come at this company to look for employment. Most of the women who do come at this company for employment are the school leavers. Some of them are married and some of them are single. These two men were telling the woman who could want to get employed at this company to have sex with them in order to get employed. Due to lack of employment, the women were accepting to have sex with them so that they get employed. They are both said to have not been using condoms when having sex with these girls/women. For men who were coming to look for employment at this company, they were asked by these two men to pay K200 each as bribery in order to get employed and due to lack of employment, men were giving them the asked K200. It was that habit of bribery that led to their dismissal in the year 2001 as some men reported this to their bosses who are the Indians. The men who succeeded them were warned that they will also be dismissed if heard receiving bribes as the previous men were doing. In so doing there is a fair employment opportunity at this company. Some selected bosses in some companies have got a similar system of having sex with job seekers who are women and bribes for men.

Information given by John Chiwasi, who is working at the same company of C\_\_\_ in C\_\_\_ at D\_\_\_ Industrial Site at the production department.

14<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2001

On 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2001, I, my brother, and my brother-in-law we were coming from the market and while on the way it started raining. We were coming from D\_\_\_ market in C\_\_\_ going to our home at K\_\_\_ and since we did not have umbrellas we hid in a certain empty shop on the road side and my brother-in-law told us that he knows the owner of that shop, she is a teacher at D\_\_\_ Primary School. He said that she was “movious” in the past but now she changed her behaviour in 1999 because she is now old. In addition to this, he said that her daughter who was selling beer at D\_\_\_ market suffered from AIDS since 1999 and died last year 2000 and that contributed to her behaviour change too. She is married with a number of children and grandchildren, and some of them who are orphans from her two late daughters. One of these late daughters is the one who is said that she died of AIDS. He further said that there is a certain businessman whom I also know myself named Daiton at K\_\_\_, he was the sexual partner of that woman who died of AIDS. And people in that village of K\_\_\_ were saying that this man got that AIDS from her. He said that he was drinking beer with her up to 12 am. This businessman is married with seven children, and three of them are sons. The businessman is still healthy. He is really a womaniser though he has got a wife. My brother-in-law further said that his (Daiton's) wife is faithful though her husband is movious. People do say that they admire her for being faithful but only that they are sorry that she will acquire AIDS through her husband because he is not changing his behaviour.

My brother-in-law named Majawa, who is working at B\_\_\_ Industries, said that there was a man at that industry who was faithful but he died of AIDS anyway. He said that he got that AIDS from his wife who was going to the beer centers for prostitution whenever he could leave home for duties. People were telling him about this but he was still living with her. His name was Deverson. He died in August 2001. But his wife died first early in the year 1999. At the same factory, he said that there is another supervisor named Edson and that supervisor divorced his wife in November, 1999 and married a prostitute. He divorced her

after falling in love with that prostitute that he married later. He married the prostitute from D\_\_\_ Beer Centres. And the prostitute died late in the year 2000 while with him. He is currently not healthy so that he was admitted at N\_\_\_ Hospital in C\_\_\_ where he was found with TB. That was in September, 2001. Many people at that factory are saying that he has got AIDS. He is currently widowed and not yet remarried.