

Le Carré and Pilger

BY NOT hearing me out before branding me a liar, Hogarth missed the real story, "Some letters that came in from the cold" (February 5).

In view of John le Carré's depiction of the criminal amorality of the pharmaceutical industry in his novel *The Constant Gardener*, I sent him a copy of my book *Debating AZT: Mbeki and the AIDS drug controversy* in mid-2001. The nub of his warmly encouraging response was: "I agree with (the alas late) Donald Woods: (AZT) needs much more serious debate than Big Pharma and the usual club of fringe beneficiaries are permitting. There is simply too big a case to answer, and it's not being answered. Having said that, I suppose I look a bit of a fool because I'm one of the numberless well-intentioned people who have been championing cheap antiretrovirals for the Third World's afflicted etc. But the book worries me deeply, and, until the debate has been properly joined and fought, will continue to do so."

Le Carré suggested I use the last sentence as a pull-quote. Quoting him more extensively (as above) on the back cover of the manuscript of my forthcoming book *The trouble with nevirapine*, I sent him a copy late last year, expecting he'd like it equally. This time he responded furiously.

As for John Pilger: On receiving *The trouble with nevirapine* he indeed e-mailed me a magnificent compliment about my political writing — which he later asked me not to quote. So I shan't. — Anthony Brink, via e-mail

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