While the response to Covid-19 affects livelihoods in adverse ways, it is informed by solid scientific research that seeks to prevent otherwise guaranteed fatalities

UVD WRKZ

EXPERT ADVICE Epidemiologist and infectious diseases specialist Salim Abdool Karim

Bacher's emotional call to Hansie's father

Over the past while, I've been thinking about the past and about my life very hard...and one thing that I had to fix was my relationship with Hansie's father, Ewie.

Bacher said his friendship with Ewie dated back to the early 1990s.

"I took over the reins at Transvaal in 1986 and at South African cricket in 1989. I think it was during that time that I met Mr Bloemfontein, Ewie Cronje, and our shared love of cricket quickly made us close friends."

When Hansie, the Proteas cricket player and captain, appeared on the scene, Bacher and Hansie became even closer.

"My passion has always been cricket development. That is why I had already carried doing it in 1986 in my townships in 1986. I can honestly tell you that, in the last 30 years, no other South African captains shared that vision as much as Ewie," said Bacher.

He said Hansie was already ready to help with that, no matter how inconvenient his request. "I remember that I called Hansie one day, two days before a big match in Bloemfontein, and asked him if he could take the team to the township for a clinic. I told him there was no pressure, and if he couldn’t take them, I would understand. Hansie didn’t ask questions and simply made time for it."

Bacher said the full of Hansie, and his later death, hit him very hard.

"After the Dale telephone call, I can sell you with an open heart that my finance page is clean. I will never forget how Hansie called me after the no decision (United Cricket board president) Percy Son on record that Hansie may never play cricket again, not even on the beach. It was so heartbreaking. His remorse was so overwhelming," said Bacher.

He said that, although Hansie submitted all his medical reports, his heart from the sport was something that rubbed South Africans up the wrong way.

"People were furious at me. Almost the entire country turned on me. And it wasn’t my decision, or even a South African cricket decision. It came directly from the international Cricket Council."

Hansie died in a plane crash in June 2003, his death came as a major shock, said Bacher.

"After his death, things were very different. There was a lot of speculation about dirty tricks and tampering with the ball, but it simply wasn’t possible that anyone with senior intentions could have known that Hansie would be on that plane. He died at the last moment to board the cargo plane as all passenger flights had been cancelled due to the bad weather (in Johannesburg)," said Bacher.

Hansie’s funeral received old wounds.

"There were issues in the media that Ewie did not want any cricket officials at the funeral. So I phoned Ewie, and, the true gentleman that he is, he said I was welcome to go."

"He and the then minister of sport, Nqobile Nkabinde, arrived at Grey College (Hansie’s former school, where the funeral was held) at the same time on that horrible day. A whole crowd of people were waiting for me to arrive. Whether they wanted to ambush me or just verbally abuse me I don’t know, but the minister’s bodyguards intervened and prevented trouble."

When it comes to the match fixing, Bacher forgave Hansie long ago.

"Hansie forestalled me a difficult thing. He was up front with me about the wrong and there is nothing more important than that I know what to do, or say to do that change, even if you wish it could."

"I am so glad that I phoned Ewie. We all make mistakes. Some mistakes are more serious than others, but we have to forgive each other and we have to learn from those mistakes. You can go on bad ways, but then you have to sort the thing out the day, it is not healthy to keep something like this for 20 years,” said Bacher.

Over the past while, I’ve been thinking about the past and about my life very hard... and one thing that I had to fix was my relationship with Hansie’s father, Ewie.