

# Let's crumple tinfoil hats

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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*No Punches: Campaign prepares anti-vaxxers for life without a job; 'Freedom Fighters' can't even get their facts - or links - straight.*



Now that my big fat brown envelope has arrived from the Illuminati, let's get cracking on spreading the "narrative" they want me to.

This final Orchids and Onions of the year focuses on marketing from two sides of the Covid fence – the public health and pro-vaxx side and the tinfoil hat conspiracy anti-vaxx side. And if you are one of the latter, then you should probably move on because you're not going to like what follows.

Frankly, I don't care.

One of the most professional public health campaigns during the pandemic has been from an outfit called CovidComms SA, run by experienced communicators like Chris Vick and Tessa Dooms.

They have put out myriad messages about non-pharmaceutical interventions – like hand-washing, mask-wearing and social distancing – since they began their work last year.

Now that the real crisis is the slow vaccination rate, they have been turning their attention to urging people to get the jab.

And the messages don't pull any punches. So, we see two women chatting in a bar and the question comes up: What happened to Sophie? Sophie got Covid. Sophie wasn't vaccinated. Sophie died.

Then we see some hip young women, heading out to go clubbing. They get stopped at the door of a few clubs where are notices: No vaxx, no entry. They then start wondering aloud whether they should have got jabbed earlier.

As they get into their Uber to go home, the driver reminds them: No vaccination, no club. And then: So, it's home sweet home.

While vaccination mandates are not quite at that stage yet, the ads are saying: they are coming, so if you want to go back to living your normal life, go and get vaccinated.

There are a number of other excellent video executions in the campaign, including a very useful "Covid survival kit", as demonstrated by Tshepo, who knows all about hand sanitising, mask-wearing and, most importantly at this time of the year, when millions of people head home, the need to have good ventilation in places like taxis.

Other materials, including print graphics and one which can be used across social media complement the video executions.

Overall, this campaign and others CovidComms SA have done would compete well with

the best campaigns put together by ad agencies for consumer brands, they're that good. The scripts, acting, production values and message are all excellent.

The organisation has also stepped into the void cause by the vanishing millions in the Digital Vibes scandal, which crippled government Covid communications just at the time it was needed.

CovidComms SA also proved that the best way to communicate is to get professionals to do it because the sad reality is that many in government communications jobs are just chair warmers.

So, Orchids to everyone at CovidComms SA for all that you've done so far and all you're still going to be doing to help keep us safe. Maybe, when this is all over, you could turn your talents to the many other areas in which the government fails to gets a message across properly.

## On the other hand

On the other side of the spectrum, the anti-vaxxers often don't send their best and brightest when trying to propagate their message that there is an evil hand behind all of this. My problem is that I can't resist engaging with them.

So, this week alone, I've been told I've been "captured", that "Bill Gates is a mass murderer" and that, apparently, South Africa's more than 250 000 Covid deaths (official figures and excess deaths) are a "negligible risk".

However, the "freedom fighters" did give me a good laugh when they started pushing their new "crimes against humanity" list of those who support vaccinations and other health interventions (other than ivermectin).

Many people pointed out, correctly, that the list is actually a useful database for those companies who make the good of society as a whole their prime concern.

However, the site – [theredlist.co.za](https://theredlist.co.za) – also committed a cardinal digital communication error... if you are going to include a hyperlink to material that supports your case, at least check that it is relevant.

In this case, the site refers to the "fact" – it's not– that 63% of SA doctors refused to have the jab. The link, hilariously, is to a press release from a doctors' organisation that hits out at strong at Covid misinformation and strenuously recommends vaccination.

Maybe you okes should put some ivermectin on that food of yours you just shot.

I'm not even going to give you clowns an Onion, because those are reserved for real entities only.

*This is the final column for 2021. Publication resumes in the new year.*

## 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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