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# Media have tried to demonise me, says McBride

THAMI NGIDI

Robert McBride thinks the "Magoo's Bomber" label that has stuck to him since his arrest in 1986, and later his death sentence, for his role in the bombing of a Durban beachfront nightspot, is "essentially" a creation of the media.

In an interview with the *Sunday Tribune* from Pretoria, McBride, 33, was less surprised than he was philosophical about his relationship with the so-called fourth estate.

"I expected that the National Party would launch a campaign against me. I have no problem with that. The involvement of the media in the campaign, however, is an indictment on the fourth estate," he said.

It was a "pathetic attempt to demonise me, but it proves that the cause that we were fighting was a just one".

McBride argued that the media had not been even handed.

"Let me give you an example. In 1988 there was a bomb blast in Witbank in which three people were killed. No journalist can tell me who planted that bomb and who the victims were. Here you have the same organisation (Umkhonto we Sizwe), the same results, but the treatment is different. The reason for that is that the victims were black... black lives continue to be cheaper than white lives in this country, and that is the issue."

He accused the media of having a selective memory.

"I have carried out many other missions, including the springing of Gordon Webster from prison. None of these missions has received prominence in the media," he said.

Three people were killed and 69 were injured on that fateful day in Durban in 1986. The ANC has accepted the blame for that mission and for others which resulted in unfortunate deaths.

McBride still feels that at the time his dictum was right: "The prerogative of fighting oppression lies not with the oppressor; it lies with the oppressed. Resistance to that oppression is determined by the oppressed and not the other way round. None but ourselves can free ourselves," he said.

There is a semblance of normality in

his life now. He is married to Paula, and they have twin daughters. He was granted a presidential pardon in 1992 and testified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission earlier this year. His submission named the commander who ordered him to carry out the bombing, a revelation (made in camera), which prompted the ANC to accept partial responsibility.

McBride is under no illusion that life will return to complete normality for him. He has resigned himself to the fact that there are people who may still want to administer their own brand of justice.

"I am not going to be a victim. I am not a pacifist. I am not the type to just lie down and die. Unfortunately that is the reality of the situation," he said.

TREFWOORDE

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