

have known Pumla Nabachwa for about 10 years. Even back then, she used to say a lot of things, only it was mostly on Facebook. When we started *The Beat* pull-out in 2013, I asked her if she wanted to literally put her money where her mouth was and write a piece for the *New Vision*.

That meant she could not just write anything *fiyaa*; she had to structure her writing properly, follow the in-house style guide, make sure what she wrote was largely factual, and always keep in mind that Uganda's equivalent of 'ambulance chasers' was always on the lookout to advise their clients that they could sue *New Vision* for a lot of money.

She jumped at the chance and said yes. So, one evening I was told someone was at the reception waiting to see me. What I found was a young lady sitting extremely 'properly', like she had just come out of Miss Warren Gayaza's finishing school. I have always teased her about that, even as we later met in pubs and places Miss Warren probably never imagined existed.

So, sometime in late 2014, she started writing a column, *Heart Matters*, which she shared with Angela Kateemu and Cathy Bagaaya. Her very first column was about a date from hell, when the man ordered all the wrong food and drinks for her and tried to 'cop a feel' when she attempted to leave. She wrote how an elbow to the ribs sorted the man out just fine.

Her subsequent columns chronicled the life and attitude of an independent single mother who made no apologies for the life she led, because she

OF PUMLA NABACHWA AND THE 'DON'T GIVE MEN YOUR MONEY' MANENO



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Pumla's remarks caused a stir on social media

was too busy having a great time to really care. She also wrote about (gulp) what happens when women are attracted to men, and the things they do to get their 'prey'.

Maybe it is true that Ugandans do not read much, because that same Pumla of 2014/15, writing a column in the *New Vision*, is the same one whose quotes on television seem to have a seismic effect on the delicate psyche of Ugandan men on social media.

While recently addressing the importance of saving, Pumla explained that while she works with the central bank and has 'enough money', she nevertheless started saving for her son's university education 10 years ago.

A great lesson to learn, right? But it seems all the public heard was 'central bank' and 'enough money'. Ugandan men then went to town over the quote, and the reactions were fast and, at times, extremely furious.

"No married woman speaks like this in public. Clearly this lady lacks a leader in her family," a Ugandan lawyer wrote. "She has no dignity. All she has is money and wrong advice. What a poor woman!" – Akiiki, a veterinary doctor, wrote.

"Most women leaders in financial institutions are a danger to society," – Hannie "She is talking a lot; someone should stop her."

"No wonder she is a single

mother of one child." – Kiiza Kenneth.

"This woman is too proud. That is why she has no husband, probably, yet she has money and a good job."

"She must be a single mother."

"Is she a widow? Where is the husband?"

The fact that she was advising people, especially women, to save for their children's education was lost amidst the noise about her relationship status and her workplace, which is quite standard for these streets.

But mostly, Pumla knows how to trigger Ugandan men into exposing their fragilities, like when she was quoted as telling married women not to give their money to their husbands, who could use it to marry another wife.

Knowing Pumla and how smart and intelligent she is, that was probably meant as a joke. I mean, who would take that seriously? But Ugandan men did, and the insults started anew.

"I just see her pain screaming louder than wisdom." – Arthur Muhwezi.

"She has always hated men." "She must be evil. I think she is not married or was not raised in a family."

"She thinks all men have the same character as her man..." "So misleading! I bet she is from a failed marriage."

Two things immediately struck me. First, where does all the bitterness come from? Do men actually use their wives' money to marry other women? If they do not, then why the hullabaloo? Or is it the fear that women will exert greater

control of 'their' money and not give it to their husbands to use as they wish?

There are many stories of men who get a windfall and immediately go after other women. Ugandan media is full of stories about wealthy men after whose death multiple women appear, complete with children of the deceased. So, maybe what Pumla is telling women is that men who want to get other wives will do so anyway; just do not make it easier for them.

In all her writing, talk shows, and podcasts, Pumla has always advocated for the independence of women. I think that is what some Ugandan men are really afraid of – that the status quo is changing, the centre cannot hold, and things are falling apart.

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