

The prince and pauper

The race for Speaker of the 12th Parliament has gone from a coronation to a grudge match and finally a sham election, featuring heavyweights and other weight classes.

In the green corner, we have Norbert Mao. The loquacious, vivacious, outgoing minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and president of the Democratic Party (DP) entered the race, citing a need to fight grand corruption.

Then there's Persis Namuganza, the outgoing State minister for Lands and MP for Bukono County. We also have Capital Radio gangster Lydia Wanyoto Mutende, who is also Mbale City Woman MP. Finally, the heir apparent Jacob Oboth-Oboth. He's the outgoing minister for Defence and West Budama South MP.

Former incumbent, Ms Anita Among, had originally sought re-election but withdrew her candidacy from the race in a manner that life imitates art. Allow me to explain this.

Ray Valentine (Eddie Murphy), directly into Winthorpe's position.

Surprisingly, to everyone but the discerning viewer, Billy Ray thrives in the cutthroat business world using his street smarts. Meanwhile, Winthorpe hits rock bottom, losing his fiancée and his status.

Trading Places, as the cognoscenti will tell you, is widely considered a modern, satirical retelling of Mark Twain's classic 1881 novel, *The Prince and the Pauper*, which explores what happens when two individuals from entirely different social classes switch places.

In Uganda's Speaker race, however, a princess might become a pauper. Not because she's said to be corrupt, but because she challenged a prince. That prince is the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

This prince does not belong to a duo pulling the puppet strings à la Randolph and Mortimer Duke in Trading Places. He is also a puppeteer, but he is in league with two others: reportedly the President and his brother, Gen Salim Saleh.

The three men belong to what is known as a Troika. This is an alliance, formal and informal, of three powerful individuals or political parties governing a nation (e.g., historical Soviet leadership or coalition governments like the former Troika (Tunisia)).

This troika may have betted on whether nature and nurture will play out in the Speaker's race. The stake may have been more than a dollar. But it does not stop there.

Ms Among has been accused of corruption. Everybody is talking about her, forgetting she was (and is) a puppet. The puppeteers, on the other hand, the Troika, appear as saviours. The CDF, by this token, has snagged the legitimacy he requires to corral popular consent in his favour.

Again, this feat is really a Psyop (Psychological Operation) or a strategic, coordinated campaign designed to influence the emotions, motives, reasoning, and behaviour of Ugandans with regard to corruption.

Originally a military term for psychological warfare, the concept has expanded into modern civilian life and is being enacted by how we view each candidate for Speaker. Ugandans are indeed being taken for yet another ride, one which might arrive at Uganda having princes, our rulers, as the rest of us stay paupers.

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Philip Matogo
Politics

Trading Places, which came out in 1983, is a classic comedy about a wealthy Wall Street commodities broker and a poor street hustler whose lives are suddenly switched as part of a cruel, \$1 bet.

This scenario is played out when two callous millionaire brothers, Randolph and Mortimer Duke, run a prestigious brokerage firm and argue over whether a person's success is determined by "nature" (genetics) or "nurture" (environment).

To test their theory, they frame their uptight, high-society managing director, Louis Winthorpe III (Dan Aykroyd), for crimes he didn't commit, stripping him of his job, home, and wealth. They then place a street hustler, Billy

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