

A S H L E Y G R A Y



T H E  
**UNFORGIVEN**

**Mercenaries or Missionaries?**



The untold stories of the rebel  
West Indian cricketers who  
toured apartheid South Africa

T H E  
**UNFORGIVEN**  
**Mercenaries or Missionaries?**

The untold stories of the rebel West Indian  
cricketers who toured apartheid South Africa

ASHLEY GRAY



# Contents

Introduction. . . . .	9
Lawrence Rowe . . . . .	26
Herbert Chang . . . . .	56
Alvin Kallicharran . . . . .	71
Faoud Bacchus . . . . .	88
Richard Austin . . . . .	102
Alvin Greenidge . . . . .	125
Emmerson Trotman . . . . .	132
David Murray . . . . .	137
Collis King . . . . .	157
Sylvester Clarke . . . . .	172
Derick Parry . . . . .	189
Hartley Alleyne . . . . .	205
Bernard Julien . . . . .	220
Albert Padmore . . . . .	238
Monte Lynch . . . . .	253
Ray Wynter . . . . .	268
Everton Mattis . . . . .	285
Colin Croft . . . . .	301
Ezra Moseley . . . . .	309
Franklyn Stephenson . . . . .	318
Acknowledgements . . . . .	336
Scorecards. . . . .	337
Map: Rebel Origins. . . . .	349
Selected Bibliography. . . . .	350

# Lawrence Rowe

*'He was a hero here'*

IT'S EASY to feel anonymous in the Fort Lauderdale sprawl. Shopping malls, car yards and hotels dominate the eyeline for miles. The vast concrete expanses have the effect of dissipating the city's intensity, of stripping out emotion. The Gallery One Hilton Fort Lauderdale is a four-star monolith minutes from the Atlantic Ocean. Lawrence Rowe, a five-star batsman in his prime, is seated in the hotel lounge area. He has been trading off the anonymity of southern Florida for the past 35 years, an exile from Kingston, Jamaica, the highly charged city that could no longer tolerate its stylish, contrary hero.

Florida is a haven for Jamaican expats; it's a short 105-minute flight across the Caribbean Sea. Some of them work at the hotel. Bartender Alyssa, a 20-something from downtown Kingston, is too young to know that the neatly groomed septuagenarian she's serving a glass of Coke was once her country's most storied sportsman. When it's pointed out to her, she giggles approvingly.

'Tell your father you met me,' Rowe jokes. He knows his demographic. There wouldn't be many men over 50 in his homeland who are unaware that he choreographed 214 and 100 not out against New Zealand at Sabina Park in 1972 – a Test record for most runs on debut that still stands – and followed it up two years later with 302 against Mike Denness's Englishmen in Barbados.

Choreographed is the word for it. Whereas Viv Richards blazed across the line, a boxer in creams, Rowe, compact and composed, caressed the ball in the classic batting arc. It wasn't the Bradmanesque weight of runs, but the way he scored them that so entranced. A young Richards hero-worshipped him, painting Rowe's nickname 'Yagga' on a fence post; Michael Holding rated him the most technically complete batsman he ever saw. Desmond Haynes and Malcolm Marshall idolised him. He was so cool that he had the temerity to whistle at the crease.

In Jamaica, he was the new George Headley, feted by prime ministers, adored by the public and media, who used the unique descriptor 'batting stylist' to encapsulate his artistry. It's said his beauty at the crease was such a distraction that fieldsmen, so transfixed by the quality of his stroke-play, sometimes forgot to chase the ball, which was always tantalisingly placed a yard to their right or left, or they found themselves applauding as they chased, like Geoffrey Boycott did from midwicket time and time again during Rowe's epic 1974 series.

'We look at Lawrence's batting with the same affection as when we see a pretty girl,' says Leonard Chambers, respected former national selector and mentor to Jamaica's batting elite.

The great Australia paceman Dennis Lillee, a formidable Rowe foe throughout the 1970s, brackets him among the very best. 'He was something to behold. He had so much time and such beautiful timing. He was in the top echelon; with Sobers, Richards, Lloyd, Haynes and Greenidge.'

Yet Rowe's demographic also knows that this son of a bus driver from Waltham Park Road in impoverished west Kingston captained the West Indies rebel side to South Africa in 1983. They know that he was forced to flee to Miami to rebuild his life when public reaction to the tours threatened to turn nasty. They know he's a fallen idol. It's why Rowe, seemingly so slick and carefree, is forever burdened with hauling a set of well-worn arguments and self-justifications that might one day, he hopes, restore his place in sporting history.

## THE UNFORGIVEN

‘I am one of the only sportsmen who reached the heights I did who hasn’t been recognised by the Jamaica government,’ he says. ‘I’ve heard some radio programmes here in Miami where Jamaicans have called in saying, “Are they going to wait until this guy dies?”’

\* \* \*

On the afternoon of 6 April 1981, during England’s tour game against Jamaica, umpire Lindel Bell was temporarily the most hated man on the island. Officiating in his first major match, the police inspector, soon to become his country’s assistant commissioner, raised his finger to a half-hearted lbw appeal from Ian Botham. The ball had struck crowd favourite Lawrence Rowe just below the hip as he pulled through midwicket. He was so disappointed with the decision that, despite making 116, he neglected to raise his bat or tip his cap to the Sabina Park faithful, whose boos turned to thunderous applause as he made his way to the pavilion.

Not that the crowd would ever hold it against him. This was the batting artist they had come to see, and he’d not disappointed. Describing one boundary, the *Jamaica Gleaner* reporter observed that Rowe had ‘danced in Nijinsky style’ to deliberately guide the ball past second slip. Yet for all the superlatives, it hadn’t been a typical Rowe century, his 17th in first-class cricket. A risk-averse single-mindedness was evident as he ‘abandoned some of his traditional gems of stroke play’. In truth, he’d been a man on a mission. The West Indies side for the fifth Test against England, controversially announced prior to the match, had once again found no room for the 32-year-old veteran of 30 Tests.

Mark Neita, just 20 at the time, was at the other end for the second half of his captain’s century. He was witness to Rowe’s fierce determination. ‘Lawrence said to me, “I am going to embarrass the selectors.” He said, “Churchill [Neita’s nickname], stay down your end and watch this hundred. This is not going to be one hundred, this is going to be a big one.” He wanted 200.’

How had the once-grand career of the mighty ‘Lawrence of Jamaica’ come to hinge on one dud decision from a greenhorn umpire in an inconsequential tour match? In some respects, Rowe was a victim of the impossibly high standards he’d set earlier. After a century in the first Test against Lillee and Thomson in Brisbane in 1975, his gargantuan run pile stood at 1,266 with a second-to-Bradman average of 70.33, including six centuries. Only Bradman himself could have maintained or improved on that kind of output. Rowe was 26 years old.

There was also the spate of injuries and ailments – an ongoing eye astigmatism diagnosed in 1974, which he says played havoc with his confidence, a grass allergy detected the following year, a broken hand that kept him out of action throughout 1977 and a dislocated shoulder suffered on the 1980 tour of England. It meant the second half of his career had a stuttering, staccato quality. There were occasional pearls such as the 175 against WSC Australia in Melbourne in 1979, an innings Richie Benaud described as one of the best he ever saw, but each time his once-glittering career threatened to reignite, misfortune seem to strike.

It led to accusations that Rowe was soft, that his ailments were directly linked to a fragile state of mind. Former Jamaica Prime Minister Michael Manley, a one-time Rowe devotee, would ultimately conclude that he ‘wasn’t a man for the trenches of adversity’. Michael Holding wrote that his Jamaica and West Indies team-mate ‘lacked self-confidence and determination’.

But where others saw fear and paranoia, Rowe saw perseverance and resilience, the capacity to forge a career in spite of the obstacles he faced. And in the late 1970s, he still had high-pedigree believers in his corner. His first Jamaica captain, former West Indies batsman Easton ‘Bull’ McMorris, remembers Clive Lloyd exhorting him to draw out more enthusiasm for the maroon cap from Rowe. ‘He said to me: “Easton, try to see if you can get Lawrence to play cricket, please, because when I talk to him it’s as if he does not want to play. But he is the best

## THE UNFORGIVEN

batsman we have.” And this was with Viv, Lloyd and Greenidge on the team.’

It didn’t help that Rowe was afflicted with the curse of the aesthetically pleasing batsman; that his effortless timing and elegance at the crease gave the impression he didn’t care. It’s a charge that still rankles. ‘Right throughout my career, it got out there, it sounded like I was chicken,’ Rowe says, ‘that I didn’t want to go out and play, heart not in it. Because of the way I played people said I was lackadaisical, but it was baloney. The injuries I had would have stopped other people, but I still managed to make a career out of cricket.’

He cites an incident during the Test match at Old Trafford on that injury-riddled 1980 tour of England as proof that his words were often manipulated to make him look weak. ‘Clyde Walcott, the manager, never liked a bone in me from when my career started. We were sitting in the pavilion, when he said to me, “If you cannot play the next county game, we will have to replace you because the guys are tired.”’ Rowe told Walcott he might not be fit in time. ‘I couldn’t get my left elbow up if somebody bowled me a short-pitched ball. So, I said to him, “If I can’t play the next game, then more than likely I will play the following one.”’

Unpersuaded, Walcott informed Rowe he would be sent home immediately. ‘But when they came off the field, Walcott met with them and told them I had requested to leave the team,’ Rowe says. ‘So, Viv [Richards] came up to me and said something like, “Yagga, why do you want to leave?” I said, “Nothing of the sort. Clyde Walcott came and told me I was going to be off the team,” and Viv said, “That’s not what he told us.”’

It wouldn’t be the first time a miscommunication tarnished Rowe’s reputation, and nor was Rowe the first cricketer to fall out with the prickly Walcott, one of the famous ‘Three Ws’ and a certified member of West Indian cricket royalty.

By the beginning of that 1981 Caribbean series against England, Richards had long assumed from Rowe the mantle of the West Indies’ premier batsman. Rowe’s average had declined

to a more terrestrial but highly respectable 43.55 and because of injuries he hadn't played Test cricket for over a year. Mere mortals Larry Gomes, Gus Logie and Jamaica team-mate Everton Mattis were now fighting over his vacant third drop spot. The perception was that Richards, unorthodox, aggressive and political, represented the zeitgeist. He was Bob Marley to Rowe's Barry White – smooth and immaculately turned out, but essentially a relic from another era.

Rowe's 116 at Sabina Park was a defiant middle finger to the establishment that had lost patience with him but also a reminder that he could cut it against international opposition. Yet earlier in the season, Clive Lloyd had approached Rowe with the offer of opening the West Indies batting in a one-day match as a replacement for the unwell Gordon Greenidge, whose star may have been momentarily on the wane because of negative comments he'd made about Lloyd's captaincy. The Guyanese had witnessed Rowe craft 51 and 58 not out in a Shell Shield match in Berbice; he could see that the Jamaican was back to his princely best. But in the second innings, Colin Croft had battered Rowe on the hip with a short ball, and the bruised Jamaica captain decided to turn down Lloyd's advances.

The incident again fed into perceptions that Rowe wasn't made of the right stuff; that he didn't want it enough, that when the going got tough he was nowhere to be found. Even his Jamaica team-mate, wicketkeeper Jeffrey Dujon, was mystified by Rowe's snub. 'From what I understand, Lawrence told Clive, "I'll get back to you." At this point in time, the West Indies is the top team. Clive Lloyd is the premier of WI cricket. You don't tell Clive Lloyd I'll get back to you. You're being offered a chance. You could be walking on one leg – yes, I'll play. You prove me unfit.'

Rowe, fated, in his own mind, to be eternally misunderstood, tells a different story. 'We were travelling across to Trinidad after the game. In the back of the plane, Lloyd came to see me. He said, "If you were selected to open in the next one-day game,

## THE UNFORGIVEN

would you be comfortable with it?” I said, “Sure.” The problem was that I had been hit – I thought I’d broken something. I was going to get an X-ray and depending on what that was, I’d do it.’ He says he was concerned that his injury would hamper the side’s effectiveness. ‘I said, “It would be a gamble if you pick me, my fielding would be a liability.”’

What sticks in his craw is that when the story came out, he was portrayed as disrespecting the West Indies. ‘I was told I’d turned him down; I didn’t want to play. No heart. But I didn’t tell him that. I had told him I would play but I would be restricted.’

Was he once again the victim of miscommunication or was there a susceptibility to injury that rendered him a now permanent selection risk? WICBC officials took the latter view. He was duly left out of the 1981/82 tour to Australia – although Lloyd publicly stated that he hoped Rowe would return to the Test side at some point – and there was even talk that he would be relieved of the Jamaican captaincy. Missing the campaign Down Under was a heavy psychological blow. The 116 against England counted for nothing. If a century against top-line international opposition wasn’t good enough to turn selectors’ heads, what was?

Uncertain about his future, and guiding a Jamaica side dogged by internal friction – the strong-willed Herbert Chang and Richard Austin attempted to engineer a coup to install Jeffrey Dujon as captain during the game in Barbados – the 1982 Shell Shield was poor by Rowe’s standards.

Off the field, he was still the revered champion of old; a man whose commercial appeal as an ambassador was invaluable. His employer, Carrier Air Conditioning, where he worked in accounts, was so pleased to have him on the books that they built a concrete pitch at the office for him and the office team to practise on. They also boosted his bank account with a dollar for every run scored over 100. Property developer Matalon felt that the benefit of being associated with the ‘batting specialist’ was worth paying off the balance on his new home. He also owned a

sports goods store with Jamaican team-mates Michael Holding and Basil Williams.

Always immaculately attired, Rowe, supported by his beautiful wife Violet, an air hostess with Air Jamaica, and their young daughter Stacey, projected an attractive package to the Jamaican people. But he was under no illusion as to where he stood. 'I thought without a doubt my career was over,' he says.

In the second half of 1982, rumblings across the Caribbean about a West Indies rebel tour to South Africa grew louder. Former Barbadian paceman Gregory Armstrong was the recruitment agent for Ali Bacher's dream of bringing a West Indies side to the republic. Fearsome fast bowlers Colin Croft and Sylvester Clarke had already shown interest, but the SACU needed to lock down a man whose stature and stainless reputation would add gravitas and star power to the concept. They needed the triple-century prestige of a Lawrence Rowe.

When Armstrong first approached Rowe, the Jamaica captain wasn't convinced, but he was interested enough in the idea to pass on the names of team-mates Everton Mattis and Richard Austin as potential recruits. It was Ali Bacher's call to Rowe at his home in the uptown Kingston suburb of Forest Hills that made him reassess his stance. He offered him the captaincy and a deal close to US\$150,000. For Rowe, there were two main considerations. 'I asked myself: if we go there, could we make it any worse for the black people? And I thought: I can't see how we can make it worse. And could we inspire if we play well and win? The whites who could see us play and realise these are black people who can play – they are this good; then the blacks – it would be a victory for them if we win. I won't lie, of course, the money was important, too.'

Black-consciousness groups and the SACB had made it known that a tour would be seen as a validation of the whites-only government. They united around the slogan 'No normal sport in an abnormal society' and wondered aloud how black Caribbean cricketers could accept gargantuan sums of money to

## THE UNFORGIVEN

play sport in a country that discriminated against people of their own colour.

Rowe heard their pleas, but like African-American tennis star Arthur Ashe, who, defying public opinion, vowed to 'put a crack in the racist wall' by playing in the South African Open in 1973, he felt interaction, not isolation, was the best form of progress. 'Ashe said, "If you want black people to see you, you have to go through the white. They are using you, but you are using them." That's what we were doing.'

With the SACU circulating rumours that the tour had been cancelled to confuse the international media, at a Kingston press luncheon on 5 January, just seven days before the rebels would leave for South Africa, WICBC president Allan Rae expressed gratitude to Colin Croft and Rowe for apparently resisting Bacher's approaches. 'I believe the cricket fraternity of the West Indies ought to say a big thank you ... the gentlemen have put temptation behind them,' Rae beamed. Rowe and Croft said nothing.

What peeved many of Rowe's keenest supporters was that he'd seemingly deceived the public into thinking he was staying when it was his intention to go all along. Rowe's first Jamaica captain Easton McMorris says, 'I love Lawrence. I knew his situation – a poor fella growing up, and the opportunity to make some money. You can't give up that. I wasn't against him going to South Africa but denying it was childish, because you're a man, you've made a decision. My brother had a poster of Lawrence cover-driving and he turned it upside down when he found out he went to South Africa.'

Rowe maintains that he hadn't made up his mind at that point, and that it was in fact sports reporter and friend Tony Becca who told Rae that he wasn't going.

\* \* \*

As Jamaica Prime Minister, Michael Manley had spoken out many times against apartheid in the UN. He was also a cricket

tragic. In the early 1970s, when Rowe's star was in the ascendant, the People's National Party (PNP) leader took a personal interest in the development of the affable, well-mannered batting star. When Rowe twisted his ankle against the Australians in 1973, and his recovery dragged on, Manley intervened to have an orthopaedic specialist X-ray his foot. He invited Rowe ringside for the famous Frazier vs Foreman 'Sunshine Showdown' at the National Stadium and made a habit of congratulating Rowe publicly on his most recent century.

There's a 1974 photo of Rowe, gleaming belt buckle and sideburns, shaking hands with a safari-suited Manley at a government presentation. It was taken after Rowe's golden series against England when he made 616 runs at an average of 88, including three centuries. Manley was unable to attend the final Test in Port of Spain, but such was his devotion to Rowe, who scored 123, that he telephoned McMorris, a spectator at the ground, for a report on his innings.

'I told Manley you could not believe that he wasn't striking the ball through the off side like in Barbados when he scored 302. Because of the off cutters Greig was bowling – he got 13 wickets in the match – he was playing through midwicket and on the on side, a totally different innings. That was batsmanship of the highest class. Heady days – the prime minister calling me about cricket.'

When Manley received word the SACU was courting Rowe to captain the rebels, he attempted to broker a meeting to divert the classic batsman from what he saw as a 'course that could only bring disgrace and disaster'.

Rowe was having none of it. 'Manley was a giant of a man when it came to dealing with the sportsmen of this country,' he says. 'But I knew he only wanted to change my decision, and by then I had made it.' Stung by the snub and betrayal, Manley would later write that Rowe 'suffered from a flaw at the centre of his character'. Heavily weighing on Rowe's mind was the knowledge that if he pulled out, the whole tour would be

## THE UNFORGIVEN

in jeopardy, threatening the futures of players such as Everton Mattis, who had clambered out of the ghetto and was barely surviving as a professional cricketer.

Jeffrey Dujon, a product of Wolmer's School, which has nurtured six Test wicketkeepers, was Rowe's heir apparent as Jamaica captain. On the strength of his elegant batting, he'd edged out David Murray as West Indies gloveman on the 1981/82 tour of Australia. Rowe stood beside him at slip in the 1983 pre-season four-day match at Sabina Park against Bermuda. It was the last time they would play together. 'One day they, Rowe, Austin and Mattis, were there, the next day they were gone. Lawrence had come over and said, "What do you think about going to South Africa?" They really wanted the current team. It took me by surprise because I had only just made the West Indies team. I brushed it off and said, "I'll have to think about that," because I had no intention of going.'

The rebel tours permanently stained their friendship. Dujon had a lot to thank Rowe for; he'd helped to resurrect the young wicketkeeper's career when he was dropped after a run of low scores the previous season. 'It was the first time I'd been dropped from the Jamaica side since I was 18,' Dujon says. 'Lawrence put his hand up for me. I'd missed a few games and he said, "I need a wicketkeeper who can bat," and he got me into the next one-day game. I scored a half-century, kept wicket well and got my career going.'

But he felt let down by what he saw as Rowe's decision to sell out. 'Of all the Jamaicans who went, he was the one who needed the money least. It was quick money, but it came at a price. He was a hero here. He could have had a good life. I'm disappointed because he could have done a lot for our cricket. Viv Richards was a genius, but Lawrence knew the right way to play. He could teach kids the right way.'

As is often the case with perceptions of Rowe, the next generation, less encumbered by career tensions and dressing room politics, were more sympathetic. Jamaica team-mate Mark

Neita, 11 years Rowe's junior, gave him the benefit of the doubt. 'I did not support apartheid, I did not agree with the tours, but I understood the point where Lawrence Rowe reached. I don't think he would ever have played for West Indies again.'

Wayne Lewis, a former Kensington club team-mate whose rise through the ranks coincided with the tail end of Rowe's career, is the deputy president of the West Indies Players' Association. He's also a fan. 'A lot of the older guys were jealous of Lawrence. But we revered him. He was like the godfather. We could understand why he and the others went to South Africa for financial reasons.'

\* \* \*

The rebels' flight from New York's Kennedy Airport to Johannesburg had started merrily. 'We sat drinking, having a gold old time,' Rowe says. 'Everybody was giving their experiences of leaving their respective countries and whether the press was there.'

Ten minutes before they landed, the atmosphere changed. 'The pilot announced we were about to arrive at the Jan Smuts International Airport, and everything went silent. You could hear a pin drop. It was like the reality is here; there is no turning back. As the plane started to get low, I looked through the window and saw some black guys working at the airport. I wondered what they were thinking about these black guys coming into South Africa.'

The truth is they probably weren't thinking much. Cricket barely registered on black South Africa's radar; football was their sport of choice. The *Rand Daily Mail* splashed their front page with 'Cricket rebels are on their way'; its township edition buried the same story underneath a political lead. It was the most prominent coverage the tour would get in black areas.

From the first, Rowe shouldered the dual burden of negotiating the daily grind of an international cricket tour and repeatedly justifying the rebels' presence to the world's media. 'It is no use trying to isolate people and keep them apart,' he told the press after the first match against Western Province. 'That

## THE UNFORGIVEN

is the very system we are trying to break down. The only way to persuade people to change things is to get together and exchange views – and this is exactly what we are doing on this tour. I'd be a fool if I didn't recognise there were problems in South Africa. But I'm from a Christian family and I pray we can do some good by giving the whites here a different perspective on black people.'

Being constantly under the spotlight took its toll. 'I've barely slept four hours. I've just been lying in my bed thinking about what we have done and the price we will pay.'

At the packed grounds, Rowe found solace. He was heartened to see white boys embracing their new black heroes. Television footage shows young fans in T-shirts and bucket hats streaming on to the field to snare West Indian autographs. 'They were holding on to our trousers and wanting to touch us. We were like gold. It was remarkable to see. You can't change that kid's mind now,' Rowe says proudly. 'Normally they were so distant from black people. A black man – I can't touch him or talk to him.'

There was also the matter of winning cricket matches. It was important to Rowe that his West Indies XI were competitive. 'We could have relaxed, got beat, gone sightseeing – we would have been paid just the same. But we wanted to show people back in the Caribbean. To this day we are still the only West Indian side to win in South Africa.'

\* \* \*

The one word all his team-mates use to describe Rowe's captaincy is 'smooth'. Barbados all-rounder Franklyn Stephenson, just 23 at the time, says Rowe was the right leader for such a controversial tour. 'He'd look at the guys and say, "Okay, go ahead and do it." He's a cool kind of guy, not a dictating captain in a sense. I'm not sure that tour could have handled a dictating captain anyway. We were all in awe when he walked out to bat and how he moved on the field.'

The younger players soaked up the older man's wisdom. Surrey recruit Monte Lynch credits Rowe with improving his

technique against quick bowlers by making him aware that he had much more time than he realised once the ball had been released. Off-spinner Derick Parry was just happy to get the chance to roll his arm over after feeling neglected under Clive Lloyd's pace-at-all-costs regime.

In 13 years of top-tier cricket, Lawrence Rowe had never bagged a pair until the second 'Test' in Johannesburg – castled twice, first by Vintcent van der Bijl and then by the inswing of Stephen Jefferies in the second innings. If Rowe was out of sorts, it was with good reason. In the back of his mind was his fracturing relationship with Michael Holding. 'Nothing shook me up so badly in South Africa as what he did to me,' Rowe says.

When it became clear that the injured Colin Croft wasn't going to play a role on tour, Rowe called his friend and business partner Holding, who was contracted to Tasmania in the Sheffield Shield, hoping he might secure his services as a bowling replacement for the remaining games. 'He told me he wouldn't come, but he also said, "Even if I could come, how could I get out of my contract with Tasmania?"' Rowe says.

When he read about their conversation in the newspaper a few days later, Rowe was furious. Holding had told Hobart's *Mercury* newspaper that Rowe had offered him US\$250,000, and was quoted as saying, 'Principle is more important than the money.'

What particularly angered Rowe was that he felt that Holding was using their private conversation to 'make himself look virtuous' to the cricket world, demonising his former captain in the process. 'He never said anything about apartheid to me,' Rowe says. Holding refuses to be engaged on the subject, but in his book *Whispering Death* he wrote that he told Rowe during their telephone conversation that by being there, he was 'supporting apartheid'.

'What he writes in his book is not true. That is garbage,' Rowe says. 'Why mention me unless you want to destroy me as well? I also asked Patrick Patterson, but he didn't tell the whole world. And Larry Gomes. It hurt me so bad I made a pair in the

## THE UNFORGIVEN

next game.’ And if there is no doubting, now, the strength of anti-apartheid conviction held by Holding and others like him, there is also no question of the passion animating Rowe. ‘Everyone was trying to make themselves look good. They wanted to be able to say they turned it down because of their principles.’

\* \* \*

Welkom is a mining city in the Free State. In 1983, its welcome didn’t always include people of ‘colour’. The final match of the first tour, a benefit for South African all-rounder Clive Rice and the retiring Barry Richards, was scheduled for the Rovers Club. What should have been a social, spectator-friendly finale to the tourists’ campaign threatened to turn sour when Rowe found out the council had recently barred blacks from attending a concert given by a visiting Welsh choir. He wondered whether the colour bar would extend to the game, violating a non-negotiable standard he’d insisted on during contract talks: that people of all races be allowed into stadiums played at by the rebels.

He quickly informed Joe Pamensky, who reiterated the SACU’s commitment to the non-racial treatment of spectators and threatened cancellation of the match. Chastened, the white-led council observed Pamensky’s terms, but insisted the tourists would have to apply for permission to play squash or swim in municipal facilities.

It was a troubling reminder that the ugly manifestations of apartheid were never far from view, leavened, no doubt, by the presentation of krugerrand cufflinks to each of the tourists at a farewell banquet. It also demonstrated that Rowe, as a leader, was prepared to put principle before play.

\* \* \*

Even before the second tour began ten months later, relations between the rebels and their South African paymasters began to fray. Rowe says he had to intervene to ensure countrymen Chang,

Austin and Wynter were paid in full when Bacher cut them from the squad in order to bring in new faces.

But sponsorship was at the crux of the fallout. As Rowe tells it, the SACU informed team manager Gregory Armstrong there was a lack of commercial support behind the tour. The West Indian brains trust of Padmore, Armstrong, Kallicharran and Rowe quickly enlisted an agent to find their own sponsors, and when they did, the SACU wasn't impressed, fearing a conflict with any sponsors they might secure.

At a hastily arranged meeting between the warring parties in the West Indies' Johannesburg hotel before the first one-day international (ODI), all hell broke loose. 'Pamensky got so mad he swore at us and walked away,' Rowe says. 'They didn't expect us to get any sponsors. Pamensky started going, "The tour is over, you breached the contract," so I told him to eff off out of here. You should have seen the look. He wasn't expecting that, especially from a black man.'

With their professional cricket careers within weeks of ending, the West Indians were anxious to eke as much money as they could from the remaining games. They also knew that gate receipts were at record levels and demanded a bigger slice of the pie. There was suspicion, too, that the SACU wasn't being entirely transparent about the level of their own sponsorship negotiations.

Rodney Hartman, in Bacher's biography, *Ali: The Life of Ali Bacher*, suggests that the West Indies wanted to boycott the game, throwing the future of the tour into chaos. When tempers cooled, the West Indies took to the field, but not in the maroon-coloured clothing they had been issued; instead they wore their whites as a protest at the way they had been treated. Eventually a deal with Yellow Pages worth 250,000 rand was struck guaranteeing 80,000 rand in bonuses, but the dynamic of the tour was irrevocably changed. Plans that Armstrong says were in train to make the West Indies tours an annual event for the next five years were binned for good.

## THE UNFORGIVEN

A congested itinerary, dissatisfaction with the umpires' strict interpretation of the two bouncers per over rule, which Rowe saw as an attempt to rein in the effectiveness of the West Indies pace attack, and the grind of a ten-week campaign added to the lingering discontent.

The presence of Violet and daughter Stacey, four, who became something of a team mascot, precociously telling reporters when it was their turn to sit down to interview her father, went some way to alleviating the tour's stresses. Yet the batting stylist was still able to block out the off-field white noise and produce in the middle. Sporting a navy blue helmet, he claimed man of the one-day series honours. And there was room for one last 'Lawrence of Jamaica'-style innings, a typical widescreen effort of 157 in Durban.

At the end of the first tour, Rowe acknowledged that his side had offended some black South Africans who didn't want them there. At the second tour's conclusion he was convinced that at least some of those people appreciated his side's feats in conquering the all-white Springbok side, but his main concern now was where he and his family would live. The febrile, anti-rebel atmosphere in Jamaica, stoked by politicians and media upset at what they saw as a betrayal of the island's fundamental values, was, he and Violet concluded, an unsafe environment to bring Stacey up in. As the figurehead of the tours, his name was a lightning rod for vicious personal abuse and, Rowe says, threats of violence.

Violet had British citizenship, but Rowe wasn't confident of picking up a county contract, and he wanted to be close to his ageing parents, who still lived in Waltham Park Road. In a newspaper article, he confessed that he now felt like he was in 'no-man's land'. Lawrence of Jamaica had become Lawrence of nowhere. His siblings were bona fide 'Jamericans', having migrated to the US in the 1970s in search of work. Miami, close enough to Jamaica that he could monitor his parents, was an obvious choice for relocation. It would also give him a vantage point to assess the political temperature in Jamaica,

so that he could, in his own words, ‘feel his way’ back to an eventual return. In addition he would not be far from his two sons, from a previous marriage, who were already at school in Kingston.

The initial plan was to stay for six months in Florida; although Rowe was banned from playing, he was keen to coach back in his native land and ‘give back’ to the game he loved. But Violet continued to harbour fears about their reception. It put a strain on their marriage. ‘I wanted to return but she wasn’t keen,’ Rowe says. ‘She was worried about what would happen in Jamaica and she said she liked living in Miami. We weren’t as visible there. We weren’t sure what would happen. We weren’t turning over much financially in Miami. I wasn’t a permanent resident – there was nothing for me to do. Violet had to leave her job with Air Jamaica. It was tough.’ They divorced in the early 1990s.

Meanwhile, time hadn’t softened attitudes where it counted – among Jamaica’s cricketing elite. The strength of feeling against the rebels in cricket officialdom was evident at the 1984 Jamaica Cricket Association (JCA) annual general meeting when a motion was tabled by a member of Rowe’s old club, Kensington, to allow the five Jamaican rebels back into the Senior Cup. Only three of more than 50 people present gave their support.

According to Rowe, it was a different story on the street. ‘In my old neighbourhood of Waltham Park Road, everything was alright,’ Rowe says. ‘No problems. My father was extremely popular. The only things they would say would be behind his back.’

It was the tours’ legacy of shattered friendships that took its greatest toll on Rowe, a naturally social man. It made him distrustful and wary of his former colleagues in a way that he wasn’t before.

Franz Botek was a giant of Jamaican business and cricket. Managing director of the Jamaica Telephone Company, he served as treasurer of the WICBC, acquiring several important sponsorships that secured the future of the sport in the region.

## THE UNFORGIVEN

To Rowe, he was a father figure. Described by Tony Becca, the doyen of Caribbean cricket writing, as a ‘godfather to many young sportsmen’, Botek acted as a sounding board for the graceful batsman, dispensing invaluable moral and financial advice from early on in his career.

‘He was what you’d call a “big boy” in Jamaica, but he never talked down to you or looked down on you,’ Rowe says. ‘If I was going to sign a contract, he was the guy who would look it over. When I went on a West Indies tour, he’d be the first person I’d see when I got back home. He even came to Australia to watch us play.’

He also tried to talk Rowe out of going to South Africa, acting as the intermediary during Michael Manley’s unsuccessful attempts to contact the Jamaica captain in the final days before he left for the republic.

During one of his reconnaissance trips to Jamaica in the early days after South Africa, Rowe tried to contact his old friend. The Wimbledon tennis final was on and Botek had one of the few satellite dishes in Kingston that could receive the game. ‘I asked him if I could come and watch the match,’ Rowe says. ‘And he said to me, “You want to speak with Carol,” his wife. I found it strange. That had never happened before. So, when she came on to the phone, I said, “Who’s at the house?” She said, “Allan Rae, and all the people on the board.” I said, “Okay,” and hung up. I didn’t think much of him after that. I didn’t think he was my friend. To see that those guys were at his house – I am his friend, these are not his friends – it was like a betrayal.’

Wary and suspicious, Rowe felt his allies were deserting him. ‘Some of his friends who were friends with me said I was taking it the wrong way, that he was in a spot. I said that’s nonsense. If he said to me, listen, I have a few people I’ve invited here already and I don’t know how you feel to be among them and I don’t know if you would be comfortable among them, I would have said okay. I would not have put him in that position. I’ll see you another time. It was painful. We never reconciled.’

From Miami, where he'd bought property and opened a successful vacuum seal business with the money earned from South Africa, Rowe began to harbour a deep sense of grievance about the way the West Indian authorities treated him and his rebel team-mates. It grated that the English rebel tourists only received a three-year ban and in particular that Graham Gooch and John Emburey were permitted to play on the English tour of the Caribbean in 1986, less than two years after representing Western Province in the Currie Cup. It seemed there was one rule for white cricketers and another for everyone else. 'I thought there was no way they could get around Gooch and Emburey. They played against us in South Africa. How can you ban us for life and have these guys coming here? That's when I came to the conclusion that all of this was a farce,' Rowe says.

For four years Tony Becca had tried to lure Rowe from his Miami eyrie with the promise of headlining the annual Milo/Melbourne Cricket festival at the famous Derrymore Road ground in New Kingston. The club president could rely on Holding and Courtney Walsh, two of Melbourne's favourite sons, and he also had the services of Andy Roberts, Joel Garner and Jeff Dujon, but in Becca's eyes none of these greats came close to matching Rowe's star power. 'He was so loved in Jamaica, I knew that the people would come to see him, but he always had an excuse for not coming,' Becca said.

In 1994, the now 45-year-old Rowe changed his mind. If he'd had any fears that the public's love affair with him had soured, they were quickly allayed. 'Batting stylist heads star cast' boomed the match preview headline in *The Gleaner*. 'The ground was filled with people,' Becca said. 'He made 14 runs, and when he got out people got up and left the ground.'

'Rowe's timing was off key on a number of occasions,' *The Gleaner* reporter wrote. 'But to the thousands who came specifically to see him, it hardly mattered, as they saw him in the flesh.'

## THE UNFORGIVEN

Two days later, Becca received a phone call from Michael Manley, now ill with prostate cancer. 'He asked me how Lawrence was. He wanted to know how he was going. He loved Lawrence, but he was so disappointed with him going to SA.'

Rowe maintains he always respected Manley's views, but says, like all politicians, the former prime minister's principles could be jettisoned when politically expedient. He says Jamaica's failure to follow Guyana's boycott of the 1976 Olympic Games demonstrated Manley's inability to match his anti-apartheid rhetoric with action. African nations pulled out in protest at New Zealand's rugby union tour of South Africa, and Guyana, under vocal Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, followed suit. 'Why didn't Jamaica pull out? Sprinter Donald Quarrie. Manley wanted to see him win gold at the Olympics. That's what suited him at the time,' says Rowe.

In his defence, Manley, the leading non-aligned figure in the fight against apartheid, said Jamaica's decision to participate in the Games was based on the fact that no one in New Zealand's Montreal squad had actually been to South Africa.

In Jamaica, apart from occasional historical references to the rebels in the press – and a petty newspaper debate blaming his 'pretty' batsmanship for the island's lack of gritty run-gatherers – Rowe's name faded from public consciousness. When in 2004 he was named alongside Holding, Dujon, Headley and Walsh as one of the country's top five cricketers of the past 75 years at a ceremony in Kingston's Pegasus Hotel, it seemed he'd been pardoned. Glowing with the belated acceptance of his peers, Rowe felt emboldened enough to declare that he could even have been one of the West Indies' top five save for the injuries that dogged his career. Seven years later he would find out that acceptance had its limits.

\* \* \*

The North Street campus of Kingston College, the alma mater of Michael Holding and Marlon Samuels, is about 200 yards

from Sabina Park. When Test matches are held at the ground, excited college schoolboys can hear the cheers and jeers. It makes focusing on history lessons difficult. Like a lot of his classmates, Delano Franklyn would sneak off to the stadium to catch a glimpse of the West Indies in action. In 1972, aged 14, he was there to witness Rowe's historic double century and century on Test debut. It changed his life. 'I was transfixed in my seat. I had never seen a more technically competent batsman, someone so comfortable at the wicket. He was cricket personified. When Lawrence Rowe walked to the wicket, you became a different person. You felt what it was to be a real fan of cricket. He made it the kind of sport it ought to be. I grew up loving Lawrence Rowe.' So enraptured was Franklyn by Rowe's ability to conjure shapes with his Gray-Nicholls bat that others could only dream of, he invented a word, 'Lawrencetonian', to describe it.

Delano Franklyn, practising attorney at law, former PNP minister of state and chief advisor to prime ministers, is also Rowe's biggest nemesis, one of the men he blames for triggering the most embarrassing incident in his life. In 1983, when it was reported that Rowe was to lead a rebel team to South Africa, Franklyn was crestfallen. In his eyes, his hero had let him down. 'I was rocked,' he says. 'And the blow became more decisive when it turned out he was captain and instrumental in recruiting others.'

A protege of Michael Manley, he was aware of his country's proud history of confronting apartheid on the world stage. 'It is something we have always been against and we expected our idols to adhere to what we considered understood by any reasonable human being.' He poured scorn on Rowe's argument that by playing in South Africa blacks would feel better about themselves if they saw men of their own race beating their white masters on the cricket field. 'If I am feeling pain and I say to you, "Don't touch my hand because it is going to increase my pain," who are you to tell me that if you touch my hand it's going to make me feel better? So, when the leadership of the ANC said to the rebel team and leadership in Jamaica, "Don't come," then don't

## THE UNFORGIVEN

come. Because, on the contrary, what the apartheid government is trying to do is to transmit to the world that despite apartheid being here, we are able to host and let into our country some of the best cricketers out there. It is assisting the process of apartheid, not dismantling it.'

In 2011, Lyndel 'Mud' Wright had just ascended to the job as president of the JCA. The former Shell Shield all-rounder and brother of West Indies legend Collie Smith had grown up playing cricket with Rowe. They were close friends, and as one of his first moves as president he proposed the idea of honouring Rowe, Courtney Walsh and Michael Holding by having parts of Sabina Park named after them. Holding would get the southern end, Walsh the northern end and Rowe the players' pavilion. On paper, it seemed like a popular decision, and in Rowe's case it would finally put a line under 27 years of recrimination and bitterness. 'Lawrence of Jamaica' was back.

Former Jamaica Labour Party Prime Minister Edward Seaga, Michael Manley's bitter adversary, was one of those who applauded the move. 'I don't have a problem with Rowe being honoured ... because so many other people who have done far worse than him have been forgiven.'

But from the beginning there were murmurs of discontent, misgivings from cricket people worried that Rowe's name etched on the players' pavilion would reopen old wounds. Tony Becca, a Rowe supporter, was sceptical. 'I spoke to Lyndel and said hold on a while, you have to get the people in this society onside before you do it, and maybe have a vote on it. He said he would get back to me, but I never heard back from him.'

Kingston Cricket Club owns Sabina Park. Together with the JCA, they administer the ground. Douglas Beckford sat on the board as a Kingston CC member when the pavilion-naming proposal was rammed through. He says the board favoured an alternative solution that would have let cricket fans decide the pavilion's name. 'Lawrence Rowe was not the only one worthy of consideration. Throw it open to the public or members of the

organisation. Why not call it the Allan Rae, Jeff Dujon, Jackie Hendricks, Gerry Alexander, Collie Smith or Frank Worrell pavilion?’ But he maintains that Wright overrode them because he had the backing of the powerful JCA. ‘We said we don’t think you should go ahead with this. I think we had forgiven Lawrence; we just weren’t prepared to elevate him.’

Wright, clearly still uncomfortable with how the saga would play out, is unwilling to speak on the matter, other than to reaffirm that ‘the decision was taken by the whole of the board’.

A lawyer for the JCA, Franklyn was also a close friend of Wright’s. Given his stance on the rebel tours it was no surprise he wasn’t in favour of honouring Rowe, but he was ‘prepared to accept an apology and see how we take it from there’.

It was the apology, which was a condition of receiving the award, which became the sticking point. Initially thrilled, Rowe began to have reservations. Flying into Kingston from Miami, he spent a long night arguing with Wright about having to say sorry for events that occurred 28 years ago. ‘I did not want to apologise. I have nothing to apologise for. I said, “You invite me here and I did not know this was going to come up. I’ll go back to Miami. You don’t have to put my name up. No hard feelings.”’

According to Rowe, Wright spent five hours that evening trying to convince him to swallow his pride and apologise. ‘He said to me, “I will have to resign. We have been friends since we were 13.” I thought, if I don’t do it, I’ll force him to lose his job, so I said, “I will sleep on it.”’

The next day Rowe relented, but he’d decided he wouldn’t read a JCA-approved apology; instead, he would deliver one in his own words. But in the car ride to Sabina Park for the ceremony, which was arranged to take place at lunch during the first Test against India, Rowe was already having second thoughts. He confided in his wife, Audrey. ‘I told her, “I think I’m making a big mistake.” Even as I started to walk over to the main pavilion I did not want to go. The world press was there, and they were saying why now? I was saying some things that were pure lies

## THE UNFORGIVEN

because the board were honouring me – it was only fair for me to bury the hatchet and apologise. When I was done, one of the board members said I handled myself superbly.’

Afterwards, Rowe, resplendent in charcoal grey suit, red shirt and bright green tie, posed for photos under the sign that now bore his name. ‘It’s good to be back,’ he told the press, ‘and after making my apology formal, I hope that the people in the region who I offended forgive me. After all that took place in the past, it is an honour and privilege to be recognised in this way.’

Jamaica’s prodigal son had returned to the fold. Wright was also happy, and relieved, telling *The Gleaner* that despite Rowe’s ‘error in judgement’ in leading the rebels to South Africa, the honour was appropriate because of the ‘sterling contribution to the game he has made in this region’.

Rowe’s rehabilitation lasted barely a day. That evening, he gave an interview to the *Beyond the Headlines* programme on RJR, one of Kingston’s most popular radio stations, with political journalist Dionne Jackson Miller. At the time, Delano Franklyn was driving home from his Crossroads office in midtown Kingston but he was so shocked by what he heard that he had to pull over. ‘Rowe said, “I did nothing wrong.” He’d apologised to appease those who might not have been in support of him.’

Franklyn was particularly incensed that Rowe had invoked the name of Paul Bogle, a 19th-century national hero who was executed after leading a rebellion against British rule. ‘He said, “Look at some of our national heroes, they were seen as crooks. Look at Paul Bogle and what he did, and he became a national hero, so in 40 or 50 years, I may also be looked at as a national hero.”’ Franklyn phoned Wright to tell him he’d withdrawn his support and would be campaigning for the removal of Rowe’s name from the pavilion. Wright was stunned.

Rowe, who began to feel the blowback from his interview the following day at the Test at Sabina Park, now thinks the radio interview was a set-up. ‘I was going to stop the interview; she

was all about taking me down,' he says now. 'She kept on saying, "Why are you apologising now?"'

He maintains he never reneged on his apology – an apology he never wanted to give – in the interview. Instead, he says he made it clear that 28 years ago he thought the South Africa tours were right, but with the benefit of hindsight that was no longer the case. He also said that history would be the real judge of his actions.

Franklyn wasn't persuaded. He wrote a series of articles in *The Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer* turning up the heat on Wright and the JCA to take down Rowe's name. It lit the blue touchpaper for a divisive public debate, as momentum built for the JCA to take action.

Rowe tried to talk Wright out of it. 'There was a backlash on him. He said sponsors weren't coming on board because some of the people on the companies didn't like that I was honoured. But that is a short-term thing. I said all you have to do is weather the storm.'

Wright was caught in a classic Shakespearean bind – torn between the demands of two dear friends he admired and respected. 'I remember one afternoon, when we met with guys who went through the Boys' Town club, which Lyndel has had years of association with,' Franklyn says. 'We would drink and socialise. But he was completely quiet. And I could see that here is a man burdened and caught in the crossfire.'

Three months later when Wright called Rowe in Miami to break the news that the JCA was rescinding his honour on the basis of what he'd said in the radio interview, Rowe was aghast. 'I asked him if he had heard the interview. He told me no. Franklyn had been writing these articles demeaning me and he didn't stand up and let the people know what was happening. I bent over backwards to deal with the conditions he wanted. I did not ask for this. He totally destroyed me. He went back on everything. We don't even talk now.'

For Franklyn, slaying his childhood hero was bittersweet. 'I went through a lot of emotions and a lot of wrangling coming to

## THE UNFORGIVEN

the position I did. I understand the gut-wrenching feelings Rowe was going through. But ultimately it was the principle and what was obtained in relation to the greater good.'

An interview Rowe did with sportscaster Orville Higgins on daytime radio days after his name was erased from the pavilion brought home to Franklyn how much pain and torment the former great was in. 'I heard the hurt, because after 28 years he did not ask for this thing. If Lawrence had not given the interview, we would not be talking about this now. If Lawrence Rowe were to walk in right now, I would not be the one to say don't join us. On the contrary, I would be the one to say join us.'

Rowe was devastated by the saga. He felt that his reputation had been destroyed by the JCA. He initiated legal proceedings against the board, declaring, 'I want the JCA to give me back my character. They have totally defamed me. My earning power throughout the world has been damaged. They have destroyed me at age 62.'

Once again Franklyn, as the JCA lawyer, was the roadblock between Rowe and validation. When Rowe found out that his own legal representative had previously worked with Franklyn, he was so enraged that he forfeited his J\$90,000 deposit. It seemed as if the whole of Jamaica was conspiring against him. 'Nothing has upset me more than what happened,' Rowe says. 'It was a total mess, which embarrassed me. It was a miserable time in my life.'

Yet letters to the editor showed sympathy for Rowe's plight; one pointed out that reggae artist Jimmy Cliff performed in South Africa in 1979 and was subsequently awarded the Order of Merit, Jamaica's third-highest honour. Others were dismayed at what they saw as an inability to forgive, a meanness of spirit in the Jamaica character. His critics labelled him the 'consummate creature of convenience' and worse.

After the naming fiasco, Rowe retreated to Miami and the vacuum seal business that has sustained him and his family for nearly three decades, vowing not to let feelings of resentment destroy him. Instead, as if to prove that he was better than the

calculating villain depicted in certain sections of the Jamaican press, he set up the Lawrence Rowe Legendary Cricket Foundation, a three-pronged charity that helps impoverished schoolchildren in Miami and Kingston, promotes black history and assists West Indian cricketers who have fallen on hard times. A few years ago, US\$6,000 was raised for ex-West Indian paceman Patrick Patterson through a banquet and exhibition match, which attracted legends Sir Garfield Sobers and Brian Lara. Plans were afoot to assist fellow rebel Richard Austin, but the drug-addicted former Test all-rounder died before they could be acted on.

Rowe bristles at any suggestion that he's seeking a form of redemption through the foundation. 'I don't want to redeem myself from anything. As far as South Africa goes, I don't see there is anything I have done wrong.'

Over the past 36 years, the anonymity of Miami, far from Kingston's barrage of verbal beamers and bumpers, must have seemed like a form of paradise to Rowe. Outwardly at least it has treated him well. His skin is as smooth and unblemished as his batsmanship – he looks at least a decade younger than his 71 years. Untucked blue-and-black gingham shirt, dark slacks and black leather loafers suggest a man comfortable with his place in the world. He's quick to laugh and, surprisingly, given his history of feuds, even quicker to praise. Yet the casual, avuncular facade also conceals the scars of a fight that seems to have no end.

Instead of forced exile, he knows that if he'd resisted Bacher's advances, he could have been a national hero. Not a Paul Bogle hero, but a Michael Holding or Courtney Walsh hero, perhaps working in commentary or in coaching the national side, in the shadow of a pavilion that all his countrymen were proud to call by his name.

'Yes, I've thought about it,' he says. Yet his regret isn't so much about having perhaps chosen the wrong path at critical junctures in his life; rather, it's regret that officials and politicians didn't give him the opportunities he thinks he deserved. 'I know Jackie Hendricks, who was president of the board, was trying to get

## THE UNFORGIVEN

me back to coach, but every time it got close, the South Africa thing came up.'

In 2007, he was invited to Jamaica as a TV analyst for the ICC World Cup, but it only served to highlight what he'd missed out on. 'I believe I could have been a world commentator,' he says. 'But one of the biggest regrets I have is the club ban. I wanted Kensington to fight it. They couldn't have beaten us. It was restraint of trade. But that's why I didn't fight to come back to Jamaica, because I wasn't able to give to the younger kids playing at the club level. And I think the West Indies lost out.'

There's also the friendship carnage. Rowe occasionally lapses into calling Michael Holding 'Mikey', as if they are still good buddies, but they are no longer close. He puts some of the acrimony from former players down to envy, not the rebel tours. 'I believe that these guys were so jealous of what I was. A lot of people describe me in Jamaica as what Usain Bolt is now. Few of us reach that level, that kind of iconic level from the public. Mikey never got that. I don't know why.'

Do the fractured friendships keep him awake at night? 'Never,' he says. Indeed, Rowe is never less than sure of himself. But when doubt encroaches, he turns to God for solace. His foundation is linked to the Gospel Light Church, and in those dark nights of the soul in hotel rooms far, far from home, he would call on his faith to sustain him. He also carries these words of Nelson Mandela with him. 'Sport is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.' He can almost recall them by heart. They bolster him when critics' slings and arrows threaten.

The great irony, of course, was that South Africa, once a pariah state, is now embraced by the world, while Rowe, one embraced by his people, has for many years been the pariah. Over time, those attitudes have softened, especially among the younger generation. Perhaps as Kingston Cricket Club board member Douglas Beckford said, 'Jamaica has forgiven the rebels, but they will never honour them.'

## LAWRENCE ROWE

Either way, Rowe has no regrets. 'I had such a strong belief in the cause, and I honestly believe that is why I got through it,' he says, as he climbs back into his white Range Rover and a life of exile. 'The only person who can convince me that is not so is Jesus Christ. If he comes down to me and says, "You are wrong," I will apologise.'