

Debora Patta warned to 'watch her back'

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3rd Degree anchor receives death threats

By PULE wa SEKANO

AWARD-WINNING investigative journalist Debora Patta's life may be in danger if there is anything behind the hate mails and death threats she has recently received.

Political and religious fanatics, who have been enraged by some of Patta's bold and in-depth investigation of controversial issues, have warned e-tv's *3rd Degree* anchor to watch her back.

In one of the e-mails sent to her after the flighting of the contentious Middle East documentary, *Palestine Is Still The Issue*, an anonymous sender warned: "Anti Semitic Pigs We Will Bomb Your Studios (sic)".

The documentary, which was put together by Australian author and journalist John Pilger, was broadcast a few months ago and detailed

the brutality meted out to Palestinians by Israeli forces.

Patta told City Press this week she had also received numerous calls from people who said: "You hate Jews and we are going to get you."

The Broadcasting Complaints Commission of SA (BCCSA) recently vindicated the decision to broadcast the Pilger documentary because it was "fair and not anti-Semitic".

Callers to a radio station branded Patta a racist when, in her *3rd Degree* expose this week, she busted doctors who sold medical certificates.

The 38-year-old Patta is, however, unfazed by the threats because "people who threaten you are usually paper tigers and the dangerous ones are those who keep quiet but carry out what they feel about

you".

"I love it when I receive radical responses from people who hate me because that means I am doing my job well.

"However, even though I sometimes do risky assignments, I am not a brave person. I am always very cautious because no story is worth dying for."

In 2000 she was threatened by whites who were angered by her expose of a "whites' only" nightclub.

But the latest threats are not something new in her career. Patta says she received several threatening calls when she investigated the Samora Machel plane crash while working for Radio 702 in 1996.

In order to beef up the e-tv prime time news bulletin, Patta was this week appointed chief anchor of the bulletin. She is also deputy head of news for the channel.