

Comment by Michael C H Jones

The names, places and dates have been withheld for my and my family's protection, and most likely for the safety of some of my associates over 40 or more years.

I was once told that if the world runs on bullshit then Australia is spinning out of control because there is more bullshit per square inch in this country - and it is a big continent - then anywhere else in the world. And my informant was from New York, USA and knew something about corruption.

Back in the late 60s when I was a university student I did part time work for two companies. The first was a multinational British engineering subsidiary in Sydney and on the second day the union delegate and members took me into its store room with the direction to take anything I wanted. I walked out with some sort of machine which I left in the gutter of a nearby street in Glebe. Hence I was contaminated and could not report any other thefts. The second company was a CBD small importer of glassware. In the first week I was directed to take off all the Made in Japan labels and replace them with Made in Italy ones - a nice little earner.

In the late 1970s I had graduated into management in a major global transport company which did not compete on price with its fellow Australian companies - if you were found quoting for TNT, Brambles, Mayne Nickless or IPEC there was an almost instant phone call from senior management to get your backside out of there. From memory Trade Practices Australia eventually got them for hundreds of millions in fines - but nobody landed in jail !!

And so it has gone on and on and on for decades - we always catch the very few bad apples and no one - well perhaps the small fry newly rich types - goes to jail. It's a tradition.

Bags full of money wash into and out of the country. What denomination do you want? Politicians get freebees and a lot more but hey both sides are doing it so shut your mouth. That is unless some newspaper journalist has a grudge against you - and particularly if you are mixed up with a woman who actually buys your clothes which is very Un-Australian. And those bloody Chinese have no respect for intellectual property rights and they have learned all their tricks from the British, French, Americans, Israelis and their fellow travellers. You can not keep anything secret anymore.

If you want to give testimony to some government inquiry, forget it - you will be the one quickly on trial and in the newspapers. And if you want to do it 'in camera' in Canberra, they simply close the hearings down before you arrive - your witnesses can please themselves.

But then those hopeless Americans actually and occasionally do some research and investigations and god forbid there is a Australian Wheat Board (AWB) fiasco - hundreds of millions going every which way to trucking companies - you see Sir Peter that's the way you do it. But then again your mate's missus left all the loot to the cats !!

Anyway you have to reward your loyal supporters when you finally get those Government Benches - they have to eat and put their kids in Private Schools and donate to the Catholics, Protestants and Jews and now the Muslims. But do the relatives know anything about corruption - well your husband, dad, brother, mother, sister, uncle, cousin etc is a senior business/corporate head doing billions of dollars of business with various government departments but that should not prevent your appointment/continuation as head of the ICAC, should it? Anyway the ICAC brings in findings of systemic corruption in Councils, and identifies other activities in State and Federal Governments - Escorts and Massage Parlours on every corner - but only the clerks get fired - and the Westminster

tradition of senior executives taking responsibility died out decades ago.

White Envelopes have always been the way of Australians - just be democratic and give them to everyone - and be up market whether with the Bus Driver or the Governor, use your Expense Account and do it generously and throw in the Jet or Limo as well. Entertainment is a proven method of generating big sales.

OK when you have mastered the trade in Australia, GO Global. Forget about those turkeys in North America or Europe, mix it with the professionals in the Middle East or Africa or better still with the State-Owned-Enterprises (SOE) in Vietnam or China. Hire a few locals or linguists, give them a flash title with an expense account and set them loose - if anything goes belly-up just be ready to relocate the Regional Office somewhere else quickly and make a full confession to whom ever - with of course suitable refreshments.

And if you are a real head honcho - corporate or government in Australia - ring the Minister and remind him of his last free trip and/or lunch. But definitely take no responsibility for anything. As my dad always told me the definition of safety is to Know Nothing and Volunteer for Nothing.