

## OVERLAND

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16 June 1988

Dear Clem:

*(Smiler)*

That was a very fine gift, and one that I really do treasure. I'm sure that I shall find much of amusement and relevance to my work in it. For your interest, I finished a 775 page MS revision and expansion for paperback of Right Words at 2.30 a.m. yesterday morning, and had cause in the course of so doing to think of you kindly on a number of occasions.

I have thanked you in the book.

Who says or thinks you have got to be or should be 'Objective' about the ABC? God preserve me from 'objectivity'. I want men and women about me with passion and anger in their bellies. I appreciate your wife's concern about your well-being -- I have been overdoing it and as you know had a heart 'incident' at Christmas time, and realise I want to see my grandson old enough to remember me, which means another ten years -- but who is there better than you, with a greater moral duty than you, to write about the ABC with the benefit of such intimate knowledge and, I am sure, continuing association. In other words, you must keep an eye on what is going on, I'm sure.

So, to use a cant phrase, let's keep it at least on the back burner. Maybe something will come up, a new book or major scandal or report, on which your comments will nicely hang.

Tell your dear wife from me that I love her, what I hear of her, but that to keep Clement alive it will be necessary to cater to his non-golfing drives as well as the third tee.

With best wishes,

*Stephen*

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The Croft  
St Clair St  
BOWRAL NSW 2576  
10 June 88

Dear Stephen,

Thanks for your note. Yes, the ABC thing has been on my mind. The trouble is that so many things I see, hear and read on and about the organization arouses me to such fury and despair that I doubt if I could ever write objectively about it. Added to which my wife, who is much younger than me, and therefore dedicated to the proposition that I should live as long as possible, urges me to put it all out of my mind, and that I should concentrate on my reading, writing, gardening, playing golf, and the nurturing of my small daughter. Furthermore, she says, surely I said it all in my 1981 book about the ABC, and should therefore have got it out of my system.

Yet withal, a still, small voice keeps saying, yes, but surely to God someone should have the guts to speak up about the chaos and confusion of the "corporate strategies"; the gutlessness and political bowing and scraping (e.g. the Pilger business); not to mention the show-pony antics of David Hill who should put his nose down and run the show instead of all that smart-arse grandstanding - that are bugging the place. So I'll think about it and see what I can put together, though it may be awhile yet. At least I've been steadily accumulating notes and material which I suppose means I eventually will do something.

Apart from all of which, I hope you will accept the enclosed book, though you may already have seen it. Over my many years of reviewing, the Australasian Publishing Co. (Hogarth, Cape, Chatto, Quartet etc.) where I have a couple of good mates, keep sending me books, some of which I review. The enclosed is one I thought might interest you and give you an idea or two if you are contemplating further editions of your excellent opus. I have to say though that a lot of it escapes me (I mean the enclosed book) though you may be more hip to it.

Hope all goes well with you: your previous letter worried me a bit but I take it you are now in corpore sano etc.

Cheers, as ever

Clem