

*"All that is needed for evil to prosper is for people of good will to do nothing." Edmund Burke*

# The Whistle



NOVEMBER 1998

## NEWSLETTER OF WHISTLEBLOWERS AUSTRALIA INC

Box U129, Wollongong Uni, NSW 2500; ph. 02 4221 3763

### MEDIA WATCH

#### Diagnosis cover-up: health unit in ICAC review

By ROBYN ASBURY, Inner Western Suburbs Courier, 5 October 1998, pp. 1, 110.

A HEALTHY former NSW Police Service human resources officer and corruption whistleblower claims a State Government health unit forced her to medically retire in 1996, stating she suffered from a permanent psychiatric disorder.

Inner Western Suburbs resident Sue Martin (not her real name) is still fighting HealthQuest's diagnosis – made after a 20-minute consultation claiming it was false and retribution for her workplace corruption allegations.

Ms Martin's own doctor has dismissed the diagnosis and the assessment of the government doctor who issued the medical retirement order, after observing she had no paranoid or psychotic symptoms. She was among about 30 protesters last Monday outside the HealthQuest's Haymarket headquarters, where they were backed by Whistleblowers Australia (NSW) president Cynthia Kardell.

About 30 complainants have received letters stating the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) is "reviewing" the referral and assessment procedure between public sector departments and HealthQuest.

The protesters called for the closure of HealthQuest, a unit of the Central Sydney Area Health Service (CSAHS), alleging it practised political and Soviet-style psychia-

try, made false psychiatric assessments to avoid the industrial relations courts and colluded with employers.

Ms Kardell told the Courier they had called on ICAC, the NSW Ombudsman and State Parliament to investigate the allegations.

No-one from HealthQuest responded to the hour-long peaceful protest, although four police officers arrived after protesters entered the building's foyer.

A CSAHS spokeswoman said she was unable to comment to the Courier during the ICAC review.

In 1995, Ms Martin, in her early thirties, had a well-paid job and a career path, but her life took a dramatic downward spiral after questioning the directions of her managers, which she claimed ranged from maladministration to corruption.

She alleges a 12-month witchhunt followed, shattering her confidence and reducing her to a photocopying and coffee girl where her every move was monitored, including timed trips to the toilet.

She was admitted to hospital following a stress-related collapse and almost lost her home as a result of the amount of unpaid leave she was forced to take.

In mid-1996, after a threat to have her employment annulled, Ms Martin's employer sent her to HealthQuest or a psychiatric

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assessment, which she claimed was used as a smokescreen to avoid Unfair Dismissal laws.

"HealthQuest has medicalised workplace problems and this is where it's unethical," she said.

Under Freedom of Information laws, Ms Martin accessed her HealthQuest files in which the assessing psychiatrist noted: "She certainly merits every effort at rehabilitation, retraining or redeployment.

"From the enclosed reports [the employer's brief] it seems the employer is denying any possibility of employment in any part of the establishment in which case she would need to be medically retired."

Ms Martin's HealthQuest medical

retirement certificate stating she suffered from a permanent psychiatric illness was signed in June 1996 by a Dr H. Jagger and a Dr H. Gapper.

"I am of the opinion that she is in consequence unable to discharge the duties of her office.

"I am of the further opinion that her disability will in all likelihood prove permanent," it stated.

Ms Martin said: "In a 20-minute interview the HealthQuest psychiatrist, relying on uncorroborated and misleading information from my employer, deemed me permanently incapacitated and had me medically retired - outrageous because my own doctors said I was fit for work."

Ms Martin unsuccessfully contested the diagnosis through the appeals process.

In a September 1995 medical report instigated by her employer, a doctor wrote: "[Ms Martin] suffered from a short period of adjustment disorder with features of anxiety and emotional reaction, but considered that that period has now finished and that her present reasons for not being at work are indeed 'political' and I consider that she is now fit to return to her normal duties in whatever form has been arranged for her."

Ms Martin admitted she had been suffering stress and anxiety because of the tension at work resulting from her whistleblowing actions. □

## Fired over 'spilt' milk

**Natural Life Review,  
Vol. 2, No. 8,  
September 1998,  
p. 20**

Two journalists in the US were fired after refusing to water down their investigative report on a link between Monsanto's rBGH in Florida milk and human health problems.

Evidence is growing that rBGH may promote cancer in humans who drink this milk.

Monsanto tried to intimidate the TV company on this issue by sending memos warning of "dire consequences" to their company. □

## Lawn control not for sale

**Chemical and  
Engineering News,  
Vol. 76, No. 33,  
17 August 1998, p. 60**

An exposé on the care of the residential front lawn (C&EN, May 4, page 88) prompted homeowner Richard Stacy of Montrose, Colo., to tell of the "big lawn" he and his wife once had in Boulder. A chemical colleague who worked for a big petroleum and agricultural chemicals company told Stacy that the company had developed an agent for use on lawns that would limit the growth of grass to 2 to 3 inches. Thereafter, only occasional watering was required to maintain the lawn.

Stacy got about 5 pounds of the stuff from his friend and found that it worked like magic. He then asked where he could buy some, and the friend responded, "You must be kidding! We have no intention of marketing this material domestically. Just think of what it would do to the lawn industry in this country!" □

## Outrage over psychiatric findings

**By Sue Williams, Sun-  
Herald, 13 September  
1998, p. 35**

Public servants certified mentally unfit for work by government-paid psychologists, after complaining about the way their schools, offices or departments were run, have won a battle to have the Independent Commission Against Corruption look into their claims.

The ICAC has written to each, pledging to review the way they were treated. The public servants, including teachers, college staff, a police rehabilitation officer, a fireman and a physicist, were backed by lobbyists Whistleblowers Australia in their campaign to have the system examined.

Each person, after bringing up a grievance about their workplace, was referred to HealthQuest, a unit of the Central Sydney Area Health Service, part of the Department of Health.

The examiner was briefed on their problems at work and they were given a report which certified them as having psychological or psychiatric problems, leading to dismissal or early retirement.

They allege collusion between employers and HealthQuest, saying it is a way to get rid of workers who rock the boat by criticising health and safety procedures, complaining about management, or blowing the whistle on misinformation. Some subsequently have won compensation payouts.

HealthQuest deputy director Helen Jagger denied the claims. □

## \$700,000 to keep him home

**Government bars public  
servant from working for more  
than two years**

**By Fia Cumming, Sun-  
Herald, 6 September  
1998, p. 17**

A whistleblower in the Foreign Affairs Department has spent the entire period

of the Howard Government locked out of his job on full pay.

Alastair Gaisford's security clearance was suspended, effectively banning him from his work, at 4.45pm on Friday, March 1, the day before the 1996 election.

He has been on full pay since, fighting the department's decision in the Federal Court. So far, he has had three court victories against the department which each time has had costs awarded against it.

Twice the department reinstated Mr Gaisford's security clearance minutes before the matter was to go before the Federal Court Justice Paul Finn. But both times, it was rescinded later the same day.

The matter is against due to go before Justice Finn on Thursday.

Department sources claim the department has spent more than \$500,000 in legal and associated fees fighting to keep Mr Gaisford out, plus almost \$200,000 for Mr Gaisford's expenses.

Mr Gaisford fell out of favour after drawing Federal Police attention to possible pedophile behaviour by senior Foreign Affairs officials on overseas postings.

In a letter to Federal Police Commissioner Mick Palmer in February 1996, he named 16 officials who he said should be investigated.

One of them was former Ambassador to Cambodia John Holloway, who was subsequently charged with overseas child sex offences allegedly committed during his Cambodian posting. The case did not go to trial because of problems with the evidence of two teenage Cambodian boys transported to Canberra for the preliminary hearings in November 1996.

Mr Gaisford said yesterday 10 of the 16 officials he had named had since taken early retirement, while he had been suspended from duty.

The department also fought to stop Mr Gaisford from giving evidence to the 1996-97 Senate inquiry into consular services which included the kidnapping and murder of Australians in Cambodia.

It has failed in its attempts to block the family of kidnap victim David Wilson calling Mr Gaisford as a witness in the inquest into Mr Wilson's death.

Mr Gaisford was the consul in the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh in 1994 when Mr Wilson and fellow Australian Kelly Wilkinson were kidnapped. □

# The Downside of Whistleblowing

By Jean Lennane and William De Maria, *Medical Journal of Australia*, Vol. 169, No. 7, 5 October 1998, pp. 351-352.

The Bristol case, in which an anaesthetist blew the whistle on high mortality rates in children undergoing surgery in the cardiac unit at the Royal Bristol Infirmary, has had a shattering impact on the medical profession and practice in the United Kingdom. Trust between patients and doctors, the profession's reputation with the general public, and the future of self-regulation are 'all changed, changed utterly' (1). But for how long? A dismal procession of scandals and allegations about unprofessional and dangerous clinical practice (2,3,4,5), research fraud (6), and administrative attempts to suppress results of changes in funding and policy (7,8) indicate that hopes of permanent change may be unrealistic.

This issue of the *Journal* (p.369) carries an account by Bolsin, the anaesthetist involved in the Bristol case (9). He started raising concerns in 1990 soon after arriving in Bristol; the last death occurred in 1995. In June this year the General Medical Council Professional Conduct Committee found against the doctors involved. Meanwhile, Dr Bolsin had 'suffered the traditional fate of whistleblowers, ostracism and a collapse in earnings - after which he emigrated to Australia' (10).

The personal cost of whistleblowing is high (11). Although the lives of Dr Bolsin and his family were 'changed utterly', like many whistleblowing doctors with portable skills he retained his health and his ability to work. But most whistleblowers do not. When seeing whistleblowers as patients, doctors need to be aware of the shattering health, financial and psychological impact on the whole family, and of the potential misuse of psychiatry by colleagues to discredit them. This is 'possibly one of the most insidious and vile weapons used against whistleblowers' (12).

Costs to the community are also high. They include the costs of supporting these injured workers, most of whom were model, often outstanding, employees before they blew the whistle; costs of the original issue, in lost lives or public monies; legal costs as public authorities defend the indefensible; the cost of public inquiries; and further legal costs and damages as in due course the vindicated victims sue.

It is easy in retrospect to see the cost, waste, and damage of the typical whistleblowing case as an unnecessary tragedy in which everybody loses; and to see how immensely preferable it would be to circumvent that process. It is not so easy to see how to do this. Several states in Australia now have whistleblower protection legislation, but to date there is no evidence that any are effective; there is still no federal legislation (13). Published comparable mortality figures (14), could help and should be implemented, but inherent difficulties in comparing cases of different complexity, and the fact that nearly half the figures will of necessity be

below average, mean they can't provide more than part of the solution (15). Monitoring the health and welfare of whistleblowers, a method pioneered by the NSW Police Service (16) shows considerable promise.

An overriding need however is to change attitudes that currently leave correction of inevitable failings in the system to the fortuitous emergence of a lone, heroic whistleblower - preferably supported by babies in life-and-death drama, to ensure front page exposure and corresponding influence. Many cases with less appealing victims would never get as far. Our focus should be on the overwhelming majority of staff who stand by and do nothing, and how to create a climate where all practitioners expect to report on others at a very early stage, support other staff who do so, and respond with constructive humility when others - staff or patients - raise concerns about them in their turn. Medical Boards in the last few years have successfully encouraged the reporting of impaired doctors in this way. Current proposals to achieve similar attitudes and policies in reporting suspected substandard competence, focussing on non-punitive investigation and correction of substantiated problems would avoid most damage from false or mistaken allegations, and enable staff with concerns to blow the whistle in confidence.

Unfortunately current reality often pits a junior staff member, dependent on references and goodwill, against a senior person of power and influence, effectively insulated by eminence. Without the support of equally senior colleagues, Colleges and other bodies-in which the senior person may well be an office bearer-the complaint will go nowhere, the whistleblower will be victimised, and the usual disaster follows.

The most important issue, therefore, is the need to recognise that however hard we try, the system won't necessarily work. Nor will external regulatory bodies, which - perhaps inevitably - tend to become part of the system (17). The profession as a whole has to try to learn to welcome and adapt to dissent. After all, today's best practice - like some of the surgical procedures used in Bristol - was yesterday's dissent, and may well be the subject of tomorrow's. Yet dissent by its nature is political as well as ethical, and we ignore its political implications at our individual and collective peril. When administrators try to 'gag' doctors, what is needed is a collective political response.

And for doctors caught in a classic 'Bristol' situation, we need to re-think conventional ethics' blanket ban on bad-mouthing colleagues to patients. That, and the brutality of inflicting great anxiety and loss of faith on parents of children with a life-threatening condition, prevented more direct action in Bristol. But political acts need the widest possible awareness and sup-

port. Parents are the most powerful and dedicated advocates for their children, and the media has repeatedly been shown to be the only reliable source of help for whistleblowers (17). The brutal truth is that if parents and public had been mobilised at a much earlier stage, many of the Bristol children would still be alive. Perhaps it is no longer enough to be a good clinician; doctors also need political skills to save all possible lives.

## Authors

Jean Lennane, psychiatrist, Vice-President of Whistleblowers Australia; Sydney, NSW. William De Maria, lecturer in social work and social policy, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland.

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# A primer for whistleblowers – How to send anonymous email

From the web site Spy and CounterSpy,  
<http://www.spycounterspy.com/>

**NOTE** – Spy and CounterSpy does not endorse, condone, or encourage any illegal act. The material in this article is presented for information, research, entertainment, and education purposes only. The words “you” and “your” are used in this article for ease of readability only.

**I**magine, for a moment, this hypothetical situation. You possess inside information. You feel the public has a right to know. You are a moral individual and you have a strong sense of social responsibility. But you don’t want the goons kicking in your door an hour before dawn. Your problem is – you don’t know how to leak the information without getting caught. You don’t know how to communicate anonymously.

## What you’ll learn here

This article teaches you how to use the Internet to send untraceable email. The recipient of the message won’t be able to trace you. The Internet provider won’t be able to trace you. The local phone company won’t be able to trace you. The FBI won’t be able to trace you. Simply stated, if you need tradecraft that will give you unbreakable anonymity, you are reading the right article.

## Step 1: Get online anonymously

First, go to a cybercafe. This is a retail store that offers public access to the Internet. You’ll find them in almost every US city.

The cybercafe you select should ideally be in another city. At a minimum, it should be on the other side of town. Don’t use the cybercafe just around the corner from where you work.

Some cybercafes charge by the hour, others by the minute. Some are free, located in public libraries and colleges. But otherwise they all work the same way. You sit down at a computer workstation and use it as if it were your own.

It’s already preloaded with nifty software, including the most popular browsers. And it’s connected to the Internet. You can surf the ‘net just like you do at your office or home. Except when you’re using a cybercafe you’re anonymous.

**BACKGROUND** – You can’t use your own computer and expect anonymity. The authorities can trace email packets back to your SMTP and POP accounts at your Internet service provider. From there the telephone line or coaxial cable can be traced to your physical location.

With today’s digital infrastructure, the trace is instantaneous. There’s no hurry, though. Billing records allow the authorities to trace you months later if need be.

So-called remailers, anonymizers, and mixmasters are helpful, of course – they’ll slow down the authorities’ search by about 24 hours – that’s about how long as it takes to serve a warrant or writ on an uncooperative Webmaster.

## Protect your identity

Whether you pay the cybercafe proprietor in advance or afterwards is not important. But you must make a point to pay using cash. And don’t show any ID. If the proprietor insists on credit card payment or personal ID, go elsewhere.

When trained members of a resistance movement use cybercafes, they alter their silhouette by wearing different clothing and footwear, changing their hairstyle, adding (or deleting) eyeglasses, and so on. Simply wearing a hat can significantly reduce the ability of a witness to describe your appearance to an investigator. It can also confound an in-store video surveillance camera.

## Step 2: Set up an email account

As soon as you are online at the cybercafe, you can set up an anonymous free email account. Here are a few providers to choose from – mailexcite.com, pronotomail.com, usa.net, hotmail.com, mailcity.com, and doghouse.com.

Other providers are available. Use a search engine to find one that meets your preferences.

## Getting registered

As you complete the online registration form, keep in mind that the provider has no way of verifying the information you provide. For all he knows, you might be using a fictitious name, address, postal code, and telephone number. Not all providers even bother to request this information. Some ask for only a name and a city.

Remember that the name you provide will appear on the header of outgoing email messages.

If the registration form insists on an email forwarding address or a social security number, you should look elsewhere for a provider.

After submitting the registration form, you’ll usually have an active email account within a few moments. You can now send and receive email anonymously.

Intelligence agencies refer to this type of arrangement as a cover address. In particular, a cover address refers to a postal address, email address, or courier address that is not linked to the identity of the per-

son using the address.

## Step 3: Send your message

If you have a short message to transmit, simply type it into the editing window of the email editor and you can send your email immediately.

## If you have a longer message

If you have a lengthy message or an encrypted message to transmit, you should prepare it in advance and bring it with you on diskette as a text file or html file. Most cybercafes allow you to use diskettes with their computers. Simply insert the diskette as you would at your office or at home.

**SECURITY CAUTION** – If your cybercafe insists on inserting the disk at a central location and then transmitting the data by LAN (local area network) to your computer workstation, you’ll probably want to use encrypted text. Some cybercafes do this because they’re concerned about viruses being introduced into their systems.

You can use Windows Wordpad to load your file, select the text, and copy it to the Windows clipboard. Then you’ll be able to use Shift+Ins to paste your text into the editing window of the email editor.

You can also send your file as an email attachment direct from your diskette. Different email account providers have different policies concerning attachments. Some allow them. Some don’t.

## Limiting your exposure

Under most circumstances, you’ll be able to get online, set up an anonymous free email account, compose and send your message, and log off in fewer than 3 minutes. There’s no real need to rush, however. You don’t want to attract attention to yourself.

## Step 4: Cover your tracks

Take a damp cloth. Wipe off the keyboard. Wipe off the mouse. Wipe off anything else you’ve touched. Don’t leave any fingerprints.

Make certain you’ve removed your diskette from the disk drive. If you have a DOS-based file-wipe utility, you can use it to delete the browser’s cache files, history files, and bookmark file. (This step does nothing to hinder the authorities, however, who can trace the source of the email message to this particular computer if they open an investigation. Deleting the browser’s files merely obstructs nosy busybodies – other cybercafe customers and staff.)

Go to the counter and pay the proprietor. With cash.

## Disappear forever

Walk out the door. Don't go back. Ever. And keep your secret to yourself. Don't tell anyone. Ever.

**BACKGROUND** – Keeping quiet is important. Most people are caught because they can't resist the urge to brag – or because they feel a need to confide in someone. If you can't keep a secret, then you'll never be a good underground urban activist, freedom fighter, or guerrilla.

Intelligence agencies, security services, resistance movements, and guerrilla groups have found that for some reason women seem better at keeping quiet about covert ops than men. So if you're a guy, you'll need to make an extra effort in this regard.

Smile to yourself. Congratulations are in order. You've just executed a successful covert op.)

Here is the small print. It appears here because we have found that maintaining a corporate front is the only way we can protect ourselves against interference by governments and their agencies. The legal underpinnings of our corporate front are our first line of defense against audit-attacks and other methods of economic warfare that the authorities use to suppress dissent, protest, and activism. They are also determined to prove their hypothesis that Spy and CounterSpy is funded by a foreign intelligence agency or terrorist group – but our double entry accounting record of corporate revenue and expenses is our shield against fabricated evidence by

an overzealous investigator or case officer.

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OFFICE: 3273 Tennyson Avenue, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

MAIL: PO Box 8026, Victoria BC, CANADA V8W 3R7.

TELEPHONE: (250) 475-1450. FAX: (250) 475-1460.

EMAIL: reader\_service@SPYCOUNTERSPY.com. □

# ARTICLES AND REPORTS

## HealthQuest

By Rachael Westwood

**H**ealthQuest grew out of the Government Medical Office (GMO) which was (and is) headed by the Government Medical Officer. The GMO provided a service to Public Sector organisations for assessing staff who were having health problems at work. They either helped employers to readjust the staff member to their position, helped find another position for the staff member, or medically retired them. Public sector organisations are legally obliged to maintain the good health of their employees, so the GMO services were part of a package. The GMO gave all staff members a medical exam upon employment. Some public sector organisations still use GMO to fulfil the requirements of the legislation.

For the bulk of people who go to HealthQuest there is no problem because everyone involved in the process – employer and employee – agrees that there is a problem. The employee is genuinely ill and needs medical help. The employer is not qualified to give that medical help and so can rely on HealthQuest. As well, some people collude to get themselves medically retired.

However, some people are subjected to collusion by other people. Some are railroaded into medical retirement by employers and unions alike. These people are troubleshooters who become "troublemakers" (see Peter Anderson).

There are, as you would expect, guidelines for HealthQuest. That the guidelines are not always followed is not necessarily a problem because by and large everyone involved in the process wants the same outcome. The problems arise when the employer and employee have different outcomes in mind.

One set of guidelines is the Premier's memorandum 98-1 which sets out that:

• A public sector employer shall give full account to the employee of what documents and information they're providing HealthQuest.

• The employee should be given the option not to attend.

• The psychiatrist should not interview a person they know is there without consent.

• During the consultation process leading up to the HealthQuest interview, the employer should encourage the employee to bring along a support person or witness.

Psychiatrists and doctors all have professional and ethical guidelines with which they should comply. For example, they should encourage and facilitate support persons and witnesses. The relationship they have with the employee is not a therapeutic relationship – they take role of investigator at the behest of the employer. They are there to investigate and report; therefore they should encourage a third party in the investigation. Instead doctors and psychiatrists do the opposite. Further, they should go to some pains to explain that theirs is an investigative, not a therapeutic, role.

In writing their report psychiatrists should take responsibility. HealthQuest should only be providing statements to employer that the employee is fit or unfit. In the worst sort of case, instead of this, the employer gets told the nastiest details of the psychiatrist's report: the employee is paranoid or delusional or suffering early onset Alzheimer's or has several personalities. The employer gets a diagnosis and that diagnosis is blabbed around town. Many people believe that HealthQuest makes fraudulent diagnoses. A person who wants to be medically retired doesn't care about the diagnosis because they know it's a fraud but it gets them the result that they want. A person who is fighting for justice does care.

Whistleblowers NSW invited Dr Helia Gapper, Director of HealthQuest, along to the 1997 seminar so that she could state her case. As a result, a dialogue started and she offered to talk and an appointment was made. However, when she learned that Stewart Dean was going along, she cancelled, claiming that he wasn't a fit person for an interview. So Cynthia Kardell wrote to her outlining our objections to the way HealthQuest practises its medicine. Her reply was simply – read my paper. We began to demonstrate.

The first demonstration was held in March outside HealthQuest and that was a small, well run affair, just a run-up to the main events. The next demo was held at Missenden road (outside the Central Sydney Area Health Service). That one was louder and resulted in a dialogue between the inappropriate Stewart Dean and Jean Lennane with the DCEO Michael Wallace. After a promising dialogue we received a disappointingly bureaucratic reply and Stewart, Bob May and Dana Tasovac prepared the last demonstration, a noisy and well-attended demo, and no doubt not the last. In the interim, a number of our members have been contacted by ICAC to let them know that ICAC is investigating the wider issue of HealthQuest's modus operandi, although it will not be addressing any individual matters. That investigation is being conducted by ICAC's Education and Prevention of Corruption Unit. That Unit just looks at systemic problems, not at individual instances. The Unit with which most whistleblowers will have had dealings with is the Investigative Unit.

In early 1998 to June 1998 Whistleblowers Australia ran a survey of our members regarding their treatment at the hands of HealthQuest. The results were sent off to

the Ombudsman and we have made a complaint to the Ombudsman that HealthQuest is guilty of maladministration. They've asked for more information and a list of people who responded to the survey along with their employers. Val Kerrison and Charles Willock were largely responsible

for drafting the survey. Val managed the whole process with Cynthia Kardell and was largely responsible for collating results.

So all in all, Whistleblowers has made slow but steady progress in the ongoing battle with HealthQuest. We have our vig-

orous and inappropriate members to thank for a lot of the work: Stewart Dean et al for indefatigable protest organisation and for annoying Helia; Gerard Crewdson for his street theatre (what is demo without costumes?) and Bill Sheridan for taking all the photos. □

## Near-synonymous or analogous terms for 'whistleblowing'

By Dr. Karl H. Wolf

The need for constructive criticism must have been recognised from the day humans were able to analyse any part of their life. Even within the first Ur-family (whatever that means in anthropology or archaeology cannot concern us here), discussions existed (even heated ones) on how to solve problems. And as soon as several families formed a group, and especially when larger communities were established, the first signs of social disharmony must have arisen; i.e. numerous types of deleterious situations arose in particular when 'cliques' formed who then developed 'policies' to ascertain that certain demands will be fulfilled. Thus, the stage of the 'first Ur-whistleblowers' was set there way back in history, although one might guess that other names were applied to such individuals. Also, the contexts and ways of handling and redressing whistleblowing were very different from today.

As a result of the phenomenon of 'ubiquity of conflicting interests' in all societies, everywhere, for thousands of years, constructive analysis, evaluation or criticism became absolutely necessary, not only to solve daily enigmas and conflicts, but for progress in general. Also, the perspectives of criticism changed and with them the types or styles of criticism — indeed the phenomenon of physical and conceptual arguing (to put it mildly, euphemistically) has intensified; that, in turn, led to coining of many words that represent 'criticism' (using it as a collective, umbrella, group, or taxonomic term). It is the purpose of the present essay to deliberate these names, which are either synonyms or, more likely, near-synonyms or analogous expressions of whistleblowing and its derivatives. For a need to distinguish between these three terms, see Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms: a Dictionary of Discriminated Synonyms with Antonyms and Analogous and Contrasted Words, Merriam-Webster Inc., Publishers (1984). By necessity, the present discussion is all too brief, but is a start in comparing/contrasting some of the available hotchpotch information.

At the outset there is at least one important clarification needed: on first consideration it may appear to stretch logic beyond reason to compare, for instance, 'criticism' with 'whistleblowing', let alone with the 'legal definition' of the latter. As well appreciated, for several reasons the word whistleblowing (WB hereafter), and deriva-

tives like whistleblower, requires in today's world a precise definition-cum-explanation, as discussed in publications available from the Whistleblowers Australia Inc. However, there is more to the concept, phenomenon, or process of WB, because the stages/phases that lead up to the WB act need to be precisely understood. If one accepts WB being the 'final, ultimate stage or pinnacle of criticism', then the important question arises as to what preceded WB. All these stages involve synthesis of information, analysis/evaluation, comparisons, interpretations, extrapolations — all to be founded on independent, critical judgements. Can one consider these as 'preparatory stages', culminating in WB? If so, can one formalise and name these preparatory stages? In some situations, these stages may either constitute part of a 'continuous, unbroken sequence of activities'; or constitute a 'continual battle, punctuated by inactive periods'. Another question arises: by examining closely the hundreds of WB cases on record, can one identify several 'models of WB' (there may be several different models depending on circumstances), which comprise stages/phases? Can these be formally named to put some order into this social phenomenon? Each of these stages, so common sense would tell us, would have certain characteristics. For instance, 'the degree of intensity of involvement by the WB' increases; 'the types of techniques in obtaining crucial information' may change over time; 'the type and intensity of counter-activities against the WB' changes; 'the emotional and physical prices to be paid by the WB' evolves; and so forth. Hence, the present critical discussion of names referring to 'critical, evaluative human activities' may not seem to be as far-fetched as a quick superficial look might suggest! Perhaps, in future issues of The Whistle this problem can be given some consideration. Write in, dear reader!

Also, the familiarity with terms that are somehow related, even if only vaguely, to WB can assist in investigations during which a search for information is commonly required. For example, the following incredibly comprehensive database uses all of the below-cited near-synonyms, which can be easily cross-referenced with WB: Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (1995), Union of International Associations, Brussels, Belgium, 3 volumes, 3100 pages; also available on CD-

ROM.

For some time, I have collected the above-mentioned terms that might represent the activities and opinions of people engaged in critically evaluating society, among which WBs constitute one such group. Here is the list of the individuals we deal with at present, prior to deliberating at least some of them: anti-bullyists, freedom-of-speech advocates, esprit forts (free thinkers), critics, analysts, intellectuals, independent scholars, heretics, perfectionists, free-lancers, outsiders, peer-reviewers, idealists, dissenters, mavericks, debunkers, guru-(and quackery-, fraud-, sham-, etc.) busters, iconoclasts, agnostics/atheists, reformers, superstition expositors, provocateurs, Devil's advocates, pacifists, activists, crusaders, true believers and fanatics (cf. Eric Hoffer's, 1951, *True Believer*), moderators, rationalists, and sceptics. Of course, there are derogative words given to WBs, such as 'dobbers', 'rats', 'troublemakers', 'betrayers', 'fanatics', 'defectors', and 'traitors', among others. There are 'perspectives' and 'perspectives', eh?!

Although all these words or expressions are defined (sometimes in various ways) in dictionaries, and as stated above, WB may be the most-exactly defined term for legal reasons, there is still room for a comparative/contrastive philosophical and especially linguistic (nomenclatural or terminological, semantic) approach. This is particularly so because many of the above terms, although all falling under the large umbrella of 'critical analysis', do in fact represent slightly-to-considerably different human or social activities — some even overlapping with WB. More importantly, some of the variable types or contexts of WB actually incorporate some of the philosophies expressed by the one or more of the above terms; and vice versa. Examples: (a) a WB is simultaneously also a freedom-of-speech advocate and a dissenter and an idealist and an outsider (not by choice, of course) — and so forth. (b) Conversely, an anti-bullyist must be a WB, if s/he wishes to alleviate the negative social impact of bullying. Many other such abstract/conceptual and concrete (practical, applied) terminological exemplars exist. Is this playing with words only? No! This only to whet your intellectual appetite to read on!

Even more fundamentally, 'low-intensive critical work' may gradually change into 'more-intensive dissension' until there

is no option left but to engage in WB. Thus, there are many potential situations where, for instance, mere reviewing of research data passes through several stages (e.g. critical analysis by an independent scholar; and scepticism, debunking, exposing, etc., by a free thinker) into full-blown WB.

Another point: some of the terms of critical analysis represent human activities distinct enough for certain social groups to have established associations. This may raise the query: shouldn't these groups of 'concerned citizens' be in continual contact with each other for increased effectiveness? At least two other associations come to mind immediately: (a) the Beyond Bullying Association Inc, PO Box 196, Nathan, Qld. 4111 (with members of the University of Queensland) – cf. their book by P. McCarthy et al., editors, 1996. *Bullying: From Backyard to Boardroom*. Millennium Books, Alexandria, NSW 2015; and (b) the Australian Skeptic Inc, PO Box 268, Roseville, NSW 2071. The latter publishes a regular magazine of interest to many professional groups. The Whistleblowers Australia Inc surely have/has a lot in common with these groups and, of course, vice versa. A reciprocal intellectual relationship ought to be considered, and perhaps move onto the international scene!

Also, from the psychological and social viewpoints, the terms dealt with here may stand for, or require, certain personality traits/characteristics, attitudes, life philosophies, world-views (or 'Weltanschauung' as generally known) that constitute the guiding conceptual framework for individuals and groups. For example, a peer-reviewer may have a 'personality' sufficient to do 'reviewing' which does not require to stick his/her intellectual neck out too far (he/she may annoy the department head and be refused tenure!). But if fraud is detected, what personality traits are necessary to expose the situation? And if the 'institutionalised internal mechanisms' refuse to deal with this, what type of personality characteristics are then resorted to for WB, when indeed your job is on the line (and your wife is expecting twins, and you are paying off the house and car, etc.)?! So, perhaps, the linguistics (including rhetoric and semantics) of one's 'nomenclature, terminology or classification of conflict resolution' is not that 'abstract' or 'academic' after all – life provides too many practical/applied settings for the need of a precise approach.

Let us specifically look at the above terms. Some are best dealt with in pairs or groups of three or more, namely, starting with a recent practical/applied economically fraudulent case: (1) technical + economic data synthesist (descriptive stage), scientific tester + analyst, independent/external reviewer (interpretive/extrapolative stage based on genetic or formative models), and WB as applied to salting of gold-containing rock samples; (2) investigative journalist, anti-censor, independent scholar, intellectual, and WB – in the political, industrial, and economic context; (3) peer-reviewer, scientific analyst, independent scholar, moderator, intellectual, and WB – in the research and publishing context: intellectual-property conflict resolution; (4) maverick, sceptic,

debunker, and WB in the scientific research context; (5) dissenter, outsider, idealist, and WB in the context of environmental problems; (6) pacifist, activist, idealist, free-thinker, freedom-of-speech advocate analyst, etc., and WB in the macro-economic context (mega-corruption of governments and global business); (7) sceptic, superstition buster, etc., and WB in the pseudo-religious context; (8) research analyst, intellectual, independent scholar, peer-reviewer, and WB in (a) the traditional medical vs. alternative-medical context, (b) predicting/forecasting complex human/social and natural systems; (9) maverick and WB, e.g. neo-Luddite's critical analysis of computerising society; and (10) religious and academic intellectual exposing ludicrous behaviour of some students.

(1) The first example deals with an investment and financial fraud/hoax/scandal widely reported by the media during May 1997, i.e. the Busang/Bre-X gold exploration and mining scam. In my article 'Salting the Mine' in *The Skeptic Magazine*, v.17, No.3. Spring 1997 (copies available on request), I outlined some of the geological/technological reasons why such a fraud should never have been possible, because we have had to deal with them for hundreds of years. One additional good discussion is provided by Anthony Spaeth's article 'The Scam of the Century', in *TIME*, May 19, 1997, pp. 90-95, among several newspaper articles. Speculators and investors eventually lost millions of dollars.

Unique about this case is that even the most experienced economic analyst, scientific sceptic, external investigator or reviewer would have had great difficulties because of the remote location (in Borneo) of the gold mineralisation. Thus, the geographic accessibility has prevented proper examination of the data supplied by the 'interested parties'. The information was so plausibly falsified/concocted to fool even the most experienced, and the fraud could not be detected from a distance, i.e. the data had to be re-checked on the spot, so to speak.

Here, then, is a situation where a group of allegedly fraudulent people remained silent for a considerable period and felt safe from being exposed, because of unavailability and inaccessibility of the data to any outside evaluators. No one of those 'in the know' was willing to WB, as they were in on the scam. Obligatory, requested, external scientific investigators finally detected the purposively-concocted fraudulent geological data and were able to WB, but only after the huge financial damage was done.

(2) Investigative journalism and anti-censorship. These two are accompanied, of course, by others such as intellectualism, independence, critical research and scholarship, idealism, and so forth. Journalists are often dependent on WBs to get important information. See the fine article by Bill Mellow 'Integrity and Ruined Lives: ... WBs who expose corruption and mismanagement ...' in *TIME*, October 21, 1991, 46-51. Much has been written in particular about censorship as it is a fundamental problem in all free societies, i.e. in democracies – cf. 'Essay—Who cares about a free press?' by Henry Grunwald, *TIME*, May 8, 1995, p.

80.

The 'powerful' have been using censorship for several hundred years to avoid scrutiny, frequently employing defamation laws against even their own employees to prevent the divulging of unethical or unlawful activities. See 7-page pamphlet *Defamation law and free speech* issued by the Whistleblowers Australia. The report by Roy Eccleston 'Defamation City', *The Weekend Australian*, December 21-22, 1996, provides an insight into Sydney's misuse of defamation laws to curtail freedom of speech. In the article 'The Return of the Wowzers' in the *Spectrum*-section, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 6, 1996, indicates that 'censorship is back ... expanding into ever more areas of our lives'. See also 'Defamation shake-up plan to end big payouts', by J. Fife-Yeomans, *The Weekend Australian*, October 28-29, 1995, p. 3, comparing the greater freedom of speech in the United States.

Censorship is required to eliminate filth, fraud, criminality, and such from society. However, it is a totally different matter to stifle fact-based criticism of political falsehoods, incompetence of financial advisers, mismanagement in government departments and industry, corruption in any institution, inappropriate behaviour of a teacher or superior, and so on – no-one should be prevented from 'speaking up' through threats or actual-application of defamation laws when a proper approach has been used to identify deleterious activities. Many case studies ought to be summarised to demonstrate (a) the various approaches used through (b) numerous sequential steps taken by 'concerned individuals' to rectify damaging social situations – the final phase often being WB.

Those interested in the Australian history (starting about 1800 to recent times) of censorship, freedom of speech, WB, and related phenomena will find an excellent read the book by Michael Pollak (1990) *Sense and Censorship: Commentaries on Censorship Violence in Australia*. Overly-busy people should at least consult the Introduction, Conclusion, and Bibliography. Ah, and there are dozens of other books dealing with recent cases of WB and censorship, e.g. Brian Toohey and William Pinwill, 1989, *Oyster: the Story of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service* (the book the Government took to Court); Robert Pullan, 1994, *Guilty Secrets: Free Speech and Defamation in Australia*; and, of course, Phillip Knightley's 1975, *The First Casualty: the War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist and Myth Maker*, laying bare the censors' role in suppressing and creating facts. The latter book paints an alternative and shaming portrait of received truth—"the first casualty is truth"—and that applies too often also in times of peace! Of course, during 'hot wars' the act of WB would be considered as 'treason'! Yet, the threat of 'treason' has been used, even in peace times, by governments (including so-called democratic ones!) to silence critics – see below for recent British examples.

And those who believe that 'All that evil requires to flourish is for good men to do nothing' may find satisfaction that a few are

pro-actively doing something; as exemplified by Frank Cain's, 1983, *The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia*; Phil Dickie's, 1988, *The Road to Fitzgerald—Revelations of Corruption Spanning Four Decades*; and Evan Whitton's 1989, *The Hillbilly Dictator—Australia's Police State*. Many citizens (but not enough!) feel that the control of information by the government and its various 'secret agent services' has to be scrutinised, and any wrongdoing exposed, if necessary by WB; see below.

The press is truly one of the most important media to 'keep an eye' on all aspects of society, but even in a democracy it is too frequently not functioning freely for various internal and external reasons. Although the media has been criticised quite frequently, let me refer to only one article by William A. Henry III 'Journalism Under Fire—a growing perception of arrogance threatens the American press', in *TIME*, December 12, 1983. He is rather critical of journalists, offering a few complimentary comments and, more importantly, declarations of the fundamental importance of factual, truthful reporting. Can this journalist's exposé be considered 'WB on his professional colleagues', or is it just plain good journalism/reporting?! Some may think it is WB, but professional self-criticism should not be misconstrued as 'ratting'.

That there often is a conflict of interest among journalists became rather clear to me when I worked for the BMR/AGSO in Canberra. Our 'institutional journalist(s)' (acting frequently as public relations-type officers), defended our status quo instead of providing the full picture of our sometimes incredible inefficiencies, for example, to journalists of the Australian media. Withholding information is manipulation, or even lying, by any definition. A 'company journalist' cannot really perform truthfully his/her professional duties when he/she is forced to merely represent the employer's interests without complete adherence to fact/truth. Read the Code of Conduct/Ethics of the Journalists Association! If it doesn't provide guidance to those implicitly or explicitly asked to manipulate information, then the Code is rather incomplete. If the Code demands respect and absolute adherence to the truth, then a journalist is almost compelled to WB. If not, to put it differently, he/she is not a true journalist — just an 'Institutionalised Public Relations Officer'. The latter officer, almost by definition, is automatically, inherently, there to describe, define, or explain, the policies of his/her employer to any outsider, including the public. And by the 'job description', the PR does not entail offering deleterious information which might amount to genuine WB. There may lie a real dilemma for a conscientious, by nature critical, analytical, ethical person, who wishes to act like a 'true, genuine journalist'!

(3) Peer-reviewers in science. Geology (or geosciences or earth-sciences, whichever you prefer) offers here too examples where WB was absolutely necessary to keep researchers (in this case paleo-anthropologists and paleontologists) honest. Case A. A recent situation was reported in the *New Scientist*, v.156, Nos. 2113/2114, p. 72: a

geologist was acting as a WB exposing certain paleo-anthropologists' ignorance about 'geological and relative-age contexts' in the study of 'human ancestry and evolution'.

Case B. Professor of Geology, Dr. John A. Talent, Macquarie University, exposed purposive fraudulent paleontological studies perpetrated by an Indian scientist who through plagiarism, database-pollution, dis-/mis-information, creation or scrambling of spurious geological locations, recycling of fossil specimens, alleged stealing of specimens, etc. (all expressions used by Talent and others to describe the fraudulent activities), has created a confusion of the geological (e.g. stratigraphic) history of certain parts of the Himalayas.

Many publications, by numerous authors, have discussed this sorry affair; here are three, each with references to other publications which will allow one 'to work back' to the earlier literature: J. A. Talent (1989), 'The case of the peripatetic fossil'. *Nature*, v.338, No. 6217, 613-615; J. A. Talent et al. (1990), 'Himalayan palaeontology database polluted: plagiarism and other anomalies'. *Geological Society of India Journal*, v.35, No. 6, 569-585; and J. A. Talent (1995), 'Chaos with conodonts and other fossil biota: v J. Gupta's career in academic fraud: bibliographies and a short biography'. *Courier Forsch.-Institut, Senckenberger*, v.182, 523-551. Talent (based on his decades of scientific training, of course) had to synthesise, compare/contrast, interpret and extrapolate geological, stratigraphic, paleontological, and environmental information in order to offer a fool-proof analysis in demonstrating that an unequivocal fraud had been perpetrated. There was no way out: he had to WB! Others have tried (e.g. associates in India), and allegedly were 'forcefully' prevented from doing so!

These cases could have been listed also in the next section on 'sceptics in science', yet it seems appropriate to highlight the need for the thousands of pro-active peer-reviewers to do a bit of 'reactive' WB, when they smell unethical information. This can make it different from 'normal sceptical or maverick'-type scientific or editorial involvements.

(4) Mavericks/sceptics in the sciences. The difference from the previous section is that there is no fraud involved, but the sceptical or maverick attitude is fundamental here to overcome a state of 'intellectual denial or refusal' as perpetrated by 'orthodox scientists' who may ignore and reject certain proposals or even facts. For example, there are numerous 'taboo' topics: e.g. ESP and 'proved' alternative medicine, among many others, are systematically misrepresented, ridiculed, and starved of funding by the 'traditionalists'. See the book by Richard Milton (1994) *Forbidden Science: Exposing the Secrets of Suppressed Research*.

When one considers the many failures in scientific predicting/forecasting, one ought to be very cautious in calling any idea 'absurd' based purely on gut-feeling. Remember, Sir William Preece FRS opined: 'Edison's electric lamp is a completely idiotic idea'; others believed that 'powered human flight was utterly impossible, which

would require the discovery of some unsuspected force in nature'; and that 'space travel is bunk' as well as 'the atomic bomb will never go off, and I speak as an expert in explosives'. There are many more such examples.

Thus, independent intellectuals ought to openly deliberate such negative attitudes. It may well involve minor WB through public debates and publications on associates who cannot see the tree for the forest of data. A world-renowned British geophysicist ones stated that continental drift-cum-plate tectonics is impossible because of the physical impossibility of the earth crust to move such continent-sized plates. Now we have all the 'evidence' to support such movements. So many 'opinions' and 'interpretations' are involved here that continual research is required. More about this latter.

One may well argue that the airing of 'genuine differences in scientific opinions' does not constitute WB. In most instances, that may be so, but consider Milton's arguments in his chapter on 'The Research Game', where he compared 'the psychology of military incompetence' to that in other hierarchical organisations which selectively attract and promote a certain type of personality that, in turn, have a preferential influence. His arguments applied also to many academic, government, and industrial research institutions, so that under such circumstance WB may well be the only way to improvements.

There are other scientific projects that definitely needed, and still need, mavericks in the true sense of the word. Many relate to proto-, or pseudo-, or quasi-sciences, as they may be called philosophically—as well as derogatively by those in opposition — but which may become eventually accepted disciplines of orthodox science. Here belongs the research on the various types of parapsychology, e.g. Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP). Many researchers refuse to get involved in this type of investigation, unless they have tenure and cannot be penalised, because it is considered hocus-pocus by many departmental heads or university presidents. But consider this. According to Walter Bowart's book of 1978 *Operation Mind Control*, he 'has uncovered a huge government "cryptocracy" dedicated to controlling and manipulating human minds. Through hypnosis and drugs, ordinary citizens became CIA "zombies": human computers, spies, trained assassins, with no control over or consciousness of their actions. Only unexplained memory gaps, or a separate personality which emerged on a trigger cue, showed the victim that something was amiss.' The Americans felt they had to engage in this sort of research and 'applied/practical activities' to keep up with similar work by the Russians. Ridiculous? Fantasy? Well, Jana Wendt a few years ago interviewed on TV a man who made similar, or identical, claims! Allegedly, he was 'programmed' to kill himself through causing a car accident because he knew too much, so he claimed. As a form of protection, the man blew the whistle.

(5) Environmental idealists/dissenters. Much has been published on environmental/ecological problems. Literally thousands

of books and articles are available now, cf. the excellent *Australia—State of the Environment*, 1996, by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, which on one hand merely described the dilemmas we are facing worldwide. However, less common are the publications by WBs revealing against opposition the misdeeds of their employers, for instance. One must mention this setting of whistleblowing, but no details can be presented here. Already in 1981, Brian Martin reported on 'The Scientific Straightjacket—the power structure of science and the suppression of environmental scholarship' in *The Ecologist*, v 11, No. 1, 33-43. Ian Lowe also published a warning in his 'Scientific objectivity and values' in CSIRO's *Australian Tropical Rainforests* (Chapter 13), edited by L. J. Webb and J. Kikkawa. WBs in the mining, timber, fishing, agricultural, etc., industry are as much required as ever. They too started in the past with low-key critical comments to colleagues and supervisors, and finally to the upper-hierarchies; and when ridiculed or worse, some were compelled to become WBs.

(6) Pacifists/activists/idealists exposing mega-corruption of governments in global business/finance, political manipulations/manoeuvres, and spying. (a) In the 'Cancer of Corruption—a World War on Bribery' James Walsh reported in *TIME* (July 13, 1998, 36-43) about 'the costs of corruption reaching earth-shaking proportions to be cleared by an Herculean international effort to clear the muck'. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, large global companies, and numerous countries' governments were involved in passively accepting bribery, baksheesh, payola, or whatever it is called in particular cultures. In some countries, bribery-cum-corruption when 'attempting to get a deal' was even (allegedly) legally accepted, even encouraged, in contrast to others where it was just implicitly/explicitly accepted without any ethical/moral compunction. However, slowly various worldwide problems (e.g. huge financial waste, non-fulfilment of projects at the expense of the poor, breakdown/turmoil of whole societies and cultures, etc.) demand some sort of rectification/nullification of this 'cancer'. For example, finally 'the IMF and World Bank, sister agencies, are readier to "blow the whistle" and cancel multi-million/billion dollar financial support, for instance, unless corruption is reduced if not eliminated'. Individuals and groups within particular countries and the financial institutions exhibiting a combination of personality traits must operate to identify, record, analyse, combat, and WB. These are, as for example in several Asian countries: free-thinkers, freedom-of-speech-advocates, activists, dissenting intellectuals with particular training/experience to collect and critically analyse the required data, sceptical economists, and so on. Here is an example where groups of investigators are engaged in WB as members of an institution, in contrast to the more familiar lone individual WB.

As to the failures of financial institutions (e.g. the World Bank) which meant to alleviate the world-wide inequities, Cather-

ine Caufield's book comes immediately to mind: *The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (1996), and especially Susan George's four books: *How the Other Half Dies: the Real Reasons for World Hunger* (1977); *Ill Fares the Land: Essays on Food, Hunger and Power* (1984); *A Fate Worse than Debt* (1988); and *Faith and Credit: the World Bank's Secular Empire* (1994).

(b) Noam Chomsky began his career as an academic linguist. He examined the language (terminology, writing style, logic, reliability, testability, etc.) of American policy-makers and politicians, finding so many were lying (including withholding information, which is merely one style of lying), and misrepresenting facts/truth that he had to do something about it. He offered his research results in numerous books, such as: *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Media* (1988) [Edward S. Herman, co-author]; *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (1989); and *Detering Democracy* (1991).

Certainly, the above researchers/authors acted as 'informal WBs' in behalf of society at large. Of course there are many more, some world-renowned, as Ralph Nader, others lesser known individuals, so well described in Peter W. Huber's (1991) *Galileo's Revenge: Junk Science in the Courtroom*. There is a book for you! No doubt, all combined a 'host of fundamental characteristics' to engage in their self-appointed exposes, because they covered a wide spectrum of social problem, utilising various approaches. These demands are traits of free-thinkers, freedom-of-speech advocates and defenders, independent scholars, idealists, scientific synthesists and analysts, critics, reviewers, sceptics, mavericks, outsiders, dissenters and even pacifists – and last, but not least, WBs.

Were all of them threatened through the many, now well-recognised, styles of intimidation? Certainly, Nader and Chomsky were; both described their 'ordeals' in interviews. The latter, for instance, mentioned that when he started to expose the 'fact-engineering', 'falsification of history', etc., within his supposedly democratic university and country, the steps taking by many to shut him up made him believe he might lose his job. His wife believed in his 'political linguistic exposes', and returned to university to get an education to allow her to financially support the family. However, 'true democracy' prevailed; he never lost his job – on the contrary, he became famous and is in great demand. Does that mean that 'the louder the noise a WB makes' and 'world-wide fame' are the best insurance/protection, aside from having all your facts well worked out and supported by incontrovertible evidence?!

Harry Wu ought to be considered here as an example of a 'WB extra-ordinaire and par excellence' as he is exposing the many human rights' abuses in his book (1997) *Troublemaker: one man's crusade against China's cruelty*. He has returned to his former home country to spy on China's activities. See also below.

(c) Public Intellectuals are absolutely a necessity in any democracy – the more we have, the better, especially of the indepen-

dent kind in contrast to the institution-dependent academic intellectuals who are too frequently muzzled, i.e. cannot speak their mind. In 'Conversations with truth', *The Australian Review of Books*, July 1997, 22-24, numerous Australian 'public intellectuals' are mentioned. All could be considered 'sceptical analysts and critics' (in the literary, social, political, and economic contexts), as well as 'dissenters', 'mavericks', and 'idealists'—plus WBs as many tend to expose deleterious, even unethical/corrupt, parts of society. The article calls them also 'outsiders': 'It is only by being an outsider that the intellectual has the freedom of speaking the truth to power'. (See the 1956/1971 book 'The Outsider' by Colin Wilson.)

One rather successful 'public intellectual' (simultaneously being a maverick, independent, idealistic, constructively critical, social analyst) is John Ralston Saul. His three books *Voltaire's Bastards: the Dictatorship of Reason in the West* (1992), *The Doubter's Companion: a Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense* (1994); and especially *The Unconscious Civilization* (1997) clearly had some policy-making influences.

(d) Spying on the international scene. The exposure of governments' activities in treason and spying plus counter-spying is another type of WB. Again, only a few comments are possible here. Peter Wright's 1987, *Spy Catcher* ought to be known to all English-speaking people. The British authorities tried desperately to suppress his explosive revelations about the government MI5-agency operating outside the law, where the only rule was the 11th commandment: 'Thou shalt not be caught'. Even over 50 years after WWII, exposes are still being written, and since several governments are still sitting on secret documents (no WBs there, even though we live in peacetime!), more will be revealed far into the future, no doubt. A recently published contribution is by Desmond Ball and David Horner, 1998, *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network*, about leakages from a Canberra source to the enemy. (Cf. review in 'Nest of Traitor's—Stalin's spies down under', *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 8, 1998.)

The most recent attempt to WB on the British MI6's bumbling, secrecy, deceptions, corruption, and incompetence, for instance, is that by former British spy Richard Tomlinson, who is being prevented from writing a book *la the Spy Catcher*. He went to jail for sending an e-mail synopsis to an Australian publisher. After his release, when he was convinced that he would be re-arrested on some pretence or found dead in a pre-arranged car accident, he slipped out of Britain. For more information, see 'The spy out in the cold' in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 15, 1998, p. 35. Let's hope Tomlinson is being 'annoyed' enough by his former so-called colleagues to do the book-based WB on the British secret service!

What one might call 'reverse spying' was undertaken by Harry Wu (born and raised in China), who exposed the brutalities of the Chinese prison system, for example, by returning to his home country several

times to gather written and video information. See his book *Troublemaker: one man's crusade against china's cruelty* (1997). One might say, simplistically, that his present life is taken up by 'constant no-holds-barred WB' to expose China's human rights abuses, such as selling of human parts taken from executed prisoners!

(7) Heretics, sceptics in religious matters. There are numerous aspects to this as covered by many older and recent books. (a) One is the science-vs.-creationism debacle, as well outlined by Ian Plimer's (1994) *Telling Lies For God: Reason vs. Creationism* (cf. my review in *The Australian Geologist Newsletter* No. 94, 31. March 1995). Young people may have been brainwashed by their parents and pseudo-religious associates to believe the creationist claptrap, and ones they have joined formally creationist groups, there is absolutely no way to object but to either leave and/or WB, because even the slightest internal critical questioning is usually not permitted. Thus, in contrast to other situations described here, in the fanatical religious context (just as under dictatorial, political ones), no gradual sequential increase from a mere 'subtle doubting stage' to a 'more intensive WB stage' is possible, because only a 'sudden exposition' may be the alternative.

(b) Heretics and reformers have existed as long as religion and its several 'alternatives' have. Let me refer you to a couple of books: Peter Cameron's, 1994. *Heretic*, and Father Paul Collins' (1997) *Papal Power* provide Australian contexts. There are others of interest: William Safire's, 1992, *The First Dissent—the Book of Job in Today's Politics*, really ought to tickle your intellectual fancy; as also H. Kersten and E. R. Gruber's, 1992, *The Jesus Conspiracy: the Turin Shroud and the Truth about the Resurrection*. The latter is a thrilling and sensational expose of the faking of dating evidence, which puts into question the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church. The authors encountered determined resistance while obtaining clear evidence as proof of their revelations. Well, what's your opinion? Here is a dilemma: in philosophy one recognises various Sources of Knowledge, one being Knowledge of Authority. Truly, one of the shakiest 'authorities' must be that based on religious research, because too much is interpreted, extrapolated, and based on 'faith'! If doctrines are well established, then those who are called mavericks, heretics and reformers by those in power can be nicely defined as WBs. The latter may have experienced even the upper hierarchy's doctrinal self-doubts (not to speak of the 'unspeakable unethical conducts') withheld from the 'lower ranks in society', which by the nature of religion have to be bamboozled continuously! Only WBs can 'induce' a change!

(8) Independent researchers/scholars—(a) Traditional Medical Practices (TMP) vs. Alternative Health Practices (AHP). Much has been written and spoken about this increasingly widespread, often acrimonious, debate. It is particularly here where one can demonstrate the need for the full, comprehensive application of 'The Scientific Method' to sort out the lunatic fringe of

AHPs from the genuine AHPs. And the more cooperation is furnished from 'patients' who have resorted to the AHP philosophy, the earlier a decision can be made as to the viability of the numerous 'alternative' approaches in order to deal properly with the present chaos, confusion, and contradictions. Even the science-trained/educated TMPs differ widely in opinion among themselves, although many universities are teaching now their future medical practitioners about the 'alternatives'. Even university-based research in some fields of the alternatives is being conducted, e.g. on herbal medicine and acupuncture, among others.

The Australian Skeptics Inc. has for some time battled in several articles in *The Skeptics* magazine/journal the way-out, lunatic fringe of the AHPs (see vol. 18, No. 2, p. 4, 10-14, 15-19, 20-22, for instance). A healthy young lady was sent to several AHPs—she was told that she suffered from several ailments/illnesses, which were 'fictitious—concocted'! Well, of course the planted young lady then WB, as pre-arranged, on these fake AHPs.

(b) Predicting complex systems. Which computer-expert and information-specialist or teacher, researcher, scientist, economist, engineer, politician or other public servant, or anyone else in any responsible position, is willing to admit that predicting, forecasting, anticipating, and similar procedures applied to unravel the future of complex social and natural complexes is nothing but 'intelligent guessing', with probabilities of the results ranging from one extreme to another, depending on many entities, factors, parameters and variables (EFPVs)?

There are literally thousands of examples demonstrating that the 'prediction/forecasting business' is well alive. But increasingly sceptics, outsiders, or whatever you may wish to call them, act as unofficial and official WBs, often warning their own professional colleagues to make more honest pronouncements, e.g. admit our human limitations. Even the most powerful computers with the best software cannot as yet (will we ever be able to?) forecast climate/weather, say, 300 years into the future (as one ANU researcher claimed). Neither can we predict earthquakes and associated volcanism, tsunamis (see recent case in Papua New Guinea wiping out several communities), coastal erosion, landslides, floods (e.g. recent ones in QLD and NSW), droughts (ditto); nor can we anticipate landslides (cf. recent cases in WA and NSW killing many people); etc. [Cf. my publications on Artificial Intelligence and Expert Systems listed below, and 'W(i)ther geological research' in *The Australian Geological Newsletter* (TAG) No. 94, March 1995, p. 67-68.] Note that often research funding is based on 'false promises of success' (see 'Earthquake "forecasters" face their critics in Japan' in TAG No. 95 June 1995, p. 39-40). The latter article is a good example of WB by a scientist.

Of course, the failures of financial/economic forecasts by 'honest experts' handling millions of investment dollars have become almost proverbial, not to forget the purposive fraudulent manipulation of

finances. In all these cases, 'professional WBs' have been active. See the following books, among others: *The Fortune Sellers: the Big Business of Buying and Selling Predictions* by W. A. Sherden (1998); *Predicting the Future: an Introduction to the Theory of Forecasting* by N. Rescher (1998); and the earlier *The Art of Anticipation: Values and Methods in Forecasting* edited by S. Encel et al. (1975).

(9) Maverick intellectuals: e.g. neo-Luddites in the computerisation context. Aside from the failures of computers in predicting/forecasting complex systems mentioned above, there are numerous other limitations and negative aspects of computerising society. Much has been written about this in the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Expert Systems (ES) [see my comments in 'AI and ES', in *Ore Geology Reviews*, v.9 (1994); 'AI—still too simplistic', in *The Australian Geologist Newsletter* No. 90. March 1994, p. 6; 241-243; and 'On predictions: neo-luddites on computerisation and climatic predictions—geniuses or morons?' in *The Skeptic magazine/journal*, v.17, No. 3, 61-63].

Which teacher has enough courage to tell his headmaster that one ought to give students (and parents!) a list of the disadvantages of computers? Which computer company or sales-person would warn parents about the potential psychological and physical health and numerous social problems (including education), if a counter-philosophy is ignored to achieve a logical balance? It should be emphasised that neither I nor most (all?) of the often derogatively called neo-Luddites are anti-technology/science or anti-progress—we are merely advocating 'reason in applying computers', knowing full well the many contributions computers have made and will make.

Well, without trying too hard, I have collected the references of 22 books (as well as many articles) by so-called neo-Luddites who have attempted to expose the computer-hype. Just a few here: H. L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do: a Critique of Artificial Intelligence* (1972, 1993); N. Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Effect of Electronic Media* (1985) and *Technology: the Surrender of Culture to Technology* (1992); R. S. Wurman, *Information Anxiety: gap of what we understand, black hole between data and knowledge* (1989); T. Roszak, *The Cult of Information: a Neo-Luddite Treatise in High-Tech, Artificial Intelligence, and the True Art of Thinking* (1994); L. Talbot, *The Future Does Not Compute: Transcending the Machines in Our Midst* (1995); T. K. Landauer, *The Trouble With Computers: Usefulness, Usability, and Productivity* (1995); and C. Stoll, *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway* (1995). Enough for a start!

(10) Ludicrous behaviour of some university males. Hopefully, this applies only to a very small percentage, but there is one case that reveals much about one of Australia's elite educational institutions, exemplified by some 'old guards' running a university college who were setting the agenda and thus determined the culture! Peter Cameron (1997) described in *Finishing*

School for Blokes: College Life Exposed how the students were involved in sport and alcohol, including binge-drinking, spew competitions; bizarre freshers' initiations; the quaint and other-worldly atmosphere; manoeuvres of prominent business people; archaic attitudes toward women; etc. After longer unsuccessful attempts to rectify the situation, the principal resigned, and in his 1997-book then WB on the college!

Conclusions. From the above discussions it seems apparent that WB is only one type of 'social criticism' and that it entails many different abstract perspectives or contexts, viewpoints, physical environments, methodologies or processes (manoeuvres and counter-manoevres), interpretations, types of people involved (e.g. their personality traits/characteristics), and so forth. Has the time come to put some conceptual order into what appears to be a pell-mell of information on social criticism, including WB? For instance, the time may have arrived to establish a 'sociology and psychology of WB typology'. This may not be too far-fetched considering the literature already available, such as S. Bok's two books on Lying (1978) and Secrets (Ethics of Concealment) (1982), as well as Cheats at Work (1982) and Industrial Sabotage (1979), respectively, by G. Mars and P. Dubois, among many others listed in my article 'The Ubiquity of Dishonesty' in *The Whistle* of July 1998, 2-5.

To put order into this deleterious human activity (i.e. dishonesty) and the approaches used to deal with it, one could commence with definitions-cum-explanations of all terms and phrases involved. For example, one ought to establish the similarities and differences of the 21 words listed (i.e. dishonesty, ..., WB, inexactitude; and there are others to be added) in my July 1998 article. Likewise, the many terms/phrases listed above in the present article that are near-synonymous to WB must be defined-cum-explained as accurately as possible to prevent confusion in our communications. Then, possibly, one can identify related activities that can be grouped or classified. Most importantly, one should also search

for features, criteria or characteristics that permit identification and distinction.

Additionally, the various types of jobs and environments where fraud, etc., can occur ought to be classified. Take, for example, the classifications by G. Mars (1982): he offered a table of 'Typology of work and its rewards' as well as a figure of 'Using grid and group to classify occupations'; the latter in the chapter on 'A classification of occupations and their associated fiddles'. Both are conducive to understanding the environments of different types of cheating. Thus, ideas or concepts that seem to be unrelated make 'more sense' if one can find them to be 'parts' of a 'system' or a 'whole'. Once this has been achieved, one can create tables (e.g. grids) that indicated 'the mode of interrelationships'. To convince yourself, here is one more general example. Ask yourself what the differences and similarities are, as well as what the conceptual/abstract relationships are, between humour, wit, satire, sarcasm, invective, irony, cynicism, and the sardonic? For the answer, see the (what I call comparative/contrastive) table on page 253 in Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, Second Edition (1968).

The more we understand about the WB-phenomenon and related 'critical activities', the better the chance that WB will be accepted as a 'normal' (well, maybe not so normal, yet absolutely necessary!), by-law-protected, activity. This has been discussed in the American and Australian contexts by the above-named article on 'Integrity' by Bill Mellor in the *TIME* magazine of October 1991, as well as by 'Protect the whistleblowers', *Sydney Morning Herald* of 7 March 1992, p.22; 'Time of for Whistleblower Bill', *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 November 1992, p.51; 'Services target cheats', *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 March 1991, p. 4; among others. Apparently, in the United States WBs are more accepted and the defamation laws are not as easy to apply against exposes, in contrast to Australia. To curtail the need for WBs, perhaps companies, governments (see need for 'Fraud and corruption detection workshop' in Canberra as advertised in Department of Primary

Industry and Energy Bulletin, No. 19/May 1993, p.6), industries, educational institutions, ought to consider 'ethics doctors' (cf. 'Whoyagonnacall? Ethics Doctors', by David Dale, *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 7, 1986)!

The WB phenomena ought to be investigated further by sociologists and psychologists to allow a fuller comprehension from several perspectives. (a) For example, what are the personality traits/characteristics that 'make' a WB, i.e. 'induce or compel him/her', to go through the various stages of 'critical analysis' that often culminate in WB – in contrast to those individuals who 'cannot bring themselves' to engage in any criticism? For instance, even during a very low-level communication (like in a meeting or conference), there are many who never ask one simplistic question, in contra-distinction to those who shift around in their seats eager to get clarifications, pose queries, offer counter-arguments or some additional data. Shouldn't one teach and encourage the latter philosophy in schools, for instance? (b) Psychologists could assist potential WBs in determining the 'emotional signs' that would warn any individual during the various stages of 'critical analysis' when the whole process may become too dangerous for that individual's 'mental health'. Readers might wish to supply information on this for discussion and publication. For example, to some WBs, the whole process may become a 'trap without the possibility to escape', whereas others may feel 'an emotional release' through being able to expose fraud, or whatever, and make a social contribution, even if in general unacknowledged.

One more point: recent and future social trends will, no doubt, increase the phenomena of WB, as indicated by J. D. Davidson and W. Rees-Mogg in their 1997 book *The Sovereign Individual: The Coming Economic Revolution—How to Survive It and Prosper in It*; see the sections on 'Heresy and Treason' and 'Defection from Citizenship' (p. 245), and the chapter 'Morality and Crime in the "Natural Economy" of the Information Age'. □

## Where lies a person's responsibility and loyalty?

By Dr. Karl H. Wolf

[This essay appeared first in *The Australian Geologist Newsletter* No. 95, June 30, 1995, p. 7-8, with the subtitle of 'A Little, Gentle, Whistleblowing.' It is offered here in a slightly modified, updated, and expanded (hopefully improved!) form, because I believe that more studies are required of the 'responsibility, accountability, and loyalty phenomena', among others. Although the essay was addressing mainly scientists, the arguments do apply to just about any social setting.]

Barry Jones once suggested that scientists (and others?) are wimps as they don't argue their case, being too meagre in, or

shying away from, taking full responsibility in enhancing science/technology; in demanding their rights; and so on. (In stark contrast, look at the recent case of the union-backed wharfies who forcefully fought for their rights, e.g. to have their numerous proverbial metaphoric cakes and eat them too!) Although Barry Jones has a point, as usual, such opinions/beliefs are half-truths, i.e. being both wrong and right, depending on many factors. One basic question: where do professional (and personal) loyalties lie?

First, one must recognise different types of loyalties: (a) absolute/universal vs. flexi-

ble/relative/comparative or value-laden; (b) personal vs. institutional (e.g. priority and policy-founded); (c) based on preferentially-selected data, philosophy and methodology; (d) economy-controlled; (e) work—colleagues-related; (f) group/class/age/family/region/nation/race/culture/religion-based; (g) expediency-controlled; (h) long/short-term (time-based) types; (i) etc. (Add your own types.)

As to synonyms, near-synonyms or analogous words that could replace in certain contexts the word 'loyalty', there are numerous ones. For example, (i) positive ones: allegiance, responsibility, duty,

respect, devotion, fidelity, etc.; and (ii) negative ones: obedience, submission, servility, passiveness, compliance, etc.

Take the professional loyalty, which can be either conceptual/abstract or concrete/physical, or both in nature and context. (Of course, this two-fold division may be somewhat artificial.) 'Conceptual loyalty' is exemplified, for example, by a company's philosophy of dealing with employees and customers, how truthful or factual their advertisement is; a university department's tenure and hiring procedures (often manipulated to merely propagate the status quo, ignoring teaching in favour of fundraising research); and a scientific fraternity perpetuating their own narrow interests and/or opposing certain hypotheses for the same reasons. There are many other instances available. Conceptual/abstract loyalty may also refer to the 'emotional attachment' of employees to their company, industry, and profession.

'Concrete/physical loyalty', on the other hand, may refer, for instance, to a belief in the physical outputs/products; to the physical presence of employees in a particular industry or profession; and physical representation of an industry and profession. One may ask whether there is really a possibility of separating the abstract/conceptual from the concrete/physical loyalty. Of course, when both comprise a harmonious relationship, it is commonly (but not always) beneficial to all. However, a conflict may arise in one's conscience when the two are in opposition: i.e. the conceptual does not correlate well with the concrete. This is particularly the case in ideological and political situations, and in such settings the two can either run in parallel or even be operative separately or sequentially. Even certain industrial problems are the consequence of the disharmony between conceptual and concrete philosophy, loyalty, responsibility, and accountability between employees, management, customers, banks, and government. In all these cases, whistleblowing is often needed.

Many enigmas related to loyalty, liability, and accountability arise in the context of academia, research, teaching, exploration, consulting, or managing/administrating: some are purely inherent to one's profession, whereas others are based on personal preferences—many negative, some positive in both cases. Dilemmas arise daily, so that conflict resolution is potentially needed continually; more so in some human activities than in others. Do you know of any lifestyle where differences of opinions or interpretations are absent over a one-month period, for instance? And when the 'right attitude' (whatever that means!) is absent, even the smallest problem is easily blown out of proportion. Then the 'loyalty question' arises: to whom, what, when, where, why, under what conditions? The points-of-reference or conceptual goal-posts constantly shift daily, even within minutes, from one situation to the next when various demands are made on loyalty, responsibility, accountability. One's self, individual associates, the group, the company, the family, and society all make demands, which are often implicit/hidden, invisible, unwritten, but still need

to be considered. If the problem cannot be solved, should one engage in dobbing-in, ratting, or whistleblowing (but then leave the family out)?

To assist in setting conceptual and concrete standards, one has resorted to the preparation of Code of Conduct documents that comprise a list of fundamental ethical rules without which society cannot properly function. When these 'ethical agreed-upon rules/laws (written and unwritten)' are broken, then here too the WB-question arises: can the misconduct be tolerated or not, and can the problem be resolved internally to prevent WB? The basic ethical/moral demands are really indisputable (with a few exceptions) in many situations, but other lesser-agreed-upon ones exist and then 'truths' or 'facts' are elusive or information is incomplete to make a decisive decision. This applies to research in just about all dis-

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**"I preferred facts and truths as I saw and experienced them, rather than 'half-truths-and lies-based loyalty', always pointing out that I am willing to be convinced otherwise."**

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ciplines where there is a continuous search for truth, i.e. in philosophy (numerous sub-disciplines), politics, sociology, psychology, medicine, economy, and in all the sciences (even in the supposedly most reliable, most accurate mathematical ones).

What does 'A Little, Gentle, Whistle-blowing' mentioned above specifically refer to? Well, here are several all-too-brief accounts of personal experiences. More could be furnished!

(1) While employed for 10 years (until my retirement at age 65) by the Bureau of Mineral Resources (BMR), now the Australian Geological Survey Organisation (AGSO) in Canberra, ACT, we underwent several internal reviews and at least two major external reviews to determine, for example, the relevance, contributions, and efficiency of the Survey. As one of the Senior Geological Editors, I was quite aware of many deleterious aspects, which had to be made known to all officials to enable them to 'induce' improvements in the future. The situation was so bad that many complaints about the Survey's poor performances were received from industry, individuals, and State Geological Surveys. Rumours had it that it was considered to even 'close down' the Survey, which of course would have been ludicrous considering the size and importance of our natural resources: no-one in his/her right mind

would go that far! Yet, the Survey had to be 're-made', 're-invigorated', up-dated, and modernised. Journalists, exploration companies, etc., argued in favour of retaining the Survey – and I likewise in two 12-14 page submissions pointed out the fundamental contribution our national Geological Survey has made in the past 50 years and should make far into the future. However, not once did I see, hear or read information in the media that unequivocally pointed to the urgent need of re-organising and re-directing our geoscience activities. That is, the enormous, incredible deficiencies and inefficiencies (including refusal to cooperate or work, institutionalised systemic go-slow attitudes among some staff, false claims of professional activities, widespread near-anarchy, unethical carrot-stick methods used by the so-called superiors/supervisors and staff, etc.), absence of priority-setting resulting in multi-million dollar wastage, chaos/disorder of much of the administration and research hierarchy, and so forth, remained hidden. I preferred facts and truths as I saw and experienced them, rather than 'half-truths-and lies-based loyalty', always pointing out that I am willing to be convinced otherwise. Inasmuch as I started to analyse and constructively criticise the system almost from the day I arrived (at age 55 I was glad they actually gave me a chance to out-do professionally some much younger scientists!), but several upper-hierarchy administrators soon told me: 'Karl, you'll never get a promotion, unless you shut up!' And one director: 'If you don't like it, you can always resign!' By two upper-echelon individuals I was informed that my comments are libellous, defamatory, slanderous – so that I deleted the names of specific individuals from my oral and written communications, but continued to complain-cum-WB in general! The threats were very standard tricks, as well known. In contrast, the then-minister thanked me in writing 'for being so honest'!

The Geological Survey (i.e. BMR/AGSO) over the past decades hired quite a few 'New Australian geoscientists', who individually and collectively made invaluable contributions. Yet, many appear (allegedly) to have been marginalised. At least seven told me on several occasions that 'they didn't have the right accent/dialect' and were considered as 'outsiders', not part of the 'in-group', or whatever euphemistic phrase one likes to offer. Thus, many of these 'foreigners' (yet Australian citizens!) were stuck at one level without hope of ever getting a promotion. I have seen some of the ridiculous reasons (in written reports) why a certain person was denied a promotion. Yet, it can be unequivocally proven that many of these individuals made scientific contributions; even far above the average. Reasons for denial were personality-based, totally science-and quality-of-work-and output-unrelated. Guess where many of 'those in charge' originally came from! Where should loyalty, priority, liability, responsibility, accountability lie under such idiotic conditions, where so-called colleagues form gangs/cliques to screw certain individuals. More energetic WBs are definitely required. The Government has Codes of Conduct',

but who cares really? Many public servants never read them; don't have a copy anyway; and don't give a damn.

Many of these so-called 'foreigners' (and others) were reluctant to engage in WB, but just accepted their fate. Barry Jones was correct: because one of these, even world-renowned 'foreign' researcher, told me: 'I am a scientist and any denied promotion doesn't matter; money is not that important!' Well, let the family suffer then! And let the bastards get away with their dirty politics!

Incidentally, it must be made absolutely clear that (a) there were quite a few scientists and others who always did their work efficiently and made excellent contributions through their laboratory and field investigations, and were always personally friendly and ethical in conduct. But a fair number were not! (b) Today, the Geological Survey is a very much-improved organisation. (c) Not-so-incidentally, there are several other national geological surveys (e.g. the USGS, GSC, etc.) that had to undergo similar intensive reviews and upgrading. The efforts were worthwhile.

(2) An extension of the above story is related to writing, by an outside scientist, the history of BMR/AGSO in form of a book for the Survey's 50th Anniversary in 1996. While this was in progress, I challenged those responsible to describe not only the successes and invaluable contributions made by the Survey, but also the failures (in personal, administrative, and scientific matters) experienced by many in the past and recently. Of course, I fully realised that any history of anything is always selective or preferential in approach (cf. books on historical methodology, e.g. *What is History?* By E.H. Carr, 1990, Penguin Books, England, reviewed by me for the Government's Department of Primary Industry and Energy Bulletin, No. 20/93, 19. May 1993, p.5.). Yet, a truthful good-vs.-bad balance is unequivocally required. The external author (Rick Wilkinson) of the Survey's history did indeed do an excellent job, much based on interviews of the staff. His *Rocks to Riches: the Story of Australia's National Geological Survey* was published on time in 1996. However, for my literary, personal, and professional taste he had ignored too many deleterious aspects. I am certain that as an 'outsider' he was not told many of the negative occurrences about which the Survey cannot be proud, in spite of the many important contributions made to Australia's welfare. Consequently, I published a critical review in *The Australian Geologist Newsletter* No. 100, September 30, 1996, 45-46. Read it!

All the above may well fall into the realm of whistleblowing. Actually, I was, and still am, surprised at the freedom granted to me to continually criticise (constructively!) the system, while experiencing only some setbacks as a consequence of my persistent criticisms. Of course, attempts were made to 'retire me early', but for every move made against me, our 'democracy' enabled me to counter with unequivocal evidence, thus demonstrating my superior professional output in contrast to the meagre output of some so-called colleagues. Do you wish me to prove this? One lesson I learnt

long ago: always cover yourself with written material! More about that later.

(3) As a member of a geological consulting group in the Middle East, I was also responsible for six years (up to 1980) to build up a scientific/technological library for the national geological survey, among my other geo-science duties. I noticed that an overseas (Western) publisher, who had the contract to purchase and ship to us all the books, charged the Arabs nearly twice the books' normal international price. The choice: loyalty to either the Western world (even if it was legally-permitted overpricing or cheating) or to ones 'foreign' employer who hired us to do an honest job assisting them to enter our world of commerce, etc.?

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Such ethical decisions are not easy, in particular since the 'foreign' government treated us very generously in many ways. See next point.

(4) While in the Middle East, it became apparent that Western civil engineering and/or construction companies used salty water for concrete roads, airports, buildings, foundations in general, etc. Within a comparatively very short time the concrete developed 'cancer', as it is called; i.e. it 'disintegrated'. Where were the whistle-blowers? A westerner might have been branded a 'traitor' no doubt, if he/she had pointed to the cause of the concrete cancer. I have no idea how the Arabs finally rectified the problem.

Too often, we did not pass on our experience from the West, although it was our sole purpose to do so. Of course, many of the Arabs refused to be 'taught', which is another, actually different, story. However, when the sole responsibility rested with us Westerners, and we could have 'done the right thing', we too frequently did not pass on our experience on, even if it would have enhanced our reputation to increase our profits. Take huge family-housing projects. From experiences in the USA, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, and several European and other countries, we have known for some time that large apartment buildings, even when clustered around a 'court

yard' or park-cum-playground, can eventually change into slums (any exceptions?) for several reasons beyond the present essay's scope. Yet, I have seen such large apartment blocks being erected in several Arab cities' central districts, which didn't even have a court-yard, playground, or park. To put many of the desert-and tent-raised people into small, very confined, high-rise apartments was another mistake we could have prevented through proper consultation by Western town planners and architects, who ought to be able to predict/forecast the sociological impacts by now! Incidentally, I had no way of expressing my opinion officially, and have no idea how the Arabs took to the apartment blocks since we left December 1980. A sociologist should inquire, for everyone's benefit, perhaps. As you realise, many such run-down, filthy blocks in Western cities were detonated to bits or bulldozed as they failed to provide proper living conditions, just as our Mt. Druit social experiment illustrated. 'Common sense is not so common', as one philosopher said.

(5) Two university situations I personally experienced. (a) As a university professor in a Canadian university, my colleagues asked me to be part of concocting 'evidence' against another associate who they wanted to deny tenure and thus get rid of (all that just before Christmas for special Christian effects, no doubt). I refused, and eventually was seconded to the Saudi Arabian Government for six years. (b) While I was a professor at a US university, the geology department applied for a Ph.D. program – a report had to be prepared, checked and passed by several other universities. From the start I expressed my opinion that we did not have the infrastructure, staff, etc., to establish a Ph.D. program; I felt it was not even sufficient for a M.Sc. program. The report even made misleading or false claims of experience, abilities, etc., of the staff presented despite my objections. The external committee refused to grant this Ph.D. program for various reasons; one was that only two (including myself) of eight staff members were sufficiently qualified! (I can prove this in writing.) Result: I went to Mexico for a company into silver exploration. Ever since I am blowing the whistle on 'institutional manipulations'.

That scientists are all-too-human in their behaviour has been pointed out by numerous philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists of science. As the British John Ziman stated in *Minerva*, vol. 9 (1957), p. 456: 'It is refreshing to be reminded that eccentricity and anarchy, serendipity and obsession, counter-suggestion, jealousy, paranoid suspicion, spasmodic laziness, arrogant virtuosity, and other individualistic traits are still to be regarded as essential ingredients in scientific creation. Some of the authors/researchers could only work quite alone; others when in company; some need to be unhappy; others prefer serenity; some are spurred on by desire to do other men down; others are motivated by pure curiosity.'

So, there you are – where is the perfect society, country, culture, or religion?! It just doesn't exist. You have to keep on battling to improve social and natural environments – and whistleblowing is just one method! □

# Surviving Work Abuse

By Brian Martin

Whistleblowers are well aware of what it is like to come under attack at work. Ostracism, petty harassment (slighting comments, loss of files, inconvenient postings), threats and reprimands are just some of the techniques used. Yet it is not only whistleblowers who suffer abuse at work. This can also happen to individuals who are singled out for whatever reason, such as their sex, ethnicity, personal style or good performance, or just because they are a convenient target. Some workplaces are so toxic that virtually everyone suffers in ongoing battles involving tantrums, put-downs, set-ups and physical assaults. In many such toxic workplaces, one person – the scapegoat – becomes a convenient target for everyone's abuse.

The problems are familiar enough, but what to do about them is less obvious. For those who have already blown the whistle, it is often too late. They are either out the door, having been dismissed, or are so stigmatised or traumatised as to have little chance of contributing constructively to change.

Rather than confronting management by making a formal complaint or public claim, is there any other alternative? One, of course, is to do nothing, which is indeed the most common thing. But what if you come under attack, or if one of your colleagues comes under attack? What can be done to survive in the job?

Consulting books on management and organisations doesn't give much guidance. There are stacks of books on dynamic leadership, empowering the workplace and creating positive change. Unfortunately, these sorts of optimistic writings give little recognition of the really terrible dynamics of so many workplaces. Furthermore, they are invariably oriented to managers, especially top managers. They assume a sincere will to bring about beneficial change. There is virtually nothing directed to middle and lower-level workers who would like to change things but have no support from, or are actively sabotaged by, their superiors.

Given this situation, it is exciting to find a new book that provides some real hope for workplace victims: Judith Wyatt and Chauncey Hare, *Work Abuse: How to Recognize and Survive It* (Rochester, Vermont: Schenkman Books, 1997). This is a comprehensive guide to surviving harassment, scapegoating, humiliation and undermining. It is by far the most helpful manual that I've come across.

The authors have years of experience in counselling work abuse victims. They are blunt in stating that most workplaces are abusive and that there's no easy way to change them. Therefore, they argue, the individual who is a target of abuse needs to develop personal skills to understand the situation, change their emotional response and rehearse new behaviours.

Their underlying premise is that in order to survive, change the situation or leave successfully, one has to change oneself. Although this will not be welcomed by those who seek to confront and expose management, the approach nevertheless has useful insights for organisational activists, especially in understanding what may be happening to others and learning how to support them.

The authors rely on the concept of shame as the driving force behind organisational dynamics. People are shamed (humiliated) in various ways, for example by being exposed or criticised for doing an inadequate job, by having suggestions ignored or laughed at, by being revealed as too emotional or caring, and a host of other ways.

To develop a method of coping with the dynamics of shame in organisations, the authors examine the psychology of both individuals and groups. They develop the ideas of "cims" (childhood individual maintenance strategies) that shape individual psychology and of "norms" (native organisational maintenance strategies) that shape group dynamics. Both cims and norms are unconscious, and their interaction affects how individuals cope.

Wyatt and Hare's basic strategy for workers is to learn how to analyse people and the organisation (cims and norms) and to develop the capacity to not be affected by shaming, but instead to psychologically distance oneself. In other words, rather than being caught up in toxic behaviours at work, they believe it is possible to emotionally separate oneself, maintaining integrity internally and helping to survive and promote beneficial change. They are quite clear about how difficult it is to get others to change, especially managers, who have a stake in their power and who are threatened by those who demonstrate competence (not to mention a direct challenge).

They elaborate two major methods for survival: "empowered awareness" and "strategic utilisation." Empowered awareness is basically becoming conscious of what is happening, including all the abuse, rather than denying it. It is a process of developing the skills for building one's own inner psychological world. It involves observing your own feelings, evaluating other people's character styles and observing the organisation's norms and power structure. It includes generating meaning and purpose in one's own life, coping with shaming by others, avoiding self-shaming and avoiding futile power struggles.

Strategic utilisation involves setting goals, planning and preparation, evaluating alternatives and taking action. One important part of this is working out one's own self-interests and also the self-interests of others, and then aligning one's self-interests with those of others, especially superiors, in

order to achieve one's own goals while not threatening others.

The authors give some lengthy examples, showing how shaming, abuse and their recommended strategies operate. Their analysis is based largely on experience with US workplaces, but most of it would apply readily in Australia.

Work Abuse is a long book. It is not something to read in a day or even a week. It does not provide a quick fix to urgent problems. Rather, it is best studied slowly and thoughtfully. The process of changing one's own habitual ways of responding to abuse is not easy. The authors recommend finding either a therapist or a friend to help, especially in recovering from a crisis. But most important is being willing to undertake the process of change and putting in the effort to do so.

The book needs to be ordered from the US (just ask any bookseller to get it for you) and will cost about A\$60. That's not cheap. But it is a bargain if it gives even a chance of avoiding work abuse, which can cause suffering for years, not to mention substantial financial losses.

To a considerable extent, the reader must take what the authors say on trust. There is no detailed justification for the analysis (such as their assumption that shame is the key driving force in abuse), nor any statistics on the effectiveness of their methods compared to other techniques. Their case rests primarily on how well their explanation fits with readers' own experiences and understandings. In other words, you need to ask, does what they say ring true? To me it does!

In several places their observations mesh with views of those familiar with whistleblowing. For example, they say you shouldn't expect justice from top management. In fact, they say, "Justice is a myth, a story; expecting it to happen within a negative-norm workplace is *always* self-destructive."

The authors' focus is on surviving personally and developing strategies to move ahead. In most cases, blowing the whistle leads only to grief for the whistleblower and no change in the organisation; the authors argue against any such self-destructive path. However, they don't say what to do about large-scale corruption or dangers to the public. Just ignoring it in order to survive hardly seems enough. Their approach has value, I believe, even for those who decide to take tackle such problems.

Whistleblowers Australia has had its own share of interpersonal and organisational problems, which of course are not unique to the paid workforce. Undoubtedly, many of the techniques provided here could be applied within WBA as well as in members' workplaces. I look forward to hearing from members who have practised the skills presented in *Work Abuse*. □

# DIALOGUE AND DEBATE

## Somebody else not me

By Stewart Dean

At the demonstration we held recently outside HealthQuest, a friend of mine happened to hear another demonstrator say that "somebody" should make a sign with certain words on it. My friend suggested that perhaps the demonstrator making the suggestion could be the "somebody" who made the sign. My friend was then informed by way of a tirade just how busy the suggestor was and that they certainly didn't have the time to make any such sign.

This incident caused me to cast my mind back to the late 1940s (yes, I'm that old). Around that time there was a revival of what is known as traditional jazz or Dixieland music. It is sometimes also referred to as New Orleans jazz. Many such bands appeared on the scene and jazz clubs were formed.

One such jazz tune called 12th Street Rag stayed at the top of the hit parade for months and months. In these days the chart consisted of the top ten. Message boys on their delivery bicycles could be heard whistling this tune and apprentices drove tradesmen to distraction doing the same thing.

The tune was released as a single and of course there was a flip side. The band that made this recording was called Pee Wee

Hunt's. In these days they were called bands, not groups as now. I never possessed the record myself but one of my mates was a proud owner.

One day when I was at my mate's place, we were repeatedly playing Pee Wee Hunt's

line of each verse of the song was "It's a wonderful opportunity for somebody but somebody else not me."

The kind of incidents that offered opportunities to "somebody" were, for example, a tiger had escaped from the zoo and needed recapturing. It was a wonderful opportunity for "somebody but somebody else not me."

There were several such incidents in the song and if my memory serves me correctly there were similar opportunities involving a bank hold-up and an escaped dangerous criminal.

This record was a revelation to me. It was the nearest thing to a meaning-of-life experience that I have encountered.

How often have you heard "somebody" should do this, "they" should do that or "we" should do something? The "somebody", the "we" or the "they" does not include the speaker making the proposal.

In my 67 years on this planet, I have belonged to a few organisations, but in none of these organisations has "somebody", "they" and "we" been so often called upon to perform as in Whistleblowers Australia.

Somebody should do something about it. □

### Editor's comment.

*Years ago in Friends of the Earth (Canberra), we spent a lot of time discussing proposals raised by members, but in many cases nothing ended up being done. So we instituted a rule. On hearing a new idea, we went around the group asking whether anyone was willing to work to help make it happen, assuming we agreed on it. If no one volunteered, the item was dropped: no more discussion on that topic. This put an end to lots of futile discussion of "good ideas."* □

12th Street Rag. Now I have always been of an enquiring nature and curiosity got the better of me. I decided to find out what was on the flip side of the record.

It was titled "Somebody else not me". It was a vocal number and it went on to describe a series of incidents that called for action, usually of a heroic kind. The punch

## Invitation

The Whistle welcomes contributions. They should deal with whistleblowing or related topics. This gives considerable scope, since it covers corruption, bureaucratic struggles, strategies of changing behaviour, law reform and specific areas where whistleblowing is relevant, among other topics. Some possibilities are:

- personal reports from or about whistleblowers;
- reports about group activities;
- updates on political or legal issues;
- reviews or summaries of books, articles or meetings;
- notes on useful skills;
- commentary on previously published articles;
- letters commenting on virtually any topic.

We are also on the lookout for items from the media (including newspapers, magazines, books and the Internet). Thanks to Don Eldridge and Cynthia Kardell for sending items used in this issue's Media Watch and to Bill Sheridan for typing.

If you can send your contribution by email or computer disc, that makes things easier for us. We also welcome volunteers willing to type up articles (on computer).

The Whistle is printed and sent to members and subscribers and also published electronically on the World Wide Web (see

[http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/contacts/au\\_wba/](http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/contacts/au_wba/)).

The tentative deadline for the next issue is 15 December.

Send all contributions to Brian Martin, editor, at PO Box U129, Wollongong Uni NSW 2500; email [brian\\_martin@uow.edu.au](mailto:brian_martin@uow.edu.au); fax 02-4221 3452. If you have queries, feel free to ring at 02-4221 3763 (work), 02-4228 7860 (home). □

## Wanted for a good home at the NSW Office

The NSW Branch is keen to get hold of some software for an Apple Mac. What we require is everything from the operating system to say Microsoft Office Suite (or equivalent) with a scanning capability. We want this software to outfit a Mac in order to establish some graphics facility to enhance WBA publications and website. Please, no pirate software!

Contact NSW committee member Grahame Wilson on (02) 9744 3610 or on email at [wilsongr@ozemail.com.au](mailto:wilsongr@ozemail.com.au). □

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## Whistleblowers Australia: regional contacts

### New South Wales

"Sharing and caring" meetings are held every Tuesday commencing at 7.30pm at the Presbyterian Church Hall, Campbell Street, Balmain.

Contact: Cynthia Kardell, ph/fax 02-9484 6895

*Goulburn* contact: Rob Cumming, 018-483155

*Wollongong* contact: Brian Martin, 02-4221 3763

### Queensland

Feliks Perera, ph/fax 07 5471 7659

Whistleblowers Action Group contact:

Greg McMahon, 07-3378 7232 (a/h)

### South Australia

Jack King, 08-8278 7853

### Tasmania

Public Interest Network contact:

Isla MacGregor, 03-6239 1652 (b/h)

### Victoria

Neville Ford, 03-9560 8276

Christina Schwerin, 03-5144 3007

### Western Australia

Avon Lovell, 08-9242 3999 (b/h)

Relevant web site: <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/>

### Whistleblowers Australia

PO Box U129, Wollongong Uni NSW 2500

### Support Whistleblowers Australia

- ☐ Become a member: annual membership fee \$25.  
(The membership fee includes a subscription to *The Whistle*.)
- ☐ Subscribe to *The Whistle*: \$25 or \$12 (low income) per year.
- ☐ Give a donation: money or your time and expertise.

WBA income is almost entirely from memberships and individual donations.

Its activities depend entirely on voluntary work by members and supporters.

If this box ☐ is ticked, your annual membership fee or subscription is due.