



## No more Mr Nice Guy

Enough is enough decides JH, he's turning to the dark side

Nice guys finish last, the adage rings true. For years I've gone the nice route, cause that's who I am deep down, a nice guy. It comes naturally to me, I don't enjoy being mean to people. I've had the odd romance, only for my heart to be broken when she eventually sees the light and goes to the dark side, aka, the bad boy. The bad boy will not necessarily be overly attractive in a conventional sense, nor will he possess the most nimble of minds, yet he still wins the girl. How can it be? Wasn't the SNAG the way of the future? Believe me, I love being blokey, but I thought showing interest and courtesy toward someone would be an attractive trait.

My sister, the main consultant for my relationship advice (I know how pathetic that sounds), keeps telling me the old cliché is the answer; "Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen", but I've never had the heart to do it. Well things are getting desperate and I've had enough; being nice gets you nowhere. From now on, the prick is in force. You want a compliment? Un-unh. Still hanging for my phonecall? It ain't coming. Blow off my mates to spend time with you? Too bad.

But why do these relationship truisms continue in this day and age? Why do men feel the need to not let their feelings be known, and why do women let men treat them like crap and seemingly enjoy it? Haven't the crusades of Germaine and her pals put empowerment back into the female psyche? Do we, the humble men of Australia, need to change our view on women? Or do females themselves need to move away from the past and into the new age where men are their best friends as opposed to their monarchs. I remember when the Spice Girls when getting around sprouting "Girl Power", now Posh is resigned to being the fashionable (i.e. stick figure) handbag on the arm of Becks.

Or is it a lot simpler and less melodramatic explanation? Do girls simply like dickheads?

Whatever the explanation is, it's no more Mr Nice Guy for this poor dateless fool.

JH

**For Your Imagination**

Open 10am-10pm  
7 Days A Week

10 Shields St. Cairns

**EROTICA**  
ADULT SHOP  
4041 4069

GT06-002

## nothing to CROW ABOUT



Twenty years' service, and that's all the thanks you get — a trophy which says you are the "worst and slowest barman I've ever served by anywhere in the world."

The recipient of this accolade, Mark Roach (aka 'Crow') of Verdi's, says it doesn't really matter since he doesn't work too often behind the bar anyway.

"I just make guest appearances these days," he says, carefully arranging a few sprigs of baccy onto a Rizla for a sly durrty out the front.

In any case, the customer who gave him the trophy isn't even a Cairns regular. Businessman Ron Jelich ("don't forget to mention his golf slice") is originally from Babinda, and no doubt expects snappier service here in the Big Smoke than he would get at home — after all, the people of Babinda were so slow they couldn't even build their own pub and had to get the State Government to build one for them.

Still, Crow admits, it's possible that Jelich might have caught him on one of his worse days.

"I may have slowed down a bit in recent times," he says. "I've got a bad back."



Nobody suggests that this bad back has come from carrying the rest of the establishment on his shoulders, but Mark's memory functions well, as he recalls the famous people who have made Verdi's their gathering place in the past — particularly the sports legends like Allan Border, Merv Hughes, Jimmy Maher, Kevin Sheedy and so on.

"I could tell you some stories," he muses.

Sorry, Mark, this is a family newspaper.

The worst and slowest barman in the world? Possibly. The worst and slowest barman in Cairns? Nowhere near.



# People are great @ txts but 2 rite propa english iz an Apostrophe Catastrophe

**can u blame ppl for txtng insults abt utha ppl in the papers? after all, u ar garanteed publikashun 4 no effort & riting propa stuff is hard work !! u mite think that concocting these columns 4 the gate iz eezy but truth iz i lik wen it is ritten mor than wen i rite if u no wot im toking abt.**

Phew, now that I've got that off my chest I've realised that the best thing about text messaging is its relative lack of apostrophes because out in the supposedly literate world we are in the grip of an apostrophe epidemic of monumental proportions. That subject in a moment but first I must digress to my adjacent and erudite colleague Hawkeye who drew attention in the last issue of *The Gate* to some of the synergies, roadblocks and silos going forward within government departments. My column's worth of contribution to this fascinating topic will have to wait for another time but a letter received the other day from the billionaire American CEO of Telstra, Sol Trujillo, exhorting me to waste yet more money on purchasing shares in his crumbling asset cannot go unremarked. It read as follows: "*We are improving our service delivery metrics and our performance metrics have turned the corner. More specifically, headcount that was increasing is now decreasing.*"

I'm very glad that Sol has improved his metrics but does he have to boast about it to the whole world? Clearly his intent is not just to drive down the Telstra share price but to destroy the English language too. Falling headcount — for those unfamiliar with Amer-gibberish or unaware, perhaps, that Telstra could be using French post-revolutionary methods to reduce staff numbers — must mean that Aussie battlers are losing their jobs so the share price can plummet. Sacked (or executed) employees, stuffed company and a bugged language — that's the triple bottom line working to perfection! And the bonus? An even bigger pay packet for Seedy Sol.

Now that I've used Telstra as linguistic laxative, I can return to punctuation. What is about apostrophes that the mere sight of an 's', whether for a plural noun or the third person singular of a verb, seems to provoke a Pavlovian paroxysm of curlicues? They're squirted around like disinfectant in an aircraft toilet. I am convinced apostrophe-ing

must satisfy a deep-rooted artistic longing in today's overly materialistic society. After all, the French have their cedillas and circumflexes and the Germans their umlauts, so what's wrong with English speakers tarting up their language a bit?

There's no doubt that apostrophers start to salivate most when about to write the plural of a noun which ends in a vowel or the letter 'y', and what better place to find such words than in the fruit and veggie stores? Blame for the apostrophic invasion must be laid at their counter, and chief victim is undoubtedly the humble banana which, it seems, is never peacefully allowed to receive its plural 's'. Quite apart from *banana's* we also get *avocado's* and *potato's* or even *strawberry's* (oh dear!)

It's hardly surprising that signwriters of electrical goods are only narrowly behind the veggie sellers in their liberal use of the apostrophe — that's right, no more *radio's* or *video's* and I'm afraid that plurals of abbreviations are out too; so farewell *CD's* or *TV's* and while we're at it, let's kiss goodbye to the *1980's* and *1990's*. None of these needs an apostrophe.

Like the Pope, I think if in doubt we should leave it out. Punctuation can also be promiscuous. This is nowhere more evident than in the use of *it's* for the possessive as in 'its owner' or 'its importance'. Maybe this incorrect use of *it's* is the cane toad of punctuation, here to stay come what may. And apart from grammarians, pedants and anal retentives, who cares whether you embellish the language with a few extra apostrophes? Don't languages change? Shouldn't we be adaptable?

Maybe I fit into one or all of the above categories, but doesn't a surfeit of apostrophes make English a fussier and more irritating language? If the rules of apostrophe use are so difficult for people to master maybe we should abolish them completely. What harm could it do? Any possible ambiguities in the meaning of words as a result would more than likely be cleared up from context and things couldn't be any more confusing than they are at present.

So, just as Telstra is a lost cause for everyone but Sol Trujillo, perhaps our grammatical curlicues should also be defeated. Writers of English unite; we have nothing to lose but our apostrophes (or is that apostrophe's?)

Denis Walls

## • SCENE & HERD •

**BEATING AROUND THE BUSH:** While this column is loath to kick a chap when he's down, Hawkeye feels duty-bound to divulge the findings of a four-month study regarding the intelligence quotient of President George W. Bush. The survey, conducted by the Lovenstein Institute, compared the IQ of the past 11 American presidents based on: scholarly achievements, writings that they produced without aid of staff, their ability to speak with clarity, and several other psychological factors. Dubya, with a rating of 91, finished at the foot of the ladder, with his dad, George Bush Snr, next (98). All the other presidents, including Ronny Reagan (105), topped a ton. Bill Clinton headed the list with an IQ rating of 182, followed by Jimmy Carter (175), John F. Kennedy (174), Richard Nixon (155), Harry S Truman (132), Lyndon Johnson (126), Dwight Eisenhower (122) and Gerald Ford (121). According to Dr Lovenstein, the current incumbent's low rating is due to a poor command of the English language in public statements, his limited use of vocabulary [6,500 words for Bush versus an average of 11,000 words for other presidents], his lack of scholastic achievements, and an absence of any body of work which could be studied on an intellectual basis.



**LANE LUNCHING:** Spotted 'doing lunch' within cooe of each other in Village Lane on a recent Friday — the new local Liberal powerbroker, Mayor Kevin Byrne, and the woman tipped to succeed Warren Entsch as the Liberal candidate for the seat of Leichhardt — former distinguished News Ltd journalist Charlie McKillop. McKillop (who's no relation to Australia's only saint as far as we know), was noshing at French restaurant C'Est Bon while Big Kev was chowing down at Rum & Raisin. Read into that what you will, dear reader.

**STICKY PROBLEM:** An elderly Cairns Central shopper last week, legitimately parked in a spot reserved for invalid parking, returned to the giant shopping mall's car park to discover that some lowlife had squirted glue into all four door locks of her vehicle. It cost her \$350 to get said locks replaced.

**LIBRARY POSER:** Why does the Cairns City Library send notification of book collection by snail mail when it accepts requests via its website? It would save postage, not to mention paper, by taking an electronic approach.

Hawkeye