



Hendo's dubious scoop

Edited by Alan Mascarenhas and Aaron Timms

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Is Brian Henderson getting confused in his dotage? Somebody is. The 73-year-old former Nine newsreader was quoted in Saturday's *Daily Telegraph* as saying he had rejected overtures from Channel Seven's chief, David Leckie, to take over the network's 6pm bulletin. "I declined because I can't imagine myself being at any other network than Nine. I worked there all my life." But Leckie has denied he ever made the offer.

"I just arrived back from LA and was dismayed to see comments by my great friend, Brian Henderson, in *The Daily Telegraph* today," he wrote in an email to Seven's news director, Chris Willis. "The facts are that Brian Henderson must have been misquoted because he has never been offered the 6pm job by me or by anyone else in the Seven network."

Hendo has a better chance of seizing his old chair at Nine, where Mark Ferguson has lost the past 17 weeks of ratings.

SBS behind the 8-ball

Viewers of the FA Cup final on SBS on May 21 were entitled to feel duded. Not only was the game a deadly bore, the commentary was woefully out of kilter, maintaining a one-second lag behind everything that appeared on screen. Come the Champions League final on Thursday morning, SBS had fixed the problem - only this time, the commentary was one second *ahead* of the footage. This meant that goals were regularly being announced without anyone even getting near a ball.

Spike fears for what will happen when SBS hosts the Ashes. Given that a ball bowled at 140kmh takes about half a second to get down a cricket pitch, we can look forward to every Glenn McGrath wicket being announced while he's halfway through his run-up.

Roll over, Rupert

The fanatical attachment of Australians to soccer teams based half a world away may strike many as odd. But a businessman and diehard West Ham United supporter, David Lewis, has a simple explanation for his obsession: shortness. The 1.73 metre tall Lewis got interested in football in his early teens when he was sick of being "murdered by gorillas" in rugby. Now, the feisty Lewis has organised tonight's double-screening of the English First Division play-off final between Preston North End and his beloved Hammers at Easts Leagues Club and Paddy Maguires pub in the city. It's the second year in a row he has single-handedly purchased the exclusive Australian television rights to the game after all the major networks indicated they would not be showing it. Consider it a victory for the little guy.

Milat sees the light

Has Ivan Milat found Allah? The notorious backpacker serial killer has converted to Islam while serving his life sentence, according to sources at Goulburn jail. Milat's epiphany is discussed by his brother, Boris on tonight's *Australian Story*. Boris says he'll believe Ivan has turned over a new leaf when he hears him say sorry: "He will have a lot of repenting to do." The question remains: will Muslims welcome Milat? Yes, says Amjad Ali Mehboob, the chief executive of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, despite admitting he's a little surprised at the faith's newest recruit.

"Islam is not the exclusive domain of anybody. Anyone can enter or leave Islam. I guess we hope that he has understood what Islam stands for and will make the appropriately remorseful actions for the crimes he has committed."

Who spat the dummy?

There's monkey tricks afoot in the federal Liberal partyroom, judging by the confused accounts of what transpired when backbench rebels proposed changes to mandatory detention last week. The proverbial dung hit the fan according to the *Herald's* Louise Dodson ("Howard explodes at MPs revolt"). The PM was "caught offguard" and "reacted furiously" to the dissent; she even quotes partyroom sources who say his mood was "very, very angry". Yet *The Australian's* Elizabeth Coleman wrote a piece later that week, quoting another party-room source who said Howard knew the motion was coming and only "pretended to be livid" at the rebels.

The headline on her story read: "Costello fury at renegades." So is Howard angry or not? And if not, how long did he practice "pretending" to explode in front of the mirror? And is Peter Costello really furious or just "pretending" so he can attract the votes of more than party moderates for his upcoming leadership tilt?

We want it back

Supporters of Schapelle Corby have swamped talkback radio and the internet, demanding that Australia reclaim the \$1.6 billion it offered Indonesia in tsunami relief. One person on <http://www.schapellicorby.com> wrote: "With regards to the aid package, how about we give [the Indonesians] a taste of their own medicine? If we choose not to take evidence into account, and basically refute that there was a tsunami because we have a seismologist here in Australia that says it didn't really happen - and of course we believe him because he's one of us - then [let's] hold back every cent until that poor girl [is freed]."

This argument got Spike thinking: where else can us Aussies reclaim aid?

The kingdom of Bhutan got over \$1million from taxpayers last year. But isn't it an anti-democratic state whose major exports include gypsum and handicrafts?

And what about the Pacific atolls of Niue and Tokelau?

They receive a combined total of \$1million a year, but at the same time enjoy a "free association" with New Zealand.

This gives them the potential to secretly funnel players into the All Blacks' development squad.

Call that gratitude? Bring back the bloody aid.

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