Is blowing the whistle worth the risk?

Play the Game

Colorado Springs, October 2019

Bonita Mersiades

David Hurley
Governor-General of Australia

"The standard you walk past is the standard you accept."

Whistleblowers …

- Are 'in the room'
  - They are not investigators or hackers or authorities
    - They have a role, but it is qualitatively different
- Ask or raise questions for no personal gain and at great personal cost
- 'Auditors of accountability and guarantors of good governance'
- 5th pillar of democracy

What I said in a nutshell *before* we knew the outcome

- This bidding process is flawed because the guidelines are flawed
- There are insufficient checks and balances
- There are too many opportunities to 'clip the ticket'
- Why are we talking to people about what they want out of this?
- Why do we need to spend so much money?
- Why do we need a two-year bidding process?
- This is 21st century 'brown paper bag money'
- There are too many dodgy people in this
- Why have we engaged these consultants?
- Our consultants don't actually *do* anything
- FIFA is allowing this to happen because this is their way of doing things
- This is going to end in tears

2010-2015

- "She will lose us the Bid"
- "She is bombastic"
- "She is incompetent"
- "She is not a team player"
- "She is bitter and twisted"
- "She is not reliable because she spoke with the media"
- "She has no right to speak about these things"

2016-2018

- 2016
  - "She is a nobody"

- 2017
  - "She is totally discredited"
  - "She's only writing a book to make money"

- 2018
  - "What would she know about what went on at FIFA?"
  - "She got paid to speak at a conference"
  - "We don't want an activist, we want someone who will do what we want"

This year

- 2019
  - "She's not a writer (or journalist)"
  - "She can't be trusted because she speaks out"
  - "She's too opinionated"
  - "We do not want her in football"
  - "We want nothing to do with you"
  - "We will have nothing to do with this (fantastic initiative) because she thought of it"

Assaults

- Surveillance on my family and me before and after I left

- Bugged

- Hacked – three times involving massive DDS attacks from Russia

- Burgled

- Ambushed

- Denigrated

- Fake
    - Websites
    - Bitcoin accounts
    - Twitter
    - Facebook
    - LinkedIn (I am not on it at all)

Who said this?

- Colleagues
- Acquaintances
- Media
- The organisation you worked for and those they can influence (eg. Australian FA, FIFA, other sporting organisations)
- People you've never met
- Even people who you thought were friends – or at least friendly

From a finance industry whistleblower

"At every juncture, I felt I had been let down. I felt let down by [the employer], the Senate inquiry and [the regulator]. [The journalist] was the one shining light throughout all of this, but even they had moved on to other scandalous stories. I had lost my identity and felt too humiliated, ashamed and proud to admit that I needed help. I was in despair. I was lost. My anger had turned into frustration then sorrow and then grief, hopelessness and regret ...My demons were loudest at night when the lights were out and the world shuts down, my brain kept thinking."

'Stuck in static time'

"At first I assumed that the whistleblowers, mostly middle-aged men and women, were talking about recent experiences: blowing the whistle, experiencing retaliation, getting fired. Only after a couple of months did I realize that most were talking about events five, ten, 15, or even 20 years ago. Their narratives seemed so fresh, their pain still so sharp, it was hard to believe they were talking about ancient history, or at least so it seemed to me … The odd thing about whistleblower narratives, beyond their aura of timelessness, 20 years ago as recent as today, is that they never stop."

Professor Fred Alford, University of Maryland

Whatever happened to ....?

- Warner
- Beckenbauer
- Radmann
- Makudi
- Temarii
- Diakite
- Salguero
- Mutko
- Shuvalov
- Al-Sabah

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