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KIRBSTER WATCH
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POETIC JUSTICE



partners in the firm called U.S.A.

Rowena Johns

1Details of the Clintons' Australian tour are from Thomas, Brett, "Clinton's Holiday", Sun-Herald, September 22, 1996.

2Details on Hillary Clinton's life are sourced from Warner, Judith (1993) Hillary Clinton: the Inside Story Pan Macmillan, Sydney.

3Bill's biographical information comes from Allen, Charles and Portis, Jonathon (1992) The Comeback Kid: the Life and Career of Bill Clinton Birch Lane Press, New York.

Their years together are documented in both the afore-mentioned books.

4The Clinton ideals can be observed in Putting People First (1992) Times Books, New York, a book of his election promises on everything from AIDS to national security. It's ostensibly penned by Clinton himself and his running mate Al Gore, though one suspects the policy team did the actual writing.

5Woodward, Bob (1994) The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House Simon and Schuster, New York. Bob Woodward is the legendary journalist, who with fellow Washington Post scribe Carl Bernstein, exposed the Nixon administration. They were immortalised in the film "All the President's Men", starring Robert Redford as Bob and Dustin Hoffmann as Carl.

PART - kirbster- TIMERS watch.

Studying part-time law you're such a bore,
You spend your life running from door to door.

And just when you think you've got to law school by two,
You get stuck in a lift and join the late roll queue.

You can pick us in class,
Our suits, noisy mobiles and front row seats, tell us apart.
And though we may not get all the reading done,
We'll use our "voices of experience" and enthusiasm to have some fun.

Yet our families often wonder,
Why we bother to plunder into a state of non-living during session time.

But all will be fine in 6 year's time.

When everyone will be pleased and no doubt relieved.

Then off to college we'll go, with briefcase in tow.

Where one day it will dawn,
That most of the laws we learnt at uni have been reformed.

But from there, our non-living will end and everyone may be content.

As long as we don't engage, in another career change!

Kerry Harrison

an update

On Thursday around 1.00 I was enmeshed in a bitter war with the Evidence Act, knowing we could never come to terms with each other. Essays tumbled over each other in my mind and exams loomed. I put it bluntly: "Can I afford to devote an hour to His Honour Justice Michael Kirby?" Kind of ironic really when I recall that this time last semester I easily justified hours of Oprah on such topics as "My Wife Eats Too Much" and "13-Year Olds Demand Silicon". Fortunately a moment of clarity briefly descended (if only it would stay) and I took a chance on the Kirbster.

This was his 20 somethingth lecture for the Speakers Forum (he must have felt like you do when you go back to infants' school: "the room seems so much smaller..." and, though many of those present had heard him speak there before, the packed audience was still ready to drip off his every word. This time, though, was different. This time Justice Kirby had been appointed to the High Court of Australia.

He began by describing how his life "was changed for ever" when his associate interrupted a committee meeting to give him a yellow sticky label on which was scrawled "Mr I a Varch wants to

“speak to you.” His face drained of colour, he wished his fellow committee members a happy Christmas and took the phone call which sent him to Canberra.

Justice Kirby's talk reflected his broad interests which have been traversed through his work with the United Nations, the Human Rights Commission and of course, his work as Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal. He touched on such diverse topics as cryptology, Australia's geopolitical position, the Monarchy, the trans-boundary transfer of information, associated privacy issues and law reform on drugs. He even referred amusingly to the fairly dodgy relationship between Sir Garfield Barwick and the late Lionel Murphy. In preparation for a speech he is to give in commemoration of the death of his great friend, Justice Kirby asked the former for the greatest attribute of the latter. The answer after a long pause: “You know, I can't think of one!”.

For Justice Kirby, it is vital that lawyers maintain an active awareness of scientific and

international developments. As he put it: “Bio-genetics may hold the key to unlock the secret of how to make a new humanity. If we think that can't happen, well it can. They already do it now with animals... Bio-genetics poses the challenge of human rights for future generations.”

He also reminded us of the necessity to fight intolerance; adjuring us to speak against prejudice in every forum. He referred us to the approach of Lionel Murphy who was always able to question the system; who was a great legal technician but also open to new ideas and the notion that old orthodoxy can be wrong.

With particular reference to the law's intolerance of drug use he suggested future lawyers take responsibility for the laws which frame social attitude. And further on the point of intolerance, he noted the importance of the words of Sir William Deane (Governor General) and Sir Bill Hayden in the current political climate.

(One point in favour of the Monarchy?)

To be honest the cynicism of the 90's, which came straight after the greed of the 80's has taken its toll on me (and many others') ability to see the law as a “noble calling”. It really is only the brave and the brilliant who would so describe it. If you need convincing - and a month before exams, I did, Justice Michael Kirby is the one to do it. Pretty unbelievably putting much of his success down to luck, and assuring us that no-one is more special than anyone else, he reminded us that “not all the garden is rosy” and that it is our responsibility “to go the extra mile, join the SRC (are you serious???)” and remember that Justice is what it's all about.

by Katie Kemm