



Source: Michael Gawenda, 'Iraq's desperate times call for a new diplomacy', *Sydney Morning Herald online*, 05/03/07.

Tags: [diplomacy](#), [evidence](#), [surveillance](#), [travel](#), [workplace](#), [sport](#)

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Ian Baker ducked his head and swivelled into the seat of his Porsche Targa. At 190 centimetres the former international rugby flanker did a lot of ducking in the course of a normal day, if any of his days fit that description. The dawn sun was just above the horizon on the Tasman Sea as he gunned the car through the winding road that hugs the coastline south of Avalon. Thoughts formed like clouds gathering moisture and languidly drifted into his conscious mind to be taken stock of when he was good and ready. This morning his mind was as cloudless as the early autumn sky.

The phone buzzed.

Hello?

Bakes?

Yes.

Rod.

Morning mate.

Barry asked me to call you. We've got an issue.

I thought issues were our business. Good to know we're still trading. What's up?

Leaked email.

Yeah.

Implicating Barry in the meeting with Trevor.

Who leaked it? Well it's from Barry to the rest of the people who attended the function.

What's Trevor doing about it?

He's got the ABC on his arse for an interview so I've told them he has to catch a plane and can't talk until later in the day.

Fucking Barry. Well, Barry's Barry and you know how it is.

What do you want me to do?

See what you can get me that links Barry to the other mob.

Sure. Barry's all over the other mob. No problem.

Emails, letters, diary notes, fucking postcards or drink coasters I don't really care as long as it has substance.

For a day at least.

Exactly. Can you do that for me?

Okay. Leave it with me. I'll get back to you by lunchtime.

The phone clicked off and Ian Baker's mind was now a gathering storm. Getting the material would be no problem for him. He knew who to ask and how to ask them. He was neutral. An insider. Well liked, trusted, ex-rugby international, clean skin. People owed him favours but he had no debts. That was his special skill. No debts and lots of owed favours. This was what kept him in business. And sailing which was what he was supposed to be doing today.

The phone buzzed.

Bakes?

Yes.

Tommy.

Morning Mr Dunne.

Got something for you.

Mmmm?

This business with Barry.

What business?

The leaked email.

Not following you, Tom.

A leaked email from Barry's office fingering Trevor.

For what?

Being at that fucking meeting.

Oh that. Mmmm. What about it?

I've got something on the other mob.

And?

I thought you might like to know.

Alright.

I can't talk now. Can you meet me at the club later today?

As long as it's before lunch time.

Okay. Usual place?

Why break with tradition? Call me at 11.

Okay.

The phone clicked off. Ian reached for his coffee. The car

flew along the Wakehurst Parkway that cut through the national park forests. He hit the radio control on the steering wheel and scanned the news. Trevor was all over it like a rash. A cloud formed in the shape of Dick Cheney. He'd met him on the recent Australian stopover and they'd talked about hunting deer. Ian spent the odd weekend hunting deer in New Zealand so he knew what he was talking about and Cheney listened to the conversation. Having an MBA was also useful for conversations with people like Cheney, essentially business people. They even touched on Halliburton and Cheney intimated that Iraq had been the right move, without saying as much.

Ian Baker didn't like Dick Cheney but he didn't have to. He didn't have to like or dislike anyone and it was best that way, in his experience. Judge not...Cheney struck him as a man with deep convictions and a strong moral sense of what was right. The fact that most of the world disagreed with him, some to the extent that they wished him dead, did not outwardly perturb him. He was secure in his own skin, authentic in his own way. Ian Baker could see that and respected him for it. You had to. He was Bush's go-to guy. The most powerful Vice President in history. The Wizard. Whether you liked him or not was beside the point. He had power, more power than any individual on earth and you could feel it in his presence. The fact that he was pallid, had bad teeth and heart problems only enhanced his stature.

Dick Cheney evaporated as the Porsche entered the freeway to the city. The phone buzzed.

Hello. Bakes, it's Leo.

Morning Leo.

Look I've got something you might be interested in.

Mmmm.

The leaked email.

Which one?

The one tying up Trevor with the meeting with Barry.

Who leaked it?

Tommy.

Tommy?

Fucking oath it was Tommy.

How do you know?

Rod told me.

Rod told you that?

Yep.

When?

He called me at 2am.

Why are you telling me? I thought you'd want to know.

What can I do about it? It's none of my business mate.

Oh I think it is your business. (Laughs)

Well...And I've got something else.

You're a wellspring of revelations this morning mate.

Well cop this. ASIO are on to Maureen.

That'd just be standard wouldn't it?

Apparently not. Apparently the direction came on the quiet.

Do you have proof?

More or less.

In what form?

Can't say right now. Can you meet me at the club later today?

As long as it's before 11.00

Okay.

Call me at 10.00

A cloud formed in the shape of breakfast in an otherwise clear sky. Bagels and a decent coffee at Angelo's. He pulled the Porsche into his car space in the basement of a Pitt Street office tower. Moments later he was in the lift with a woman he didn't know. Later that day they would be on his yacht sailing through the heads on the way to Pittwater. He needed to get her onto the slips for a clean up.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Boris Kelly.*