

Bad Debts

Peter Temple

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Extract

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I found Edward Dollery, age forty-seven, defrocked accountant, big spender and dishonest person, living in a house rented in the name of Carol Pick. It was in a new brick-veneer suburb built on cow pasture east of the city, one of those strangely silent developments where the average age is twelve and you can feel the pressure of the mortgages on your skin.

Eddie Dollery's skin wasn't looking good. He'd cut himself several times shaving and each nick was wearing a little red-centred rosette of toilet paper. The rest of Eddie, short, bloated, was wearing yesterday's superfine cotton business shirt, striped, and scarlet pyjama pants, silk. The overall effect was not fetching.

'Yes?' he said in the clipped tone of a man interrupted while on the line to Tokyo or Zurich or Milan. He had both hands behind his back, apparently holding up his pants.

'Marinara, right?' I said, pointing to a small piece of hardened food attached to the pocket of his shirt.

Eddie Dollery looked at my finger, and he looked in my eyes, and he knew. A small greyish probe of tongue came out to inspect his upper lip, disapproved and withdrew.

'Come in,' he said in a less commanding tone. He

took a step backwards. His right hand came around from behind his back and pointed a small pistol at my fly. ‘Come in or I’ll shoot your balls off.’

I looked at the pistol with concern. It had a distinctly Albanian cast to it. These things go off for motives of their own.

‘Mr Sabbatini,’ I said. ‘You’re Mr Michael Sabbatini? I’m only here about your credit card payment.’

‘Inside,’ he said, wagging the firearm.

He backed in, I followed. We went through a barren hallway into a sitting room containing pastel-coloured leather furniture of the kind that appears to have been squashed.

Eddie stopped in the middle of the room. I stopped. We looked at each other.

I said, ‘Mr Sabbatini, it’s only money. You’re pointing a gun at a debt collector. From an agency. You can go to jail for that. If it’s not convenient to discuss new arrangements for repayments now, I’m happy to tell my agency that.’

Eddie shook his head slowly. ‘How’d you find me?’ he said.

I blinked at him. ‘Find you? We’ve got your address, Mr Sabbatini. We send your accounts here. The company sends your accounts here.’

Eddie moved aside a big piece of hair to scratch his scalp, revealing a small plantation of transplanted hairs. ‘I’ve got to lock you up,’ he said. ‘Put your hands on your head.’

I complied. Eddie got around behind me and said, ‘Straight ahead. March.’

He kept his distance. He was a good metre and a half behind me when I went through the doorway into the kitchen. There were about a dozen empty champagne bottles on various surfaces around the room – Perrier Jouet, Moët et Chandon, Pol Roger, Krug. No brand loyalty here, no concern for the country's balance of payments. The one on the counter to my right was Piper.

'Turn right,' Eddie said.

I turned right very smartly. When Eddie came into the doorway, the Piper bottle, swung backhand, caught him on the jawbone. The Albanian time-bomb in his hand went off, no more than a door slam, the slug going Christ knows where. Eddie dropped the gun to nurse his face. I pulled him into the room by his shirt, spun him around and kicked him in the back of the right knee with an instep while wrenching him backwards by his hair. He hit the ground hard. I was about to give him a kick when a semblance of calm descended upon me. I spared him the grace note.

Eddie was moaning a great deal but he wasn't going to die from the impact of the Piper. I dragged him off by the heels and locked him in the lavatory along the passage.

'Mate,' he said in a thick voice from behind the door, 'mate, what's your name?'

I said, 'Mr Dollery, that was a very silly thing to do. Where's the money?'

'Mate, mate, just hold it, just one second...'

The freezer had been stocked for a two- or three-week stay, but all the recent catering had been by Colonel Sanders, McDonald's and Dial-a-Dino.

Dessert was from Colombia. There were dirty shirts and underpants all over the main bedroom and its bathroom. The mirror-fronted wall of cupboards held three suits, two tweedy sports jackets and several pairs of trousers on one side. On the other hung a nurse's uniform, a Salvation Army Sally's uniform, a meter maid's uniform, and what appeared to be the parade dress of a female officer in the Waffen SS. With these went black underwear, some of it leather, and red suspender belts. My respect for Mrs Pick, florist and signatory to the house's lease, deepened. By all accounts, she had a way with flowers too.

I was passing the lavatory on my way back from looking over the laundry when Eddie Dollery said, 'Listen, mate, you want to be rich?'

He had excellent hearing. I stopped. 'Mr Dollery,' I said, 'meeting people like you is riches enough for me.'

'Cut that smart shit. Are you going to do it?'

'Do what?'

'Knock me.'

His was not a proper vocabulary for someone who had been an accountant. 'Don't be paranoid,' I said. 'It's that marching powder you're putting up your nose.'

'Oh, Jesus,' said Eddie. 'Give me a chance, will you?'

I went into the sitting room and telephoned Belvedere Investments, my temporary employer. Mr Wootton would return my call, said Mrs Davenport. She'd had twenty years as the receptionist for a specialist in sexually transmitted diseases before joining Wootton. J. Edgar Hoover knew fewer secrets.

I looked around some more while I waited. Then I

sat down next to the phone and studied what I could see of Mabberley Court. Nothing moved except a curtain in the house opposite, a building so sterile and with surroundings so perfectly tended that it could have been the Tomb of the Unknown Suburbanites.

The phone rang.

‘Jack, my boy. Good news, I hope. Speak freely, old sausage.’ Wootton was in a pub.

I said, ‘Dollery thinks I’m here to kill him.’

‘Got him, have you? Bloody spot on.’

‘I expect to be warned about the armed and desperate, Cyril. There’ll be an extra five per cent deduction to cover my shock and horror at having a firearm pointed at me.’

Wootton laughed his snorting laugh. ‘Listen, Jack, Eddie’s a disloyal little bugger with lots of bad habits but he wouldn’t actually harm anyone. People like that think the worst about everything. It’s the guilt. And eating icing sugar with their noses. What’s on the premises?’

‘Ladies’ uniforms,’ I said.

Wootton laughed again. ‘That’s one of the habits. He’s got the stuff on him, hasn’t he?’

It was starting to rain on Mabberley Court. Across the road, an impossibly white cat had appeared on the porch of the Tomb.

On my way out, I stopped to speak to Eddie. You can’t help admiring a man who can get the local florist to dress up in Ilse Koch’s old uniform over crotchless leather panties.

‘Mr Dollery,’ I said outside the lavatory, ‘you’re going to have to be more cooperative with people

whose money you have stolen. Pointing a firearm at their representatives is not the way.'

Eddie said, 'Listen, listen. Don't go. Give me the gun back and I'll tell you where to find ten grand. Go round the back and put the gun through the window. Ten grand. Notes. Old notes.'

'I know where to find ten grand,' I said. 'Everybody keeps ten grand in the dishwasher. And everybody keeps seventy grand in the airconditioner. Wootton reckons you're short twenty. I'm pushing a receipt for eighty grand and a pen under the door. I want you to sign it.'

There was a moment's silence.

'Mate,' Eddie said, 'every cent. Tell him every cent.'

'You tell him. Just sign,' I said.

The receipt came back, signed.

'The pen, please.'

The pen appeared. 'Thank you. Goodbye, Mr Dollery.'

Eddie was shouting something when I closed the front door, but he'd stopped by the time I reached the car. Across the road, the white cat was watching. I drove out of Mabberley Court. Two hours later, I was at Pakenham racecourse watching a horse called New Ninevah run seventh in a maiden.

The next day, I went to Sydney to talk to a possible witness to a near-fatal dispute in the carpark of the Melton shopping centre. It was supposed to be a six-hour quickie. It took two days, and a man hit me on the upper left arm with a full swing of a baseball bat. It was an aluminium baseball bat made in Japan. This would never have happened in the old days. He

would have hit me with a Stewart Surrige cricket bat with black insulation tape around the middle. Except in the old days I didn't do this kind of work.

It was 5.30 p.m. on Saturday before I got back. I listened to a summary of the football on the radio on the way from the airport. ‘Fitzroy started in a blaze of glory...’ said the announcer. I felt like switching off. The only question left was: By how much? By 114 to 78 was the answer.

I turned off at Royal Park and drove around the university and through Carlton to the Prince of Prussia. It was one of the few pubs left in Fitzroy that still made a living out of selling beer. Most of the proud names had been turned into Thai–Italian bistros with art prints in their lavatories.

I parked a block away, two wheels on the kerb in a one-way street, and made a run for the Prince. I could have found it by smell: a hundred-odd years of spilt beer. My grandfather used to drink there. So did my father. His dark, intense face is in the faded photographs of the Fitzroy Football Club sides of the late 1940s on the wall near the door marked GENTS.

There are only a few dozen Fitzroy supporters left who remember my father; to them I represent a genetic melt down. Three of these veterans were sitting at the bar nursing glasses of beer and old grievances. As I stood brushing rain off my sleeves, they looked at me

as if I were personally responsible for Fitzroy's 36-point loss to despised Carlton on Saturday.

'Three in a row, Jack,' said Eric Tanner, the one nearest the door. 'Played like girls. Where the hell were you?'

'Sorry, men,' I said. 'Business.'

Three sets of eyes with a combined age of around 220 examined me. They all held the same look. It was the one the boy in the gang gets when he is the first to put talking to a girl ahead of kicking the football in the street.

'I had to go to Sydney,' I said. 'Work.' I might as well have said I had to go to Perigord for truffles for all the exculpatory power this statement carried.

'Should've taken the team with you,' said Wilbur Ong.

'What kind of work does a man have in Sydney on Satdee arvo?' said Norm O'Neill in a tone of amazement. These men would no more consider being away from Melbourne on a Saturday in the football season than they would consider enrolling in personal development courses.

I caught the eye of Stan the publican. He was talking in undertones to his wife, Liz, at the serving hatch to the kitchen. Only half of her face was visible, her mouth a perfect Ctesiphon curve of disgust. Stan said a last word and floated over, a big man, thinning head of pubic hair, small nose like an afterthought pinched out by the divine sculptor. His eighty-six-year-old father, Morris, owned the pub and wouldn't sell it. To Liz's disgust, he also wouldn't die.

'The boys missed you today,' he said.

‘They told me how much,’ I said. ‘Cleaned these pipes yet?’ The beer had been tasting funny for weeks.

Stan looked at me pityingly. ‘Jack, you could give a baby milk through these pipes. I had the bloke in. Nothing come out ’cept clean steam. Clean steam in, clean steam out. Chucking my dough away, he reckons.’

He put the first full glass on the counter. ‘Your Mr Pommy Wootton’s been ringing. The old bat said to give him a tinkle when you came in, quick smart.’

‘He’s about as pommy as you are,’ I said. ‘His old man taught welding at Preston Tech.’

‘Wish my old man’d taught welding at Preston Tech,’ Stan said with controlled venom. ‘Then I wouldn’t be standin here till all hours listenin to old buggers fartin on about footie games sixty years ago.’

I rang Wootton from what Stan called his office, a midden of old bills, junk mail, newspapers, telephone directories. Under the telephone was a Carlton & United Breweries page-a-day diary. The year was 1954.

‘Mr Wootton has made a number of attempts to contact you,’ said Mrs Davenport. ‘Please wait while I see whether he’s free.’

‘Free, free, like a bird in a tree,’ I said. I don’t know why.

‘I beg your pardon?’ said Mrs Davenport, not startled.

‘It’s a line from an American poet, E. A. Presley.’

There was a silence of precise duration. It told me my flippancy had been noted. Then Wootton came on the line, querulous.

‘What’s the point of having an answering machine if you don’t plan to respond to messages? I even resorted to ringing that filthy hole you drink in.’

‘Even as we speak I am in that hole.’

‘Well, see if you can get out of it by Monday to do a small task for me.’

‘Cyril,’ I said, ‘do I detect a hint of the master-servant relationship creeping in here? Let’s start with a nice thank you for the parcel I dropped off on Thursday. And then we can talk about the possibility of future dealings.’

‘Thank you,’ he said ungratefully. ‘I notice that you remunerated yourself rather lavishly in excess of the agreed fee.’

‘The agreed fee didn’t cover uniform fetishists armed with dodgy guns. I explained that on the phone.’

‘Perfectly harmless little turd.’

‘There’s no such thing as an armed harmless little turd.’

We went on like this for a while. Then I went back to the bar, drank a beer with the lads, ate a toasted cheese sandwich crafted out of recycled sawdust and polyvinyl by the reluctant hands of Liz. I was at the door when Stan said, ‘Another bloke looking for you. Thursday, I think it was. Said he’d been round your office.’

‘Name?’

‘Didn’t say. Didn’t ask. Said he’d come back.’

‘What’d he look like?’

Stan thought for a while, squinting slightly. ‘Short,’ he said. ‘Dangerous.’

‘That’s half the people I know.’

I went home. The flat smelled of musty books. It took me back to the start of my legal career, searching through document boxes stacked like tin coffins in a crypt. I put my bag in the bedroom and opened the sitting room windows. The cold came in like a presence. At the end of the lane cars flicked by. The rain held in the streetlight’s cone seemed to rise from the sharkskin pavement.

I made a drink of whisky, ice and tap water and slumped on the sofa beside the telephone. In the gloom, the little red light on the answering machine blinked nervously. I went to push the button and thought, bugger it. Tomorrow.

I finished the whisky, made some Milo and took it to bed, feeling tired and lonely. It took six pages of a Bolivian novelist to put me away.

On Sunday I fiddled around, doing nothing, restless, vaguely sorry for myself. I spent an hour writing a letter to my daughter in Queensland. Claire was cooking on a fishing boat out of Port Douglas. In my mind, I saw her, a beautiful stick with wrists the size of some men's knuckle-bones. She was circled by large males, blond men with permanent sunburn and the eyes of dead sharks. I thought about the first time I saw Claire's mother, on Bells Beach. She had been surrounded by testosterone-crazed surfers, all lying belly down to hide their erections.

I reread Claire's most recent letter. It made too many mentions of the boat's skipper, a man called Eric. I ended my letter with some delicately phrased warnings about the distorting effects of propinquity on judgment. Still, at least Eric had a job.

I walked to the corner to post the letter. The sky was low, the colour of misery, wind whipping the naked trees. There was no-one in the park except a man and a small boy sitting at a table near the playground. The boy was eating something out of a styrofoam box, his eyes on the table. The man was smoking a cigarette. He put out a helpless hand and touched the boy's hair.

I went home and the winking light on the answering machine caught my eye as I came in the door. I pressed the button and slumped on the couch.

Jack, Andrew. Thought you'd be back by now. Listen, I've pushed a little lease thing your way. Bloke called Andropolous. I just got his cousin off a couple of obtaining-by-deceptions. Andy's all right. Cash in hand. Pause. By the way, Helen's fucked off. Give me a ring when you get back. Cheers. Oh, my secretary says a guy called McKillop was around here today looking for you. Ex-client, I gather. See you.

The machine's deep voice said: *Thursday, July 23, 6.20 p.m.* Andrew Greer, former law partner.

Jack. Mate, it's Danny McKillop. Pause. Danny, y'know, the hit-and-run? In '84? I'm out. You said ring you, like if there was something? I'm in a bit of strife, mate. You reckon you can give me a ring? It's 9419 8432. Tonight if you can. Cheers.

The machine said: *Thursday, July 23, 7.47 p.m.*

I stopped the machine. Danny McKillop. *Y'know, the hit-and-run?* It meant nothing. A former client? A client who went to jail. Plenty of those around. I pressed the button again.

Jack, Laurie Baranek. Look, this agreement needs a bit extra, know what I mean? Can we stick in a couple other penalties? I just want it so he understands he don't deliver, he's in big shit. Get my meaning? Ring me. Not at work, I'm on the mobile.

Friday, July 24, 2.28 p.m. Laurence Baranek, vegetable merchant and property speculator.

Jack, it's Danny. McKillop. Get my message? Listen, ring any time, doesn't matter what time. Pause. Jack,

I'm in deep shit. Can you meet me in the carpark of the Hero of Trafalgar in Brunswick? It's off Sydney Road. Seven o'clock tonight? I wouldn't ask only I'm shitting myself, okay? Cheers.

The man said it was Saturday, 25 July, 3.46 p.m.

There were no more messages, just a lot of silences and disconnections. Danny McKillop? The name still meant nothing. I rang the number. No answer. I put on Mahler, made a beef stew, opened a bottle of wine, rang my sister and listened for half an hour. The day passed.

On Monday, Cameron Delray, the small man's enigmatic footsoldier, picked me up at Taub's Cabinetmaking in Fitzroy. It's in Carrigan's Lane, a grubby one-way that runs down to Smith Street, Collingwood. Cam blocked the street with his Kingswood. I was at the back of the shop making myself useful, ripping some ash for a bureau carcass. I switched off the machine with my knee and took off my helmet.

Cam gave me a nod and walked over to where Charlie Taub was fine-tuning some clamps on a George III writing table.

'G'day, boss,' Cam said. 'How's the apprentice coming on?'

'Not bad,' said Charlie, taking the long-dead cheroot out of his mouth and looking at it. 'Five, six years, he'll make a joint that fits. Then I'll sell him the business and retire.'

I was taking off my leather apron. 'Retire at ninety?' I said. 'Premature, that's what they'll say. Best work still ahead of him.'

Cam said, 'Get along without the boy for a bit?'

'I'll try,' Charlie said. 'Fifty years on my own, if I'm ready yet I don't know.' He gave me his appraising look from under the exploding grey eyebrows. 'I blame myself,' he said. 'Introducing you to Harry Strang.'

I said, 'Don't torture yourself, Charlie. People have introduced me to a lot worse than Harry Strang. By a factor of about three thousand.'

'Horse business,' Charlie said. 'Never met a man it didn't ruin.'

'I should be so lucky to be ruined like Harry Strang,' I said. 'I'm scared Harry'll die before he ruins me.'

'Material possessions,' Charlie said. He lit the cheroot with a kitchen match and coughed for a while, waving the smoke away with a hand the size of a tennis racquet. 'Material possessions he's got. Otherwise, a ruined man. Ruined.'

Cam's Kingswood smelt faintly of expensive perfume. The radio was on. An ABC voice, rich with authority, was saying:

The Premier, Dr Marcia Saunders, today defended the six hundred million dollar Yarra Cove project.

Approving the project, which will transform a large section of the west bank of the Yarra, was one of the new government's first acts.

Dr Saunders said she and her party had for years in opposition called for a number of large Melbourne developments to be given the go ahead.

The Premier's voice, hoarse, slightly too loud, the voice of someone you interrupt at your peril, followed.

The previous government was so obsessed by its hatred of anyone who made a profit and created jobs that it allowed this State to stagnate. Well, the people of Victoria have had enough of social engineering. This government is trying to get this State moving again. We're unashamedly pro-development and so are the people who voted us into office.

The announcer came back.

Opposition leader David Kerr said the Yarra Cove project had no merit whatsoever.

David Kerr's gravelly voice said, *This government would like to hand the whole State over to their pals the developers. Yarra Cove is bad enough, but it's just the beginning...*

'Yarra Cove?' said Cam. 'What the hell is Yarra Cove?'

'Sounds tropical,' I said. 'Topless girls in grass skirts swaying by the banks of the Yarra, that sort of thing.'

'In this climate,' Cam said, 'they start topless, they'll end titless.'

We were on Johnston Street. I closed my eyes as Cam aimed the Kingswood at a gap between two vehicles that had to grow about two metres before he reached it. It obviously grew. I opened my eyes. Cam punched over to 3MP Easy Music. They were playing 'The Way We Were', probably for the fifth time since breakfast. He screamed and punched over to a man talking about public transport.

Harry Strang lived in Parkville, in a huge Victorian house behind high red-brick walls. Cam spoke into the voicebox in the studded street door and the door unlocked itself. The house was fifty metres away, at the

end of a stone path that wound through a two-gardener garden.

Lyn Strang let us in. Harry's wife was in her forties, sexy in a bush-hospital nurse way: short hair, snub nose, legs-apart stance. She had a generous mouth, big knowing hands and broad calf muscles. Lyn had been married to a small-time country trainer called Ronnie Braudel. Ronnie lucked on to a horse called Fiery Continent, a little thing with no more breeding than the average can of dog food. But the horse was more than the sum of his parents. He was an equine freak, a once-in-a-lifetime horse.

Ronnie Braudel was just smart enough to keep his mouth shut and look for help with the horse. His old man knew Harry Strang, and Harry knew what to do with Fiery Continent.

It took just under twelve months to set it up, but it was the mother of all paydayes for Ronnie. He transferred his operations to Queensland, taking with him a new friend, eighteen-year-old Valma, a highly qualified nail technician from Wangaratta. Harry extended his sympathies to the deserted wife and Lyn Braudel ended up the fourth Mrs Harry Strang. She gave Harry about thirty years' start and he conceded two hands in height but there was an electricity between them.

Harry was waiting in the study. The room was the idea of a study that is stored up in heaven. It had a full wall of mahogany bookshelves, probably five metres high and ten metres wide, opposite the windows. The upper shelves were reached by four teak and brass ladders that moved on rails. On the shelves was what seemed to be every book ever written on horse racing.

The other walls displayed a collection of racing paintings and prints. Between the windows hung a set of photographs in walnut frames of Harry Strang winning English and French races in the late 1940s and early 1950s: the English and Irish Derbies, the King Edward VII Stakes, the Queen Alexandra Stakes, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, the Grand Prix de Deauville, the Prix de Diane, the Grand Prix de Saint Cloud.

Harry could ride at about the same weight now as when he was in the photographs. He was tall by jockey standards and looked taller because of his shoulders-back, chin-up carriage. He had a full head of short hair, dark with some unscented oil, a small-featured face barely lined. Today he was wearing a Donegal tweed suit, dark-green silk tie on a creamy shirt, russet brogues. I could never help staring at his feet. You can't buy handmade brogues to fit ten-year-olds in the shops, so Lobb's in London made Harry's shoes: \$400 a shoe.

'Jack, Cam,' he said. 'Sit.'

Harry liked to get on with it.

We sat down in leather club armchairs. Harry went behind the desk, a classic piece in the style of Eugene Harvill made by Charlie Taub. Almost everything in the apartment was made or restored by Charlie.

Harry put his hands on the desk. They were the hands of someone half his age and twice his size: square-tipped, tanned, strong-looking. There was nothing wrong with his eyes, either.

'Crook arm, Jack?' he said.

I hadn't been aware of touching it. 'Just a strain,' I said.

Harry cocked his head. 'Give it the balsam three times a day. Now. Business. A bloke I've done some transactin with across the years, he reckons he's got somethin for us.'

The years spent in Europe had done nothing to take small-town Victoria out of Harry's voice.

There was a knock at the door and ancient Mrs Aldridge, Harry's housekeeper for thirty-odd years, came in, followed by Lyn Strang carrying a tray of coffee things. At the table, Mrs Aldridge took command, shooin Lyn out of the room. When we had each been served a cup of hell-dark brew from the silver pot, plus a chocolate biscuit, business resumed.

'This fella's name is Tie. Rex Tie,' Harry said. 'Trains a few cattle out in the bush.'

Cam said, 'Time Urgent.'

'That's the one,' Harry said.

'You do that Time Urgent thing?' Cam asked.

'What's past is past,' Harry said. 'I want to have a little look, see if Rex Tie's brain's still workin. We'll have to get on the Drizas, motor out to the bush next week. Suit, Jack?'

I nodded.

'Good. Cam, let's step over and look at the movin pictures.'

We went across the passage into Harry's wood-panelled cinema and sank into the plush armchair seats. Cam plugged in the video cassette I'd given him, pressed some buttons on a remote control, and moist Pakenham appeared on the wraparound screen. Harry had been at Pakenham. I'd seen him up near the back of the stand, on his own as always, grey

felt hat, undistinguished raincoat, eyes stuck to the X15 binoculars. You never went near Harry on a racetrack, that was the rule. You didn't talk to Cam either if you saw him. My job had been to video New Ninevah's run with about twenty thousand dollars' worth of small video camera. For this and a bit of legal work, I got paid a retainer.

'Take the start in slow, Cam,' said Harry.

We watched in silence.

'Again,' Harry said. And so it went on. It took nearly ten minutes to watch a race that was over in 1 minute 24.20 seconds. When Cam put the lights on, Harry looked at me and said, 'Did he or didn't he?'

I shrugged. 'Looked like he was trying to to me. Didn't miss the start this time.'

'No,' Harry said. 'No, he came out fightin. Cam?'

'Clean, I'd say,' Cam said. He was putting a label on the video cassette. 'Reckon he just don't like the wet.'

Harry got out of his chair. 'Course we could be pissin on the wrong campfire again.' He walked over and looked out the window, hands in his jacket pockets. 'Doubt it though.' He sighed. 'Well, that's it for today, gentlemen. Ballarat on Wednesday. Freeze our arses off as usual. Come round nine for a bit of sustenance. Suit? Jack, Cam'll drop you back. Then he's got some computin to do. That and clean the gutterin and prune the roses.'

'After that I'm going to put on my burglar suit and give the dogs savaging practice,' said Cam.

'I forgot,' Harry said. 'They're getting rusty.'