

**GERARD HENDERSON'S MEDIA WATCH DOG –  
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Nancy  
(2005-)



Bob Ellis  
(1942-2016)

**BOB ELLIS GIVES NANCY THE DRUM**

– as told to Nancy (per courtesy of the Australian tax payer)

**The ABC's *The Drum Unleashed* (editor Jonathan Green) pays out taxpayers' money to the occasional columnist Bob Ellis, otherwise known as The (False) Prophet of Palm Beach. Equipped with only half a dozen bottles of scotch, Nancy was able to "scoop" the public broadcaster by enticing The (False) Prophet to meet with her, at his Palm Beach abode on Sydney's northern beaches, in the early hours of this morning – April Fools' Day. Bob Ellis' comments – as dictated to Nancy – exhibit a certain similarity to his articles in *The Drum Unleashed* this year on 3 January, 12 January, 31 January, 10 February, 18 February, 1 March, 9 March, 25 March and 27 March – all of which can be located on the ABC's website. Here we go.**

It's April Fools Day. Discuss. Last Saturday fell on a Saturday. Prove that I lie. Up here, in the under-privileged ghetto of Palm Beach where I live, you can hear the gnashing of Labor teeth in Sussex Street, in New South Wales Parliament House and in Governor Macquarie Tower.

How can we get over our loss to that fat bloke Barry O'Farrell – you know, Fatty O'Barrell? Some people have been so unkind as to suggest that I carry much more weight than the newly elected Liberal Party Premier of New South Wales. But I think thin. And so it goes. And so it went.

There will be some mean-spirited types and fascists and crazed cross-bearing Catholic papists and smokers and free traders and Rupert Murdochs who will mock me for writing in *The Drum Unleashed* on 3 January 2011: "I alone in all of Australia think Labor will hold government, in perhaps a hung parliament, in New South Wales on March 24". They were bold predictions – especially since the election was due to be held on Saturday 26 March. But Jonathan Green at the ABC was very reassuring. He told me that my election date prophecy was only two days out – and that a day or two here – or even there – isn't really noticed at the ABC, where the taxpayers pay the bills which buy the clocks. And that, in any event, it was only fascists like Mussolini who bothered about the importance of things being on time. Like trains and wars and appointments with Italian mistresses and things like that. Time is on the wing. Discuss.

As to that triple-super-girl-cheerleader Kristina Keneally's defeat. Well, look no further than that 80 year Rupert Murdoch and *Fox News* and Roger Ailes and Bill O'Reilly and Glenn (or is it Glen?) Beck and their lackeys Down Under. It's not often that prophets like me get it wrong. And certainly not my wife – whom I refer to as having "reliable clairvoyant powers (reported in most of my books)". She foretold the gorgeous Ms Keneally narrowly losing by only a seat or two. Which, alas, does not do much for the clairvoyant industry.

It's odd when one crystal ball gets fogged up. But two? This shows the ability of the 80 year old Rupert Murdoch to manipulate our future from elsewhere – he, who with his insistence on publishing pics of Page 3 topless lovelies in *The Sun*, ruined and distorted and imperilled the futures of 25,000 teenage girls. Work it out for yourself. Seven (topless) sheilas for seven (topless) days for 52 (topless) weeks for 40 (topless) years. Well, okay, it's not quite 25,000 – more like 16,000, in fact. But it's more than 25,000 if you count each individual (topless) bosom. And that's a lot of tit. Think about it. I certainly do. And so it goes.

I don't quite know what I am going to do now that Labor has lost in New South Wales and the Golden Age has ended and I am out of a taxpayer funded job. I have never told anyone before – except readers of *The Drum Unleashed*, of course – that during their Golden Age I used to write speeches for (Bob) Carr and (Jeff) Shaw and (Bob) Debus and (Andrew) Refshauge and (David) Borger and (Virginia) Judge and, and, and. All now gone – one way or the other. I also wrote poetry for Labor staffers who were about to resign from their jobs in order to enter Parliament or to become head of the Water Board or to go to prison – or who had birthdays or whatever. My (many) admirers still recall my brilliant ditty to Miss Little Goa, which went like this:

Twenty-one today. Twenty-one today

She's got the key to the door

What a pity

She's drunk on the floor.

Laugh. Did they laugh? Yes. They laughed so loud the top fell off my whisky bottle. Prove that I lie.

The truth is that I've written speeches for many a Labor leader. Including nice Mike Rann (in South Australia) and Kim Beazley and Bob Carr and Nathan Rees and that Jack Lang bloke. Hang on a minute. I think I wrote that "Lang-Is-Greater-Than-Lenin" line. But it was

some eight decades ago – and a lot of (empty) whisky bottles have passed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge since then.

I have a common bond with leaders – certainly with Labor and Labour leaders and occasionally the odd (read very odd) conservative. In my book *Goodbye Babylon*, I revealed that I knew Winston Churchill so intimately that I alone was aware that he was still alive in 1974. Previously some fools and knaves thought that Old Winnie died in 1965. This was even the case with some fools and knaves who went to Old Winnie's funeral – which demonstrates the frailty of (other people's) memory.

In my book *Goodbye Babylon* I also recalled that the New Zealand Labour prime minister Mike Moore and I once drank more than a dozen bottles of wine between us in just a few hours. (See *MWD* Issue 8). And we survived. Prove that I lie. In the olden days, a drinking session with a prime minister used to end with a "Carriages at Eight" reminder. When I got on the piss with Mike, the word went out: "Hearses at Ten".

In spite of the end of the Golden Age, I'm still available. Come to think of it, I should not have called Mr O'Farrell "wheezy, pudgy, puffy" nor declared that he "looks like a deflated football" nor written that "he has no ideas and no courage and he will kill the Arts" nor suggested that he would only win the votes of "certain pudgy old Westies and whinging Poms". Who knows? Maybe if I had not been so unkind, Mr O'Farrell may have continued my role as Court Jester to the NSW Government. I would not have written any such abuse if only I had a windscreen wiper on my crystal ball – and known that he was about to score the biggest winning margin in modern Australian history. As Hamlet of Denmark once mumbled: "Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping'?" It's a good question – even if I don't understand what Mr Shakespeare was on about here.

And it's a pity. And it's a sorrow. But my wife tells me that I may yet continue as a Court Jester. All I need is a court. And a bit of jest. Prove that she lies.

*Bob Ellis' latest two books on Australian politics have been remaindered and placed in the fiction bargain bins at your local bottle shop.*