THE ADVENTURES OF BARRY THE BANKER

(A best seller in the making)

SYNOPSIS

In "The Adventures of Bary the Banker," a fatherless boy named Barry embarks on a journey of independence after landing a job at the Rural Bank. With his wit and athleticism, he navigates the camaraderie of the workplace, taking on tasks for his boss while enjoying the simple pleasures of life, including sausage rolls and his first pay packet. As he learns the ropes, Barry discovers the value of hard work and the joy of earning his own way in the world

DAY ONE

On the morning of the 5th of January 1970 Barry donned his work clothes for the very first time. He eyed himself in the mirror and was happy with what he saw. He was looking very business-like: short sleeve shirt, tie, shorts and long socks.

He caught the bus into town and knocked on the front door of his new workplace.

There he was greeted by a familiar face, David, a team-mate in his local cricket side. (Barry, a pretty good athlete was playing 1st grade senior cricket while still at school). It was David who told him about the job vacancy, and he suspects he put in a good word for him which may have influenced the boss, Mr Dunne.

David was one of the tellers at the branch and he took Barry under his wing. He introduced him to the 20 odd members of staff. Roles were gender specific. The girls were ledger operators, proof machine operators, stenographers and receptionists while the guys were tellers, examiners, loans officers, accountants and managers.

The girls had uniforms (very short, tight-fitting dresses) while the guys only had corporate ties to identify themselves as Rural Bank employees.

Barry was impressed by the camaraderie of the group. There was good banter and the mood was light.

He quickly learned that the role of a junior included doing whatever the Manager, Mr Dunne, asked him to do. It was like he was his personal servant, because he had a button on his desk, and when pressed, a buzzer would sound which was his cue to immediately cease whatever he was doing and attend to the Mr Dunne.

One of the most common tasks the boss asked Barry to perform was to replenish the blue and red ink wells he used in for his fountain pens. This seemingly simple task however was not so simple because the viscosity of ink from the source bottle was too high for the boss's liking, so it needed watering down. Several attempts were usually needed to obtain just the right viscosity to the boss's satisfaction.

Mr Dunne had also just given up smoking and would suck on mint-flavoured lollies to keep his craving for tobacco at bay. So, the buzzer would sound, and into the boss's office Barry would trek. "Yes Mr Dunne. What can I do for you?"

"Be a good lad will you and go to the supermarket and buy a packet of these lollies for me" Mr Dunne would say as he handed a single lolly to Barry. Lolly in hand, off he would go to achieve his mission.

Besides attending to Mr Dunne's needs, Barry was assigned to preparing exchanges, posting to the General Ledger, posting to the LTL ledgers and processing direct debits from customers' accounts to third parties.

At the allocated time (9.30am) it was "pens down" as it was time for morning tea. A trip across the road to the café to acquire a sausage roll was the choice for most of the guys. No need for a key to get back into the branch. A comb would unlock the front door.

FIRST PAY

Staff were paid every fortnight on a Thursday, and when his first payday arrived, he felt like a man.

He had opened up his cheque account to receive his pay and was issued a cheque book. A CHEQUE BOOK. Only adults had cheque books, and he had one!

By the way, cheque books in those days were devoid of personal information. They were blank instruments with no account numbers or names of the drawer. This meant that it was easy for people to use a cheque leaf out of somebody else's cheque book. Alternatively you could obtain a "Counter Cheque" from places like the Worker's Club if you needed cash to have a few more beers. You just wrote the date, the payee and the amount on the blank cheque leaf and signed it. The ledger machine operators would identify the signatures and post it to the correct account.

Back to Barry. Payday arrived and the princely sum of $17 was credited to his account. He cashed a cheque with Dave the teller for $5, and the first purchase he made with his own income was a bottle of chocolate milk from the corner shop near his home.

BARRY'SPROMOTION TO EXCHANGE CLERK

After a few months Barry was given the responsibility of attending daily cheque exchanges with the other banks in town.

At this meeting, all seven exchange clerks from the local banks would go about the process of swapping cheques were drawn on other banks that their respective customers had deposited.

Barry would wave a bunch of cheques around that were drawn on the ANZ for example, find that bank's representative (let's call him Andy) and carry out a swap where he would give Andy all the ANZ cheques, and Andy would give Barry all the Rural Bank Cheques he had.

Exchange clerks would keep a tab on the value of cheques exchanged and would settle the differences once a week.

Being in contact with each other every day, these clerks became friends, and rumour has it that once or twice Barry, Andy and others may have popped into the Canberra Hotel for a quick beer after exchanges before returning to their branches.

One day, Barry rode his newly purchased motorbike to exchanges because he was running late. Cheque bag reasonably secured to the "sissy bar", Barry started his machine and exited the staff car park. The problem was however , that the car park's exit passed directly under the Manager's office window, and his attempt to exit stealthily was betrayed by the bike's rather noisy motor

This act earned the ire of the Manager, who, chastised him on his return. The message was clear: Don't ride the bike again on bank business.

Two weeks later, Barry was again running late, and he thought that if he just wheeled his bike past the Manager's office out to the main street, then started it, he wouldn't know.

A fine plan, however ….

On his journey a vehicle turned sharply in front of Barry without indicating. A collision ensued and Barry flew like a bird over the bonnet. He did not fly for long however and returned rather harshly to the hard bitumen.

His bike was no longer a single unit, cheques were scattered on the street, and he was looking like his mother hadn't dressed him properly.

His non-attendance in the exchange room caused some concern and led to the clerk from the Bank of NSW ringing his bank to enquire about his whereabouts.

Before a search party came looking, he wandered back into his branch with an arm full of cheques, bleeding knees and a ripped shirt.

The Manager invited Barry into his office for a nice chat.

Surprisingly, he kept his job.