

To: Harry Brown

Subject: Our relationship...

Date: Sat, 29 Mar 1997 21:18:35 +1100

(Your call whether you copy this to the Executive or not!)

Harry

I have not said to anyone that I believed our working relationship has been unworkable following the March meeting. But that is a charge being currently leveled at me. Or at us, depending on how you perceive it...

Do you believe our working relationship *has* changed substantially since I said I wanted to tender for the NBA contract? I really would appreciate your comments on how we are relating now, comparing it to how we have related over the last few years, both while you were working for HBAC and after.

We have never talked on the phone very much in the last several years. In itself, I don't think that is a necessarily a critically damaging thing, as I believe we have communicated often enough with email and fax.

In the time that Ron was Executive Secretary, I don't think I spoke with him any more or less often than I have with you. (I'll correct that - probably less! As I preferred to have a copy of it all, too - you might be able to relate to that...)

I can't remember the last time that you rang me - it would have been last year (?), I think, but again, I don't think that has been in any way damaging. From memory, the last time I rang you was in early February, when I stepped you through the printer setup for the receipting programme.

As most of my free time is in the evenings, and I am keenly aware of costs of telephoning, especially from the Polytechnic at business rates, I have mostly used email and fax by preference. You have never said to me that that is a problem to you in any way. Do you believe that it is? I have always *preferred* to give you feedback and communication in writing, as it gives you the chance to refer back to it, a 'paper trail' if you will. Would you have preferred over the last few years for me to give you more telephone calls rather than fax and email? If that is now the indicator that we aren't relating

well, do you think it has always been a problem, or just since the last meeting?

As I have indicated an interest in the contract that your company has, I wouldn't expect our relationship to ever be overly 'matey' again, but that doesn't mean it can't still be effective, allowing us both to continue to do the NBA's work. (I'd be surprised if very many people *anywhere* would refer to me as 'matey' anyway! I'm not really that sort of person...)

I do *like* you, Harry. I trust you, and I really appreciate what you have attempted to take on and do for the NBA. Your willingness to relate to the membership, to involve yourself with the local branch, to accept work from the membership - all of these things are very very much in your favour as a Secretary and as a person, Harry. I mean that.

So from here, I simply see it as important that we both act professionally in the extreme. I am staying well-distanced from the rest of the Executive's evaluation of your performance and from any decision they make to put the contract up for expressions of interest, and for how they handle the process if they decide to do that.

I want to assure you that there is also no way I would ever try to 'set you up', leading you into any aspects of non-performance to make you look bad. I wouldn't do that because I'm not that sort of person, and I also would not allow such a thing to be done *to* the NBA, as it is the NBA that suffers from errors and omissions.

So you can be assured that I will still be sending you all the various reminders and corrections and commentary and advice and assistance that I have from the very beginning of our professional relationship. Think back on them - they haven't been 'rah rah' aren't we doing a good job. I have complimented you on good jobs but I have also given you instructions, reminders, corrections, criticism, encouragement, warnings, advice, discussion. I've asked your advice, I've asked for your assistance.

Thinking back through it all, I really don't think there has been much change in *that* aspect of our relationship since the last meeting.

I will most certainly be there to help through the Executive elections (and since I am not up for election this year, I can be more available than I was last year, when I had to make sure it was all completely set up beforehand since I was standing), through the remit receipt period and for the dealings with possible rule changes and into Conference itself.

I **am** always (well, **mostly**) available by telephone if that is what you prefer, but as you know I am responsive by fax and/or email, too.

So I'm certainly acutely aware that our relationship **has** changed in light of my letting you and the rest of the Executive know that I am interested in getting the chance to put my case for obtaining the contract. It was bound to change in light of that, but as I say, I don't feel it is **dramatically** different so far as it effects the NBA. And as for you as a person, Harry, I feel no differently toward you. I hope you'll understand that I too am trying to do things in the most honourable and honest way possible.