# Cartoons and the Social Construction of 'Cop Culture': A Force in an Australian Force?

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**Abstract.** In-house professional magazines clearly provide a rich source of knowledge about traditional and contemporary issues impacting people involved. Many contain cartoons, which, whilst regarded as unimportant, may carry considerable weight in terms of enabling a practical institutional world view for its members. Furthermore this view may be at odds with the official face of the profession. This is a case study solely examining cartoons appearing in an Australian police association publication, the 'New South Wales Police Review'. It will be suggested that the strip performed a role in the informal socialization of police officers by reinforcing informal attitudes and assumptions amongst that agency. The paper presents cartoons addressing both universal and context bound issues in policing, indicates that targets of humour may be shifting over time, and offers some thoughts as to why this might be the case.

**Keywords**: Policing; Cartoons; Australia; Occupational Cultures

## 1. Theoretical Underpinnings: Formalism, Informalism and the Case of Policing

As an introduction to this article I wish to identify a number of the theoretical assumptions which underpin it. These may be thought of as provocative, but rest on a sociological perspective rooted both in critical theory and phenomenology. The Dramatist Tom Stoppard came up with two ideas which should be fundamental to sociological work (though they usually aren't). The first is that 'life is lived off the record'. (Stoppard 2011) Rather than the glossy brochure version of reality according to which all institutions and social members operate 'on the level', formal rules (whilst lip-service is paid to them and paperwork assures us that they're being generally adhered to) in practical living get replaced by informal ones.

The second is the notion of the 'professional foul'. (Stoppard 1998) Within institutions and organizations 'doing things by the book' is often implicitly perceived as amateurish and naïve, whereas 'getting a result' whether couched in motivations such as 'easy life', 'expediency' or 'power games' better explains (literally) the 'show'. Institutional life (where arguably all 'Social life' is lived) is primarily characterized by what the rational Martian might understand as deceit and hypocrisy. A public commitment to the formal rules runs simultaneously alongside extensive efforts to circumvent them when they seem, one might say, less than 'personally and/or sub-culturally convenient'.

The claim thus is in one sense a restating of Durkheim's (1982) assertion that rule-breaking and bending, rather than being understood as abnormal and peripheral, should be seen as normal and inevitable, a routine feature of social life. I recall my mother (who worked

as a doctor's receptionist) complaining about how her employers took short cuts, thereby engaging in what she thought of as self-serving and unethical practices. She steadfastly refused, however, to even consider that other organizations operated in much the same way, because a generalized socialization assured her that they were all more or less as they were publically expected to be. Rather obviously, in order to work effectively within one's own chosen or allotted occupation, it's necessary to be re-socialized within that occupation, to get to recognize an informal but practically 'valid' world view. Such re-socialization enables people to interact harmoniously with colleagues and those 'others' with whom they routinely deal. To be 'successful' within an institution requires everyday compliance to informal rules, whilst appearing to be committed to the formal ones in more public and visible settings. The widespread hostility to, and intensifying control of whistle-blowers, investigative journalists and some social scientists is primarily because of their propensity to expose the gaps between formal and informal versions of reality.

Preamble over, it should be clear that there's a need to understand the mechanisms by which resocialization into informal rules occurs within occupational cultures, and I'm arguing that humour is one such mechanism. Humour parades the territory between the 'ideal' and the 'normal', between the 'normal' and the 'deviant'. Humour is a form of social control, in terms of the role it plays in creating in the minds of recruits a 'new normal' whilst re-affirming the same for existing members. Recruits need to be re-socialized, taught to switch their preconceptions about the 'on the level' version of policing to a 'this is what needs to be done' one. Humour serves to assist with an acceptance of, and integration within, the occupational culture. It helps engender a sense of solidarity.

If 'Occupational deviance' was the generic concept, criminologists recognized that there was a need to create something more specific when it came to policing, namely 'Cop culture'. Indeed 'Cop Culture' became perhaps the most important concept within the Sociology of Policing. (Manning 1997, Chan 1998) The reasons for this are apparent. Early analysts of Policing (Westley 1971) quickly became aware of the gulf between 'Policing in Books' and 'Policing on Streets', and needed a vocabulary equipped to account for such a gulf. The image was and is of an agency formally charged with the responsibility for applying just laws even-handedly, regardless of the social location of the people being policed. The reality proves to be rather different. 'Cop Culture' functions to 'explain' the difference. A 'realist' assertion of 'what needs to be done' in order to 'get a result' has historically been frequently articulated by grass roots officers and their unions and associations. Confronted with the early sociologies of policing's ethnographically based evidence regarding the gulf between books and streets the response of senior officials was predictably one of denial. Gradually this became transformed into one of semi accepting resignation. Nowadays Senior Police officials cite Cop Culture as an obstacle to 'the kinds of progressive changes they'd like to see'. Civil servants and politicians wring their hands as to its presumably negative effects whilst arguably the vast majority of ordinary lower level police officers continue to romanticize it. (See Appendix 1.)

Significantly the concepts usage transcends national boundaries. Each countries police force (or 'service' if one buys into the currently in-vogue politically correct term) departs from 'on the level' practices and such departures can seemingly be conveniently explained by reference to 'Cop Culture'. Of course local variations exist in respect of what passes for on (and off) the level practices. The concept of 'Cop Culture' seems to accomplish ideological tasks beyond merely 'telling it like it is'. Indeed the ready and general acceptance of the concept should alert the sceptical amongst us. I'm implying that the concept carries with it considerable value for Police Chiefs and Ministers of Justice, both for explaining certain practices and accounting for why not much can actually be done about them. Public handwringing disguises private silent nods and implicit approval which historically has emboldened police working the streets. I'll suggest that might be steadily if subtly changing.

Those whose interest is primarily pragmatic or academic and assume 'Cop Culture' as a 'given', might be more concerned, however, in considering how it is constructed and what functions it performs for officers. On the surface after all, it seems to represent a 'problem' to be overcome, as are informal occupational cultural practices generally. The latter question has been answered in terms of 'integration' and 'solidarity'. Integration and solidarity serve as defence mechanisms for the group as a whole. Since Skolnick (1966) it has been widely recognized that Police organizations differ from most others in that their members are prone to feel (and indeed in some instances are encouraged to develop) a sense of distance from the communities in which they are located and in whose interests they are supposed to operate. Such relative isolation means that individual officers are often rendered exceptionally dependent on the organization for social contacts and for both 'moral' and 'professional' support. How Cop Culture' is constructed is more elusive to examination and indeed study. Usually recourse is made to the concept of 'Secondary socialization' whereby trainee officers 'pick up' the key dimensions of the culture in the course of interaction with more seasoned mentors and colleagues. In other words it is done relatively informally.

## 2. In-House Magazines

Police forces (see Appendix 2) of many nations possess a forum in which formal and informal expressions of policing co-exist seemingly quite 'naturally' most of the time. 'In house' magazines constitute a key means whereby members of any given occupational group can speak to one another. They fulfil a variety of functions. For example, besides detailing events, job opportunities and the movement of key staff they provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of issues considered to affect the group. These include- a/ The 'Best' way to 'do the job', b/ the management of and best direction for Organizational, Technological and Broader Societal change, c/ the identification of threats to the organization and the mobilization of resistance, and d/ the construction of a group ethos. Police 'in house' magazines thus are likely to play a particularly significant role in defining both the everyday 'reality' of policing and the contexts within which it takes place.

Alongside the purportedly 'serious' contents of the texts it is rather common to find cartoons and cartoon strips. Drawing on the 'Resistance and Control' thesis which I have pioneered in respect of the Sociology of Humour elsewhere,(Powell '88 and '96) the general argument is that Cop Cultures are partly produced, sustained and reproduced by the perspectives expressed in cartoon 'humour' form. The cartoons perform a function in a process whereby Cop Culture is, or police world views are, socially constructed. It will be argued that cartoon humour enables us to recognize focal police concerns and provides us with insights into Police thinking and practices which are less accessible via other means. Often humour plays an important boundary testing function and may articulate rather starkly what other, more 'serious' forms of communication only hint at.

An analysis of such cartoons potentially casts light on Police perceptions of different social groups (outside the Police and within) and their feelings concerning broader social issues and specific 'policing related' matters. Hence we might get a sense of what 'good' and 'bad' police practices look like and how different social and indeed professional groups ( 'criminals', Ethnic and other 'minorities', judges, attorneys, probation officers, social workers and others) are perceived. Most importantly we could also obtain a useful insight into the sense of police attitudes concerning prospective reorganization and change.

I have been conducting an ongoing comparative project on cartoons located in Police magazines in a variety of countries and over different time periods. Dating back to the 1980's I've analysed material from the UK, the USA, Finland, Norway, Australia and New Zealand. Whilst all are 'advanced' societies, there are differences between them in terms of social,

political, economic and ideological characteristics. Formal criminal justice policies and practices clearly reflect these variations in emphasis. The UK and the USA have clearly adopted increasingly 'authoritarian' approaches to crime and social control which have been concomitant with the broader cultural shifts since the Thatcher/Reagan era. 'Police Review' in the UK generally reflects a hard-line approach and the humour of cartoonists such as Nigel Maugham in the earlier period and David Banks more recently fits in quite well. Whilst the claims for a 'penal exceptionalism' (Pratt and Eriksson 2014) may be contested, the Nordic countries have systems much more reflective of social democratic principles. The Norwegian magazine 'Politiforum' carries the work of a Police officer named Hermund Storsaeter. His strip 'Torvald' implies a world much less fraught than that of British counterparts. There is a somewhat complacent impression of a self-confident organization comfortable in their situation and with a high level of self-deprecation. Where the outside world is experienced as generally non-threatening there is presumably less need to focus on external targets. The Australasian systems are somewhere in-between. The New Zealand magazine 'Police News' has not run a regular cartoon strip but often uses ones lifted from 'Police Review'.

## 3. The Australian Cartoons

I want to concentrate, however, on an Australian magazine from New South Wales, also entitled 'Police News', and in doing so wish to introduce you to Senior Constable Gazza O'Reilly. I suggest that the police perspective Gazza presents is reasonably representative of that of most police worldwide, and provides us with useful insights into the occupational culture.

I conducted a qualitative content analysis of all copies of the New South Wales Police Review (which is published by the Police Association of New South Wales) from 1992 to 2004. (See Appendix 3.) Throughout that period a strip appeared monthly called 'Gazza O'Reilly-a force in the force'. The primary cartoonist was Lee Falson, who produced a monthly strip from 1996 to 2004. It will be suggested that the pieces performed a role in the effective socialization of Australian police officers by reinforcing informal attitudes and assumptions within that agency. The character of 'Gazza O'Reilly', stands for 'Every-Cop', a 'good ole boy', if a little distanced from 'Ocker' (the Australian version of 'red-neck') culture. Gazza is world weary and cynical. His function is to perpetually highlight the gap between the pious formality of Police chiefs and the more prosaic concerns and practices of routine policing. Gazza cannot take the former too seriously (though he may pay lip-service to doing so) as his experience has convinced him that life is indeed best lived 'off the record'. Everyday policing necessitates (as he sees it) rule bending and the evasion of 'politically correct' niceties. Ordinary cops are the ones best placed to make judgments about how to proceed and feel justified to do so regardless of whether or not their eventual actions fall strictly within 'the letter of the law'. Indeed Skolnick (1966) alerted us to the notion that one can prioritize 'law' or 'order', but not necessarily or indeed usually both at the same time.

I've argued elsewhere (Powell 1996) that the targets of in-house police cartoons have historically been quite diverse. The arrows are aimed in varying directions, internally and downwards (at new recruits and 'by the book' co-workers), externally and downwards (at 'ordinary members of the public and 'the criminal classes'), internally and upwards (at Police Bosses), externally and horizontally, (at other functionaries within the 'Criminal Justice System'), and externally and upwards (at political masters). The function (as sometimes distinct from intention), is to subvert various 'thems', whilst affirming and often celebrating a presumed singular 'us', members of the cop culture. What is 'good' about us is defined by what is 'bad' about them. Integration depends on division, and humour facilitates a sense of

division by highlighting the differences between the 'realist police experience' and those of 'naïve misunderstanding' others.

We can clearly find many examples within the Gazza cartoons which address such universal and context bound issues in policing. This humour indeed works by mocking (targeting) a variety of others-those who fail to comprehend the world as Gazza and his colleagues do. The humour serves to help create and reproduce the occupational culture. It's significant that there are relatively few 'Gazza' cartoons which blatantly celebrate manifest breeches of protocol. One which does (Fig. 1) might be of concern to those who expect total sobriety from police officers, but it should be observed that public sentiment in Australia has historically afforded a somewhat tolerant attitude to inebriation.
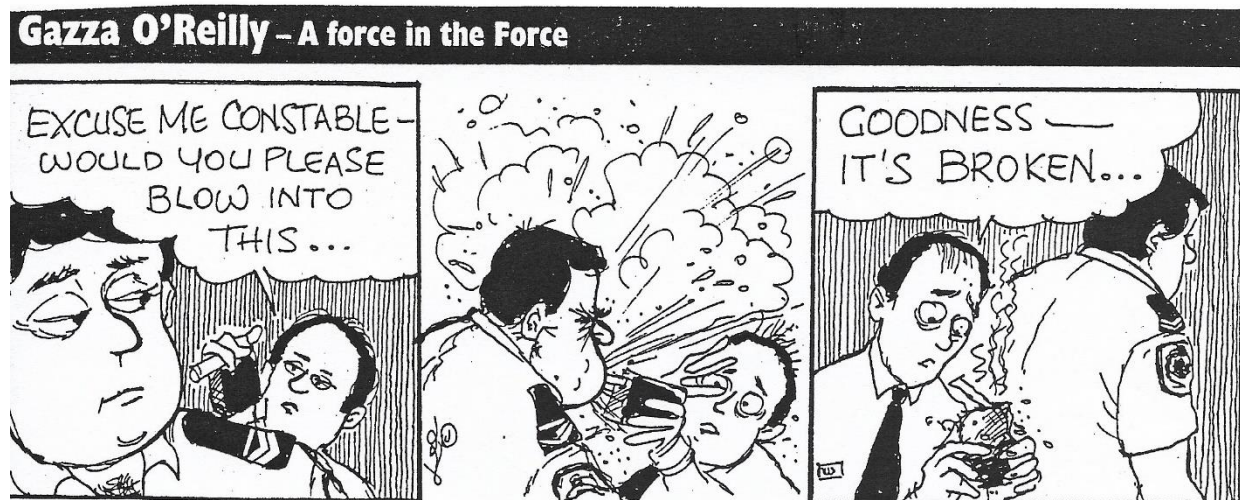


Figure 1. From *Police news,* April 1998.

The message seems to be that intoxication on the job is little more than a human foible, and a good deal of sociological literature on the police emphasizes the integrative effects facilitated by alcohol. Furthermore, whilst administrators may publically denounce this aspect of cop (sometimes termed 'canteen') culture, there is arguably an implicit acceptance of it for precisely this reason. Hockey (1986) made a similar point regarding the British military, maintaining that senior officers secretly not only tolerated but saw the necessity of attitudes and behaviours officially both frowned on and punishable. As long as it didn't become too visible, routine racism, sexism and acts of non-official violence carried value for morale. It is little wonder that police chiefs the world over so often use the alibi of 'police culture' to explain why their best laid (and often politically correct) plans don't always produce the results they claim they wish to obtain.

The next few cartoons are much more representative of the series in focusing on elements which have the power to directly affect the lives of Gazza and his colleagues. The humour is thus aimed upwards, both externally and internally. All refer to working conditions. This is of course a universal theme, articulated not only across police organizations world-wide but in all occupations. Most of us are prone to often strongly romantic and nostalgic feelings, harking back to an earlier 'golden age' when we felt more highly regarded and better treated by political and managerial masters who more fully understood the difficulties we faced. Hence whilst predating neo-liberal politics it has clearly intensified due to them, particularly in the developing consequences for public sector institutions such as the NSW (New South Wales) police. Gazza is convinced his outfit is understaffed (Fig. 2). He also believes that opportunities for promotion are far too limited (Fig. 3).
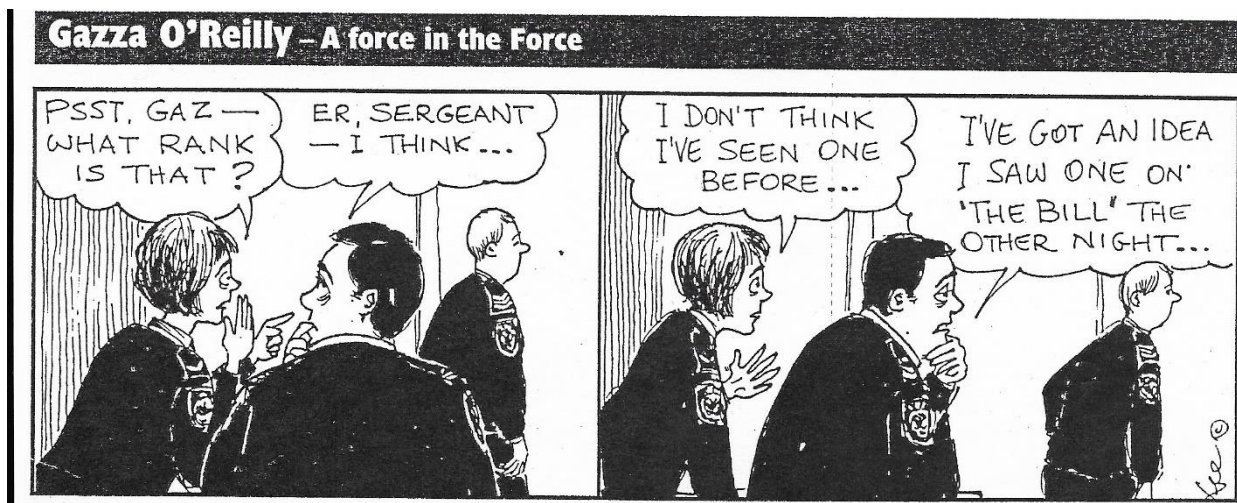
Figure 2. From *Police news,* January 1999.



Figure 3. From *Police news,* July 2000.

The reference is to 'The Bill', a British TV series much liked by police both in the UK and also apparently in Australia. There's a sense of 'it doesn't have to be this way, look at them' underlying the cartoon, a view which would definitely be contested by David Banks's cartoon strip 'El Cid' in the UK's 'Police Review'. The next (Fig. 4) nicely highlights the notion that police retirement schemes are woefully inadequate.

Figure 4. From *Police news,* July 2001.



Figure 4. The first two panels of the same cartoon, enlarged.

Clearly those whom Australians refer to as 'the pollies' (politicians) are directly to blame for such circumstances, though it should be said that in comparative terms Police pay (the current starting salary is around $US 48.000) and conditions are not particularly stringent. Gazza is certain that cops are under-remunerated and un-appreciated. This left libertarian leaning author, lacking sympathy, did not find the cartoons particularly amusing, though if transposed for academic life probably would have. The point is of course that humour relates to values. Perceived adherence to (Bergson 2017) or divergence from both formal and informal 'rules' is liable to be interpreted as 'funny' or otherwise by different social groups.

Figure 4.  The last two panels of the same cartoon, enlarged.

The next target really struck a chord and amused this reader. Gazza clearly takes the view that s/he who can does, whilst s/he who can't administrates. We find a series of cartoons mercilessly mocking bureaucracy in general and managerialist technobabble in particular. Figure 5, for example, pours icy water on the idea that administrative driven initiatives and changes actually bring about improvement.



Figure 5.  From *Police news,* July 1999.
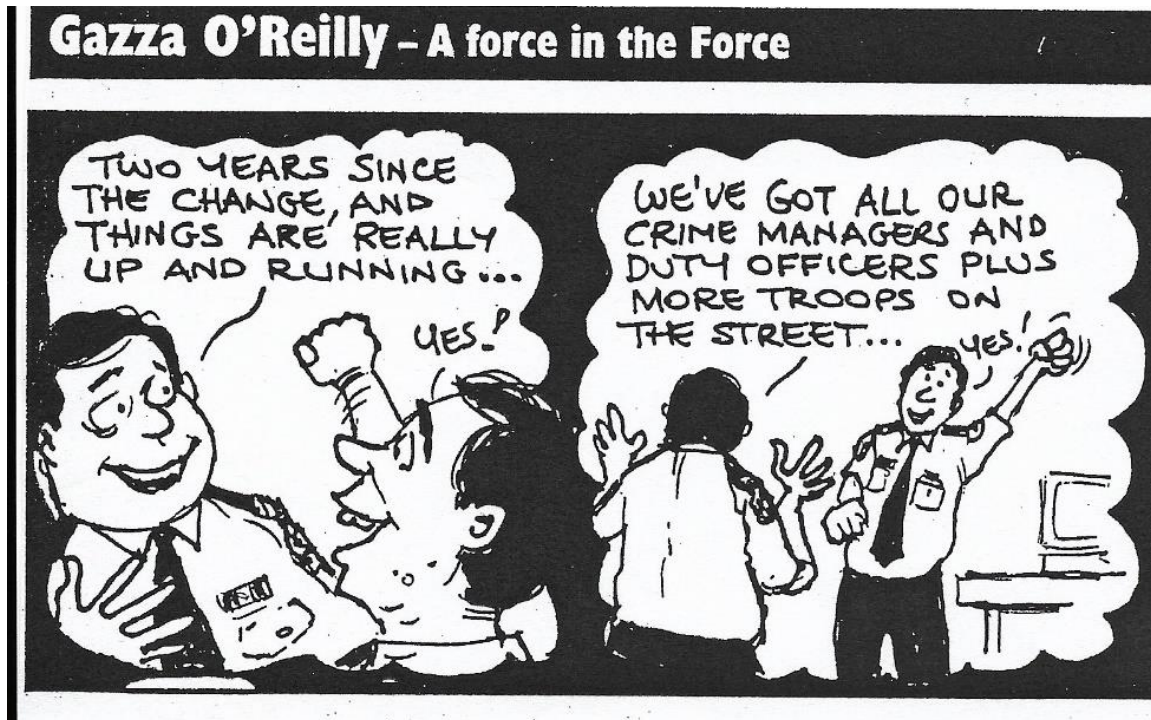
Figure 5. The first two panels, enlarged: the pipe dream. From *Police news,* July 1999.

Rather, the promised positive outcomes remain a (knowing Gazza) pipe dream. The fundamentally conservative police perspective indicates the futility of most changes, and certainly those driven from above. Pontification from the top office is patently absurd (Fig. 6).
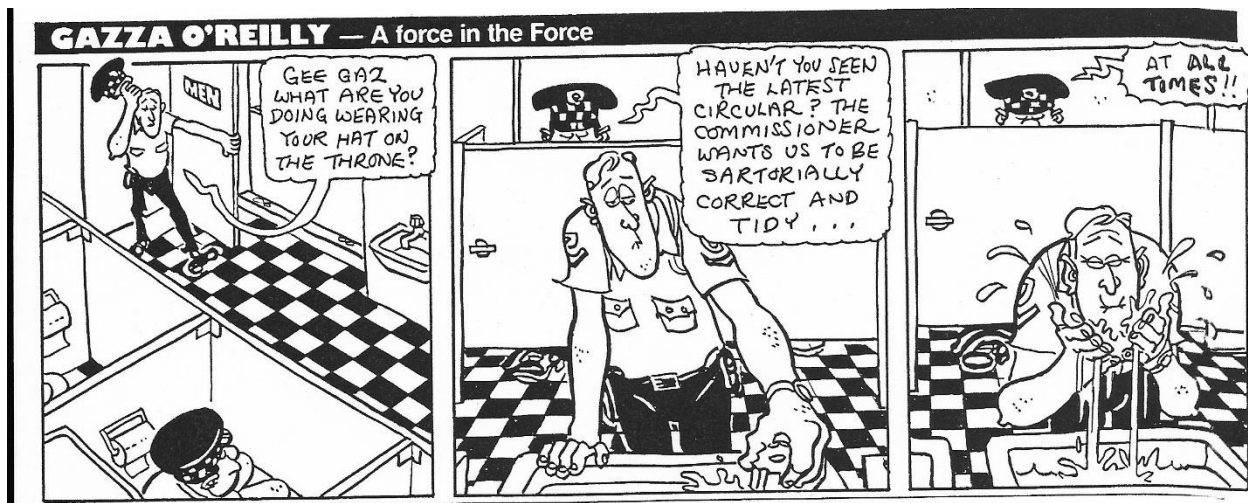


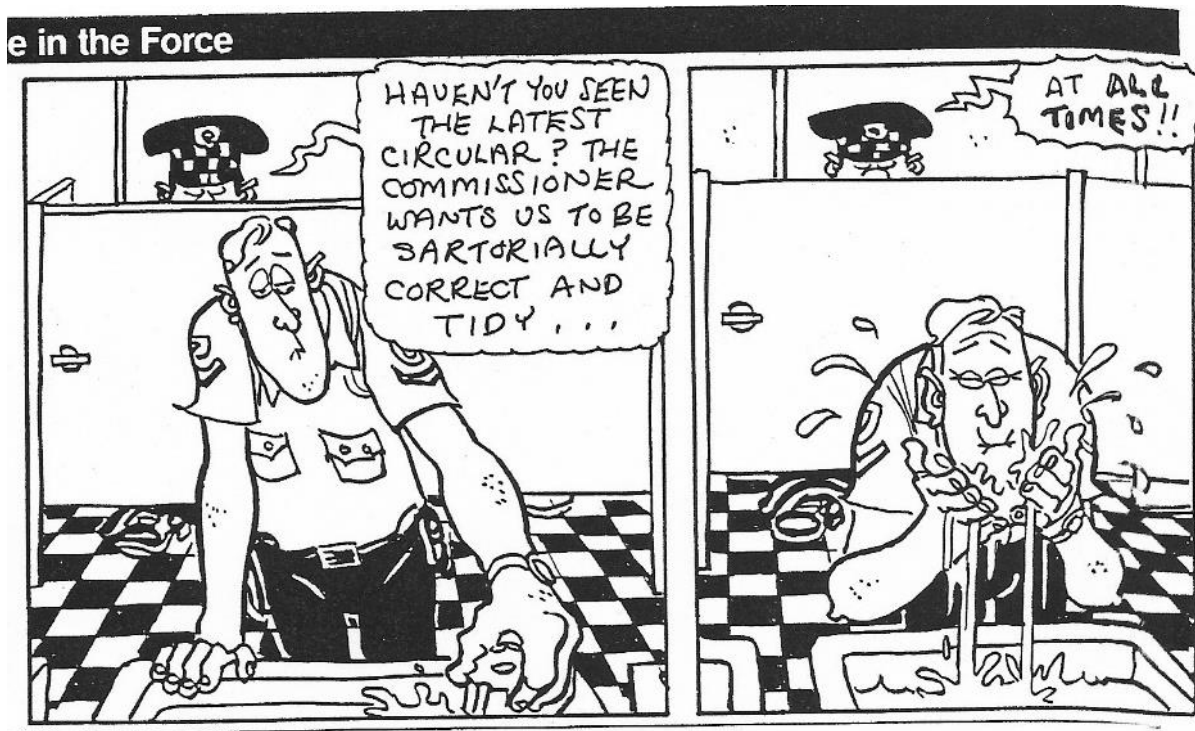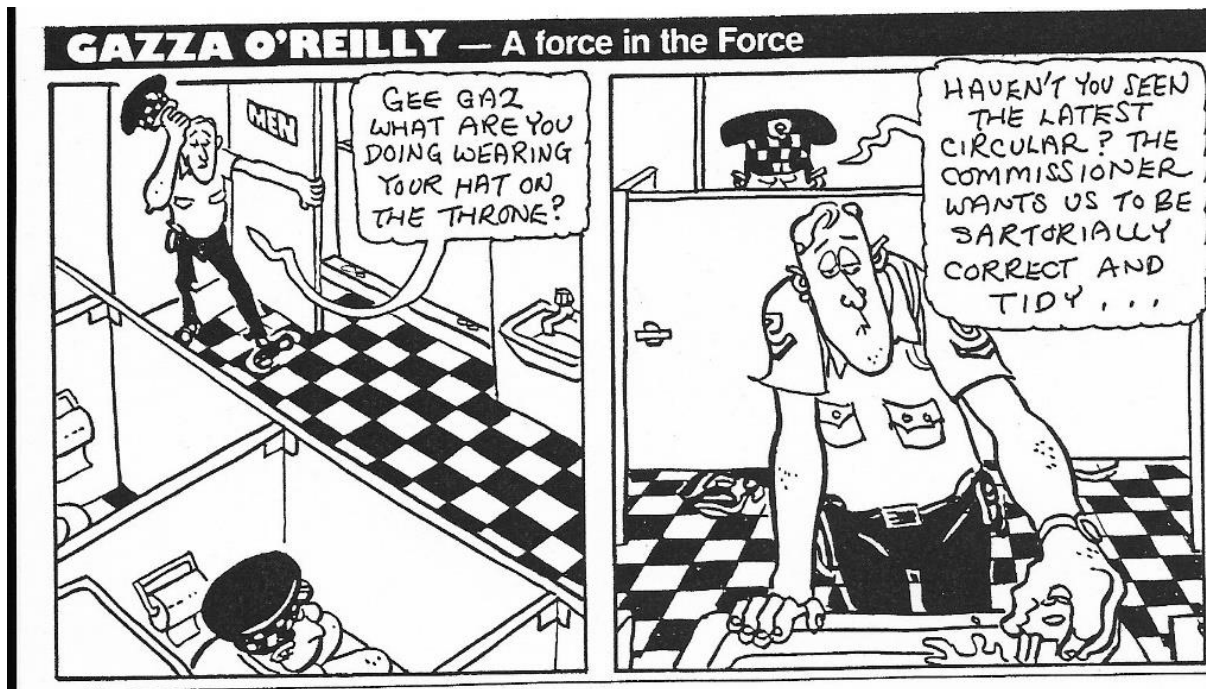Figure 6. From *NSW Police news,* April 1992.

Figure 6. The same cartoon of April 1992, with panels enlarged.

In early 2002, when police commanders instigated a no doubt well intentioned initiative to spend a little time on patrol in order to gage what life was like out there, Gazza clearly regarded this rather as a tokenistic imposition. He 'knows' that senior officers are simply out of touch, pointing out that commanders have no idea of real policing and would be better off doing paperwork back in the office and keeping out of the way (Fig. 7).

Figure 7. From *Police news,* April 2002.

When asked about documentation from auditors Gazza adopts a sardonic and dismissive attitude, whilst appearing to go along with it (Fig. 8).

This is a form of evasion which is seemingly understood by his superior. We, his readers, know that little of this will have much effect upon the ways in which Gazza will behave. Figure 9) makes the same point more forcibly.

Presented by more managerialist technobabble he translates the nonsense into common sense terms, making it clear that the practical consequences are negligible as cops will just continue to do what they've always done and what works for them. If the bosses want to describe it in some pretentious and convoluted way in order to justify their inflated salaries let them get on with it. This is reminiscent of Michael Dibdin's detective hero Aurelio Zen who can't disguise his disdain for the memo from 'above' which reads 'to facilitate positive interaction and innovative strategies fostering enhanced productivity in the crime issue resolution sector'. (Dibdin 2007)

Sometimes though, bureaucracy isn't merely pointless, it's counterproductive. In Fig. 10, new procedures dictate that Gazza spends the majority of his shift processing criminals rather than catching them.

This has been a common refrain amongst police for many years, though it should be pointed out that the attractions of the station from the street cop perspective have always had a lot of appeal. Adjourning to the relative comfort of office or canteen in order to process cases when outside conditions are less than ideal is a routine strategy for doing 'easy time'. Of course having to do tedious paperwork on someone else's terms when it's probably more fun to be driving around probably shouldn't be regarded as easy time. It's easy to see the dilemma though, as contemporary working life generally involves less time actually doing it than trying to account for what one does by re-scripting it-and humour is regularly used to highlight that gap between 'ideal' and 'normal'.

Gazza's cynicism regarding bureaucracy and managerialism is arguably only exceeded by his disdain for his political masters and indeed the political structure. In one example of externally directed, upward humour (Fig. 11), it's implied that changes in political leadership are largely irrelevant.
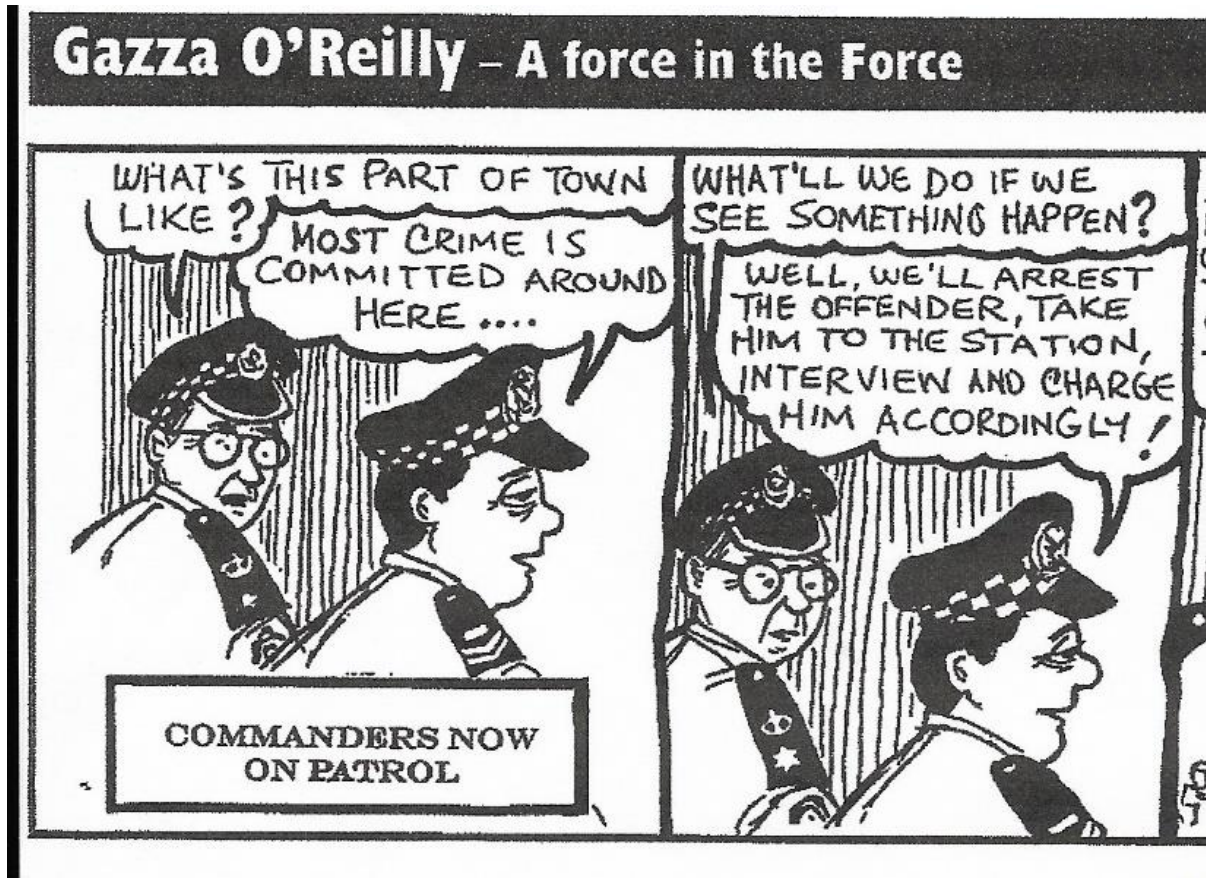
Figure 7.  The same cartoon of April 2002, with panels enlarged.

Figure 8. From *Police news,* July 1996.



Figure 8. The same cartoon, with the first two panels enlarged.
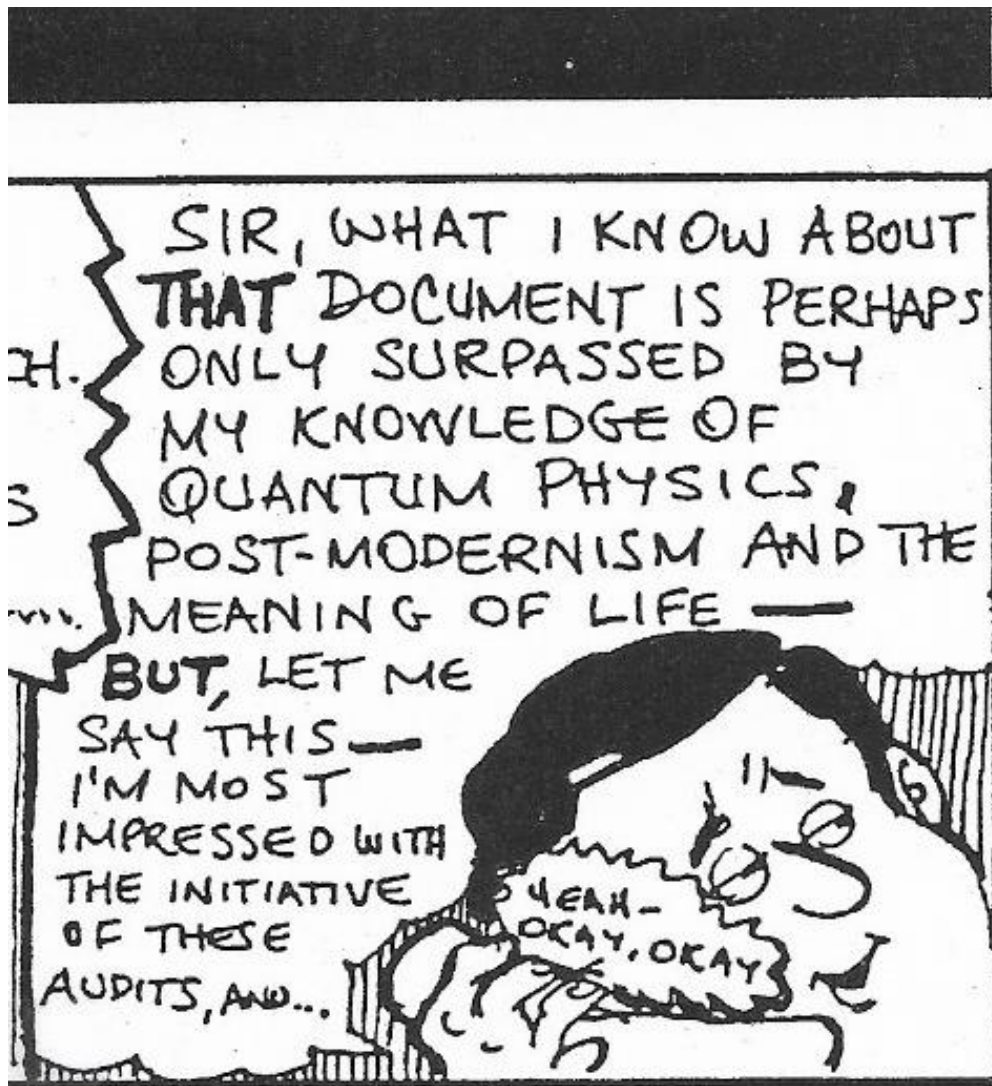
Figure 8. The same cartoon of July 1996, with the last panel enlarged.
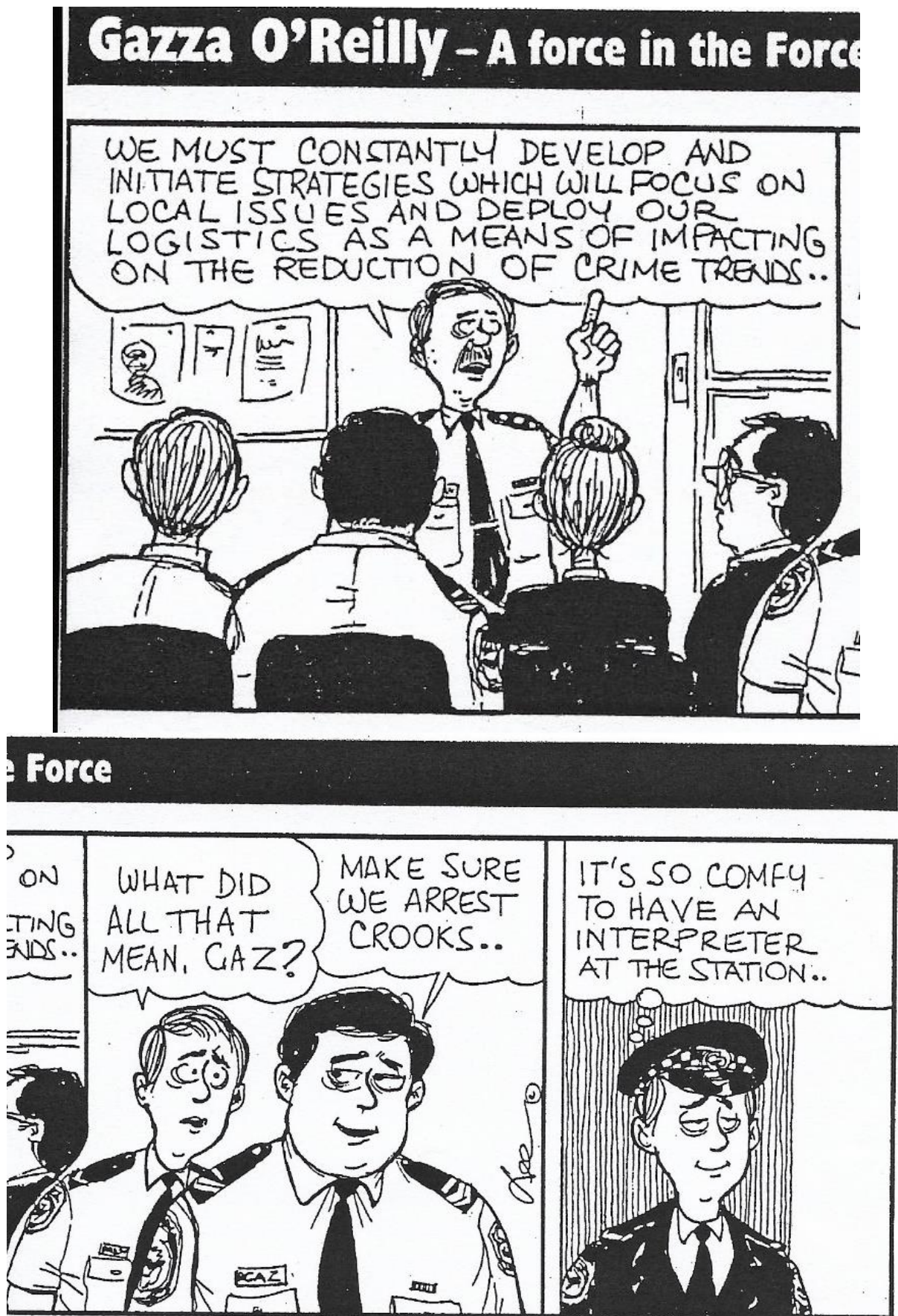


Figure 9. From *Police news,* October 1999.

Figure 9. The same cartoon of October 1999, with panels enlarged.

Figure 10. From *Police news,* October 1997.



Figure 10. Last panel enlarged.

Figure 11.  From *NSW Police news,* October 1992.



Figure 11.  The same cartoon with the first two panels enlarged.

Figure 11.  The same cartoon with the last two panels enlarged.

Put simply, what the Police need is a 'blank cheque'. The Pollies, though, are less interested in investing money and resources in the force, than in placing more and more restrictions upon officers. Even worse they're all hypocrites, as Fig. 12 suggests.
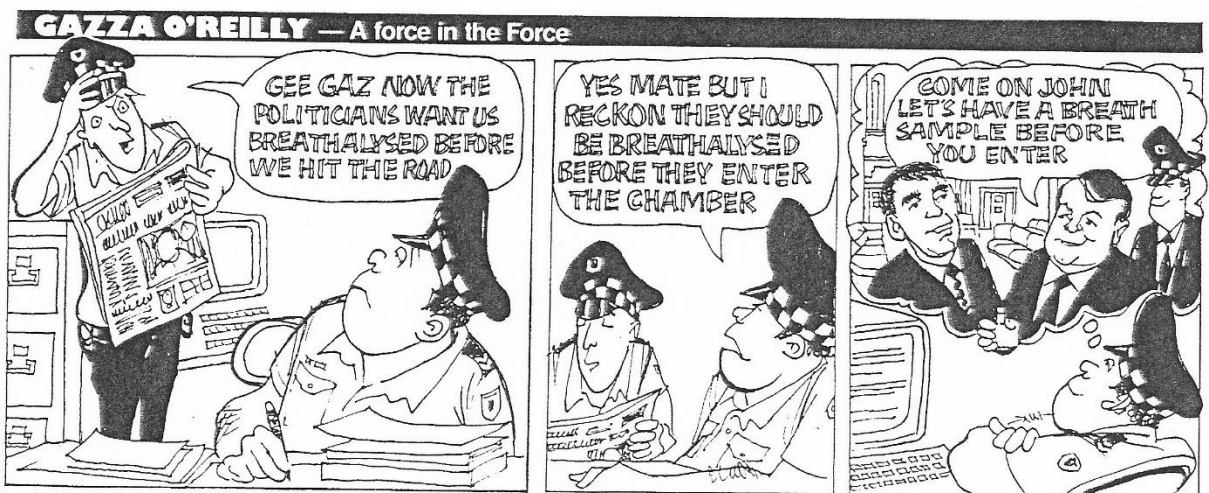


Figure 12.  From *NSW Police news,* April 1994.

Figure 12. The same cartoon of April 1994, with panels enlarged.

This companion to Fig. 1 makes this clear, as does Fig. 13, where demands that the police should become more efficient are countered by the suggestion that politicians should be the first people subject to such attention.



Figure 13.  From *NSW Police news,* July 1993.



Figure 13.  The same cartoon with the first two panels enlarged.

Figure 13.  The same cartoon of July 1993 with the last two panels enlarged.

Equally conventional is the universally found conviction that the police (and they assume the public) are invariably let down by an overly lenient broader judicial system. Every comparable in-house police magazine I have studied contains multiple versions of (Fig. 14).
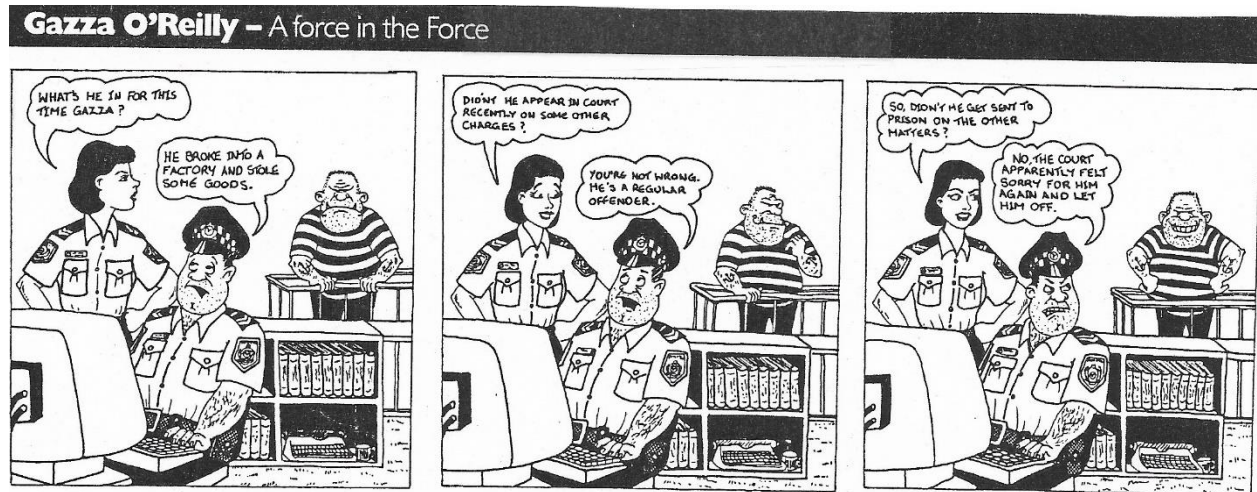


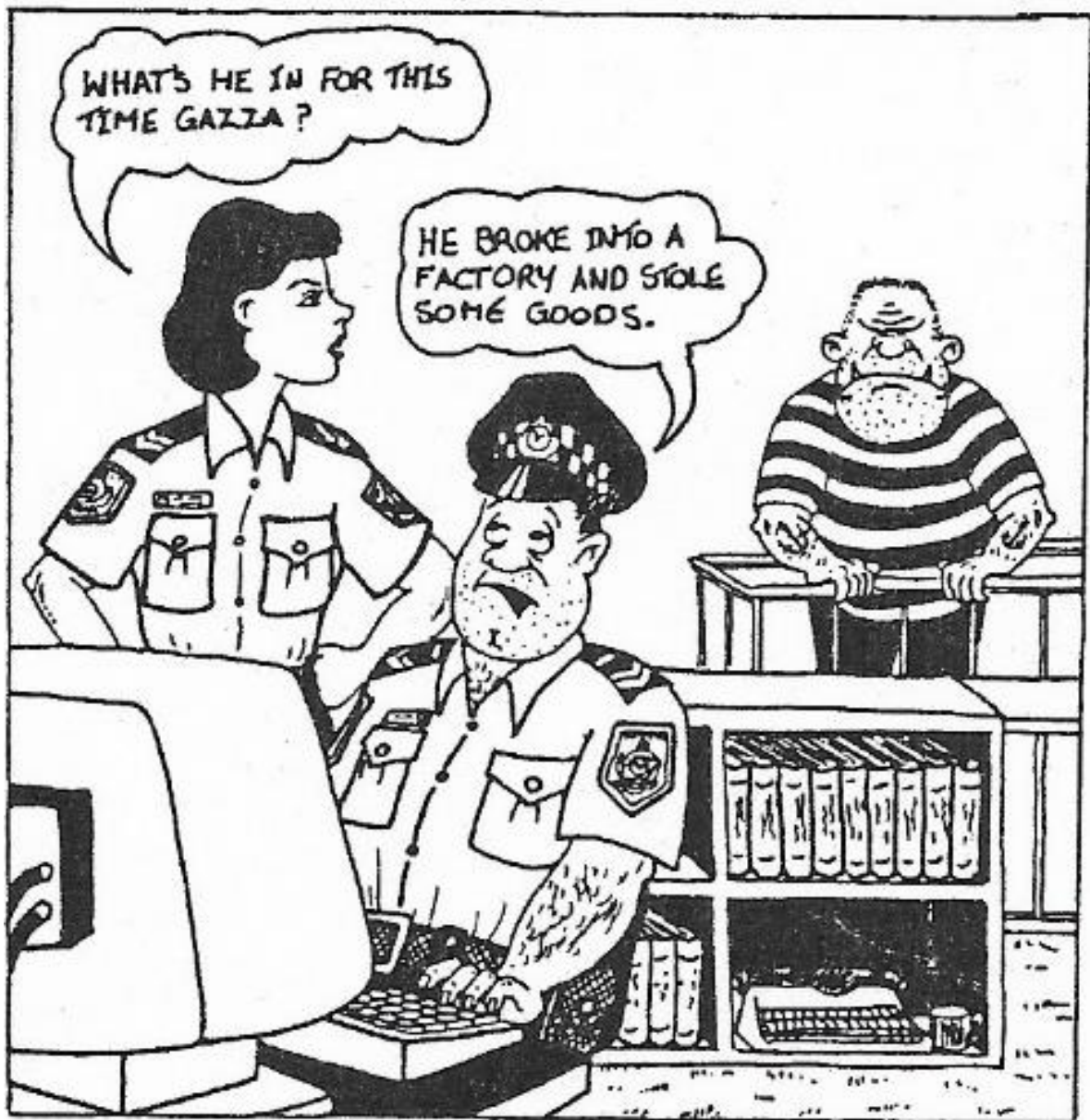Figure 14.  From *Police news,* April 1996.

Figure 14. The same cartoon of April 1996: the first panel enlarged.

Figure 14.  The same cartoon of April 1996: the second panel enlarged.

Figure 14. The last panel enlarged, of the same cartoon of April 1996.

It should be clear that these humorous interludes within a generally serious magazine are actually about articulating a perspective with an eye to managing perceived deviance amidst the existing social order. Politicians represent that order and disdain for them is intense and transparent, even when contained within a cartoons 'safe' humour zone. It's rare for Gazza to step too overtly on to political terrain. Fig. 15 is however one such example.

Figure 15.  From *NSW Police news,* January 1994.



Figure 15.  The same cartoon of January 1994: the first panel enlarged.

Figure 15. The same cartoon of January 1994: the second panel enlarged.

Figure 15.  The same cartoon of January 1994: the last panel enlarged.

In one sense it is obviously about working conditions, but it also expresses resentment over Aboriginal land rights, which the Mabo bill directly addressed. The implication is that 'the system' bent over backwards to accommodate the Aboriginal community (an absurdity by any standards) whilst neglecting the descendants of presumably ethnically Irish people such as Gazza.

It should be emphasized that Australian policing cannot be adequately understood without exploring a wide range of contexts. Whilst it is beyond my scope here clearly colonial history is a significant factor. Modern Australia was founded in blood and sweat, of indigenous peoples and convicts.

The police role was to try to keep the lid on potentially explosive conflicts. Since the 1990's a series of scandals have emerged involving the New South Wales police (as well as those of Victoria). There have been exposés of brutality and corruption.

The police have clearly resented initiatives aimed at cleaning up the service. In New South Wales a 'whistle-blower's charter' was declared in order to persuade officers to report on unruly colleagues. Very few reports materialised and when they did the 'snitch' (as cop culture might have it) felt forced to resign. Fig. 16 conveys the re-assuring message that everything is fine.



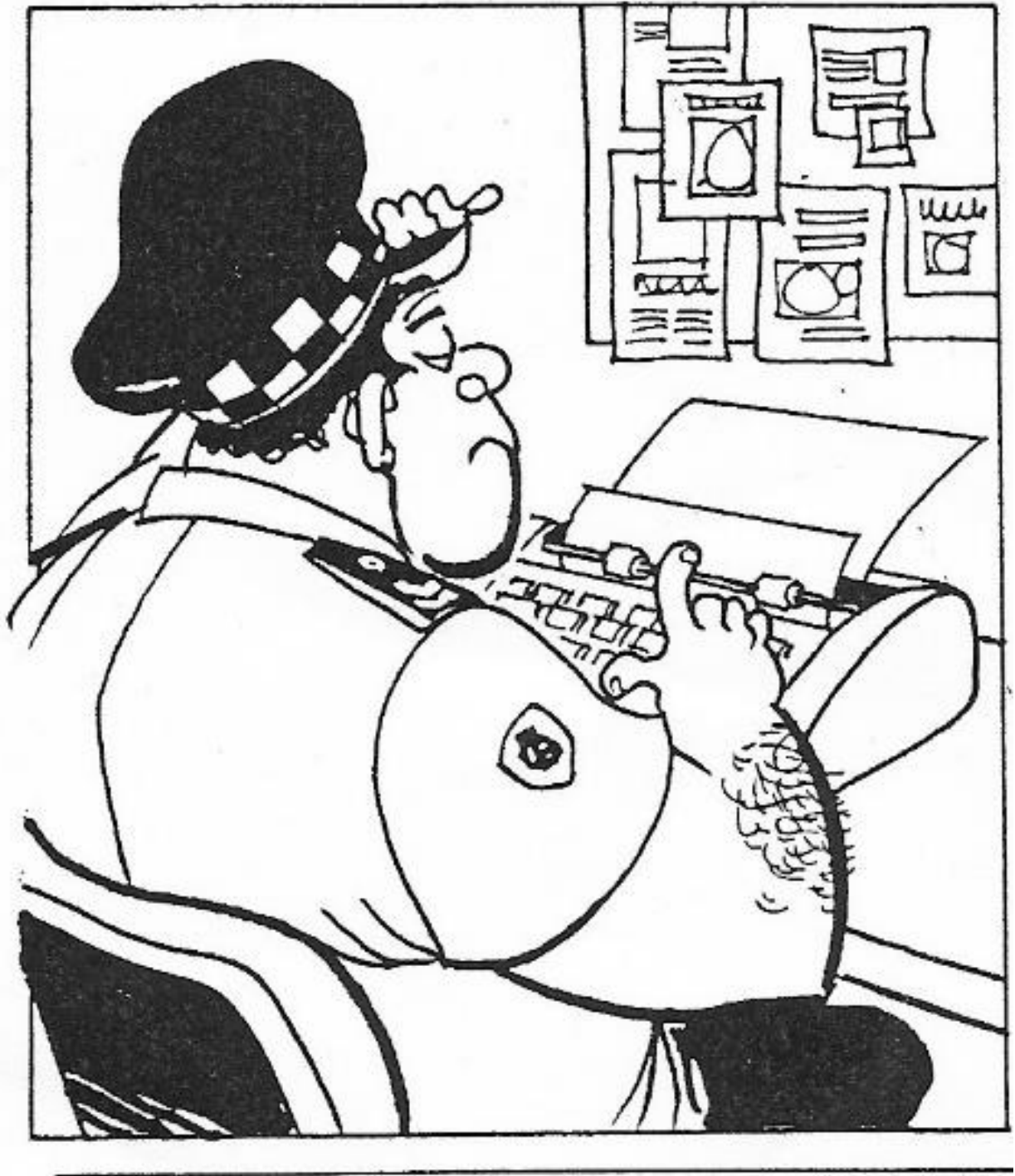Figure 16.  From *NSW Police news,* October 1995.

Figure 16. The first panel of the October 1995 cartoon.

Figure 16. The second panel of the October 1995 cartoon.

Figure 16. The third panel of the October 1995 cartoon.

I conclude this section by presenting a cartoon which targets a professional group somewhat too close to home! Figure 17 reflects and reproduces a conventional police cynicism with regards to academia and experts.
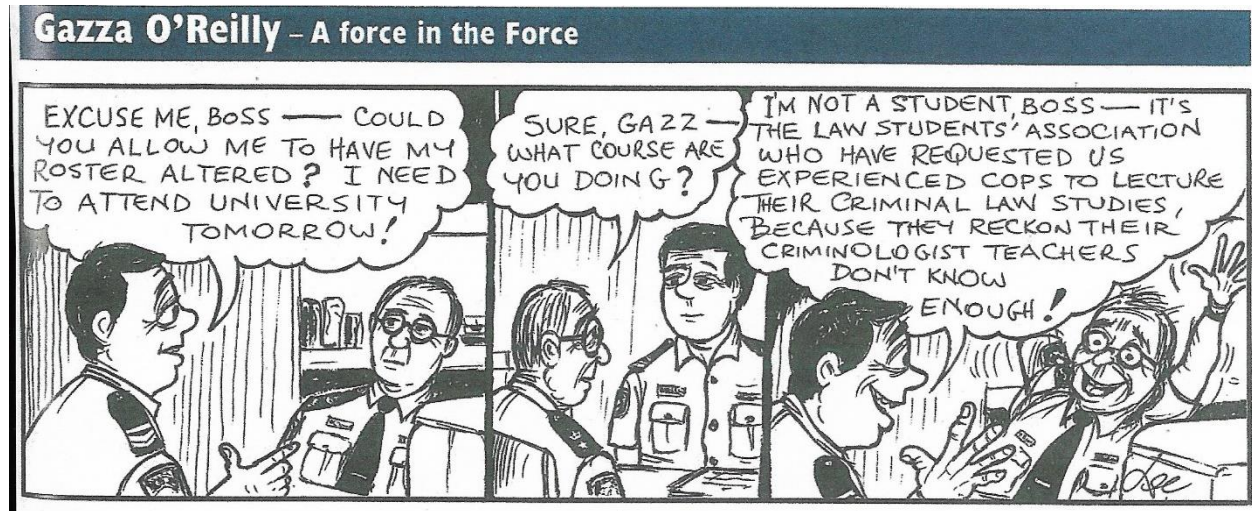
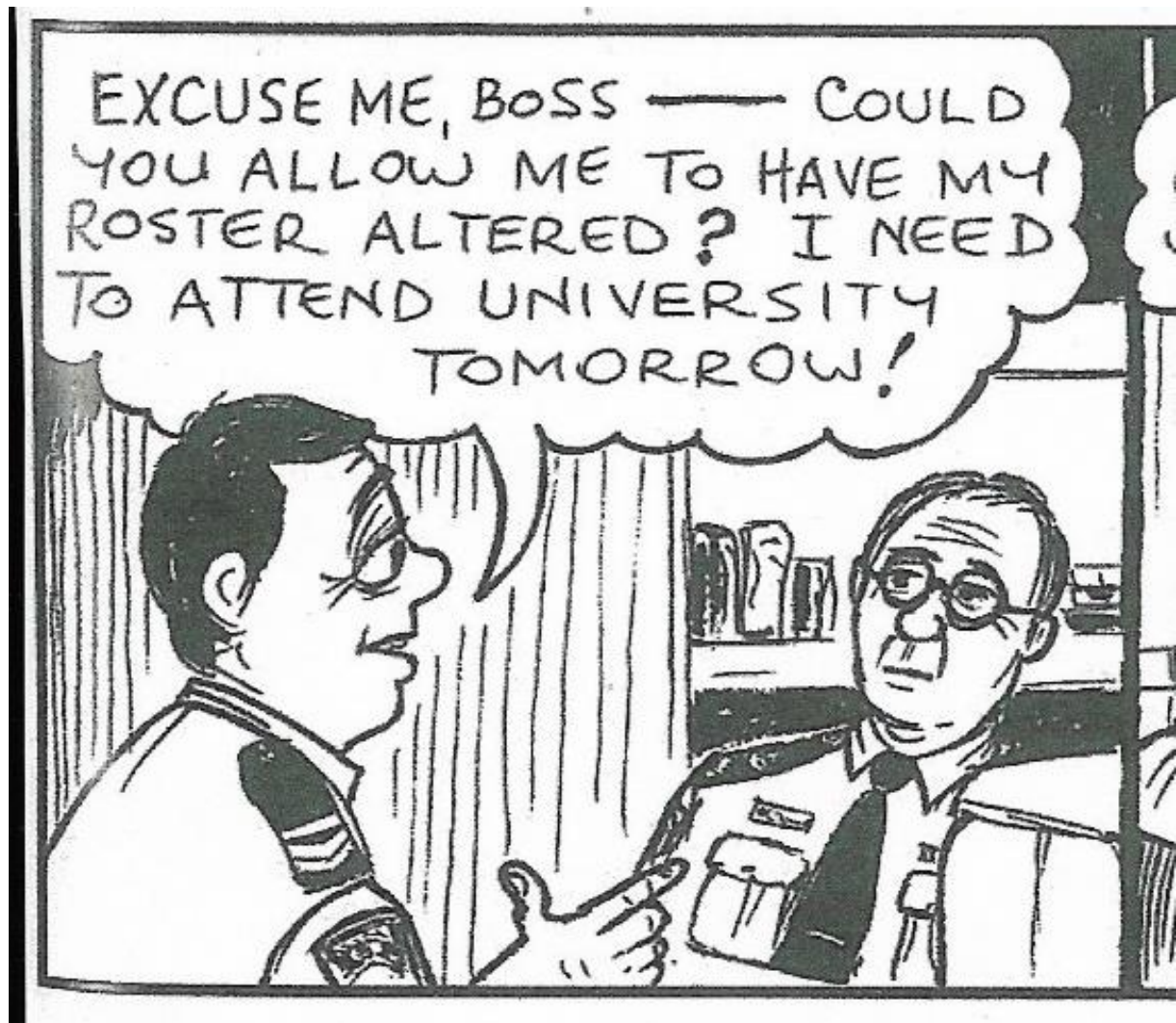Figure 17. From *Police news,* January 2003.



Figure 17. The first panel of the January 2003 cartoon.

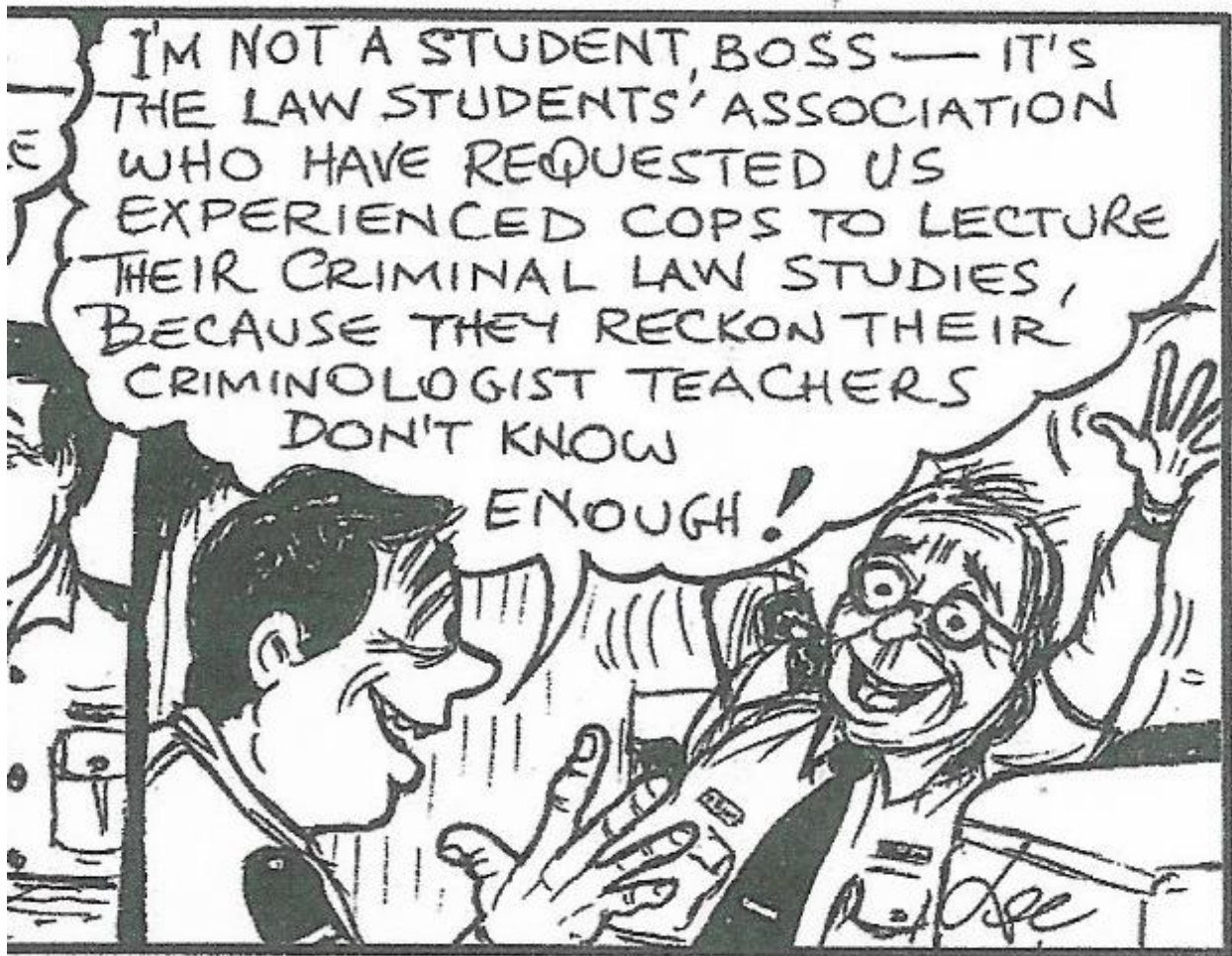Figure 17. The second panel of the January 2003 cartoon.

Figure 17.  The third panel of the January 2003 cartoon.

Whilst referring specifically to 'university' the police academy is surely implied. The weaning of new recruits away from the formal legalistic training taking place in the Academy at Goulburn is a key element of becoming incorporated into NSW cop culture. The message 'we know better than the so called experts' could not be clearer. Along with many others this expression of cynicism, is an important element of a world view, one which can be conceived of as a slightly accentuated common sense perspective of large numbers of ordinary cops. The primary official audience for the cartoons is expected to (and I suspect does) smile at Gazza and say to themselves 'yeah too right mate'.

## 5.  Conclusion

It has been suggested that humour has been used as commentary both on specific contemporary contextualized events and more universal concerns. Reference to the 'universal' lays one open to the charge of a-historicism. However, what constitutes 'universal' is ultimately a question of definition. Briefly, I would maintain that whilst some forms clearly change, many remain the same. Furthermore indeed, I am arguing in the inevitable course of the process and chronology of change a sub-cultures response is to adjust, albeit slowly. The period of lag is characterized by resistances of various kinds, amongst which humour plays its

role. Contemporarily a significant feature is the availability of a technological infrastructure increasingly fine-tuned by managers motivated to shape the appearance of events. In this article I have attempted to flag and indeed bemoan this development, but to provide more would require a different (probably a more depressing and certainly a duller) paper.

In informed speculative mode however I suggest that from the start of this millennium we can detect somewhat of a sea-change in internal police magazine cartoons generally. In Gazza's earliest days it was still rather more permissible to celebrate and reproduce cop culture. At that time the common sense view of police as maintainers of 'law and order' (ideologically vital for public support and recruitment) was internally derided by a more realistic portrayal of cops as self-interested wheeler dealers, willing to do what it takes in the pursuit of an 'easy life' and their understandings of 'order'. Such portrayals served to shift newcomers away from 'law in books' and towards 'law on streets' by legitimating the occupational culture. The celebration of informalism has been gradually diminishing and self-congratulation even more so. Today we inhabit an institutional world far more savvy and guarded than the more forthright and self-confident world of even a recent but generally pre-social media era. We have experienced an increasing tendency towards spin doctoring and a crackdown on the spaces which might have existed for the expression of 'off-messages'. In-house magazines, (and certainly their on-line versions) have become more easily accessible to a wider audience than merely the occupationally acculturated and acculturating police officers who traditionally read the strips. Editors and cartoonists are far more sensitive regarding the exposure of dirty or even soiled linen in public, even within the 'safe' framework of humour. Noel Johnson, the cartoonist who succeeded Lee Falsom in 'Police News' with his strip 'Out of the Blue' is manifestly far more guarded (or his editors are) where 'foibles' are concerned. Today a Police Association has to think twice about indulging the kind of self-congratulation and self-deprecation of a more self-confident and at least on the surface a less publically accountable force. Furthermore it's increasingly difficult to operate outside the goldfish bowl. For instance, camera technology has advanced. Smart phones are ubiquitous as are calls for body cameras for police officers. Clearly from the perspective of Police agencies both formally and informally visibility needs to be managed, on one hand by selective exposure and on the other by attempts at covering up. One suspects that Gazza would have had a lot to say.

The objective of this article has been to argue that 'in-house' cartoons reflect and reproduce collective Police perspectives relating to both general aspects of police work, and to specific police contexts vis-à-vis national and contemporary political and economic 'realities'. I maintain that around the cusp of the 20th Century cartoons addressed 3 key issues. Firstly they clarified and celebrated rule bending and 'deviance' amongst officers. The cartoon material for obvious reasons skated around the more egregious realms of prosecutable deviance such as police brutality and corruption. Humour which might have been rather open and blunt on such themes in the canteen and on patrol was not to be found in even semi-public contexts. Contemporary expressions of racism and sexism rarely appeared, as evidenced by the relative invisibility of non-whites and women. I found no non-white officers or indeed criminals. Over time and slowly, female officers began to appear, mainly as sponges for Gazza's 'wisdom'. Nevertheless the cartoons were highly suggestive with regard to how the socially constructed occupational mind-set both enabled and justified self-serving discriminatory and probably inevitable practices. Secondly they were concerned with what were seen as threats to various kinds of resources-for example economic and legal. Finally they reflected a sceptical perspective on their 'bosses' (politicians and managers). In more recent years the cartoons concentrate predominantly on the latter two, as celebration of 'us and our little ways' has shifted to a focus on 'them and their nefarious schemes'.

Changes have taken place which the Police tend to see negatively-as the practices and discourses of 'bureaucrazy' and managerialism have come to hold sway and purse strings (on

the surface at least) have tightened. In a public relations, impression management preoccupied world, illuminating ones petty foibles has become less pragmatic and viable. Why provide evidence for potential critics if it can be avoided? After all, it's 'their' fault isn't it?

## Appendices

**A1.** Interestingly, it is rather apparent that the early sociologists of policing's perhaps naïve intention was to 'tell it like it was' in order to expose and presumably challenge 'malpractices'. More contemporary researchers have seemed rather more prone to 'go native'. This anthropological term refers to the notion that researchers can become so immersed in the culture they're supposed to be 'objectively' studying, that they begin to uncritically 'buy in' to the rationales those cultures offer for behaviour. At worst many police researchers implicitly have come to take for granted and accept often morally questionable if not always technically illegal behaviours. The reasons are many and varied. They include a manifest shaping of research topics and parameters by funding agencies, and continuing control over access to data and ultimately publication. Increasingly research occurs, not in Sociology or (later) Criminology departments but in ones signalling much more 'applied' and conservative ones, most notably 'Criminal Justice'. Finally critical research is curtailed by the (surely ironic) role played by 'ethics committees'.

**A2.** 'Police SERVICE' is the more in vogue term. This author regards 'Police FORCE' as a generally more valid one.

**A3.** I make no claims for 'objectivity' here, at least not in the conventional sense. All the cartoons were considered, and a form of thematic coding applied. However, what was presented and highlighted in the final analysis is 'just' a narrative. Experience has led this author to the conclusion that social scientific interpretations which make overly bullish claims to 'objectivity' are often essentially 'smoke and mirror' exercises designed to convince and impress audiences. Honestly I lack the motivation to convince anyone. Those who find my account interesting or alienating are of course free to review the material I've covered in order to assess its value or otherwise for themselves. I would anticipate some 'reproducibility of results' and some dissent. I see human life as a construction of narratives, some, as the Emotivists would have it, 'nice' and others 'nasty' according to values.

No academic credentials render the holders exempt. From a phenomenological perspective all narratives are developed intersubjectively within a wide array of social contexts. This theoretical/methodological position is reflected by the writing style adopted here. I resist the academic convention which serves to deny and disguise the role of authorship. I think 'I' should replace the more 'correct' terms such as 'we' or 'one' and similarly consensually insistent ones. My style is intended to offer only 'invitations'. In the course of reading texts, people continually break off and make mental connections from their own prior 'knowledge' and experience. I prefer to encourage rather than prevent this process.

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