

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS' OF AUSTRALIA INC.
(Vic. Branch)

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29 July 1989.

R. Van Driesum
Editor AMCN.

Sir,

Ed's Desk, July 28, is a distortion of the facts that I did not expect. I was asked to write for AMCN at the end of 1985. I have been a loyal and reliable contributor for four years.

The \$75 a week pay did not even cover my phone bill. I wrote the column because I believed in a national motorcycle organisation.

I wasted three hours in your office with ^{you and} Ken Wootan discussing the direction of the calendar, my input and pay and the way the magazine "covered" the motorcycle community. I felt that there should have been a lot more for the ordinary rider. That the commuter scene was being neglected for muscle bike and technical/competition material. That's OK if all you want to do is appeal to the minority - the competition enthusiast. But I was under the impression that AMCN wanted to broaden it's base and attract new readers. This was what Ken and I were "arguing" as I left AMCN for the last time. How best to promote motorcycling? I felt the capacity/revs/vroom type articles like the piece on the Honda 250 vs the 1000 demonstrated my point. The article did not show the 250 in a way that said here is a machine that is simple, robust and an ideal commuter/learner bike. It compared it unfavourably to a big sport/tourer in a race type situation on public roads. It told of supposedly responsible staff members breaking a lot of laws and riding recklessly in traffic. I did not believe this kind of story was the kind of thing that would attract new riders or readers or would give the motorcycle community an improved image in the eyes of the authorities. That is why I got AMCN a seat at the Victoria Police Road Safety Advisory Committee. I doubt AMCN will take advantage of this. When I left AMCN for the last time I had agreed to find you someone reliable, with the expertise and knowledge to write the MRA Calendar. I had agreed to fill the gap until the new writer could come on line. I did not walk out in a huff. You lie.

I went home and spent some \$80 on STD calls to find the right replacement. I found him for you. Of course you make it seem I did the wrong thing and you had to go out and find Hal. I rang people across the country looking for the right person.

What "wierd and wonderful things" did I accuse you of before I walked out? Misleading tripe. Bureaucrats use these tactics when they want introduce restrictive legislation. I did not expect it from you. If you want to accuse me of a thing at least have the guts to base the allegations on fact. I left with Ken talking about the image of motorcycling as a whole.

Next morning I rang your office to tell you I had solved the problem and Hal would do the job starting in a month or so. I

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was going to fill in until he could start. I came to you. I listened to what you had to say. I did not entirely agree with you but I did what you asked and the calendar will be done for free.

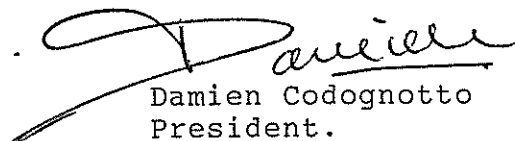
Ken Wootan told me to ring you at the printers and gave me your number there. Now you have known me long enough to know my manner of speech is loud and fast. There is nothing I find more annoying than not being allowed to complete a sentence. You kept cutting me off before I could tell you I had solved your problem. There is nothing I find more insulting than being hung-up on. You hung-up the phone with a loud bang in my ear. I dont take that from public servants and I certainly think you owe me an apology for that and for your propaganda article to make me look bad and give you an excuse for failing to have a calendar in the current issue.

I stopped writing for AMCN because you, in a rude and arrogant manner, slammed the phone down in my ear. Of course, like the Australian with "A Bridge to far for Violent Bikies", you wont discredit your own propaganda with the truth unless you are forced to. But the Australian is national and you only reach 20 to 30 thousand. The bulk of the motorcycle community will see through the Ed's Desk so I will be happy that at least this letter records my side of the story.

We have an exciting year ahead and much of the GP Week activities were to feature the only Melbourne bike mag. I hope AMCN will be involved but you will have to lift your standards before I will look forward to working with AMCN on any project again.

Ian Coutes and I had talked about promotions that would certainly have benefited the MRA but would also have put AMCN into high profile situations and probably attracted new readers.

As far as I am concerned you have misled your readers and my opinion of you as an ethical journalist has reached about the same level as my opinion of Penny Robinson of the Australian.


Damien Codognotto
President.