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Corruption in cricket

For 100 years or more, since the mid-Victorians elevated it to something approaching a holy devotion, the game of cricket stood principally for gentlemanly, and preferably heroic, conduct. So pure was cricket's image that it sometimes resembled a branch of Christianity. Any man or boy who behaved in a disapproved fashion on the field was branded a 'bounder'. Englishmen took the game with them as a symbol of fair play wherever they advanced the causes of the British Empire.

In stark contrast, in recent decades cricket at the highest level has been dragged into the realms of brash show business, financial profit almost the sole driving force among those who aspired to the responsibility of preserving and steering the game. Cricketers at this level usually seek to justify excesses by pointing to the fact that this is their means of livelihood in a competitive world where the millions – even billions – of pounds, dollars and rupees blind almost everybody to the ethical values of old. By the twenty-first century, so remote a vision has the earlier benevolent concept of sport become that even in minor club matches instances of cheating and abuse, physical as well as verbal, are not rare.

Corruption in cricket embraces a multitude of sins, including biased umpiring, fraudulent promotions, deliberate preparation of pitches to suit home teams, thefts from dressing-rooms and of memorabilia, or – a rare occurrence this, but witnessed at international level – deliberate scuffing of the pitch by a fieldsman. All these offences have soiled the virtuous façade of cricket's traditional image.

In the 1990s, frantic headlines flashed as accusations of ball-tampering emerged, a widespread and complex problem. Pakistan's Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis were at the eye of the storm for their unexplained late swing at high speed. The conclusion of many opponents was that these bowlers must have been gouging the ball. Then came the realisation that a ball may be made to deviate late in its flight path not solely through the aerodynamic principle that the less shiny side drags it down, but now also by a method

known as ‘reverse swing’ (caused by applying a copious amount of natural moisture to one side while letting the other become rough). This had the theorists chattering, speculating and demonstrating. Widespread suspicion of tampering receded, the sense of relief aided by the new procedure of regular examination of the ball by the umpires.

To a degree it remains true that there is nothing new in cricket. Ted Peate, a Yorkshire slow left-artermer of the 1880s, was one bowler who slyly tampered with the ball, in his case by surreptitiously applying mud to one side of it to create bias. There is no scarcity of early recorded instances of cheating, bribery and match-fixing. Wider society, however, had no cause to recoil on a grand scale until the dark deeds which hung depressingly over the last few years of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first.

Even so, modern cricket has yet to throw up anything quite of a magnitude to match the dishonourable deed of which William Lambert was adjudged guilty in 1818.¹ It was not that he was the only cricketer deemed to have ‘thrown’ a match, because he wasn’t. Such a sin was anything but a rarity. What shocked the comparatively small cricket world of the time, when pitches were usually rough but bowling was still underhand, was the revelation that the crime had been committed by a cricketer who by general consent was the pre-eminent batsman in the land – and therefore in the whole world at a time when no cricket of consequence was played outside England.

A strongly built Surrey man with all-round cricket skill, Lambert had astounded everyone by scoring two hundreds in a match at the semi-rural Lord’s ground only the summer before. But as a member of the so-called England side which played against Twenty-two of Nottingham in Nottingham, Lambert was stumped for 7 and caught for 9; and although he caught, stumped or bowled thirteen of his opponents he was deemed, through his batting failures, to have engineered his team’s unexpected downfall by 30 runs. The noblemen at Lord’s banned him from playing at their select ground thereafter. Today, Lambert would have been hunted by television crews and reporters. Almost 200 years ago, he quietly faded from view, although it is thought that it could have been none other than Lambert who unburdened himself to the Reverend James Pycroft, who devoted pages of his 1851 classic *The Cricket-Field* to an interview with an old cricketer: ‘But for that Nottingham match I could have said with a clear conscience to a gentleman like you that all which was said was false, and I never sold a match in my life; but now I can’t.’²

Pycroft also recorded a precious interview with the celebrated Surrey batsman ‘Silver Billy’ Beldham, who, like the previous witness, declared that betting and match-fixing were rife early in the nineteenth century. It seems

that only after it had touched excessive levels did it undergo a natural evaporation. This was probably expedited by the sense of shame stemming from its exposure.

The Green Man and Still, a tavern in London's Oxford Street, was where cricket's 'underworld' used to congregate, mixing with the players, planning and rigging matches as well as individual performances for the benefit of the few. There was no International Cricket Council Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) to shadow them and monitor them and move in to press charges; nor did the shady dealers and gamblers, the 'legs', and their cricketer targets and accomplices have mobile telephones to facilitate contact.

As for the gentlemen who proudly developed Lord's in north-west London as the premier venue, all they could do was ban bookmakers from entry. There had been widespread distaste for the gambling and manipulation associated with prizefighting, foot racing, and principally horse racing, a 'sport' which in England was eventually brought under limited control in 1740 by an Act of Parliament which prohibited stakes of less than a very substantial £50. So, although horse racing remained a major social attraction for the wealthy, cricket now became a ready substitute for those who made their livings not only from gambling but also from illicit manipulation. While a number of noblemen underwrote cricket matches around the country for sumptuous wagers, some of them were at the same time known to have been rigging those matches. In doing so, they usually won appreciably more than they lost in stake money. A rare insight was afforded by another of cricket's outstanding players of the 1840s, Alfred Mynn from Kent, who recalled being approached by a baronet who wished to discuss the possible fixing of a match – a 'foul proposal' – only to be told by the heavyweight Mynn: 'Get out of my sight, or, Baronet as you are, I am sure I shall be knocking you down.'³

While the wretched Lambert was the top cricketer of his era, his lasting fame was as nothing beside that of the rough-hewn Gloucestershire giant W. G. Grace, doctor of medicine, record-breaker extraordinaire and – not least because of his imposing stature and great beard – as famous, then and now, as any cricketer. Drawing upon the popular anecdotes about him, modern readers might easily conclude that W. G. owed his extraordinary record as batsman and bowler to his inclination to cheat. That record might indeed have owed a little to his domineering manner towards opponents and umpires, but the stronger ones, such as Bob Thoms, ignored his attempts to overrule them. Wilfred Rhodes, the young Yorkshire slow left-arm bowler, once hit W. G. on the pads, appealed and saw Thoms's finger raised; but the batsman refused to budge – until Thoms said adamantly, 'You're out! You're out! You've got to go!' And Grace went.⁴

If the world-famous doctor – an amateur who demanded and was paid fees and ‘expenses’ well above those granted to professionals – was ever party to undisguised corruption it might have been during the 1873–74 tour of Australia, when he agreed terms to take his team to the South Australian mining town of Kadina while shunning any fixture in Adelaide, the state capital. After the farcical Kadina game, it became clear that Grace and his players were hurrying away to play in a lucrative fixture in Adelaide after all, thus devaluing Kadina’s proud promotional claim that theirs was the only match the Englishmen would be playing in South Australia. W. G.’s duplicity and money hunger gave rise to some imaginative terms of insult in Kadina’s *Wallaroo Times*, one opinion concluding that ‘his name will become a synonym for mean cunning and systematic fraud’.⁵

It was not the only taint on W. G. Grace’s name, or on his wider family, since his cousin Walter Gilbert, a fellow tourist on that 1873–74 venture, left England in shame in 1886 after having been caught stealing in the dressing-room. This was only one of many instances of pavilion theft across the decades, almost all of them hushed up.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, suspicions of match-fixing were rare, mostly fanciful as English county captains sought outright results in four-innings matches confined to three days. Challenges were regularly and necessarily struck through impromptu declarations, and risks were calculated, often conjointly, in the quest for precious points. At the highest level – Test match cricket – came a story from the imaginative pen of the Australian spin bowler Arthur Mailey. At the team hotel in Adelaide during the 1924–25 series, his captain Herby Collins, playing cards as usual in the early hours, was approached by a cigar-smoking stranger who made a proposition: tomorrow, on the sixth day, England needed 27 runs to win with two wickets in hand. Allow them to win, suggested the stranger, and it would be worth £100 to the Australian captain. ‘Let’s throw him downstairs’, said Collins.⁶

In the later years of the century and into the next, a time when litigation became a somewhat more accessible and popular pursuit, many a writ or ‘stop writ’ was the consequence as fiercely competitive newspapers strove ever harder to increase circulation. Media excess proliferated in close parallel with the show-business façade created by the rebel World Series Cricket, a cash-oriented form of loud and colourful cricket entertainment bankrolled by media magnate Kerry Packer in Australia towards the end of 1977.

The feverish excitement generated by the ‘new’ brand of cricket brought with it the occasional conjecture about possible corruption, an instance of which occurred when, under the headline ‘Come on Dollar, Come on’ in an edition of the Melbourne *Age* newspaper in January 1982, an article was

perceived by some as having implied that West Indies had deliberately lost a limited-overs match to Australia in Sydney a few days earlier in order to ensure that the home side qualified for the finals at the expense of Pakistan. (It was calmly pointed out later in *Wisden* that an Australia v. West Indies final – rather than a match between West Indies and Pakistan – would generate much extra money at the turnstiles.) West Indies captain Clive Lloyd, who had not played in the match in question, decided to sue the newspaper publishers, David Syme & Company, claiming that the report in the *Age* ‘imputed that he had committed a fraud on the public for financial gain by pre-arranging a match, or was suspected of or prepared to commit such a fraud’.⁷ In September 1984 the New South Wales Supreme Court found in favour of Lloyd and awarded him damages of \$A100,000; but later that year the Court of Appeal decided by a majority that Lloyd had not been defamed. The damages award was set aside and Lloyd had to pay costs. He then appealed to the Privy Council in London, where the decision was reversed a second time, restoring Lloyd’s damages award – and causing uproar in Australia’s parliamentary corridors, where the majority wish had long been to cut the traditional legal legislative links with the United Kingdom.

For over 100 years cricket’s clean image remained largely unbesmirched, even after betting tents returned to England’s major cricket grounds in the 1960s. A Northamptonshire CCC employee was arrested after £247,000 went missing in 2004; there were scandals in Canada when \$100,000 was secreted from the Maple Leaf Club; and Zimbabwe’s accounts were found by auditors to have serious irregularities in 2008 (though the ICC did nothing about it). Kenya’s chief executive Tom Tikolo resigned in 2009 after \$10,000 went missing.

Although serious conjecture over conspiracy to rig matches remained practically non-existent, a risible occurrence during the famous 1981 Headingley Test match would not have been allowed to pass some years later after cricket had been exposed as a hotbed for match-fixing. England were in such deep bother against Australia that Ladbroke’s betting tent at the ground offered a wild 500–1 against them. Australia’s fast bowler Dennis Lillee and wicketkeeper Rod Marsh grasped the opportunity and placed bets against their own side, rather as a joke. They were red-faced a day later when Ian Botham’s hellcat batting and Bob Willis’s ferocious spell of fast bowling brought England the unlikeliest of victories by 18 runs.

In the early 1990s emerged a variety of rumours which were not followed up, as much because of scepticism about the sensationalist nature and excesses of a competitive media industry as for fear of a legal backlash. Australians Dean Jones and Greg Matthews spoke of approaches to them

to help fix a match in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1992, while in England, Essex player Don Topley claimed in a tabloid newspaper article that in a match in 1991 between his county and Lancashire, both teams had been paid to fix the result. Cricket-lovers cringed at the thought and few wished to believe it. Meanwhile, another Australian, Allan Border, spoke of attempts to bribe the team on the subcontinent; and soon afterwards Tim May, Shane Warne and Mark Waugh revealed that Pakistan's Salim Malik had tried to tempt them into match-fixing. Malik was exonerated through insufficient evidence after the Ibrahim Inquiry.

Meanwhile, Aamir Sohail, the Pakistan batsman, and Rashid Latif, a team-mate, had spoken of approaches by certain Indian players, by bookies and also by their captain Salim Malik during one-day tournaments and Test matches. Many more names were bandied about, some as accusers, others as the accused. Sohail, despite his endeavours to shed light on the developing murkiness, was to receive a six-month ban from the Pakistan Cricket Board. It was now fairly obvious that the game was in a turbulent state.

An official inquiry was set up in Pakistan upon the initiative of Pakistan Cricket Board chief Majid Khan, the former Test captain. Opened in 1998 before Judge Malik Mohammad Qayyum, a High Court judge in Lahore who had earlier sentenced former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to five years' gaol for corruption, the inquiry dragged on for many months, with dozens of current and former Test cricketers and bookmakers testifying, and a special court in Melbourne hearing evidence from Shane Warne and Mark Waugh. Pakistan's defeats in the 1999 World Cup by Bangladesh and by Australia in the final were high on the list of matters to be investigated.

The outcome indicated that Judge Qayyum had not been supported as he might have wished, and that perhaps he had even been under pressure not to damage his country's national and cricket reputation. Examination of some of the players' telephone records would have been revealing, but no such process was pursued. The judge also had to cope with evidence which some of the players later insisted on altering. Nor, apparently, was there sufficient probing into Pakistan matches under Salim Malik's captaincy in the 1990s, fixtures which had been subject to considerable suspicion, particularly in South Africa and Zimbabwe in 1995. It was there, immediately after lowly Zimbabwe's unexpected victory by an innings in the Harare Test match, that one journalist heard angry shouting coming from the Pakistan dressing-room. Soon afterwards wicketkeeper Rashid Latif, then at the peak of his career, abruptly announced his retirement. Basit Ali soon followed him. Latif was to return to the game, and courageously wrote to the ICC warning the world body that corruption was rife in international cricket. His adventurous career found him captaining Pakistan, then suspended for

five matches for wrongly claiming a catch in a match against Bangladesh, before being appointed as his country's wicketkeeping coach.

The inquiry's meandering course concluded at last in 2000, with Judge Qayyum ruling that certain punishment should be handed out, including life bans for captain/batsman Salim Malik and pace bowler Ata-ur-Rehman, and a fine for world-ranked all-rounder Wasim Akram, who was barred from captaining Pakistan, the judge having felt that the player's integrity had been compromised; Waqar Younis and Saeed Anwar were also fined, as was heavyweight batsman Inzamam-ul-Haq for not co-operating with the inquiry: but little else transpired immediately.

At least a viable legalese definition of match-fixing emerged from the Qayyum Inquiry, should anyone have been wondering: it was declared to be 'deciding the outcome of a match before it is played and then playing oneself or having others play below one's/their ability to influence the outcome to be in accordance with the pre-decided outcome'.

Sri Lanka's cricket authority decided to look into its own team's collapse to lose the Singer Cup final after they had been in a quite formidable position against Pakistan. But again no conclusive condemnatory evidence could be found. Elsewhere, Ms Fareshteh Gati-Aslam alleged that the world-class fast bowlers Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis had deliberately bowled badly against England in a one-day international at Trent Bridge in 1992, when the home side smashed 363 runs off their 55 overs, Pakistan eventually losing by 198 runs. Whether corruption was a factor or not, nervous suspicion was in the air, and people were burdened by it whenever anything untoward occurred in a cricket match. Given that the game of cricket has long been renowned for its unpredictable nature, the advent of apparently commonplace illegal and immoral practices had a depressing effect on the once-glorious summer game. Almost the only compassion to be aired, feeble though it seemed, concerned the comparatively low remuneration received by most Asian international cricketers, which fact underlined their vulnerability to corrupt 'bonuses' to their incomes.

When Dave Richardson, South Africa's wicketkeeper, revealed a few years after the event that an Indian bookie had offered his captain \$250,000 to throw Mohinder Amarnath's benefit match (played in December 1996 at the end of an exhausting tour, and which caused resentment among the touring cricketers when their Board agreed to elevate it to an official one-day international), the odour of a game rotting perhaps mortally was being picked up by even the most resistant cricket-lover. To this despair was added anger that the body which was supposed to be doing all it could to protect and advance the game of cricket – the ICC – was apparently still doing little or nothing to investigate and attempt to flush out the miscreants.

If the danger of failing to protect cricket from the gambling fraternity was still not obvious to everyone, the implication of statistics given in a *Times of India* editorial in April 2000 caused fresh shudders: each one-day international was thought to attract an estimated \$US227 million in bets across India, and the total sum gambled in a year on India's matches was estimated as being between six to nine billion US dollars. 'Since betting is illegal in India, the whole of it is generated in black [illicit] money', wrote Indian investigative journalist Pradeep Magazine.⁸ Tales of underworld killings bewildered and frightened innocent cricket spectators and viewers – and without doubt some cricketers as well. Where was it all leading?

The spotlight had suddenly swung glaringly over Australia when it was revealed in December 1998 that Shane Warne and Mark Waugh, two of the nation's most popular players, had accepted \$5,000 from a friendly stranger calling himself 'John' (later identified as Delhi bookmaker Mukesh Gupta) in a nightclub in Sri Lanka in 1994. The money was in return for a few superficially innocent items of information concerning team selection and pitch conditions in the forthcoming match, responses to casual enquiries such as a genuine cricket journalist might make – except that this was part of a clever grooming process.

Once exposed, the young cricketers pleaded that their acceptance of the inexplicably disproportionate gift had simply been a case of naivety on their part. Their personal popularity plummeted, if only temporarily. Many cricket-lovers felt that the punishment should have been much harsher. Warne was compelled to forfeit a couple of lucrative newspaper contracts, but soon picked up another. What further horrified the cricket fraternity was the subsequent revelation that the executives of the Australian Cricket Board, in a desperate attempt to avoid destabilising their team at the start of a tour of the Caribbean, decided to keep private the matter of Warne's and Waugh's indiscretions. ICC chairman Clyde Walcott and chief executive David Richards were informed but were also asked to keep the matter to themselves. It later became clear that a kind of paralysis induced by panic and fear was affecting administrators whenever murmurs and evidence of corruption stirred, even in the offices of cricket's world governing body, to which the game justifiably looked for prompt positive action in such alarming circumstances.

Insinuations had been rumbling for several years. Pakistan batsman Salim Malik – banned and fined £12,500 by the Pakistan Cricket Board (which itself had a history of financial unaccountability) – had been implicated early, as had Ijaz Ahmed and Wasim Akram. One of the most ominous and chilling quotes following the exposure and expulsion of Malik after the Qayyum Inquiry was the player's statement that 'when you've got the main

players in your hand you'll have to be really unlucky to lose [i.e. money]. You pay and they will be out. He'll run himself out, whatever, but he will be out. You'll have four or five players in hand and they will be playing just for you. No matter what the rest of the team do, they will do what they've agreed to do.'⁹

Australia set up an inquiry of its own, conducted by Rob O'Regan QC, who set about interviewing six dozen people behind closed doors. His conclusions came after two months of questions and statements: the bookmaker who had approached and paid Mark Waugh had, it seemed, a large network of cricketers around the globe who regularly fed him information, presumably for substantial 'fees'. O'Regan strongly condemned not only the behaviour of Warne and Waugh in this matter but was critical of the moderate weight of the fines dished out by the Australian Cricket Board, which 'did not reflect the seriousness of what they [the implicated players] had done'. In his opinion they should have been suspended. He rejected the players' excuses based on the claim that they were 'naïve and stupid'.

Retrospectively, incidents which had seemed merely dubious and slightly puzzling in this complex game of cricket were now recalled and reconsidered. India had refused to play matches against Pakistan in Sharjah because of suspicions that some behaviour at that venue sometimes seemed irregular. India's captain in 1979–80, Gundappa Viswanath, later wrote that he went to toss the coin with Pakistan's Asif Iqbal, who did not even check how the coin had fallen before saying, 'Congratulations. You've won the toss.'

Sarfraz Nawaz, a former team-mate of Asif Iqbal, believed that betting on cricket became big business around that time when Pakistan were led by Iqbal, with matches against India, as always, generating widespread frenzy. Sarfraz said that the betting grew to a 'big scale' when matches were staged in Sharjah. It was remarked that Asif Iqbal never did come forward to clear his name after these and other allegations, though there was no actual legal requirement for him to defend himself. Some time later he did protest his innocence.

Elsewhere, New Zealand's respected captain Stephen Fleming decided to air a claim that he had known of match-fixing, while England manager Ray Illingworth declared that in 1996 he had been approached by a Pakistani bookmaker who wanted him to engineer an England defeat in a World Cup match. South African umpires Cyril Mitchley and Rudi Koertzen stated that they had been offered bribes to influence play in matches involving Pakistan and Australia in Lahore in 1994 and West Indies and India in Singapore in 1999. Further, England all-rounder Chris Lewis (who was to be sent to gaol for thirteen years in 2009 for smuggling cocaine worth £140,000 into Britain when returning from St Lucia) claimed in 1999 that two Indians had

offered him £300,000 to persuade some England cricketers to throw the 1998 Old Trafford Test match against New Zealand. He further asserted that three England players had actually accepted bribes recently. One England one-day player who had something to add was Adam Hoolioake, who referred to approaches he had received during the 1997 Sharjah tournament. Allegations by an Indian bookmaker that England batsman-wicketkeeper Alec Stewart had been given £5,000 ‘for information’ after India’s Manoj Prabhakar had introduced them to each other were disposed of when the bookie declined to testify and the England and Wales Cricket Board exonerated Stewart. Prabhakar had also named the greatly admired Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev as one who had tried to bribe him, a charge strongly denied, with the counter-accusation that Prabhakar had never forgiven his former captain for omitting him from Tests in England in 1986. Kapil was cleared, but the investigation did reveal that he had over 25 million rupees of undeclared income. The unsavoury theme inflated further in 2000 when Indian bookmaker Rajesh Kalra told *India Today* that he offered players \$4/500,000 to fix a recent one-day series between India and South Africa.

It was the Cronje Affair which truly rocked the world of cricket to its foundations. Hansie Cronje was South Africa’s forceful captain, a top player, a brooding, serious man ever eager to parade his devotion to Christianity, a cricketer who hotly denied the first suggestions that he might be involved in rigging individual performances or the outcome of big matches. In April 2000, with cricket-lovers divided, some desperately unwilling to believe the rumours, others suspicious, the shocking truth suddenly emerged. Delhi police claimed to have twelve tapes of incriminating telephone calls which involved Cronje. The police said that Cronje and four of his team, via an intermediary known as ‘Sanjay’ (later revealed to be Sanjiv Chawla, with Hamid ‘Banjo’ Cassim as the go-between), had ‘fixed’ the recent series of five one-day internationals in India in exchange for a huge sum of money. It came as no surprise when Cronje denied any involvement in corruption.

When the full text of the police statement emerged, it brought shock and disgust to practically everyone who cherished the game of cricket: ‘Those involved in such fixing’, the statement read, ‘have illegally amassed huge sums of money both in Indian and foreign currencies and made huge gains by wrongful means and by clearly deceiving the cricket fans and general public.’¹⁰

The recordings revealed details of a deal wherein South African players Herschelle Gibbs, Henry Williams and Pieter Strydom, in return for bribes, were to underperform to suit the bookmakers’ needs. Spin bowler Nicky Boje was also implicated. The only morsel of humour came when it was later revealed that Gibbs, having agreed to get out before his score

had reached 20 in a one-day international at Nagpur, seemingly forgot his lucrative pledge and raced on to score 74. He was still fined 60,000 rand; Williams was fined R10,000.

Cronje's adamant denial of the Indian authorities' accusation sent waves of indignation and incredulity across South Africa. This man was a national hero, and surely always spoke the truth? India's Cricket Board, similarly horrified, jumped to support the wave of denial and disbelief.

However, Cronje soon found he could carry the burden of guilt no longer, and a nocturnal call to Dr Ali Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, triggered a sensational passage in cricket history. Cronje was instantly stripped of the captaincy.

As people were now giving or selling their stories to the media, most of them requesting anonymity, a frightening reality emerged. Claims from years earlier, by the likes of Pakistan captain Imran Khan (himself a confessed ball-tamperer¹¹), were now being re-evaluated. He had said that India was the centre of a gambling underworld worth probably two billion US dollars annually. From the betting network's Mumbai centre, agents worked at making tempting deals with cricketers. These deals were not so disingenuous as to concern the deliberate losing of matches, although any notable upset, such as Pakistan's losses to Zimbabwe and Bangladesh, and Kenya's extraordinary victory over West Indies in the 1996 World Cup, now aroused suspicion. The means of deceit were almost imperceptible to onlookers. A batsman would be well rewarded simply to get out before a nominated score; a bowler would be bribed to bowl loosely or deliver a certain number of no-balls or wides; a wicketkeeper would be set up to allow deliberate byes; a captain would be paid for making orchestrated moves on cue. The impenetrable nature of these murky schemes and their implications had a depressing effect. Certain players would not risk going to India. To the fear of arrest and interrogation was added the perceived threat of a faceless underworld and its violent reach.

Cronje was called before a full-scale inquiry chaired by Judge Edwin King, who had been appointed by President Thabo Mbeki. The King Commission hearings began on 7 June 2000 at the Centre for the Book, in Cape Town, with the cricketer guaranteed immunity from criminal prosecution in return for full disclosure of wrong-doing. Cronje's biographer Garth King described the cricketer's appearances at the ten-day inquiry as 'misery itself for the Cronje clan, a kind of sadistic, legalistic farce, watched live by millions. One can hardly imagine a more shameful and tragic end to a top international cricketing captain's career.'¹²

The trail of widespread deceit and subterfuge was exposed at last. One stunning revelation came when Mark Boucher, Jacques Kallis and Lance

Klusener told of how Cronje had approached them in the team hotel in Bangalore and suggested possibly throwing the upcoming Test match; Ali Bacher startled the hearing with an allegation that the umpire Javed Akhtar, from Pakistan, was 'on the payroll' of a bookmaker when he umpired the England v. South Africa Test at Headingley in 1998, giving some questionable decisions in England's favour; but the most extraordinary narrative concerned Cronje's involvement with Marlon Aronstam, a gambler and racehorse owner, who persuaded him to make a deal with England's captain on the final morning of the severely rain-shortened Test match at Centurion early in 2000. With no prospect of a result, if England forfeited their first innings and South Africa their second (an unprecedented arrangement in Test history) a run-chase on agreed terms would restore purpose and excitement to a dying match. The captains finally agreed a target, England won the match by two wickets, and Cronje was rewarded by Aronstam with £800 and a leather jacket.

The deposed and disgraced South Africa captain read out a 70-clause statement to the King Commission, his voice and manner vacillating between near-flippancy to dark introversion. At times he wept. He told of how he had 'turned from Jesus' and 'allowed Satan and the world to dictate terms to me'. He disclosed that between 1996 and 2000 he had accepted at least \$US130,000 from illegal bookmakers and others. A cascade of detail stunned those present and radiated across a cricket world now aghast.

The inquiry did not reconvene, and in due course it was announced that Cronje was banned from any involvement in cricket for life. Some months later his life ended when a cargo aircraft in which he had hitched a lift crashed on a frozen mountainside on a flight to his home in George. Notwithstanding inevitable rumours, foul play was ruled out, and to general astonishment around the world, Hansie Cronje was now hailed as a martyr not only by those close to him but by a wider circle in his South African homeland. Among calmer assessments, former coach and friend Bob Woolmer, whose own mysterious death during the 2007 World Cup was to inspire theories about corruption, conspiracy and murder, said of Cronje that 'he dabbled too much and got caught. I would perceive that he got too much power and felt invulnerable.'¹³

The ICC's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit was set up in 2000 as a matter of some urgency following the Cronje case. It was designed to be the operating division of the ICC Code of Conduct Commission (chairman Lord Griffiths), with former London Metropolitan Police Commissioner Lord (Paul) Condon as its head, and Jeff Rees as general manager and chief investigator until 2007, succeeded by Navindra Nath Sawani, a former police officer who led the inquiry in 2000 into match-fixing in India. Five

regional security managers were also appointed, one for every international series, to ensure that anti-corruption protocols were enforced, not least in the vicinity of the dressing-rooms, where mobile phones were banned.

The spotlight fell brightly on India, whose Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) launched a powerful and thorough inquiry, focusing principally on Manoj Prabhakar, who had been liberal with his accusations, and on Mohammad Azharuddin, whose charming batsmanship during his 99 Test matches had drawn comparisons with Ranjitsinhji's, and whose involvement in match-fixing had first been exposed during the Cronje hearing. The homes of several Indian players were raided and their tax records seized. While bookie Mukesh Gupta spoke freely, naming several non-Indians, including Brian Lara, Aravinda de Silva, Arjuna Ranatunga and Sanath Jayasuriya (all exonerated in due course), suspensions were imposed upon Prabhakar, Ajay Jadeja, Ajay Sharma and a physiotherapist following the CBI report of November 2000. It so happened that the ICC president at the time, India's Jagmohan Dalmiya, had been the subject of allegations that he had abused his position as sole negotiator for the ICC in a television rights deal for a tournament in Bangladesh in October 1998. His predecessor as BCCI president, I. S. Bindra, told a press conference that Dalmiya was 'in the grip of the mafia and sharks'.¹⁴ In May 2000, the ICC cleared Dalmiya of malpractice.

Azharuddin, however, was headline news, and for his misdemeanours the BCCI banned him for life. The CBI investigation discovered that he had once made sixty calls to a bookie in one day, and after the discovery of one of his bank accounts (in Dubai) and over 200 expensive watches, his personal wealth was estimated at \$50 million.

Within six years of its ban on Azharuddin, the Indian Board – to expressions of disapproval and astonishment from the ICC and elsewhere – had lifted it, and 'Azha' not only took his place among the honoured former captains in a parade during the Champions Trophy but in 2009 became an MP for the Indian National Congress Party.

Thenceforth, even though the game was on full alert, instances of suspicion and proven misbehaviour in top-class cricket were not uncommon. West Indies batsman Marlon Samuels was banned for two years for links with an Indian gambler, having pleaded that he had merely borrowed some money to settle his hotel bill. For several weeks in 2008 the cricket administrators in the Caribbean and in England were taken in by the lurid proposals of Texan Allen Stanford, operating out of Antigua. The millions of dollars he dangled before them in return for staging clamorous Twenty/20 matches proved to be of dubious pedigree, and by 2010 Stanford was in gaol pending weighty charges relating to the legitimacy of his money-making.

The phenomenon of the IPL, masterminded by Lalit Modi, inevitably generated fears of corruption, not only because of the unprecedented amounts of money attached to this globally televised circus, but through the reality that there would be no ICC security in attendance. (Sir Ronnie Flanagan, former Royal Ulster Constabulary Chief Constable, succeeded Lord Condon in June 2010.) It was now accepted that anything was possible. Writs were served around the IPL enterprise, while the crowds went on cheering wildly as the sixes fell into their midst. During the ICC's own World Twenty/20 tournament in England in 2009, approaches by bookmakers to players were reported to the ACSU, while at the start of the Under-19 World Cup, staged in New Zealand, it was thought necessary to brief the young players about the risk of corruption and to warn them about drugs, imprecations that their Victorian-era counterparts would little have understood.

So deeply had suspicion bitten into the game that when Pakistan, having been in an almost impregnable position in the Sydney Test of January 2010, somehow managed to lose to Australia, suspicions circulated. Their captain in 2009, Younis Khan, had already stood down in October, 'disgusted' by allegations that Pakistan had deliberately underperformed in the Champions Trophy. But dropped catch, missed stumping or loose stroke could now readily arouse public suspicion. Wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal's possibly unique 'achievement' of *four* missed stumpings and a fluffed run-out in one day's play became a major talking point. Team coach Intikhab Alam and manager Aaqib Javed told the PCB inquiry that they thought that bookies may have been involved in this match, while captain Mohammad Yousuf also aired suspicions about some of his players' performances. Kamran, meanwhile, protested that people were now hooting him in the field, and that he was 'mentally disturbed'. There were several fines and sackings when the touring players returned home, and Pakistan Board chairman Ijaz Butt announced that two (unnamed) players were under investigation for match-fixing. Younis Khan and Mohammad Yousuf were banned from any form of international cricket; a one-year ban was imposed on Shoaib Malik and Rana Naved-ul-Hasan; a six-month probation came the way of Shahid Afridi (who had been shown on television biting pieces out of the ball), and also Kamran Akmal and his brother Umar. These last three were all fined: three million rupees each for the first two and two million for Umar Akmal. Ijaz Butt then announced that the inquiry was closed, no evidence of match-fixing having been uncovered.

Tim May, chief executive of FICA, the professional players' world body, reminded everyone after these announcements that the ACSU had recently stated that 'this cancer' (match-fixing) should never be regarded as beaten. Furthermore, the boom form of the game, Twenty/20 cricket, not least

the phenomenal multi-million-dollar Indian Premier League, which was not monitored by the ICC, was ‘just ripe for corruption – the shorter the game the more influence each incident can have’. Cricket, said May, ‘needs to be very, very careful’. To which England spin bowler Graeme Swann added: ‘You would be an absolute idiot if you did it. It is lunacy and anyone who tries it gets what they [sic] deserve.’¹⁵ And in spring 2010, two Essex players, Mervyn Westfield and Danish Kaneira, the Pakistan spin bowler, were arrested and bailed following allegations of match-fixing and/or spot-fixing (fixing a minor element of a match such as deliberately bowling a wide delivery or dropping a catch at the behest of a corrupt party). Meanwhile, Bangladesh captain Shakib al-Hasan claimed to have been approached by a bookmaker in 2008. Cricket’s fragile hope was that sharp vigilance and advanced technology would somehow keep corruption at bay.

NOTES

- 1 Fred Lillywhite, *Scores and Biographies of Celebrated Cricketers from 1746 [1744] to 1826: Volume I* (London: Lillywhite, 1862), p. 289.
- 2 James Pycroft, *The Cricket-Field* (London: St James’s Press, 1922), pp. 133–40.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- 4 Rhodes in conversation with David Frith, 1968.
- 5 Bernard Whimpress, *W.G. Grace at Kadina: Champion Cricketer or Scoundrel?* (Adelaide: the author, 1994), pp. 9–11.
- 6 Arthur Mailey, *10 for 66 and All That* (London: Phoenix, 1958), p. 67.
- 7 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 November 1985.
- 8 Pradeep Magazine, *Not Quite Cricket: The Explosive Story of How Bookmakers Influence the Game Today* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), p. xxiv.
- 9 *News of the World*, 21 May 2000.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Ivo Tennant, *Imran Khan* (London: H.E. and G. Witherby, 1994), pp. 134–35.
- 12 Garth King, *The Hansie Cronje Story: An Authorised Biography* (Oxford: Monarch, 2007), p. 195.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 196.
- 14 Scyld Berry, *Sunday Telegraph*, 30 April 2000.
- 15 *Daily Telegraph*, 17 February 2010.