

BRYAN STRAUCHAN

MY STORY

as told to PETER HELLIAR
and PAUL CALLEJA



**The RISE and RISE
of a genuine
SUPERSTAR
of Australian sport**

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preface

Strauchanie only reads books he writes so when the publisher approached him to write Volume One of his life story, he thought, better sooner than later. With nine Brownlows to come there will be a lot of volumes.

Anyway, once they sign you up the @#\$%* publishers want everything. Family history, childhood stuff, whether I played well with others, early memories – how does anyone remember stuff like that? I reckon most people who write books make it up. So that's what Strachanie did. Until the @#\$%* publishers got hold of my manuscript and started asking all these questions. Reminded me of school (see Chapter 3, Growing Up Strauchanie).

So, dear Fan of Strauchanie, you can see what I went through to tell you this inspiring story because I have left a lot of those queries in the book so you will know that it is all true, all checked, all verified, whatever they want to call it. They use words only Jimmy Clement would understand.

To give you an example of how difficult these people are to work with, here are some better titles Strauchanie came up with for this book that were all rejected by publishers:

x

Strauchanie's Guide to the Galaxy

700 Saturdays

It's More Than a Boot

The Secret

The Third Testament

How Strauchanie Wins Friends and Influences People

Byran Strauchan and the Deathly Hallows

Tuesdays With Strauchanie

The Sum of All Strauchanies

Clear and Present Strauchanie

Men Are From Mars, Strauchanie's From Venus

The Bridges of the Shire of Horsham

Strauchanie's Just Not That Into You

Who Moved Strauchanie's Cheese?

Memoirs of Strauchanie's Geisha

SYMBOLS USED



The good thing about being an elite AFL footballer is you are above the law and people adore you. This not the case for most people. As a gesture of gratitude for buying Strauchanie's autobiography [although let's face it, you should be thanking me!] I have generously included pre-signed handwritten notes to get you out of almost any situation by adding a little bit of Strauchanie muscle. These are throughout the book and always have the 'bonus' symbol. Hirdy didn't put anything like this in his book so count yourselves lucky you didn't waste your money on that.

xi

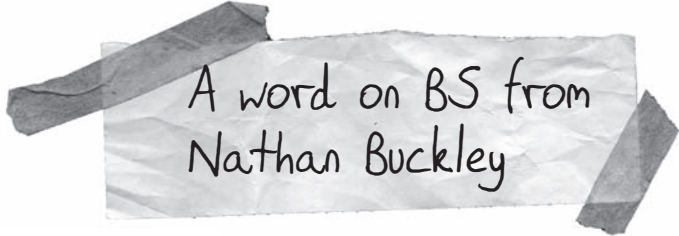


Psychic photos, like those ones in Harry Potter that wave, but even better because Strauchanie tells you what people were actually thinking when the photo was being taken.



No need for Strauchanie to blow his own trumpet when other people will blow it for him.

foreword



A word on BS from
Nathan Buckley

I still vividly recall the first time I laid eyes on Bryan. He was head down and bum up, as always, looking for the full cream mayonnaise in the bottom drawer of the players' kitchen at the Lexus Centre. At that stage I wasn't aware of any new recruits and I was positive none of our players was wearing the number 59 jumper.

Needless to say, like Scott Burns on a hard ball get, he found the mayo and on turning around and seeing the puzzled look on my face all he said was: 'Strauchanieeee'.

Since that moment only one player at the club has shared a closer bond with BS than I have ... Jimmy Clement. Perhaps it was the way Jimmy opened his arms every time he saw Strauchanie walk through the double doors at Lexus. I can't be sure why, but their relationship has always left me with a tinge of jealousy. I still vividly recall the time when Strauchanie decided to accept Jimmy's offer of a lift [Strauchanie's always keen to save on petrol money] to a club function over mine. Strauchanie explained that he

thought my car smelt of baby sick and that he would prefer to ride shotgun with Jimmy. It still surprises me how much that hurt.

Despite this, and the fact that Strauchanie probably feels I should have stood down to allow him to captain the club this year, we have become good mates both off the field and when he's not playing.

To be entirely honest, Strauchanie has provided a lot of balance for us at the club. While the rest of the playing list has focussed on a hardworking and team-oriented style of football, Strauchanie has always preached that the concept of the individual is bigger than the team. There is little doubt that he has lived it too. (Strauchanie has gone from an L to an XXL jumper with all his work in the players' kitchen.)

We all knew it was only a matter of time until Strauchanie would cash in and tell his inspirational story to provide himself with more money to maintain his high-flying C-list lifestyle.

I can honestly say there will never be another Strauchanie, and the boys at the club can't help but be thankful for that.

Nathan Buckley



introduction

The definition of irony: Strauchanie, the one man in Australia who needs no introduction, writing an introduction to his book. My publisher was adamant that I should introduce myself to anyone who hasn't yet heard of Bryan 'Strauchanie' Strauchan. Strauchanie still laughs at the notion of somebody not knowing who he is. Ha ha ha. If you haven't heard of me you've obviously been hiding under a rock, and if you're hiding under a rock, you're probably a terrorist, and Strauchanie would prefer it if you didn't read his book. The last thing Strauchanie needs is to be inspiring the wrong sorts of people.

Football has been a part of my life since the first time I knocked off a football from the local servo, aged six. I only got caught because a bloke with a neat haircut and a blue shirt and trousers spooked my dad, Roy Strauchan. 'Til this day, I still don't know why Dad freaked out so much, but he took off before young Strauchanie got back in the car. He was the one who sent me in there in the first place.

There I was, sitting behind the counter at the local servo in Horsham waiting for Dad to come back, having been busted for lifting a plastic footy, a carton of Camels and twenty-three Sherbet bombs. Little Strauchanie vowed then and there that he would never get caught with a footy in his hands ever again. Fast-forward eighteen years, and defenders still shake their heads in wonderment at how this sporting superstar, with the movie star good looks and the rock star attitude, has made such an impact in such little time. In the world of AFL football the term 'superstar' is bandied around far too easily for Strauchanie's liking. I once overheard Steve Quartermain refer to Essendon's James Hird as a 'superstar' at a Channel 10 Christmas party. Strauchanie unwound on an unsuspecting Quarters, 'Call yourself a commentator! James Hird a superstar? Come off it! Tell him to win a Brownlow and then come talk to me!' Quarters tried to tell me that Hirdy had, in fact, won the coveted medal a few years ago; but by the time he could say 'See the Bombers fly up' Strauchanie had already moved on and was having a crack at an ex-Big Brother housemate, not entirely sure which one, they all look the same to me [but not in a racist way].

People often approach me in the street and say, 'Strauchanie, you are a superstar'. I say 'thanks' because dealing with the public is just as much a part of being an AFL footballer as kicking goals or turning up to training, although sometimes, I have to remind coach Mick Malthouse of this football reality. He twitches his mo and walks off remaining unconvinced. Bobby Skilton who, as his name suggests,

had a ton of skill, took Strauchanie aside once and had a word. He said, 'Strauchanie, I won three Brownlows' [I went along with his fantasy of three Brownlows because the old buggler was a little tipsy] but I have never seen a player take this entire sport to a new level like you have, Strauchanie'. I looked at Bobby, a little confused: how could a bloke who has deluded himself into thinking he has won, not one, not two, but three Brownlows, be so spot on in his assessment of Strauchanie? I explained to Bobby that it all comes down to heritage. My mother is Chinese and my dad is from Horsham, which equals perfect football pedigree. Strauchanie has the aerial grace of a Shaolin Monk crossed with the ability to give you a roundhouse from behind if you're getting on top at the stoppages.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity I have been given by the Collingwood Football Club. I will never forget D-Day – Draft Day. Strauchanie sat with Dad (Roy) and Mum (Soy Bean) glued to the telly. Strauchanie's folks were as proud as punch. Dad with his Bulldogs scarf and Mum with her apron still on, after whipping up a batch of Fortune Cookies with each one saying 'Western Bulldogs'. They were so happy for Strauchanie until, that is, Neil Balme read out 'Bryan Strauchan' and drove the proverbial chopstick through Mum's heart. Dad was upset, but after so many strokes [47 in 1996 alone], he struggled to show as much emotion as Mum. It didn't worry Strauchanie, to be honest, because Strauchanie knew that if you want to be a true superstar then you have to get to the Lexus Centre, and that's exactly where I headed . . . in my Ford Cortina.

Sure there have been ups and downs. Finding out I was adopted, breaking Christi Malthouse's heart, Christi breaking Strauchanie's heart, getting my first game, getting locked in the stairwell at Telstra Stadium before my first game and, of course, winning nine consecutive Brownlow medals from 2007-2015.

So buckle up and get ready for a bumpy ride, it's Yum Cha Time!!

Bryan 'Superstar' Strauchan

I include evidence of how my publisher tried to censor me, but Strauchanie threatened to stop working on the book - whose story is it??

Bryan,

As discussed in our last phone call, a thorough read of your resubmitted manuscript has indicated that many of your facts still need verifying.

I have listed below some of our major concerns, as well as marking up instances on the attached pages.

PAGE 6: lines 5-6

Please stop dressing predictions as fact. At the time of publishing you are still yet to play a game in the 2007 season.

But you feel silly about this one now!!
- BS



CHAPTER ONE ->