

‘An astonishing story of bribery and vote-rigging.’ *Daily Mail*

‘Andrew Jennings has been shown the red card by FIFA.’ *Sunday Times*

‘Jennings has followed the paper trails, bearded the principals, ignored quiet threats and turned down sweeteners to get at this story. Even if you aren’t interested in football, it’s still a powerful analysis and indictment of what ails us.’ *Sunday Herald*

‘The story of how the World Cup traded its jumpers-for-goalposts innocence for a place in the showbiz sun is full of twists, all too frequently of the knife. The product may be soap opera but the process is pure Sopranos...’ *Irish Independent*

‘A meticulously researched and detailed dossier into the inner workings of FIFA . . . extremely entertaining.’ *Sunday Business Post*

‘Journalist Andrew Jennings throws stones at sports Goliaths for a living. *Foul!* paints FIFA as a corrupt fiefdom rife with bribes and vote rigging. The writing is light and lively – somewhere between popular fiction and tabloid journalism.’ *Colombia Journalism Review*

‘Jennings seems to have made it his life’s work to uncover the tapestry of lies, deceit, and fraud that permeates world football’s governing body. While based in fact – and there’s plenty of meat on the bones of each of his allegations – the book is written in the style of a fictional blockbuster. Jumping from continent to continent, underhand meeting to public pronouncement, Frederick Forsyth or Dan Brown could learn a thing or two from Jennings.’ *Sport 100*

‘It makes for great theatre and there is no doubt that his [Jennings’] latest offering on sports corruption is an entertaining read. Jennings’ dogged pursuit of Blatter and the other men who run the world game serves as an overwhelming reminder that the urgent need for greater transparency in football is not confined to these shores.’ *Daily Telegraph*

‘Jennings’ book provides lively, interesting and overdue insight into FIFA politics and how mismanagement, misbehaviour and the pursuit of personal gain seem to have had few consequences for its leaders. Its evidence and findings will certainly be fodder for further investigations.’

*Transparency International*

‘Jennings is banned from all FIFA events, which is a badge of honour in this game, and his work has struck at the heart of FIFA. “This so-called gentleman,” is how Blatter described him. “He goes around saying, amongst other things, that FIFA is a corrupt society. This goes into discrimination. He’s obsessed, this man. Obsessed! And wrong!”’

*Scotland on Sunday*

‘Andrew Jennings has come up again with a masterpiece of investigative journalism with its jaw-dropping allusions to multi-layer corruption in FIFA, its allegedly dark financial underbelly, its shocking electoral dishonesty and byzantine power tussles. The extraordinary professional zeal with which Jennings has culled all the details of this sordid account, moving from Europe to Africa to the Caribbean, invests his story with unmistakable authenticity.’

*The Statesman, Calcutta*

‘Without a doubt one of the most compelling reads I’ve had in a long time. Not only is there drama and mystery, there are also the good guys and bad guys. His book makes for an extremely compelling read. Even though there are many characters and many plots and twists and scandals, Jennings has done a great job telling the story clearly.’

*The Star, Malaysia*

‘Full of high drama, sports politics, both internal and external, colourful – and, indeed larger than life – characters, well drawn by the author, and also high finance, that will make uncomfortable reading for FIFA.’

*International Sports Law Journal*

‘A damning exposé of the inner workings of football’s world governing body.’

*Belfast News*

‘The best investigative sports book since *Pitch Invasion*.’ *Sunday Herald*

# FOUL!

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THE SECRET WORLD OF FIFA:  
BRIBES, VOTE RIGGING  
AND TICKET SCANDALS

ANDREW JENNINGS



HarperSport

*An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers*

ANDREW JENNINGS is an internationally acclaimed investigative journalist and film-maker. His exposé of sleaze at the International Olympic Committee, *The Lords of the Rings*, is ranked among *Sports Illustrated's* Top 100 Sports Books of All Time. It was translated into 13 languages and earned him a five-day jail sentence from a judge in the IOC's home town of Lausanne.

*Foul!* has so far been translated into 12 languages and Jennings' BBC *Panorama* documentary *The Beautiful Bung*, based on the book, has been screened worldwide. See more at [www.transparencyinsport.org](http://www.transparencyinsport.org).

## CONTENTS

	<i>Preface</i>	xiii
1	BLATTER'S TICKING TIME-BOMB <i>A kickback lands on Sepp's desk</i>	1
2	GOODBYE SIR STAN <i>Hello to a New World of Sport</i>	8
3	SEPP BLATTER, MADE BY ADIDAS <i>A new leader rolls off Dassler's production line</i>	19
4	SEPP MAKES HIS MOVE ON HAVELANGE <i>... and lives to tell the tale</i>	32
5	HAVELANGE WANTS TO GET SERIOUSLY RICH <i>Can he turn FIFA into a bookie's shop?</i>	39
6	DASSLER'S BOYS LOSE THE OLYMPICS <i>... and need football more than ever</i>	48
7	A STRANGE FIGHT FOR THE WORLD CUP <i>Referee: Sepp Blatter</i>	54
8	EXIT HAVELANGE, FOOT IN MOUTH <i>Blatter moves into position</i>	61
9	THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE KING <i>Blatter delivers the money</i>	74
10	DAYLIGHT ROBBERY AGAIN <i>How they stole the vote in Paris</i>	86
11	PRESIDENT BLATTER AND THE GOLDEN GOOSE <i>Leafing through Sepp's expenses</i>	95

FOUL!

12	‘MR PRESIDENT, HOW MUCH DOES FIFA PAY YOU?’ <i>‘Er . . .’</i>	105
13	FROM CARROTS AND STICKS . . . <i>Blatter builds his citadel</i>	112
14	DIVIDE AND RULE <i>FIFA’s civil war</i>	122
15	A MESSIAH FOR TRINIDAD <i>The rise and rise of Jack Warner</i>	131
16	BEHOLD! I SEND MY MESSENGER <i>Chuck the Baptist</i>	140
17	HURRAY FOR YOUTH SPORT <i>. . . and the Warner family piggybank</i>	150
18	BIGGER, BIGGER AND BIGGER . . . <i>Weber puffs up the ISL bubble</i>	164
19	WEBER’S SHIP IS SINKING <i>Will Sepp come to the rescue?</i>	171
20	GREENHORNS TO THE RESCUE <i>FIFA family therapy, McKinsey-style</i>	180
21	OWN GOAL! <i>Sleeping dogs wake up and bark</i>	188
22	THE FIFA HOUSE IS BURNING <i>Who struck the match?</i>	200
23	BLATTER FOR TRANSPARENCY <i>‘Every question can be asked and answered!’</i>	212
24	A WARM WELCOME FOR MR SEPP . . . <i>Boos all round</i>	231
25	THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK <i>Revolution in the Caribbean</i>	249
26	SEPP BLATTER BREAKS MANDELA’S HEART <i>Twice!</i>	267
27	POISONING, DRUG-BUST AND KIDNAP <i>Meet Blatter’s new PR man</i>	286
28	CHARM AND DESTABILISE <i>Hargitay brings the press into line</i>	294

## CONTENTS

29	SOME QUESTIONS FOR MR BLATTER <i>... some answers from his lawyer</i>	301
30	FIFA FAIRY TALES <i>Clawing back the money</i>	317
31	PSST, WANT A TICKET FOR THE WORLD CUP? <i>Jack Warner's got thousands to sell</i>	336
32	CHASING THOSE BRIBES <i>Please, someone, speak to us!</i>	352
33	LIES, ADULTERY AND FABRICATION <i>How Sepp plays fair</i>	360
	<i>Postscript</i>	379
	<i>Appendix</i>	381
	<i>Index</i>	421

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When children ask me what it is I do exactly, I tell them I've made a life and a living out of chasing bad men.

I've investigated corrupt police-officers, corrupt governments and professional criminals, I've won awards for my work on secret British involvement in the Iran/Contra scandal and crooked cops. And when I turned forty I started looking into sport.

Sport? Some of my comrades in investigative journalism asked me, had I gone soft?

Not a bit of it. Sport belongs to the people. It's part of our culture, the social cement that holds us together.

And just as corruption in government and among police officers causes public concern, so, too, it matters when bad men take control of the people's sport and use it for their own personal ends.

So I trawled the waters of sport politics and came up with one gigantic fish, rotting, as fish tend to, from the head. It was, of all things, the Olympics.

I revealed that Juan Antonio Samaranch, leader of the Olympics, had been a career fascist, a minister in the government of the murderous Spanish dictator Franco. And I discovered that among the men who stood behind him in his International Olympic Committee were some who should have been behind

## FOUL!

bars (and have since spent time there) and many for whom Olympic politics was not a way to serve the people, but self-service, big time – and supersize that.

Investigative reporters don't always live to see bad men get their comeuppance, but the whole world saw Olympic corruption blow up back in 1998 and when the US Senate investigated the scandal they invited me to testify in Washington.

I might have left it there. But then I got a call from Colin Gibson, sports editor of the *Daily Mail*, asking would I take a look at the people running international football. 'Ah, come off it, Colin,' I said. 'Football is *big*. It would take years to find out what's going on inside FIFA.'

It's taken years. The things I've discovered have shocked even me. Some bad guys have been in there taking what they can. It's still the beautiful game, of course. They can't take that away from us. But, as you'll read here, there's been some ugly business going on. I'd like to see the beautiful game get the leadership it deserves. In that spirit I dedicate this book to the fans.

## PREFACE

Click, click, click  
Candid snapshots from inside world football's fortress  
But stop  
That's not allowed in the villa up on Sunny Hill

They say it's the people's game  
Don't ask, how much the boss pays himself  
Or who got the kickback, who got the contract  
Don't ask, who got all those World Cup tickets

They're based in Switzerland  
Where whistle-blowing is a crime  
Their documents are forever hidden  
Nobody ever gets the evidence

This isn't a history of FIFA  
Just a taste of the truth  
Here are snapshots of how it really is  
How it's been for the last quarter century  
For the good of the game.

*Andrew Jennings*  
*February 2006*

## BLATTER'S TICKING TIME-BOMB

### A kickback lands on Sepp's desk

FIFA Headquarters, Zurich, winter 1998. It's just turned seven o'clock in the morning at Sunny Hill, the white-walled, red-tiled mansion perched on a hillside high above the city at Sonnenberg. Down in the warm basement mailroom, secretaries gather to collect the post and telexes and overnight faxes. News of football results, player transfers, tournaments, travel schedules, pleas for subsidies from national associations, appointments with heads of state – just an ordinary day's business at the world's largest sports organisation.

Heads of department pop in, eager to pick up some tit-bit of news they can take upstairs and present, personally, to the boss, in exchange for some small favourable comment, or just a nod of approval. Here comes Erwin Schmid, FIFA's Director of Finance, a broad-shouldered bear of a man, who gets more dishevelled as the day goes on, his shirt-tail escaping from his trousers. Here comes Erwin, with the usual happy greetings.

He picks up an envelope. It's from the head office of FIFA's bankers, the Union Bank of Switzerland. Erwin tears it open and looks at the enclosed document, a notification of a payment. His plump face pales. He reads it again. Something is not right. Something is most irregular. Erwin leaves the mailroom and heads for the elevator, gripping the document in one tight, nervous hand.

Two floors up, FIFA General Secretary Joseph S Blatter, known universally as 'Sepp', reclines behind his leather-topped desk, in a high-backed black leather chair, performing his morning ritual of reading the *Neue Zurcher Zeitung*. The big JVC television is silent, too early for the tennis he loves to watch.

At 61 years of age Blatter has the air of a man who's in charge. He's a round man, round face, round body, a little on the short side, going bald. But his well-cut suit, his two-tone shirt, his solid gold cufflinks, his heavy, premium wristwatch, his don't-waste-my-time stare, all say: *I've been the boss for 17 years. Now, what can you do for me?* President Joao Havelange has an office just above but today he's an ocean away, at home in Brazil. Sepp is in charge.

Blatter enjoys the villa's finest views. A gigantic picture window frames the distant Alps, the wooded ridge and, far below, the lake and the old city, its church steeples squeezed between the valley shoulders. He might stroll across to the side window and gaze down on a steep vineyard and secluded villas whose high gates open now and then as a trickle of dark Mercedes saloons carry their owners to the city.

But this is no day to enjoy the view. His finance director has bad news for the boss who is also his good friend, indeed, his best friend. Erwin Schmid tells colleagues, 'I have only one friend in my life and that is JSB.' And now Erwin has the kind of news that can tear friendships apart. As the elevator rises, Erwin's spirits sink.

For the past three years Blatter himself has overseen the sale of rights for the World Cups of 2002 and 2006: the rights to show the games on television in every country in the world, the rights to put FIFA's badge and the magic words 'World Cup' on soft drinks, beer, burgers, razors and trainers. They're all in FIFA's gift. And senior people within FIFA have overseen a whopping US\$2.3 billion worth of business to old friends in a secretive company a few Alpine ranges to the south.

Sitting at No 10 Marktstrasse in the little tax-haven city of Sarnen, this company goes by the name of International Sport and Leisure, or ISL.

Erwin steps out of the lift. The document in his hand threatens to blow FIFA apart. Over the years there's been unkind talk of the relationship between FIFA and ISL, rumours of kickbacks and bribes. Loyal fellows like Erwin have dismissed that talk. Special relationships always attract gossip, don't they? Bad losers often complain. And there's been no evidence of wrongdoing. But now, there's this piece of paper. A payment has landed somewhere it shouldn't.

Erwin pads along the carpeted corridor. He reaches Blatter's door, knocks and waits for the call. In he goes. Erwin wastes no time. He hands the document to Blatter. It is a standard USB form, stating that ISL has transferred one million Swiss francs (some £400,000) into FIFA's account. It's the payee's name that makes acid churn in the belly. He's a senior official in football. It's a very fat 'thank you'. This is most improper (but not illegal in Switzerland, as long as it is declared to the taxman).

'My God,' Blatter groans. He stands up. 'This is a problem . . .'  
'*It does not belong to us.*'

Erwin knows that. But what will Blatter do? Call in the police? Report it to FIFA's Executive Committee, to the Finance Committee? That is the least that should be done.

## FOUL!

Instead, the money is moved out of FIFA's account to the man named on the payment order. And the record of the transaction sits there. The law says this record must be kept until the winter of 2008. So there it is, a ticking timebomb, waiting to go off.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

**Tunis, Abou Nawas Hotel, 23 January 2004.** The reporters have come from Cairo and Cape Town, Yaounde and Nairobi, some wearing city suits, some in white desert jalabiyyas, others in colourful West African agbadas, all sitting in rows, notebooks at the ready, waiting for the words of the most powerful man in world football.

High above the podium in the brightly lit function room is the portrait that dominates public buildings, restaurants and shops in this country. President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali stands erect and unsmiling, sports a helmet of implausibly jet-black hair and wears a long dress-coat, studded with medals. In the Tunisia he has led since 1987 no serious political opposition is permitted, no critical opinion tolerated, and hundreds of people rot in jail after unfair trials. There are elections here: Ben Ali wins them every time, claiming 99 per cent of the vote.

But his country always shows a happy face to tourists and, this week, to thousands of fans from Rwanda and Benin, Mali, Zimbabwe and a dozen other countries who've flocked to the stadiums on the Mediterranean coast for non-stop, stadium-shaking drumming, cheering and jeering at the finals of the 2004 African Nations Cup.

Here comes Sepp Blatter, taking his seat at the centre of the podium beneath Ben Ali's portrait. He was general secretary, now he's FIFA president with six years under his belt. Blatter admires

Ben Ali as someone who has earned 'a lot of respect' and praises Tunisia as 'an absolutely open country'.

To Blatter's right sits our host, Issa Hayatou from Cameroon, president of African football for the past sixteen years. A big, broad-chested man, once a champion 800-metre runner, Hayatou looks tired but has a nod here and a smile there for men he's laughed and duelled with. Eighteen months ago he challenged Blatter for the FIFA presidency. He promised to 'restore integrity and accountability' to the organisation. Along with others, he wrote to Zurich's public prosecutor accusing Blatter of corruption and demanding an investigation. Hayatou's integrity campaign couldn't beat Sepp's charisma and Blatter won a second term as president. The prosecutor decided not to take Blatter to court, on the basis that there was insufficient evidence for a prosecution to proceed. No charges were brought.

Everyone knew Blatter would strike back. It's his way: *stand in my path and it will cost you*. Yesterday, Hayatou stood for re-election as president of the African confederation. Blatter and his Zurich bag-carriers strongly backed the challenger, Botswana's Ismail Bhamjee. But Hayatou is no pushover. He'd secured his base in the French-speaking countries from Morocco down through West Africa to the Congo, and Bhamjee, who never got any momentum, lost, 46 votes to 6. Still, Blatter's a pro. There's no trace of bitterness in his face. He touches Hayatou's arm and the gesture says, *We're all friends again*. The subtext: *I'll get you next time*.

To Blatter's left sits FIFA General Secretary Urs Linsi who, like his president, sports a diagonally striped tie, blue shirt and dark suit. Like Blatter, from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Like Blatter, he's balding; one rogue tuft of hair sticks up above his forehead.

Ever since arriving at FIFA, Linsi has been a Blatter-man.

Blatter recruited him as finance director from Credit Suisse years ago in 1999. When then-General Secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen backed Hayatou for the presidency, Linsi stayed loyal. After the votes were counted in Seoul in May 2002, Blatter growled to a Swiss reporter, 'Tomorrow, we take care of Mr Clean.' Mr Clean, Zen-Ruffinen, was out. Linsi was on his way up. So now, aged 54, Linsi's got two jobs, finance director and general secretary. He's a very powerful man.

At the Abou Nawas Hotel, a question from the floor. What does the president think of African football? Blatter smiles. He says with conviction, 'Africa is the future of football.' (It's a formula that works for him. About the women's game? That firm voice: 'The future of football.' About Asia? 'The future of football.') Blatter's on good form, flashing his warmest charismatic smile. It's a beautiful day.

But there's a party pooper. Me. I've got hold of the roaming microphone. 'A question to President Blatter.' His smile fades, he draws up a fist to support his chin. I'm not his favourite reporter. I know about the ticking time-bomb. And here I go: 'After the last marketing and TV contract was signed with ISL for 2002 and 2006, a secret payment of one million Swiss francs from ISL arrived by accident in FIFA's bank account.'

I draw breath. Sepp's eyes tighten a little. I'm off again. 'It is alleged that you, as general secretary at the time, instructed it was to be moved immediately to a private account of a FIFA official.' Then I ask him who it went to.

Blatter tenses up, gazes down at the table before him and mutters something about the ISL company, now in the hands of a liquidator. Then, he says, frostily, 'I will not enter into discussion here in this press conference and I think also it is totally out of the matter we like to discuss today in Africa together with the African journalists for the development of football in this continent. I'm

BLATTER'S TICKING TIME-BOMB

sorry, please accept this situation as it is and I am sure your colleagues from the African and international press here will agree with me.'

Outside, in an atrium dotted with tall potted palms, I sink into a soft leather settee, sip strong sweet coffee and chat with old acquaintances from the press-room at the previous World Cup. A tall white reporter from South Africa, hurrying to an interview, pauses, waves and calls cheerily, 'I always like to see some theatre!' A lean magazine editor from the Gulf, casual in open-neck shirt and unbuttoned sports coat marvels, 'Blatter's face went green!'

'No,' says a friend from the Kenyan *Daily Nation*, 'He turned yellow.'

Tick. Tick. Tick.