



Sam Flint

Writing about thrills & spills

A game of two halves – short story

The furore over alleged corruption in the FIFA process for awarding the 2018 and 2022 World Cup venues has launched a number of investigations into how FIFA does business. Here is an old one

http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/gossip_and_transfers/9253692.stm

Since then Fifa have investigated themselves and declared themselves clean but won't show anyone the full results of the investigators' report. Pressure on FIFA to disclose how the voting process went will continue right up until the first matches are played in the next two world cups.

At some point they will have to bow to pressure to be more transparent and explain to the media how their Executive Committee (Exco) voted.

Imagine if it went something like this...

Spamarama "We have been granted an exclusive interview with FIFO President Schlep Fannybatter to discuss the award of the 2018 World Cup to Russia and 2022 to Qatar. Mr Fannybatter we were very surprised to get your interview request given our earlier investigation into the way FIFO members conduct themselves and your reluctance to publish the results of your inquiry into the voting process."

Fannybatter: "A grave injustice was perpetrated in Zurich when we voted and I trust Spamarama to expose the people at the heart of this."

Spamarama: "Really you wish to confess and apologise to football fans all over the world?"

Fannybatter: "No, I want those who have hijacked our time honoured process brought to justice."

Spamarama: "Perhaps if you explained the decision making process for to our viewers they could judge for themselves."

Fannybatter: "Gladly. I am sure that afterwards you will see why we are incensed. It started just like any other award process. All the executive council members entered the room, the door was locked and we all took our bung envelopes out of our pockets and put them on the table. There was the usual joking about how the suckers fall for voting promises every time. The director of finance then sorted it into piles from each of the bidders and counted the cash. "

Spamarama: "This is an appalling admission of dishonesty amongst FIFO members."

Fannybatter: "No this is our normal process, but what happened next has destroyed my belief in the integrity of FIFO members."

Spamarama: "How so?"

Fannybatter: "I asked if that was all the cash as it looked short to me. I looked every one of them in the eye and some could not return my gaze. I ordered them all to strip naked and this revealed several of them were wearing money belts. In fact one of the shits who for the last 5 years I thought was a 120 kg bloater turned out to be a 70 kg weakling who had been carrying his stash with him all the time because he did not trust banks!"

Spamarama: "How did you feel about this corruption?"

Fannybatter: "I felt betrayed; I did not know who I could trust. I did the only thing a man of integrity could do."

Spamarama: "What was that?"

Fannybatter: "I launched an immediate investigation. I broke out the latex gloves and a powerful torch and got the lot of them to line up and touch their toes. I was shocked. Hidden in the arses of some members I found Kruger Rands, Rolexes, blood diamonds and two members of the England bid team! I asked them if they had any explanation for holding back all this stuff."

Spamarama: "What did they say?"

Fannybatter: "What could they say, I caught them 'bang to rights' as you say in England. I realised I had to give them back some dignity. I am not the world foremost sports diplomat for nothing you know. I made sure I had all the loot then I suggested we break for a quick lunch. Four hours later we were back at the hard job of picking venues."

Spamarama: "How did this go?"

Fannybatter: "Well as you know FIFO is an organisation with principles; so I asked who we should reject on principle. It was at that point that the English bid went out of the window. We did not even bother to count the cash as we could all see that it was the thinnest envelope. I felt so embarrassed for you."

Spamarama: "And then?"

Fannybatter: "Well we continued working through the envelopes by weight until we got to the last two. The Spain bid looked good, all in dollars and gold, none of that dodgy Euro stuff or government bonds. You can't be too careful in this economic climate, can you?"

Spamarama: "So why did Spain loose out?"

Fannybatter: "I'm getting to that. We opened the Russian envelope and there was no cash inside, just photos of every executive council member taken through a sniper scope, cross hairs and everything. I tell you I shat myself. On the back of each photo was a brief dossier listing each person's financial and sexual misdemeanours. The intent to blackmail and intimidate us was clear."

Spamarama: "What did you do?"

Fannybatter: "We agreed that we had to front him out. We are FIFO for fuck sake. We run the football rackets. We could not let Putta muscle in."

Spamarama: "Did it work?"

Fannybatter: "No. Just as we all agreed to dump the Russian bid, Putta kicked the door down and came into the room with half a dozen armed FSB thugs. He put his finger to his lips, bent two members over the table and extracted microphone bugs from their arses and discovered another member of the England bid team. I felt such a fool. How did I miss them? I am usually so careful. Anyway Putta crushes the bugs and bid member under his heel. He just looks up and says `Russia 2018 are we all cool with that?` His goons raised their guns. After an awkward pause I hear voices saying yes we are cool. He looks at me with his cold dead eyes (just like the old Pope) and turns to leave. He gets to the door and another of his goons comes in with a bag, walks up to the table and shovels half of our stash into it. That Putta he is a FSB! He is making me his bitch in front of my crew. He is power mad, one day he might even be after my job! Finally he leaves with that fucking smirk on his face. It all goes deadly quiet. I say fuck him we still have 2022. Lets go next door and do some voting."

Spamarama: "What did they say?"

Fannybatter: "What could they say. The day was turning into a bummer and I had to salvage the situation. So we start getting back on track counting envelopes for 2022 and just as we are about to make a decision, fuck me if that door is not kicked in and there he is again. Deja fuckin' vu or what? He walks over, puts me across the table and extracts a microphone bug from my arse! Qatar he says. You must be fucking joking I say. They've never even seen a football there! No problem he says. Then he puts the bag he took our stash in back on the table. Not again I'm thinking. But now he opens it and turns it upside down and all the loot falls out. `A present comrades' he says. Cheeky cunt. His goons leave and come back in with shopping trolleys full of designer handbags. `The bags are for your wives, the contents for you'. Fuck me if there is not the keys to a Lear-jet in each of them. `A small consideration from our good friend Ali Babba or whatever the fuck his name is', says Putta with a grin. The day ends on a high after all."

Spamarama: "So let me understand, if it is not the bribery, intimidation and corruption of FIFO you want us to expose what is it?"

Fannybatter: "Have you not heard? I thought it was a done deal but it turns out the Arabs now want to move the competition to Christmas. They are taking a fucking liberty. You must stop them!"

Spamarama: "Schlep Fannybatter, thank you. Money to the usual place?"

Fannybatter: "Yes please but I must insist on cash only. With that Wiki Leaks bastard around you can't be too careful."

This is a work of fiction. All resemblance to people living or dead is entirely accidental.

For more free stories see www.samflint.uk