

# It's Elementary.

Anthony Element

This column is a break with tradition for me, as I usually don't do serious, although one of my novels is about a serial killer, but I don't think that counts. I generally leave serious to the real journos. You know, the ones who sound like they know what they're talking about. I've no idea what that feels like; or whether they do either, but I have my suspicions in some cases.

Anyway, this all took place some time ago and began with a call from my GP's receptionist, "The doctor has the results of your test. He'd like to have a chat."

That, right there, was the scariest phone call I've ever had. I mean, even getting a call from the cops couldn't be that bad. "Er, Mister Element, we'd like you to come down to the station and answer a few questions." Sure, that'd be scary too, but the thing is, I know I haven't committed a crime. Well, there was that time... Oh, never mind.



And then she tells me there's no hurry. Yeah, right. No hurry for her maybe. After all, she knows the story, and anyway, it's not about her. As for me, I wanted that conversation NOW. Now turned out to be almost a week later, by which time I was... well, fingernails were a distant memory, but at least I was sober. Almost.

The doc told me my PSA level had gone up in the year since my last check. Ahh, the prostate. I have this theory that the prostate is nature's way of making sure we of the male persuasion don't enjoy retirement too much. Anyway, it was up a fair way, as it turned out. And, speaking of up a fair way, you'll never guess what was next on the agenda.

Yep, the good old, Digital Rectal Exam. That's where the doctor sticks a finger up a fair way and wriggles it around for a while. And then you have to pay for it. Doesn't seem right, somehow. He couldn't feel anything unusual so he sent me off to a Urologist. Speaking of which, I've never understood what drives people to certain professions. I know someone has to do them, but I have this image...



"What did you do today, Daddy?"

"Well, son, I spent the day sticking my finger up..."

Anyway, what is it about the medical profession, that they don't trust each other? Of course, said urologist had to have another feel. Same result but I had to pay three times as much as when the GP did it. He decided we should wait a few months and then do another PSA. He told me not to worry, it's probably nothing serious.

That, I thought, was easy for him to say.

So queue some more sleepless nights and another blood test. The urologist instructed me to ensure there was no sex and no bicycle riding in the week before the blood test. No problems there, although I did have to make a tough decision to defer my Tour de France campaign for another year.

Contrary to my fervent expectations, the PSA had risen quite a bit more. Further evidence that negotiating with God doesn't work. "Time," said the urologist, a tad too solemnly for my liking, "for a biopsy."

Now, I should warn you that if you are concerned about looking like a big girl because your eyes are watering, you should skip the next part. A biopsy, it turns out involves inserting a long needle just aft of your really important bits and drawing a few samples from the prostate. I'm both happy and relieved to report that this was done under anaesthetic and there was no discomfort afterwards. I expected to make another appointment to get the results, but no, the urologist was quite emphatic that he'd call me once he had the report.



Why he was so insistent about this I don't know, but I'm going to go with, if I was to collapse in a heap on the floor, he preferred I did it on my floor and not his.

Well, things just got better and better. Not!

It was prostate cancer, and a fairly aggressive one. But on the plus side, we'd caught it early. Here was where I began to understand what old Donald Rumsfeld was on about with his unknown unknowns. I definitely didn't know what I didn't know about prostate cancer, which turned out to be practically everything.

I had always thought that one of the great things about modern medicine is that there's a big focus on patients making an informed decision. What I didn't understand was that to make an informed decision I would have to learn enough to practically qualify for a bachelor of medicine. Just the language alone is a nightmare. I thought the military and the aviation worlds were full of TLAs, (as in Three Letter Acronyms), but don't even get me started about medicine.

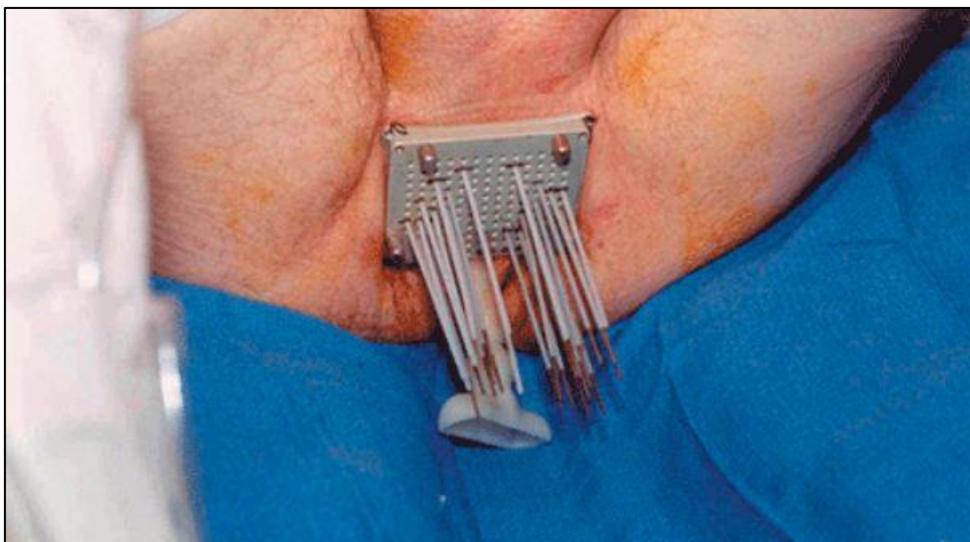
And what's worse, in medicine, the TLAs usually stand for something in Latin, so even if you know what they mean, you have no idea of what they mean. If you get what I mean...

Sometime later, I felt that I knew enough to decide which option to go with. Which is probably another way of saying that I knew just enough to be dangerous. I didn't like the idea of having my prostate surgically removed. First, I wasn't crazy about having anyone wielding a knife in that general area of my anatomy. And second, as this is the only body I've got, despite a certain amount of deterioration, I'd like to hang on to as much of it as I can, for as long as I can.

So I opted for a process called High Dose Brachytherapy.

Another eye water alert!

This procedure involved inserting eighteen needles more or less where the biopsy was done, and leaving them in place for 24 hours, during which time I got three bursts of radiation via a computer which they hooked up to the needles. What I liked about this choice, well maybe 'liked' is putting it a tad strongly, but



anyway, the radiation to each needle tip is a controlled dose, the idea being to do maximum damage to the tumour area without Catherine Wheeling the healthy bits. The worst part was that I couldn't lay on my back between doses - yeah, that's right, because the bits of the damned needle they hook the computer to stick out - so the nurses had to turn me from side to side every so often.

Sort of like a pig on a spit... No, delete that, stand by one while I think of a less self-deprecating analogy. I know I've put on a kilo or six, but still...But I will say that there's practically no discomfort in this process.

The upshot of all this is that a bit down the track, everything's looking good and – much more importantly – everything still works; more or less anyway, and making allowances for advancing years.

So, if there's a message in here, it's this: if you're a male no longer in the, ahem, bloom of youth, and you don't already do so, you might think about getting yourself checked once a year. Sure there's this big debate going on about whether we should get checked and that most of us will die of something else, but there are two facts that seem to me to be highly relevant here.

Fact 1, if prostate cancer does decide to mess with your retirement and you catch early enough it has an excellent chance of being brought into remission.

Fact 2, prostate cancer is still one of the main killers of men in this country.

Kinda makes it a no brainer really.

I bought a dog once and called him Stay. I'd say, "Come here Stay". He's insane now.

## VP Day Commemoration.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> August, people all over Australia commemorated VP Day - Victory in the Pacific Day, also referred to as VJ (Victory over Japan) Day. This date commemorates Japan's acceptance of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender which occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1945. For Australians, it meant that the Second World War was finally over.

On that day, the Emperor of Japan announced that Japan would accept the Allies ultimatum to surrender.

On the same day just after nine o'clock, as the majority of the population would normally have been starting the day's work, Prime Minister Ben Chifley's voice was heard over the wireless sets of the nation announcing that Japan had bowed to the ultimatum issued by the Allies and peace was at hand.

This was the signal for a spontaneous outpouring of happiness never before or since seen in Australia. Martin Place in Sydney, Bourke Street in Melbourne, Queen St in Brisbane, Brisbane St in Launceston and the main streets of almost every city and town across the nation became rallying points.

Australians, not normally given to public displays of emotion, danced in the streets through piles of shredded paper which rained down from office buildings. Major traffic came to a halt and trams inched along main streets with revellers cling to the sides and roofs.

The day of Ben Chifley's announcement became known as VP Day.

The formal surrender of the Japanese Empire took place on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1945. This became known as VJ Day.

Kedron Wavell Ex-Service Club in Brisbane's northern suburb of Chermside held a commemoration ceremony at 10.30am on the 15<sup>th</sup> August.



Major Graham Palmer, CSM, from Headquarters 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, gave the address.



Mavis Obst laying a wreath on behalf of the Brisbane Ex-Service Women.

After the ceremony, everyone was invited into the community centre for a morning tea.



These two spritely ladies, (L-R) Helen Rosbrook and Mavis Obst, who were spotted enjoying the fruit of the vine after the ceremony, both served with the RAAF during the war. Helen joined in 1942 and worked as a Clerk in accounts and Mavis joined in 1944 and served as a Teleg

with Fighter Sector in the long gone W.D. & H.O. Wills Building in Ann Street Brisbane. The Wills building was approximately opposite St. John's Cathedral in Ann Street.

If your religion is worth killing for, please start with yourself.

## Coke.

I bought a carton of Coke Zero from Coles recently and when I got it home found one of the cans was empty. Next time I went to Coles I took the can back thinking they would give me another can for the empty one. They were only too willing to replace the can but suggested I contact Coke direct as they would probably replace the can with another carton – so I did.



That's when I got a bit of a surprise. Mr Coke, who must be doing it tough wrote me [a letter](#) more or less indicating I had made it up as their systems won't allow that to happen and here's a money order for \$3.00 to just go away.



That incensed me so I sent it back to Mr Coke and told him so. Mr Coke wrote [back to me](#) and this time sent me a Coke cap and two key rings and a pen.

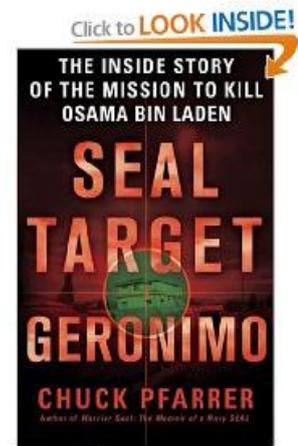
What an insult. Pepsi looks good to me.

## Seals Reveal Truth About Bin Laden Raid.

Osama Bin Laden was killed within 90 seconds of the US Navy Seals landing in his compound and not after a protracted gun battle, according to the first account by the men who carried out the raid. The operation was so clinical that only 12 bullets were fired.

The Seals have spoken out because they were angered at the version given by politicians, which they see as portraying them as cold-blooded murderers on a kill mission. They were also shocked that President Barack Obama announced Bin Laden's death on television the same evening, rendering useless much of the intelligence they had seized.

Chuck Pfarrer, a former commander of Seal Team 6, which conducted the operation, has interviewed many of those who took part for a book, Seal Target Geronimo, to be published in the US this week.



The Seals own accounts differ from the White House version, which gave the impression that Bin Laden was killed at the end of the operation rather than in its opening seconds. Pfarrer insists Bin Laden would have been captured had he surrendered.

There isn't a politician in the world who could resist trying to take credit for getting Bin Laden but it devalued the intelligence and gave time for every other Al-Qaeda leader to scurry to another bolthole, said Pfarrer.

The men who did this and their valorous act deserve better. It's a pretty shabby way to treat these guys. The first hint of the mission came in January last year when the team's commanding officer was called to a meeting at the headquarters of joint special operations command. The meeting was held in a soundproof bunker three stories below ground with his boss, Admiral William McRaven, and a CIA officer.



They told him a walled compound in Pakistan had been under surveillance for a couple of weeks. They were certain a high-value individual was inside and needed a plan to present to the president. It had to be someone important. So is this Bert or Ernie? he asked. The Seals nicknames for Bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri are a reference to two Muppets in Sesame Street, one tall and thin and the other short and fat. We have a voice print, said the CIA officer, and were 60% or 70% certain it's our guy. McRaven added that a reconnaissance satellite had measured the targets shadow. Over 6ft tall.

When McRaven added they would use Ghost Hawk helicopters, the team leader had no doubt. These are the most classified, sophisticated stealth helicopters ever developed, said Pfarrer. They are kept in locked hangars and fly so quiet we call it whisper mode. Over the next couple of months a plan was hatched. A mock-up of the compound was built at Tall Pines, an army facility in a national forest somewhere in the eastern US.

Four reconnaissance satellites were placed in orbit over the compound, sending back video and communications intercepts. A tall figure seen walking up and down was named the Pacer. Obama gave the go-ahead and Seal Team 6, known as the Jedi, was deployed to Afghanistan. The White House cancelled plans to provide air cover using jet fighters, fearing this might endanger relations with Pakistan. Sending in the Ghost Hawks without air cover was considered too risky so the Seals had to use older Stealth Hawks. A Prowler electronic warfare aircraft from the carrier USS Carl Vinson was used to jam Pakistan's radar and create decoy targets.



Operation Neptune's Spear was initially planned for April 30 but bad weather delayed it until May 1, a moonless night. The commandos flew on two Stealth Hawks, codenamed Razor 1 and 2, followed by two Chinooks five minutes behind, known as Command Bird and the gun platform. On board, each Seal was clad in body armour and night vision goggles and equipped with laser targets, radios and sawn-off M4 rifles. They were expecting up to 30 people in the main house, including Bin Laden and three of his wives, two sons, Khalid and Hamza, his courier, Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti, four bodyguards and a number of children. At 56 minutes past midnight the compound came into sight and the code Palm Beach signalled three minutes to landing. Razor 1 hovered above the main house, a three-story building where Bin Laden lived on the top floor. Twelve Seals roped the 5ft-6ft down onto the roof and then jumped to a third-floor patio, where they kicked in the windows and entered.

The first person the Seals encountered was a terrified woman, Bin Laden's third wife, Khaira, who ran into the hall. Blinded by a searing white strobe light they shone at her, she stumbled back. A Seal grabbed her by the arm and threw her to the floor. Bin Laden's bedroom was along a short hall. The door opened; he popped out and then slammed the door shut. Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo, radioed one Seal, meaning eyes on target. At the same time lights came on from the floor below and Bin Laden's son Khalid came running up the stairs towards the Seals. He was shot dead.

Two Seals kicked in Bin Laden's door. The room, they later recalled, smelt like old clothing, like a guest bedroom in a grandmother's house. Inside was the Al-Qaeda leader and his youngest wife, Amal, who was screaming as he pushed her in front of him. No, no, don't do this! she shouted as her husband reached across the king-size bed for his AK-47 assault rifle. The Seals reacted instantly, firing in the same second. One round thudded into the mattress. The other, aimed at Bin Laden's head, grazed Amal in the calf. As his hand reached for the gun, they each fired again: one shot hit his breastbone, the other his skull, killing him instantly and blowing out the back of his head.

Meanwhile Razor 2 was heading for the guesthouse, a low, shoebox-like building, where Bin Laden's courier, Kuwaiti, and his brother lived. As the helicopter neared, a door opened and two figures appeared, one waving an AK-47. This was Kuwaiti. In the moonless night he could see nothing and lifted his rifle, spraying bullets wildly. He did not see the Stealth Hawk. On board someone shouted, Bust him!, and a sniper fired two shots. Kuwaiti was killed, as was the person behind him, who turned out to be his wife. Also on board were a CIA agent, a Pakistani-American who would act as interpreter, and a sniffer dog called Karo, wearing dog body armor and goggles.



Within two minutes the Seals from Razor 2 had cleared the guesthouse and removed the women and children. They then ran to the main house and entered from the ground floor, checking the rooms. One of Bin Laden's bodyguards was waiting with his AK-47. The

Seals shot him twice and he toppled over. Five minutes into the operation the command Chinook landed outside the compound, disgorging the commanding officer and more men. They blasted through the compound wall and rushed in.

The commander made his way to the third floor, where Bin Laden's body lay on the floor face up. Photographs were taken, and the commander called on his satellite phone to headquarters with the words: Geronimo Echo KIA Bin Laden enemy killed in action. This was the first time the White House knew he was dead and it was probably 20 minutes into the raid, said Pfarrer. A sample of Bin Laden's DNA was taken and the body was bagged. They kept his rifle. It is now mounted on the wall of their team room at their headquarters in Virginia Beach, Virginia, alongside photographs of a dozen colleagues killed in action in the past 20 years.

At this point things started to go wrong. Razor 1 took off but the top secret green unit that controls the electronics failed. The aircraft went into a spin and crashed tail-first into the compound... The Seals were alarmed, thinking it had been shot down, and several rushed to the wreckage. The crew climbed out, shaken but unharmed. The commanding officer ordered them to destroy Razor 2, to remove the green unit, and to smash the avionics. They then laid explosive charges.



They loaded Bin Laden's body onto the Chinook along with the cache of intelligence in plastic bin bags and headed toward the USS Carl Vinson. As they flew off they blew up Razor 2. The whole operation had taken 38 minutes.

The following morning White House officials announced that the helicopter had crashed as it arrived, forcing the Seals to abandon plans to enter from the roof. A photograph of the situation room showed a shocked Hillary Clinton, the secretary of state, with her hand to her mouth. Why did they get it so wrong? What they were watching was live video but it was shot from 20,000 feet by a drone circling overhead and relayed in real time to the White House and Leon Panetta, the CIA director, in Langley. The Seals were not wearing helmet cameras, and those watching in Washington had no idea what was happening inside the buildings. They don't understand our terminology, so when someone said the insertion helicopter has crashed, they assumed it meant on entry, said Pfarrer.

What infuriated the Seals, according to Pfarrer, was the description of the raid as a kill mission. I've been a Seal for 30 years and I never heard the words kill mission, he said. It's a Beltway [Washington insiders] fantasy world. If it was a kill mission you don't need Seal Team 6; you need a box of grenades.

## Death Ray.

Vaporizing things and folks with a powerful ray has been a staple of fervid sci-fi imaginations since the beginnings of the genre. Today, we've got weaponized lasers to do that for us. Boeing recently offered a powerful proof-of-concept of the lethal capabilities of airborne laser weapons when it blasted a ballistic missile into oblivion from its Airborne Laser Testbed (ALTB). The modified B 747-400 is fitted with a Northrup Gruman megawatt-class laser (read higher energy) and a Lockheed Martin beam and fire control system. The ALTB uses one low-energy laser to track the target and a second one to measure and compensate for atmospheric disturbances. Then it unleashes its killer laser that heats the target to "critical structural failure." That's defence-speak for oblivion.



See it on youTube [HERE](#).

## The F111.

SIX of the RAAF's now retired F-111 strike bombers, affectionately referred to as "pigs", are set to go on display at aircraft museums and historical organisations across Australia. Defence Materiel Minister Jason Clare said these aircraft, which retired in 2010, would be loaned out to help preserve an important part of Australia's military heritage.



The aircraft were developed in the United States in the 1960s and first entered service in 1967 with the USAF. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) ordered them soon after and began operating F-111Cs

in 1973. When the F-111s were retired, the government invited historical and other organisations to submit bids for surplus aircraft.

The successful organisations are the Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory; Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Association; Fighter World, Williamtown, NSW; Historical Aircraft Restoration Society; Queensland Air Museum; and the South Australian Aviation Museum.

Mr Clare said the Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association, WA Division Inc will get a crew module display.

F-111 aircraft are already on display at the Aviation Heritage Centre, RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, and at the RAAF Museum, RAAF Base Point Cook in Victoria. Two F-111 aircraft are also at RAAF Base Edinburgh and RAAF Base Wagga. These aircraft will also go on display.

Aircraft loaned to aircraft museums and historical organisations are expected to be delivered from early 2013.

The plane leaves Heathrow Airport under the control of a Jewish captain; his co-pilot is Chinese. It's the first time they've flown together and an awkward silence between the two seems to indicate a mutual dislike. Once they reach cruising altitude, the Jewish captain activates the auto-pilot, leans back in his seat, and mutters, 'I don't like Chinese..' 'No rike Chinese?' asks the co-pilot, 'why not?' 'You people bombed Pearl Harbor , that's why!' 'No, no', the co-pilot protests, 'Chinese not bomb Peahl Hahbah! That Japanese, not Chinese.' 'Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese....doesn't matter, you're all alike!'

There's a few minutes of silence. 'I no rike Jews!' the co-pilot suddenly announces. 'Oh yeah, why not?' asks the captain. 'Jews sink Titanic!' says the co-pilot. 'What? *You're insane!* Jews didn't sink the Titanic!' exclaims the captain, 'It was an iceberg!' 'Iceberg, Goldberg, Greenberg, Rosenberg , .....no mattah....all same.'