

*Ustina Dolgopol**

COMBINING A LOVE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW WITH A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

I am sitting in a lecture theatre at one of the east coast Universities attending my first Australian conference on international law. A melodious male voice hushes the crowd and proceeds to query some of the ideas put forward by the panel. The voice is entrancing, but the ideas are not in accord with my understanding of the development of international law — particularly international human rights law. During a break I seek to engage with this man whose voice I admire but whose ideas I want to contest. Ever calm but resolute Ivan Shearer continues to set out his views. He listens intently to my arguments, displaying that consummate respect for the exchange of ideas that would mark our discussions years later in Adelaide after an evening movie.

Although our paths crossed at other conferences and seminars, it was his return to Adelaide that led to opportunities to spend greater amounts of time together — both professionally and socially. Others have detailed his significant achievements in the law. They are to be admired. But so too was his commitment to working on projects in a collegial manner. He never assumed that his time was more valuable than that of others, or that his ideas had to be given precedence. Those seeking his assistance, particularly students and younger academics, were given meaningful feedback. Having been copied on a series of emails to students and early career researchers, I can attest to his willingness to give his time and energy to others, and his desire to approach all queries with the precision that marked the work he undertook as a member of international committees and panels.

Sitting at dinner with Ivan after a movie could, at times, be a bit like participating in a university seminar. The plot was to be analysed, the quality of the acting to be dissected and the effect of filming scenes in a particular manner to be considered. Although not all the films we saw matched our expectations (both of us preferring somewhat serious films with moral dilemmas, whilst our companions were pleased by those that had light-hearted scenes and were not intended to offer any insight into the human condition), Ivan always expressed his pleasure at having a night out. Unfortunately for the remainder of our group, each movie somehow provoked a discussion about an aspect of international law. I have never asked the others but I suspect that they were bemused by the idea that every movie we saw somehow connected to recent developments in international humanitarian or international criminal law. Segues can be an art form and I will give Ivan the credit for creating the stage on which valued and, at times, challenging discussions occurred.

I will miss that melodious voice that could as easily deliver a warm-hearted joke as a significant insight into international law. *Ave atque vale* Ivan Shearer.

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