

# *No Bull!*

*A Bush Bash*

*by Paul Hemphill*

*Yesterday as the workmen from the Circular Wharf were proceeding home, a cry arose that a wild bull was loose. No sooner was the alarm given than the animal was among the crowd, doing great mischief as it made its way along the quay." The "wild beast" had apparently escaped from Glebe Island. It eventually became trapped and was dispatched by a carpenter's axe.*

Sydney Morning Herald, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1861

There is a straight if idiosyncratic line between the balladeers of old and those of today. Between the old Greeks and the bush poets, and flowing between them all, the myriad tributaries and branches of the rivers of song and story.

*Titans Close* and its prequel, *Mads The Mad*, overwrought sagas of battling bovines, owe their heritage to both Homer (the Greek, not the yellow one), and HW Longfellow's *Hiawatha* (specifically the epic struggle with the sturgeon). And there are echoes of the heroic verse that JRR Tolkien's heroes would recite at the drop of a broad-sword. But it also pays tribute to our own Banjo Paterson, particularly his faux-epic *The Geebung Polo Club*, and there is also the more contemporary, and incomparably incontinent *McArthur's Fart* by Rob Bath and Andrew Bleby, with its marvelous mix of pong, pun and pastiche. In this and other instances, I am reminded also of that excruciating English bard of bad puns, Les Barker, particularly his *Jason And The Arguments*. "No you're not, yes I am, no you're not..."

Most of all, it's about the primordial and perennial conflict between light and darkness, between good and evil. The law man and the colonel's son go up against the bandit and the gunslinger. Rudyard declaimed: "But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, when two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth". And Hal David in his song, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*: "From the moment a girl gets to be full-grown, the very first thing she learns, when two men go out to face each other, only one retur-r-r-ns" (notwithstanding the fact that in the movie thus celebrated, nothing of the sort occurred).

From the anthology *The Drovers Dog And Other Stories*

# Titans Close (No Bull!)

*Arms and the man I sing... forc'd by fate,  
And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate.*

Virgil, *The Aeneid*

The following events occurred on a summer's day a few years back, on the Pacific Highway, News South Wales' primary north-south arterial. At a place called Boambee, just south of the seaside town of Coffs Harbour (capital of the Retiree Riviera, the Costa Geriatrica), It was one of those 'believe it or not' occurrences that would see the raconteur ragged as having partaken of a wealth of wacky weed, of which there is an abundance thereabouts.



Benny was a champion  
With many media mentions.  
In pastures green, this bull had grown  
To Hummer-like dimensions<sup>1</sup>.  
As gorgeous as a summer's day,  
As white as Zeus in bull array<sup>2</sup>  
Who fair Europa bore away,  
He nonchalantly munched his hay,  
And mild were his intentions.  
But so was paved the path to hell –  
Adjacent to his premises,  
There dwelt another mount of meat,  
And he was Benny's nemesis.  
As dark as night was Bjorn the Bad<sup>3</sup>,  
The son of Old Black Sambo<sup>4</sup>,  
With massive head,  
And shoulders broad,  
As lean and mean as Rambeau<sup>5</sup>  
(That's Sly, and not that fey French bard<sup>6</sup>;  
This bruiser was no bimbeau!)  
His hide as dark as ebony,  
As tough as old mahogany,  
His horns shone like chalcedony<sup>7</sup>,  
This massif of solidity  
Was built like a Pajero<sup>8</sup>.  
That morning bright, big Bjorn arose,  
And bad and crazy brave,  
The madness of the Minotaur<sup>9</sup>,

A match for any Matador<sup>10</sup>,  
This buffalo Conquistador<sup>11</sup>  
Now aimed to misbehave!<sup>12</sup>  
He spied his rival from afar<sup>13</sup>  
And feral dreams compelled him.  
Down through the creek  
And up the bank,  
A ton of meat propelled him.  
Three fences strong he swept away,  
Two wire and one electric.  
Such barricades did not avail  
Against a charge so hectic.  
Mad Bjorn crashed through the final fence,  
And Benny lunged in self-defence.  
With bellows bright and bulk immense,  
So they engaged, with rage intense,  
With snorting breath and howls of death,  
And dusty hooves of thunder,  
A soaking gruel of snot and drool,  
So to the death in mighty duel,  
They locked and drew asunder.  
This feral ruck of wayward cattle  
Seemed so like some great Greek battle<sup>14</sup>.  
They butted heads, demolished sheds,  
Made water tanks upend, 'tis said.  
And on their contest so engaged,  
Out onto the road they raged<sup>15</sup>  
Oblivious to traffic.  
So motors swerved to left and right,  
And cars careened in shock and fright,  
Colliding to avoid the fight.  
That raged about them graphic.  
With smoking tyres and braying horns,  
The screech of heavy braking,  
As drove they through the ruck, it seemed  
The very earth was shaking.  
Loudly cried the panicked drivers,  
Bayed the klaxons of prime movers<sup>16</sup>  
That swerved and swivelled wildly.  
For on the highway dead ahead,  
Bjorn and Benny's combat dread,  
From such are rural legends made  
(And that's to put it mildly!),  
With bloodied brow and broken horn,  
Benny locked on tight to Bjorn.  
And white foam blood flecked  
Was Bjorn's black neck,  
And so he stood bejewelled with blood,  
His hide a 'shine like varnished wood.  
And Benny wild with pain and bile,  
He pawed the ground and stood awhile,  
His battered flanks incarnadine,  
Just like some vampire movie scene<sup>17</sup>.  
Like torrents from a broken dam,  
Beef met machine like battering ram.

As motors drove into the pair,  
'twas like they hit a boulder.  
And 'midst the smoke and engine roar  
The upturned wheels a spinning there,  
An Astra and a Subaru<sup>18</sup>  
Lay capsized on the shoulder.  
And when the evening easterly  
Dispersed the fog of war,  
The mess of meat and metal  
Lay like flotsam on the shore.  
And through the mist of steam and dust,  
Amidst the metal rubble,  
Bjorn impaled upon the bull-bar  
Of an overturned B Double<sup>19</sup>.  
Whilst the other gladiator<sup>20</sup>  
Gored a Holden<sup>21</sup> radiator,  
And with a last defiant roar.  
Went off to his creator.  
And so it passed at Titans Close  
Such bruised and battered glory  
Never had such mighty cattle,  
Fallen In the midst of battle,  
Caused the Gates of Hell<sup>22</sup> to rattle.  
(That beats the Old Greek's story!)<sup>23</sup>  
Then from the west, a might herd  
Of Valkrie <sup>24</sup>cattle came,  
And in a crash of flashing hooves,  
Bore Bjorn's black soul away.  
And high upon the heaven's range,  
Forever he will fly,  
Running with the devil-herd  
Across the endless sky<sup>25</sup>.  
So, Bjorn did join the ghost stampede.  
That suited his psychosis.  
But Benny's fate did consecrate  
A pure apotheosis.  
As choirs of heaven sang his praise,  
Brave Ben, in angels' arms was raised,  
And snowy white and heaven bright,  
A constellation in the night,  
He pranced and danced in a field of stars  
To the strum of flamenco guitars.



# Mads The Mad



*Shoot straight you bastards!*

The last words of Harry 'Breaker' Morant, February 1902

Some stories are so outlandish that their like is never seen again. But the bad day at Titans Close had an unusual prequel that was as unusual as it was epic. Not only was the protagonist of this tale related to one of the combatants, but, the target of tauran wrath was the owner of the other.

Prequel or sequel,  
Black Bjorn<sup>26</sup> knew no equal  
His final fight with Benny  
Was an epic of folklore.  
Though I cannot match that saga  
With its road kill rock 'n' roll,  
There's another crazy story  
From Boambee's fatal shore<sup>27</sup>.  
Now, compared with Bjorn and Benny,  
It's poor thing, I confess,  
But the story needed telling,  
So I'll tell it nonetheless.  
The events recalled preceded  
Black Bjorn's dire demise.  
And not a word is falsehood  
For we do not deal in lies.  
Nor strive we to embellish  
The truth you now behold.  
Suspend all disbelieving  
As the tale of Mads is told.

Now Mads he was a rangy bull.  
Not huge like his big brother.  
But Mads was mad and Mads was bad.  
This bull was born to bother.  
His heart it was as black as tar,  
His hide was like concrete,  
And he made up with meanness  
What he didn't do with meat.  
His stamina was epic,  
His stubbornness quite mythical,

His values quite unethical,  
The toughest on the street.  
He had no truck with paddock life,  
His instincts super-feral.  
No cattleman could fence him in  
And did so at his peril.  
No paddock could contain him,  
Nor fence withstand his vigour.  
And the chips on both his shoulders  
Were big and getting bigger.  
One day bad Mads was roving  
As the farmer wandered by.  
You could see he meant to do him  
By the glint in his black eye<sup>28</sup>.  
The farmer backed up to the fence  
With no place left to go,  
And all he had for self-defense  
Was a phone and triple 0<sup>29</sup>.  
It must have been his lucky day -  
A signal loud and clear  
Went out across the ether, and,  
It happened, help was near.  
For right in his vicinity  
A crowd opposing CSG<sup>30</sup>  
And the riot squad<sup>31</sup> in SUV  
Were proving their virility.  
With armèd men on every hand,  
His inner John McClane<sup>32</sup>  
Determined now make a stand,  
And make a world of pain.  
A mêlée quite spectacular,  
His battle rage testicular,  
Unstoppable, undroppable,  
A feral gladiator<sup>33</sup>,  
Berserker<sup>34</sup> blood a pumping,  
And I tell you, it was something,  
Onto the massed myrmidons<sup>35</sup>  
Like a vengeful terminator<sup>36</sup>,  
He came on like a 'dozer<sup>37</sup>,  
Cutting through them like a razor,  
As batons flew, and gas cans too<sup>38</sup>,  
Some side arms and a tazer<sup>39</sup>.  
The roar of bull, the clash of arms,  
The gasp of shock and awe,  
And Mads had done what no bad bull  
Had ever done before  
He'd bested the states brightest,  
Its scattered ranks laid low!  
Oh, oxen! Sing the story,  
From Cowes to Buffalo<sup>40</sup>.  
He reared and roared,  
And bowed his head,  
He challenged them to take him.  
So they brought up their marksmen  
As the only way to break him.



The snipers in their kevlar vests<sup>41</sup>  
Put well and truly to the test,  
But it was Mads who came off best  
With bullets stapled 'cross his chest.  
He charged, they fired, and fired again.  
Again, the slugs were flattened.  
He snorted, farted, gave a shrug  
As if it hardly mattered.  
Another fusillade rang out,  
And one shot hit his mug  
Between his black and beady eyes.  
And with a groan, his lights went out,  
He tumbled slowly to the dirt.  
And Mads the undefeated  
Lay silent and inert.

There's blood upon the wattle<sup>42</sup>  
By the ring-barked border tree<sup>43</sup>.  
There's a farmer in the valley  
With bad PTSD<sup>44</sup>.  
Yes, a farmer in the valley  
Who has given up on beef,  
And has planted out his paddocks  
Since his Benny came to grief<sup>45</sup>.  
His nerves fray if he hears Bizet<sup>46</sup>  
Or the honking of truck horns,  
And he wears the cornedras de toros<sup>47</sup>.  
Like a psychic crown of thorns.  
But there's a statue in a city<sup>48</sup>  
Almost half a world away,  
Where the tale of Mads is mentioned  
And remembered to this day,  
As a symbol of aggression  
And of optimistic hide,  
A resister of oppression  
And a prince of bullish pride.



*Only black bulls go tot the bullring, only black bulls fight*  
Little White Bull (Bart, Prat & Bennett) from *Tommy The Toreador* (1959)

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<sup>1</sup>Hummer was a brand of trucks and sports utility vehicle (SUV), the civilian version of the military Humvee. In 1998, General Motors (GM) marketed three vehicles: the original Hummer H1, based on the Humvee, and two smaller (but still huge) civilian models. By 2008, Hummer's viability in the economic downturn was in question. In 2009, a Chinese manufacturer announced that it would acquire Hummer, pending government approvals, but in February 2010, Reuters reported that the Chinese Ministry of Commerce had blocked the deal, ostensibly because it couldn't see a market for such a gas guzzler. In May 2010, the last hummer rolled off the production line.

<sup>2</sup> Greek Top God Zeus was said to have fancied the gorgeous Europa and, as was his wont, thought to disguise himself to win her. His guise usually depended on the predilections of the maiden in question. To Leda, he appeared as a swan. She subsequently gave birth to two human chicks, the heavenly twins Castor and Pollox. Leonardo DaVinci captured the moment of hatching, and well before it became fashionable, Zeus was actually present at the birth – in full swan array too. Europa, on the other hand, was obviously drawn to bovines, and hence he presented himself as a radiant white bull and bore her away on his back to, well, Europe - and that's how the continent got its name.

<sup>3</sup> Yes, that's right. ABBA was a Swedish pop group formed in 1972 by Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad, Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson. They became one of the most commercially successful acts in the history of popular music, topping the charts worldwide from 1975 to 1982, and, selling over 380 million albums and singles worldwide, one of the best-selling acts of all time.

<sup>4</sup> *The Story of Little Black Sambo* is a children's book written and illustrated by Helen Bannerman, first published October 1899. It was a children's favourite for half a century until "sambo" was deemed a racial slur, and the illustrations, politically incorrect "darky iconography". Old Black Sambo is the adult version.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Rimbaud (1854-1891) was a French poet who has had a great influence on modern literature and the arts, inspiring many musicians, particularly Bob Dylan, and prefiguring surrealism. He started writing poems in primary school, ceasing completely before he turned twenty one. A restless soul, he travelled three continents before dying from cancer just after his thirty seventh birthday.

<sup>6</sup> Sylvester "Sly" Stallone is an American actor, screenwriter and film director, famous (or infamous, for his popularity is mixed) for his action roles. His best-remembered characters are the undaunted boxer Rocky Balboa and the unkillable ex-Vietnam vet John Rambo. The many *Rocky* and *Rambo* films are in a very large part responsible for the latter day cinematic disease of Sequelitis

<sup>7</sup> This triplet of lines owes much to the stirring song ballads of JRR Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings*. It echoes the heroic verse that Tolkien's heroes would recite at the drop of a broad-sword.

<sup>8</sup> The Mitsubishi Pajero is a popular Japanese SUV named for *Leopardus pajeros*, the Pampas cat native to Patagonia in southern Argentina. Alternative names have been used in many markets. In Spain, India, and the Americas, it is known as the *Montero* (mountain hunter), and in the UK as the *Shogun*, as "Pajero" in Latin American Spanish is a common term of abuse, usually translated as "wanker" or "tosser".

<sup>9</sup> In Greek mythology, the Minotaur was a creature with the head of a bull and the body of a man. He dwelt at the centre of *The Labyrinth*, an elaborate maze designed by the architect Daedalus and his son Icarus, on the orders of King Minos of Crete. Minos' vassals were required to deliver unto the maze and the hungry Minotaur an annual quota of fair lads and lassies - a tribute that was terminated abruptly by the Athenian hero Theseus, aided and abetted by Minos' delinquent daughter Ariadne. Daedalus and Icarus went on to be famous for the waxen wings that did for the overweening Icarus when he flew too close to the sun. The Minotaur is often seen as reference to the eternal beast that lurks in the male of the human species. On a happier note, he was the subject of a great song by memorable new-'sixties new-agers, The Incredible String Band.

<sup>10</sup> The matador is the main performer in the Spanish Bull Fight. He is the leader of an entourage and the one who kills the bull, hence his formal title is 'matador de toros' (killer of bulls).

<sup>11</sup> Conquistadors, from Portuguese or Spanish 'conquistadores' or 'conquerors' were the soldiers and explorers of the Portuguese and Spanish Empires during the sixteenth century *Age of Discovery*. The most famous were one-time accountant Hernán Cortés who conquered the Aztec Empire, and poor-boy made good Francisco Pizarro destroyed the Incan Empire. History has not looked kindly on them, and they are today synonymous with rape and pillage, and the death and dispossession of indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, *Cortez The Killer* is one of Neil Young's best and most memorable songs.

<sup>12</sup> Pirate captain Mal Reynolds' famous line as he rallies the ragtag crew of the spaceship *Firefly* in the 2005 movie *Serenity* to simultaneously take on the authoritarian Alliance and the sado-cannibalistic Reavers.

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<sup>13</sup> The battle scene that follows has a long literary pedigree, owing its heritage to both Homer (the Greek, not the yellow one), and HW Longfellow's *Hiawatha* (specifically the epic struggle with the sturgeon). And there are echoes of the Tolkien, and our own Banjo Paterson, particularly his faux-epic *The Geebung Polo Club*.

<sup>14</sup> "Some great Greek battle" refers to the epic conflict that took place before the walls of Troy in Homer's *The Iliad*, and also to the lugubrious EB Farnum's description of the state of affairs in the frontier town of *Deadwood* at the commencement of the second season of the 2005 HBO masterpiece.

<sup>15</sup> The road was the old Pacific Highway that passed through Boambee before the motorway was constructed. It is now called Pikes Creek Way. Heading north towards Coffs Harbour, you could in those days turn left into Titans Close just before the Butterfly Factory turnoff.

<sup>16</sup> These are the heavy semi-trailer trucks that are known to travel in packs on Australia's highways.

<sup>17</sup> Vampire movie scenes are quite graphic nowadays. Of particular note in this regard is the 'vampires are cool and sexy' series *True Blood* with its ultra-violence, sex and nudity, and sanguinary and untidy vampire feeding frenzies

<sup>18</sup> Astra and Subaru are hybrid metaphors for passenger motor vehicles in general. The first is a popular small sedan and the latter, a SUV.

<sup>19</sup> B Doubles are the infamous heavy-duty, double-trailer trucks. The smaller ones are called 'dog trailers' because they are a dog to park, and the larger ones, 'pig trailers' (say no more).

<sup>20</sup> Gladiators were armed combatants who entertained audiences in the Roman Republic and Roman Empire in violent combat with other gladiators, wild animals, and condemned criminals. Some were professional fighters, others, slaves or prisoners of war. All were said to offer paying spectators lectures in flesh of Rome's martial ethos, and in fighting or dying well, they could inspire admiration and popular acclaim. But the first thing that comes to mind when one visualizes gladiators is: "My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius, commander of the Armies of the North, General of the Felix Legions and loyal servant to the true emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Father to a murdered son, husband to a murdered wife. And I will have my vengeance, in this life or the next. That's Russell Crow in Ridley Scott's 2000 movie. Rusty actually lives near Coffs Harbour.

<sup>21</sup> Holden is the Australian arm of General Motors, and Holdens are generally revered as Aussie icons, particularly the much-loved and long-departed *Kingswood*, and the long-lived *Commodore*. Presently, Holden's days are numbered.

<sup>22</sup> The *Gates of Hell* are places that have acquired a reputation in legend as entrances to The Underworld. Often, they are in regions of unusual geological activity, particularly volcanic areas, but can also be found by lakes, and in caves and mountains. Or, as in *The Hellmouth* in the acclaimed HBO series of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, in the fictional, generically Californian town of Sunnydale (although there has been talk of one in Chicago). Most likely, however, it is Jerusalem. A city of the mind as much as of this earth, it haunts the prayers and dreams of three faiths, and to this day, it is coveted and contested. Arthur Koestler wrote: "The angry face of Yahweh is brooding over the hot rocks which have seen more holy murder, rape and plunder than any other place on earth". Is it because Jerusalem is mankind's number one hot spot? "There's this thing that happens here, over the hell mouth", says the Buffy, "where the way a thing feels - it kind of starts being that way for real. I've seen all these things before - just not all at once". More Jews have probably died violently in Jerusalem than in the Holocaust. And countless folk of other faiths have likewise perished. See <https://howlinginfinite.wordpress.com/a-brief-history-of-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-west-2/>

<sup>23</sup> The Old Greek is Homer, of course, so famous he only needed one name. He was the author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, believed by the ancient Greeks to have been the first and greatest of the epic poets, and by all since as author of the first European literature, with a lasting influence the Western canon.

<sup>24</sup> In Norse mythology, a valkyrie is one of a host of female warriors who choose those who must die in battle and those who will live, taking the slain to the great feasting hall in the sky in Valhalla, home of the Norse gods. The valkyries are best known for their stirring song in Richard Wagner's over-long *Die Walküre* (1870) – "Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!" They are sometimes accompanied on their 'ride' by ravens, but never livestock.

<sup>25</sup> Echoing the last line of *Ghost Riders In The Sky: A Cowboy Legend*, a country & western song written in 1948 by American songwriter Stan Jones. "Yippie yi aaaay, yippie yi ohhhh"! Stan, a member of the famous Sons Of The Pioneers musical group, also penned the theme song of John Ford's classic *The Searchers*, considered by many to be the best western of all time. I would give that gong to Clint Eastwood's *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

<sup>26</sup> Black Bjorn is of course Benny's nemesis in the epic *Titans Close*.

<sup>27</sup> Boambee is, actually not on the coast, but is rather just west of the seaside town of Sawtell, and is transected by the Pacific Highway. The 'fatal shore' is a homage to the late Robert Hughes' magnificent and magisterial history of the First Settlement of New South Wales in 1788, *The Fatal Shore*

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<sup>28</sup> The couplet is a parody of the old Irish and Australian folk song *The Black Velvet Band*, the tale of a lovely deceiver fitting up a naive young man, resulting in his transportation to Botany Bay. In 1967, the song became an unlikely Top Twenty hit for the Irish band The Dubliners.

<sup>29</sup> Triple O is the Australian emergency services number, the equivalent of the UK's 999 and the US' 911.

<sup>30</sup> CSG is Coal Seam Gas, the exploration and drilling for which is causing a large degree of angst among farmers and residents in its vicinity, prompting numerous demonstrations and blockades. The Glenugie blockade just south of Grafton is one of these. It is just eighty kilometres north of Boambee, on the Pacific Highway.

<sup>31</sup> New South Wales Police fields a Riot Squad which devotes a substantial energy and resources to policing throngs of country folk, young activists and "knitting grannies".

<sup>32</sup> John McClane is protagonist of the *Die Hard* film series. As portrayed by Bruce Willis, he is known for his unstoppable ability and his sardonic one-liners, including his catchphrase "Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker!".

<sup>33</sup> See *Titans Close* note 20. 'Feral' in the sense of 'wild' as with animals on one hand, or unkempt, rebellious youth on the other, noted on the North Coast for their 'actions' in defense of the forests..

<sup>34</sup> Berserkers or berserks) were Norse warriors who fought in a nearly uncontrollable, trance-like fury (in a word, they went berserk). It's reckoned they berserkers worked themselves into a rage before battle. When they fell in battle, they hitched a ride to Valhalla from the Valkyrie maidens – see *Titans Close* note 24.

<sup>35</sup> The Myrmidons were a legendary Ancient Greek people. In Homer's *Iliad* (yes, that again), they the shock troops commanded by the famed Achilles. In pre-industrial Europe the name carried similar connotations to "minion", but later came to mean "hired thug" or a loyal follower, who executes orders without question, protest, or pity. In the 2004 film *Troy*, the black-garbed Myrmidons leap off their boats like demons led by a very well-toned Brad Pitt, portraying, in WH Auden's words, "the strong, iron-hearted man-slaying Achilles who would not live long".

<sup>36</sup> The poetic imagery is on a roll here. Riot squads, Bruce Willis, berserkers, Brad Pitt, and now, the king of them all: Arnold Schwarzenegger's indestructible *Terminator* in his first, 1984 *incarnation*, the "fuck you! I'll be back" killer, and not the 'girly man' protector of the weak and helpless of the later films.

<sup>37</sup> Again the image of an unstoppable force.

<sup>38</sup> Crowd calming devices much favoured by policemen the world over. Less namby-pamby forces prefer tools and techniques that are a tad less non-lethal. Hence the latter-day militarisation of American constabulary that presented at the recent protests in Ferguson, Missouri, the heavy handed response in Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park, and the premeditated murder in Cairo's Rabaa Square.

<sup>39</sup> An electroshock weapon sold by Taser International. Causing "neuromuscular incapacitation". Tasers are used as non-lethal weapons to subdue fleeing, belligerent, or potentially dangerous people, who would have otherwise been subjected to more lethal force. There has been controversy where they have inflicted serious injury or death.

<sup>40</sup> An exhortation in the manner of the old praise singers or bards of classical and also indigenous societies. "Cows to Buffalo"? Bad puns, but irresistible in view of the bovine context.

<sup>41</sup> Body armour that absorbs the impact from firearm-fired projectiles and shrapnel from explosions.

<sup>42</sup> The phrase comes from Henry Lawson's well-known poem *Freedom on the Wallaby*, a comment on the 1891 Australian shearers' strike: "We'll make the tyrants feel the sting o' those that they would throttle; they needn't say the fault is ours if blood should stain the wattle!"

<sup>43</sup> Ring-barking is a technique for killing large trees before they are felled, reducing their weight, and hence rendering them safer to drop: the complete removal of a strip of bark from around the entire circumference.

<sup>44</sup> Post traumatic stress disorder may develop after a person is exposed to one or more traumatic events, such as sexual assault, warfare, serious injury, or threats of imminent death.

<sup>45</sup> The poem does a time shift here, rematerialising after the events recounted in *Titans Close*.

<sup>46</sup> *The Toreador Song* is the popular name for the aria "Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre" from Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*. It is sung by the bullfighter Escamillo, who subsequently has an affair with the lady in question, driving her jealous lover Don José to strangle her.

<sup>47</sup> Literally 'bull's horns' juxtaposed with the spiritual metaphor of the 'Crown of Thorns' of the Crucifixion story.

<sup>48</sup> *The Charging Bull*, sometimes referred to as *The Wall Street Bull*, is a bronze sculpture by Arturo Di Modica in Wall Street financial district of Manhattan, New York City. It is seen as a symbol of aggressive financial optimism and prosperity.

## About Paul Hemphill

Multi-award winning songwriter Paul Hemphill has performed throughout Australasia and the UK, as a solo artist and as a member of the shadowy HuldreFolk, combining poetry and music, horror and humour. Vikings, Romans, Mongols, and the Spanish Inquisition have all faced the music!

Something old, something new, something that may take us disappearing down the foggy ruins of time – pushing poetic licence to its hazy limits, reacquainting us with his particular take on history, imparting an altogether different perspective on pain and pandemonium, and sharing with us dubious anthems to power, pride, and prejudice.

You can find out more and listen to some of Paul's songs on SoundCloud and YouTube.  
Search under Paul Hemphill or HuldreFolk (but ignore the Flemish death metal band of the same name)



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