

## Review of “On The Take”

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Congratulations on your excellent book *On The Take*. It is a most illuminating description of events leading up to September 1910 at the Carlton Football Club, the Victorian Football League and more broadly in Melbourne.

A copy of your book was sent to me by a Lang family member. It came as quite a surprise when I opened the package. I had not heard about your book and found it a real page turner, difficult to put down.

Perhaps your book should have been titled “Almost All On The Take”. However, I suspect this would have been a touch too controversial for the legal people. Nevertheless, from what you describe in considerable detail, the “Almost all” is most definitely implied in the title. Anyone associated with football during the period covered by your book, receiving illegal “under the lap” payments, was effectively on the take. QED.

Reading your book reminded me of a saying that I came across while involved in industry: “What you condone, you approve”.

I believe your book is an excellent summary of the behaviours and culture that led up to the events in September 1910 at the Carlton Football Club and the VFL more generally.

Alex Lang was a young man who appears to have made a serious error of judgement. Making errors is part of the human condition. We are all flawed beings, none of us is perfect. He was probably not the first footballer to make a mistake and probably will not be the last, as recent events in the AFL clearly demonstrate.

The VFL had, and the AFL continues to have, something to hide by not releasing a full, thorough, and independent investigation of the alleged wrong doings of Alex Lang and his colleagues in 1910. Your book has certainly brought the clear light of day to a period of great upheaval and change in the history of Australian football. It is an excellent source of information on the early history of the VFA and the VFL and will be greatly welcomed by all who have a genuine interest in the social context, evolution, and history of the game.

My most sincere thanks for bringing the whole saga out into the open.

I have great respect for Alex Lang who stood his ground, acknowledged what he did, accepted the decision of the inquiry, and returned after five years suspension to play football for Carlton.

Yours sincerely,  
Lang family member