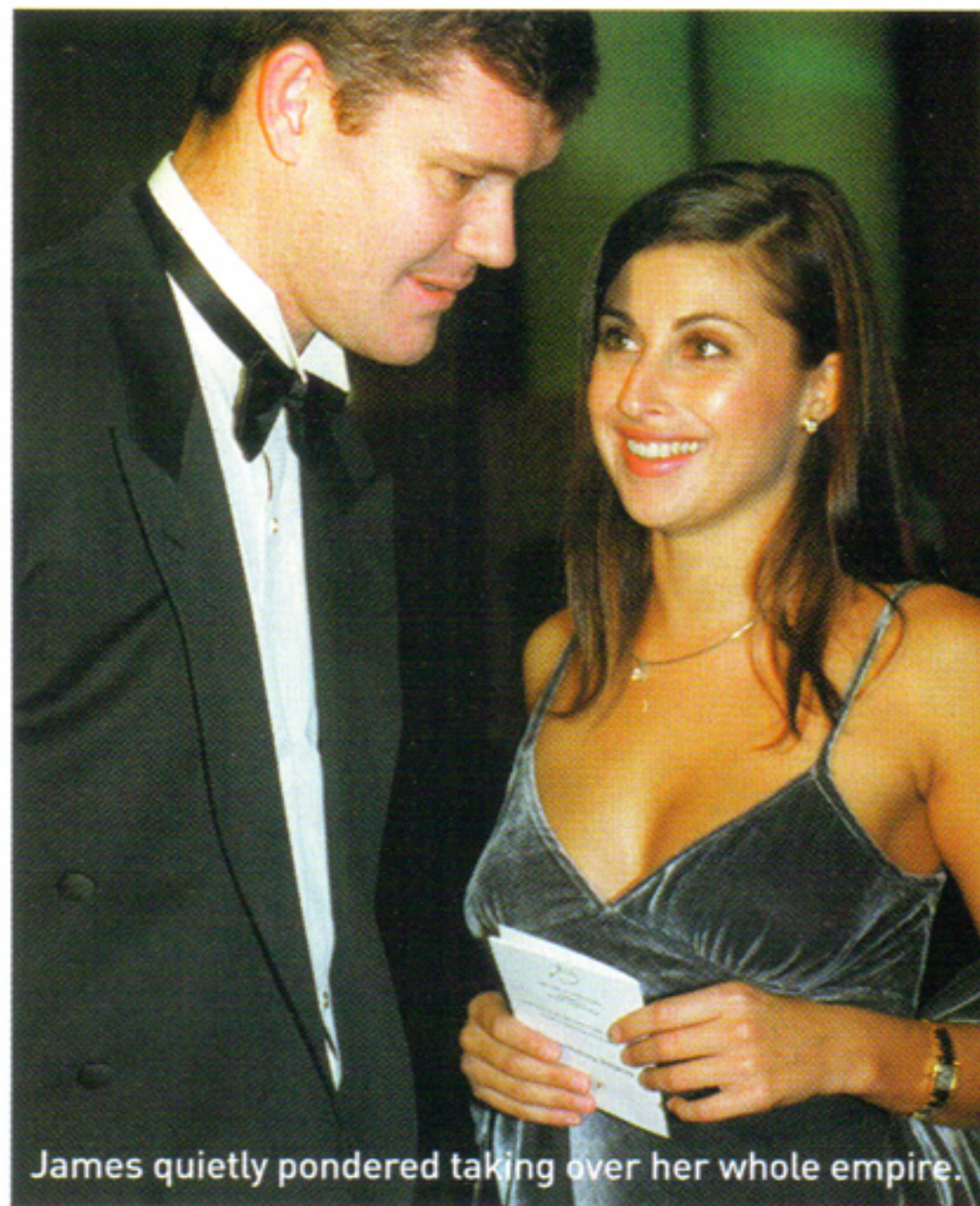




For Love and Money

How a bunch of bitter divorcees got the law changed.

A successful lobbying campaign by certain high-profile Sydney business divorcees means that pre-nuptial agreements are now legally binding in Australia ... just in time for a certain junior media mogul's "wedding of the year". During many late-night discussions at parties and in corporate boxes after the football, these mainly older powerful men bemoaned the payouts they had to make to their ex-wives, and raised concerns that the beautiful young girls they were now escorting were after them just for their money. So talk turned to forming a lobby group and, sure enough, about a year later, the law has been changed. Under the Family Law Amendment Bill, introduced in late September, pre-nuptial agreements covering property, maintenance payments and some businesses agreements can be drawn up before or during a marriage. Previously, the Family Court had the power to ignore pre-nuptial agreements. It's amazing how quickly some people can act when affairs of money and the heart are at stake.



James quietly pondered taking over her whole empire.

NEWSPIX

Keating in Effective New Role

The PM who maximised tax revenue takes a different angle.



Paul Keating, the man who used to close tax loopholes and maximise revenue during his years as federal treasurer, is consulting to a financing group called Allco, which specialises in global tax-effective financing schemes on big-ticket infrastructure and capital projects. Allco was run by John Kinghorn for many years, who has now moved on to run the home loan specialist RAMS, which also uses Keating as a consultant.

Kinghorn makes no secret about what Allco does from its offices in places like Stockholm, Frankfurt, New York and London. "It is totally tax and cross-border financing," he explains. "It's financing big ticket items such as power stations, aircraft and rolling stock." Sounds like a perfect job for Keating, who was a little miffed when Bitch called to inquire about the arrangement, particularly when we asked if had advised on the controversial cross-border leasing deal put together by the NSW government in late 1996 on the Mt Piper power

station. This tax-effective deal had the artificial effect of improving the 1997-98 NSW budget outcome by almost \$200 million. The spin doctor for NSW treasurer Michael Egan confirmed that Allco won the deal in a joint-venture with Babcock and Brown after 10 groups were invited to tender. Keating told Bitch: "I don't work for Allco, no," but continued, "I try and do some things of mutual interest with them from time to time." What sort of things? "That's for me to know, old son, and you to find out," replied the former PM. "You thought you might be able to stir up a bit of crap about me," he chipped in. Finally we actually got the answer about Mt Piper: "No, it was all done before I had anything to do with Allco".

Where Have All The Spinners Gone?

Froth disappears as top PR firm loses its crème de la crème.

Hard-hitting Melbourne-based spin (public relations) outfit IPR Shandwick is having problems with general managers: four of them have walked over the past few months. First, Queensland chief Ross McSwain exited, setting up on his own with clients including the State Development department. Then several members of the Canberra office decamped with former Canberra general manager Andrew Parker into a boutique firm which has retained several IPR Shandwick clients. NSW general manager Bob Bowden, a former spinner for

ex-PM Bob Hawke, has also gone out on his own in recent months, and long-serving Tasmanian boss Marea Fox left two months back. But the firm hasn't lost its biggest client — fugitive Mexican banker Carlos Cabal — who is understood to be paying IPR Shandwick \$80,000 a month for the services of its national chairman and former editor of *The Age*, Mike Smith. Cabal is accused of masterminding a multi-billion dollar banking scam and is fighting moves in the Melbourne courts to have him extradited to Mexico, so he needs all the PR he can get. Maybe it was a dispute over fronting the banker which led to the split this year in the Melbourne family synonymous with IPR, the Kerrs. Laurie Kerr, who is now retired and in his late 70s, drove IPR for years and pocketed several million dollars after selling the business to London-based Shandwicks in 1987. Laurie's three sons and Alan Bond supporter John Fitzgerald were left to run the business, although 'Fitzie' quit about five years ago and runs his own boutique sports spinning outfit Javelin Australia. Paul Kerr, then joint-managing director, departed abruptly in February and is now out on his own spinning for corporate clients. That has left Mark Kerr as chief executive, Smith as executive chairman and youngest brother Stephen Kerr as the national general manager.



"RICHARD CARLETON SURVIVAL KIT ... SORRY THE CAVIAR WENT OFF" reads the note. With journalists swarming all over Darwin during the East Timor crisis, one downtown camping store tapped into the frenzied zeitgeist with this inviting promo: the chair and esky outside their shop features a few of the essentials that every working journo needs, 'as seen on TV'. In the context we figure Carleton Cold actually means a bottle of Bolly.

MARK CHIPPERFIELD



Would you like some brutality with that?

John Safran's Big Mac Drive-Through Drama

TV network declines doco with the lot.

Rabble rouser **John Safran** is having more problems convincing nervous television networks to broadcast some of his outlandish but eminently entertaining productions. The ABC says it declined to run two 30-minute specials — *John Safran: Media Tycoon* and *John Safran: Celebrity Chef* — because they failed to meet quality standards. The first of these gained national prominence when the ABC's *Media Watch* showed footage of **Ray Martin** objecting menacingly to Safran rummaging through his garbage, a ploy aimed at highlighting some of the tactics used by the foot-in-door specialists at Nine's *A Current Affair*, formerly fronted by Ray. Now we hear that Seven has politely declined to air a segment produced by Safran for its now-dumped variety show *The Late Report*. Safran claims the problem was that Seven felt it would offend **McDonald's**, one of Seven's Olympic sponsors. A spokesman for Seven says the segment was not run simply because the show was dumped. Safran says the segment was inspired by the famous protracted English court battle known as **McLibel**, in which the protectors of the great Golden Arches brand cracked down on people besmirching its good name. Safran hired an actor to play a lawyer and started doorknocking Melburnians who were surnamed

McDonald. The lawyer explained he was from McDonald's, which required them to change their surname. The responses were most amusing and Safran says one elderly Scottish gentleman objected violently, slammed the door and shouted: "Tell them to go to hell". The second part of the segment involved Safran dressing up as Ronald McDonald and arriving at a Sydney McDonald's just before a scheduled guest appearance from the real Ronald. As Safran tells the story: "We had the costume immaculately done but it all turned ugly and they called the police. It then turned really ugly and all the McDonald's staff surrounded the car as we tried to leave. They said they were making a citizen's arrest." He claims the McDonald's manager suggested to police that Safran was planning a hold-up, hence the involvement of as many as five police cars in the chase, all of which was captured on film. McDonald's spokesman **John Blyth** said its store managers are encouraged to be on the lookout for suspicious behaviour and Safran had not given any warning about his stunt.



THIS FORTNIGHT'S TIMEBOMB

Disgraced former Coles Myer chief executive **Brian Quinn** could be released from one of Victoria's newfangled privatised prisons as early as Monday, 18 October, only a few handy weeks before the Coles Myer AGM. The convicted fraudster and expert renovator has had a long time to dwell on life outside. He must be looking forward to a few pleasant evenings with all those high profile union, business and political figures who testified for him at his trial. And no doubt they can't wait for the invite.

He Said, She Said ... Heck, Let's All Go Home

Life in the property fast track gets a little bumpy.

High profile real estate agents in Sydney's affluent eastern suburbs are usually in quite a hurry to score their latest commission, and the flamboyant **Di Jones** is no exception. Such a hurry, in fact, that Bitch hears of an altercation between Di and a male driver after she ran into the back of his Commodore in her white BMW. As always with car accidents, there are two sides to the story. When Bitch first spoke to Di's mouthpiece, the accident was described as "a run-of-the-mill little nothing". Di says after the accident the male driver, **Michael**, "took off to the left" and she decided "I am not going to chase him". This is where the stories differ. Michael claims Di "took off like Nigel Mansell" so he set off in pursuit. Di's take on events is



that she suddenly found this Commodore tailing her with horn blaring. When she pulled over, Michael claims he suggested they fill in a police report and Di said she "did not have time for that nonsense". A little bit of sexism crept in as Michael opted for the "listen honey" tactic, which extracted an equally haughty "don't call me honey" from Di. Michael claims he was trying to extract Di's details so "I stood in front of her so she would not drive off". He then claims that Di "hit my legs with the bumper bar. She was driving against me." Di says: "He was standing in front of my car and I said would you please move, and he did." Such road rage just goes to show that Sydneysiders can get highly strung. At the end of the day, Di, who says she is "just a mum" happily filled out the police report and nothing ever came of the minor accident. By the way, Di is apparently a very good real estate flogger who also does worthwhile charity work.