

SUBMISSION

Australian authors' Foreign Editions in English.

Australian authors suffer a particular disadvantage under open parallel import provisions in our home country.

Books by Australian authors which are taken up for publishing by a foreign house in the English language, will be remaindered, when its market drops away. Its author is entitled to no royalty on sales by remainder.

The foreign house will ship remainders to Australia to sell the book, at no author royalty, against the Australian edition which must pay the royalty, in the author's home market.

American houses practise this routinely. Over-runs are specifically so geared.

Contrary undertakings by the foreign house are of no effect, because remaindering is carried out by a bidding wholesaler who cannot be bound.

Further, the importer can take advantage of our home market for a longer period, since the Australian markets' interest in an Australian book has typically greater longevity than the foreign.

Australian authors should be protected from this practice.

Instance:

In 1986 Simon & Schuster USA, as Summit Books, purchased North American rights to my 'Evil Angels' (Azaria Chamberlain case) through Penguin Books Australia. S&S on-sold paperback rights to Bantam USA and remaindered its hard-cover after a year, selling to a wholesaler. In Melbourne, at that time, Professor Alan Fels was conducting publicity for his proposal to allow parallel importation of books. I heard his interview on the ABC with Terry Lane, and rang in, pointing to the difficulty I feared, because I had lately been notified of the USA remainder sale. Prof Fels gave his opinion that a US edition would not be sold in the Australian market because the cost of transport would be prohibitive. Within two months 'bulk' bookshops in Melbourne and Sydney had the US edition on sale. I bought copies from the bookseller on the north-eastern corner of Russel and Bourke Sts Melbourne.

I was pleased to mail a copy to Prof. Fels. Please remember that this was while the prohibition was still in place.

I see Bob Carr has a contrary opinion. His examination is shallow. Plainly he has no knowledge of this practice.

John Bryson.