



SCRATCHING THE SURFACE
By Paul Smith

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SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

A CRICKETING CONTROVERSY

By Paul Smith

TIME – March 2018

CHARACTERS

Steve Smith – Captain of the Australian Cricket Team – Highly ranked test match batsman – 28 years old

David Warner – Vice-Captain of the Australian Cricket Team – Hugely talented batsman – 31 years old

Cameron Bancroft – Australian batsman – inexperienced at international level – 25 years old

Cricket Australia Spokesman – lines can be pre-recorded – not seen on stage

Media Voice - lines can be pre-recorded – not seen on stage

NOTE – The greater part of the lines spoken are taken verbatim from the various press conferences given by the players and statements by Cricket Australia

SCENE ONE

Darkness

MEDIA VOICE On 24 March 2018, the third day of the Third Test Match between South Africa and Australia at Cape Town, just after the lunch interval; the TV cameras caught sight of an Australian fielder appearing to rub the ball with something coloured yellow. Soon after he realised it had been seen on the big screen at the ground, he was seen putting the yellow object down the front of his trousers. The umpires called him over and he pulled a black cloth sunglasses pouch from his pocket and showed it to them. The ball was examined. No action was taken. No action was taken then. After the play had ended for the day, there were repercussions.

Lights come up on SMITH & BANCROFT who wear their cricket kit – they are seated at a press conference ‘set’

Captain Steve Smith and the fielder in question, Cameron Bancroft, faced the media.

SMITH Do you wanna explain?

BANCROFT I’ve been charged with attempting to change the condition of the ball. I saw an opportunity to potentially use some tape, get some granules from the rough patches on the wicket and try to change the condition of the ball. It didn’t work.

I was obviously nervous about it. Attempting to change the condition of the ball.

SMITH We saw an opportunity.

This game was such an important game. Not that all other games aren’t important as well.

I won’t be considering stepping down. I think I’m still the right man for the job.

We’ll move past this. It’s a big error in judgement, but we’ll learn from it and move past it.

It won’t happen again.

I can promise you that.

Under my leadership.

I won’t be considering stepping down.

I feel for Cam.

Do you wanna explain?

BANCROFT In my short career so far, I've felt like I've sat here and been asked big questions a couple of times now.

I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was in the vicinity of the area when the leadership group were discussing it.

SMITH The leadership group were talking about it and Bangers was there at the time. We spoke about it.

BANCROFT Yellow tape in our kit. It's very sticky.

SMITH We've obviously seen the ball reversing quite a lot throughout this series and our ball just didn't look like it was gonna.

The players and the leadership group came up with this. The coaches weren't involved.

BANCROFT It's always a risk isn't it? Attempting to change the condition of the ball. With thousands, hundreds of cameras around. It's always a risk.

SMITH I feel for Cam. It's not what we want to see in the game

BANCROFT It didn't work.

SMITH Obviously it didn't work. The umpires didn't see it change.

BANCROFT The umpires obviously didn't change the ball.

SMITH It didn't work. If we hadn't been caught, I'd still feel incredibly bad about it.

I know the boys in the shed are embarrassed.

I'm embarrassed.

It's a poor reflection of everyone in that dressing room.

It won't happen again under my leadership.

I can promise you.

A mistake on our behalf.

The team's integrity has come into question.

I am embarrassed to be sitting here talking about this.

I can promise you that this is the first time it has happened.

I think I have made it clear, we're regrettable and we'll move on from this and, hopefully, we'll learn something from it.

I feel for Cam as well.

It's not what Australian cricket is about.

It's a big error in judgement, but we'll learn from it and move past it.

The coaches weren't involved. Purely the players and the leadership group.

I'm not naming names.

It's not on.

It won't happen again.

BANCROFT

I'm not proud of what's happened, and I've got to live with the consequences, live with the damage to my own reputation that that comes with and do my best to move forward and play cricket.

SMITH

I feel for Cam.

Blackout

