

The Bureau is beset by doctrinaire feminism. Sexual harassment may be an unwelcome cup of coffee or the gift of a poem.

The Bureau & Beyond

by George Kennedy

**Order the complete book from the publisher
[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/9378.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

THE BUREAU

Smile

THE BUREAU & BEYOND

1987 – 2002 – Now

3

of three literary memoirs

GEORGE KENNEDY

THE BUREAU

&

BEYOND

*Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam
antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi!
et ecce intus eras et ego foris, et ibi
te quaerebam.*

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever
ancient and ever new! Late have I
loved you! And, behold, you were
within me, and I out of myself, and
there I searched for you.

St. Augustine *Confessions* bk. x, ch. 27

pardoepardoe.com
e-books
blog

Copyright © 2017 George Kennedy

ISBN: 978-1-63492-534-1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.

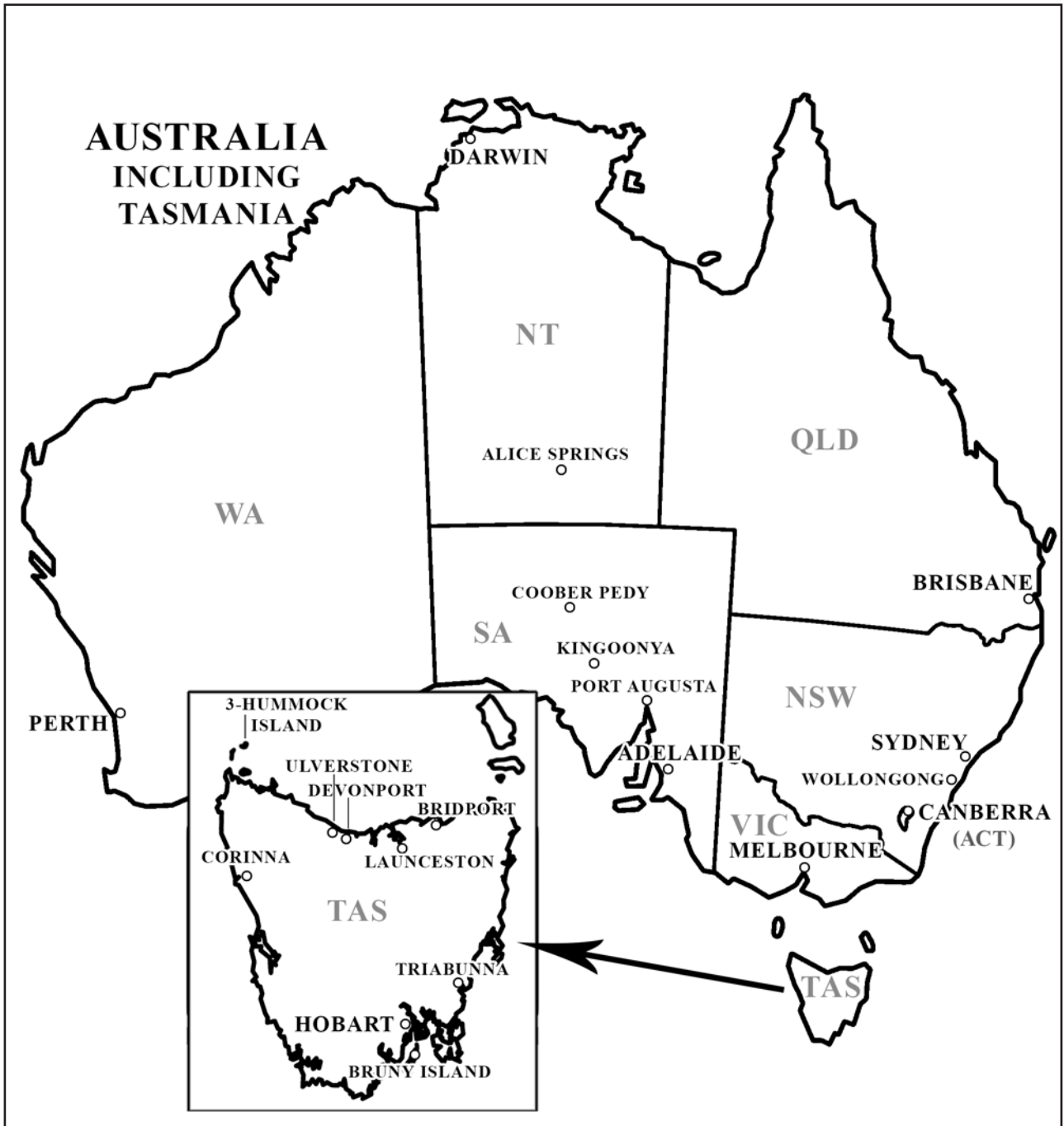
2017

First Edition

Dedicated to Uma and to Maria Grist (matchless webmaster) and to the very many competent, hardworking Officers I knew in the Tasmanian Office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Most of the panels are entirely factual, almost all are based on fact. I do not have total recall of distant conversations.

Most persons appearing are/were real. In some cases their names are/were not. I have not invented the behaviour of real and identifiable persons.



1987 PANELS: 35

1

APR 1987

THE BUREAU: PINCY WHY

Pincy Whye?... Pincy Whye?

“...Pincy Whye...Mr. Kennedy.”

Is it a product?

“Mr. Kennedy, my name is Pincy Whye...”

It’s a person. How could anyone be named Pincy?

“I’m calling from the ABS...”

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene? Anti-lock Braking System? American Bible Society?

“...the Australian Bureau of Statistics.”

How could anyone be named Pincy? What does he want?

“I want you to work for us.”

Why would I want to do what somebody named Pincy wants me to do?

“I was offered a job last week.”

“Mr. Kennedy, you refused it, if you don’t mind.”

I don’t mind...but why do people think I’m interested in an Australian Public Service job just because I did the Australian Public Service entry examination?

“I’m actually doing my Income Tax at the moment.”

“Mr. Kennedy, if you please...”

If I please who?...whom?...him?

“...we need you straight away. Our cycle is near the peak.”

Let us pedal, Pincy Whye, manfully...

2

APR 30 1987

THE BUREAU: WEEK 1

“That’s your AGS No. That stands for Australian Government Service. It remains unchanged through your

career in the Service.”

“Will I?”

“Not if we can help it. You start as a CAD 1.”

“Have you seen the Probate notices in ‘The Australian’? They say ‘James Alfred Witherspoon (for example), Gentleman, formerly Public Servant...’”

“I can see you’re going to be an asset, George. Here’s the Staff Handbook to get you started and there are many interesting things in this publication: TASMANIAN OFFICE ACRONYMS. I’ll take you through to Demography Labour Social.”

“George, this is Scott. Scott...George Kennedy, who you’re expecting.”

“Hullo, George... Grant must have arranged it. He’s on leave till next Tuesday.”

“It was somebody called Pincy Whye. He said your cycle was near the peak.”

“Ah...Well, no problem. Here’s a desk. Make yourself at home and we’ll try and work out who’s in charge of you and what you’ll be doing. When you’ve read the Handbook, the Year Book’s in that shelf over there. Tell Pincy which crossword you want.”

STARTING WORK: YOUR STAFF HANDBOOK

Australian Bureau of Statistics: Information for new Entrants

I trust that you will soon feel that you are a part of the ABS and making a contribution to its work.

I wish you every success and trust that you will have an interesting and worthwhile career.

A.R.Bagnall ACTING AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN

MAIN CONDITIONS OF SERVICE: SUMMARY

Notification of Absences: notify your supervisor by 10 a.m. if you are unable to report for duty.

Sick Leave: permanent Officers are credited with 2 weeks full pay and 2 weeks half pay

Special Leave: up to 3 days a year; for emergency leave e.g. illness of spouse, attend a funeral

Bereavement Leave: 3 days a year; for death of close relative

Long Service Leave: 3 months leave after 10 years service plus 3/10ths of a month per year of service thereafter.

Study Leave: up to 5 hours per week for approved courses

Maternity Leave: 12 weeks leave on full pay; maximum absence 52 weeks

Leave Bonus: payable on application for at least one week’s recreation leave and is calculated in the following manner: (Annual Salary at 1 January x 6, divided by 313) x (no. of weeks accrued) x (17.5 divided by 100)

Outside Employment: Officers wanting to undertake paid employment outside the Public Service must seek permission from the Chief Officer before they commence the employment.

Resignation: An Officer may tender his resignation at any time, but, it is expected that he give at least two weeks notice.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE INDUCTION AND PROBATION PERIOD

Your responsibilities as a probationer are:

- To learn the basic job skills and perform them at the required standard
- To behave in the manner expected of Officers in the work area;
- To decide whether or not you wish to pursue a career in the Australian Public Service.

OBLIGATIONS OF A PUBLIC SERVANT

As you are employed to administer government policies and programs at public expense, you owe a special duty to the community. Simply stated, this involves an obligation to give value for money, not only in administering public policies and programs, but also in your personal performance and day to day conduct.

-
-

Regulation 7 says that you have a responsibility to “acquaint yourself with the Public Service Act and these regulations”.

DUTY AND BEHAVIOUR

During the hours of official business devote yourself exclusively and zealously to your particular job. Behave courteously at all times to the public and give prompt attention to all reasonable requests and requirements.

Obey promptly all instructions given to you by your supervisor.

*Prince, I can hear the trumpet of Germinal,
The tumbril toiling up the terrible way.*

“What’s that rumbling noise? A tumbril?”

“You mean from the French Revolution? It’s the tea-trolley, a damned good thing.”

“G. K. Chesterton lists the tumbril as a good thing in his Ballade, along with the rector’s mother perhaps not calling, getting paid tomorrow, finding a stream astray in thick woods – leading to the refrain:

I think I will not hang myself today.”

“I know I won’t – till 3.10 anyway.”

**10 am
CHEESE SANDWICHES
COFFEE**

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)

The ABS is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer.

Public Service EEO legislation recognises that there are groups of people subject to discrimination in employment matters. The four traditionally-disadvantaged groups are Aboriginals, disabled, migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, and women.

EEO Programs aim to assist these groups by removing unfair barriers to their employment and advancement, and by improving labour force skills.

The ABS has established EEO co-ordinators in each State Office and in Central Office. More information about ABS EEO programs can be obtained from these Officers.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This covers a range of unsolicited behaviour which constitutes a deliberate verbal or physical affront of a sexual nature against another person. It extends from unwelcome actions such as leers, gestures or comments of a sexual nature, to physical contact such as petting, pinching or brushing against another person's body, to subtle or explicit demands for sexual activities and actual molestation.

PROVISIONS OF FLEXTIME

Earliest starting time – 8.00 a.m.

Latest Finishing Time – 6.00 p.m.

Settlement Period – Consists of two fortnights. The first reporting fortnight is recorded on a blue card and the second on a pink card.

Lunchbreak – A minimum break of half an hour must be taken between 12.00 noon and 2.00 p.m.

Maximum Hours Worked – 5 hours without break

Flex Credit – Carryover limited to fifteen hours (after 2 x 2 weeks)

Flex Debit – Maximum debt accumulation at any time is ten hours

Core Time Absence – Prior approval required

Abuse of Flexitime – Will result in

- (i) A direction to preclude you from participation in Flexitime.
- (ii) Disciplinary action under section 55 of the Public Service Act which could lead to dismissal.

TASMANIAN OFFICE ACRONYMS

ACOA = Administrative Clerical Officers Association

ADABAS = Adaptable Database

ADCS = Australian Deputy Commonwealth Statistician

ADP = Automatic Data Processing

AFS = Agricultural Finance Survey

AGC = Australian Government Centre

AGPS = Australian Government Publishing Service

AIM = Advanced Information Management

APSA = Australian Public Service Association

ARO = Assistant Research Officer
ASAC = Australian Statistical Advisory Council
ASCO = Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ASGC = Australian Standard Geographic Classification
ASIC = Australian Standard Industrial Classification
AWE = Average Weekly Earnings

3 pm
EGG SANDWICHES
COFFEE

TASMANIAN YEAR BOOK © ABS

1. HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

1.1 The First People in Tasmania

Aboriginal people have been in Australia for at least 50,000 years. They probably came from java and perhaps China...

The Tasmanian Aborigines arrived in Tasmania more than 20,000 years ago...

2. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Location and Area

The State of Tasmania is a group of islands lying south of the south-east corner of the Australian mainland. Roughly shield-shaped with the greatest breadth in the north, the Tasmanian mainland extends from 40 degrees 38 minutes to 43 degrees 39 minutes south latitude and from 144 degrees 36 minutes to 148 degrees 23 minutes east. The coastline is bounded by the Southern Ocean on the south and west and the Tasman Sea on the east, while the approximately 240 kilometres wide Bass Strait separates the island from the Australian mainland. Macquarie Island, a part of the State, is situated at 54 degrees 38 minutes south latitude, 158 degrees 53 minutes latitude...

The area of the whole State, including the lesser islands, is 68,331 square kilometres or about 0.9 per cent of the total area of Australia; it is ...less than half the size of England and Wales...

Tasmania could legitimately be called the island of mountains, since it has the largest proportion of high country to its total area, compared with the other states...Tasmania is “probably the most thoroughly mountainous island on the globe...”

2.2 Climate

Since Tasmania lies between 40 and 43 ½ degrees south and is an island with no point more than 115 kilometres from the sea, its climate is classified as temperate maritime...

3. GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Australia's federal system

Since 1 January 1901, Australia has been a federation of six states. In 1911 two territories, the Australian Capital territory and the Northern Territory were transferred to the Commonwealth from New South Wales and South Australia.....

12.3 Electricity

Tasmania's electrical requirements are provided by the Hydro-Electric Commission from a system based almost entirely on hydro installations.....

14.2

Hailed as a complete success, Mr Alfred Biggs' experimental telephone call between Launceston and Campbell Town in 1877, has been claimed to be the first occasion on which a telephone was used in Australia.....

SAS = Statistical Analysis System

SL = Sick Leave

SCO = Senior Computer Operator

SCO = Statistical Collection Officers

SEE = Survey of Employment & Earnings

SMVU = Survey of Motor Vehicle Usage

SOL = State of Location

SRO = Senior Research Officer

SSS = State Supplementary Survey

SUSD = Statistical and User Service Division

TA = Travel Allowance

TIS = Transport Industry Survey

TO = Training Officer

TPL = Table Producing Language

TSAC = Tasmanian Statistical Advisory Council

TSS = Time Sharing System

TTS = Trade and Transport Section

TYB = Tasmanian Year Book

VACP = Value of Agricultural Commodity Produced

VDU = Visual Display Unit

WP = Word Processor

STARTING WORK: YOUR STAFF HANDBOOK

Australian Bureau of Statistics: Information for new Entrants

I trust that you will soon feel that you are a part of the ABS and making a contribution to its work.

I wish you every success and trust that you will have an interesting and worthwhile career.

A.R.Bagnall ACTING AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN

10 am
EGG SANDWICHES
COFFEE

3 pm
JAM TART
TEA

10 am
JAM TART
COFFEE

3 pm
GINGER BISCUIT
TEA

“Has anybody explained the system to you?”

“How everything works. No.”

“Not everything...just the Register. Come and I’ll show you.”

Paul Curtain prints IRIS at the top of a whiteboard.

“The Integrated Register Information System, a hierarchy of entities connected by the Structured Reference No. and the IRID.”

“Integrated Register Information Digits’?”

“Integrated Register ID.”

“It’s all very well worked out, isn’t it? Was that done in The Bureau? Please don’t wipe the board...I’m still copying it.”

“I’ll give you a printout of it. Maybe The Bureau invented the Register, maybe they adapted it. Any more questions?”

“Two, but the first is rhetorical. If IRIS is the acronym of Integrated Register Information System, then Integrated Register Information System is the what? of IRIS. The answer must be the ‘bathonym’, from the Greek for ‘deep’ or ‘low’. Second question: can you construct a Bureau hierarchy for me?”

“The DCS is at the top – the Deputy Commonwealth Statistician. He’s also the Government Statistician of Tasmania. Glenn Cocking at the moment. They tend to come from outside and the job is sometimes filled by a Director of one of the four branches here. The directors are usually home-grown and long-term. Denis Rogers is Chairman of the TCA.”

“Tactical...Top...”

“‘Tasmanian Cricket Association’. Tony Manley is a great cricket fan. John Pollard fishes in the Highlands. He’s got a shack there.”

“Your heart’s closer than that, I imagine.”

“I’ve been in The Bureau longer than some senior people and sort of feel responsible for it...”

“WANKER!”

“Sorry?”

“Mughead.”

“Who?”

“Paul Curtain.”

“He was just telling me about the Register.”

This is the Shuttle. He darts from A to B and back to A, arriving with the same mechanical word. He transmits information. I listen to him later because I am afraid not to.

10 am
CHOCOLATE BISCUIT
COFFEE

**3 pm
GINGER BISCUIT
COFFEE**

**10 am
LAMINGTON
COFFEE**

She says “I’m Dang. How are you?”

“I think I will not hang myself today.”

“Is this desk free?”

“Absolutely.”

“This is The Bureau, isn’t it?”

“It is.”

“Can I ask you something?”

“Anything you like.”

“Why do you think you will not hang yourself today?”

“I see a little cloud all pink and grey. Can I ask why you asked whether this is The Bureau when you must have come through the Front Office?”

“I was just making sure. Can I tell you something in confidence?”

“You can, and can we stop asking permission to ask?”

“OK. This is the second job I’ve had this morning.”

“You must be very efficient. Does The Bureau keep moving you to where the work is?”

“The Bureau hired me as a temp but I got off at the wrong floor. Taxation must’ve been expecting someone who could’ve been me because they gave me a desk and a pile of forms to process. Finally, I noticed the ATO letterhead but I thought The Bureau must be helping them out. I said to the girl next to me ‘Can I ask you something?’ She said ‘Yes’, and I said ‘This is the Australian Taxation Office, isn’t it?’ She laughed and said ‘Why do you ask?’, and I said ‘Well, I wouldn’t want to be working at the ATO if I was supposed to be working at the Bureau of Statistics.’ She laughed again and said ‘You are working at the ATO.’ I didn’t go straight away because I hadn’t quite finished the forms.”

“Did you see anybody down there gloating over a bowl?”

“Somebody might’ve been doing that but I was too busy to notice. What makes the bowl so valuable?”

“It’s full of coins. Last month, apparently, the honesty bowl disappeared from the tea-trolley. The Bureau said ‘We only take samples, so it must have happened in the ATO.’ The tea-trolley is the only physical connection between the two organisations. The Bureau guarantees not to give any respondent information to Tax. Excuse me, I’ll be back in a minute.”

I examine my face in the washroom mirror. Is that a smile or a leer? It looks unnatural – as one would expect, being manufactured for inspection. I shut my eyes and imagine Dang talking to me. Now...open! I look annoyed. Have I caught myself in the act? What is a leer, anyway? Something sly and lecherous I had always supposed, without knowing what that looked like. I fix the identikit of my face on the mirror:

“Half close the eyes...Twist the mouth a little...Raise the left eyebrow...the left eyebrow...alright...both of them...Bulge the eyes...open one wide and bulge it...Stick the tongue out a bit...”

I see myself through Dang’s eyes, giggle and cover my mouth. What sexual gestures has that hand been making, unobserved? Snake-like swaying? Writhing? Claspings?

Emerging from the washroom, I see the tea-trolley, unattended and unobserved. Swiftly, I suspend myself beneath it. The tea-ladies return and push it into the lift.

“Damn! It’s heavier than when we brought it up.”

“You’re letting it get you down, Roz. I enjoy choosing the little cakes, and putting on the costume. ‘Performing twice daily at The Bureau’. Fancy! Have one of those biscuits, luv. That red, twirly stuff is delicious.”

“No, thanks. I mean ‘Shut up!’. You don’t have a PhD in Taxation Law. Has it ever occurred to you that they know our mission and are mocking us with their chatter?”

“That new girl in Tax – Dang – how did she get into The Bureau so quickly?”

“Fast-tracked, I suppose. The ATO uses all the talents at its disposal. Our sleepers are already in place.”

“Where’s George? I gave no approval for leave or Core Time Absence. Morning tea finishes at 10.10 am. He should have been not-working at his desk 5 minutes ago.”

“I was in the washroom just now and there was no sign of him in the mirror. He has Vanished.”

3 pm

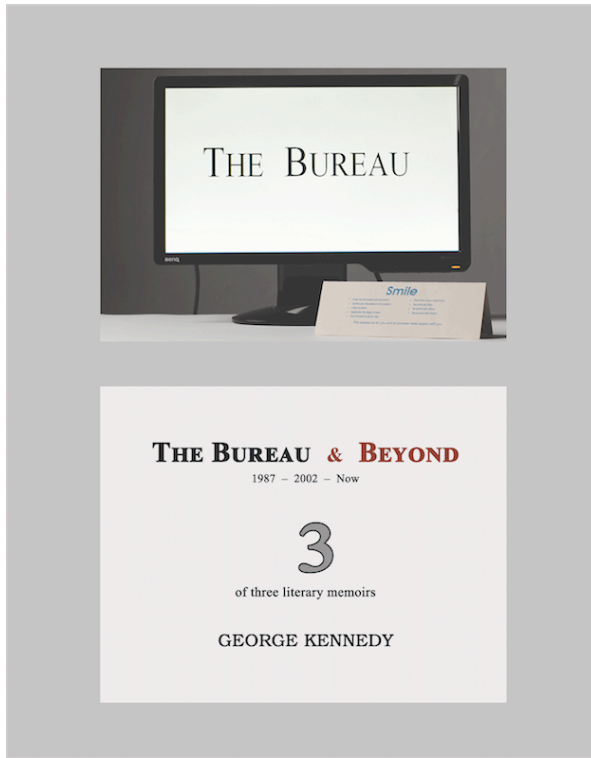
BISCUIT WITH RED TWIRLY STUFF (delicious)

TEA

Back at my desk, at 3.10 pm, I finish afternoon tea and read the memorandum left earlier on my desk.

VANISHMENT

Vanishees are bound by the standard conditions of service applying to



The Bureau is beset by doctrinaire feminism. Sexual harassment may be an unwelcome cup of coffee or the gift of a poem.

The Bureau & Beyond

by George Kennedy

**Order the complete book from the publisher
[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/9378.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**