

How a curmudgeonly old reporter exposed the FIFA scandal

By Michael E. Miller, Washington Post

The biggest news story of the year was breaking, but the journalist responsible was fast asleep.

It was just after dawn on May 27 when Andrew Jennings's phone began ringing. Swiss police had just launched a startling raid on a luxury hotel in Zurich, arresting seven top FIFA officials and charging them and others with running a \$150 million racket. The world was stunned.

The waking world, that is. If Jennings had bothered to climb out of bed, he wouldn't have been surprised at the news. After all, he was the man who set the investigation in motion, with a book in 2006, "FOUL! The Secret World of FIFA: Bribes, Vote Rigging and Ticket Scandals," followed by an exposé aired on the BBC's "Panorama" program that same year, and then another book in 2014, called "Omerta: Sepp Blatter's FIFA Organised Crime Family."

"My phone started ringing at six in the morning," Jennings said Tuesday from his farm in the hilly north of England. "I turned it off actually to get some more sleep, because whatever is happening at six in the morning is still going to be there at lunch time, isn't it?"

If you can't tell already, Jennings is an advocate of slow, methodical journalism. For half a century, the 71-year-old investigative reporter has been digging into complex, time-consuming stories about organized crime. In the 1980s, it was bad cops, the Thai heroin trade and the Italian mob. In the '90s, he turned to sports, exposing corruption with the

International Olympic Committee.

For the past 15 years, Jennings has focused on the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), international soccer's governing body. As other journalists were ball watching – reporting scorelines or writing player profiles – Jennings was digging into the dirty deals underpinning the world's most popular game.

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