According to the Script
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Since before Christmas - don't ask which Christmas - television has been an almost entirely entertainment-free zone, although Eden's Lost was apparently the most glorious Austro-drama in history. Some, however, would say Eden's Lost was awful, stagey, stilted, badly written, incomprehensibly strung together tosh.

Its gilt-edged cast was left floundering in that popular school of drama whose main tenet is: if in doubt - shout. If still in doubt - shout louder. If you can't get a bearing on your lines or part because the writer actually supplied you with toilet paper and the director can't or won't help: then simply yell your lines or part because the writer whose talents were so miserably squandered in this risible attempt at sitcom?

Meanwhile, be thankful for small mercies - like SBS, whose news service, for one thing, is better than world class. It's almost a sitcom in itself turning from the programs called "news" on the commercial channels to see what SBS delivers under the same title.

Returning to good writing: make the most of thirtysomething. Channel Ten clearly has no idea what to do with its unpigeonholeable brilliance and it may well disappear before long. Enjoy LA Law for its consistently high quality scripts and swirling camera-work (why haven't the makers of crappy TV cottoned on to the simple fact that life doesn't happen in static takes?) and, enjoy even more - because it's homegrown and potentially the best domestic product in years - the ABC's new series GP.

You'd think that doctoring was played out as a hanger to suspend a sitcom? No. According to Clive, you'd be so predictable as to dust off a hoary old question that was answered years ago?

It seems the first thought to pop into the minds of the moral giants of the press was that it was an election ploy. How so? Did Bob engineer, in some unexplained Machiavellian way, that Clive would be so predictable as to dust off a hoary old question that was answered years ago?

Would the moral giants have preferred Bob to fudge it? Or to lie? There are few sights yuckier than the outraged hypocrite in full bluster. They should remember the words of Confucius, however, who said of such persons: man with hole in pocket all time feel cocky.

Wendy Harmer's Big Gig - lousy title, terrific show - which must be propelling co-funny woman Jean Kitson to major stardom, the ABC has just about sewn up Tuesday night as a telly night. Fans of thirtysomething and LA Law which, in Sydney anyway, clash with these two, should watch the ABC and record the others, then watch with the considerable advantage of fast-forwarding through the commercial breaks.

Gasp. Did I say that?

Speaking of which, who actually WATCHED the Bob Hawke shock-horror-amazing-scenes-I-have-behaved-like-most-other-men-and-I'm-deeply-ashamed confession? And who can then relate to what has since been reported in our august print media? Let us recollect ... Clive asked Bob what was meant by the description of him as "a womaniser". Bob said it meant he'd been unfaithful to Hazel. Clive asked him how he reckoned Hazel felt about that. Bob found that thought a bit upsetting andcries! he looked upset.

Politicians are criticised for not being honest, on the one hand, and for not giving straight answers to questions, on the other. Taking these two hands one by one, Bob was honest and he answered the questions absolutely straight. For this he is a gruesome wimp?

Australia isn't unique in treating its screenwriters badly; anyone who's read William (Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid) Goldman's Adventures in the Screen Trade will know that, but it has a pretty astonishing record in finding and using, with enormous gusto, some of the worst writing in the world. Why should this be?

Can we really only come up with one Geoffrey Atherton? Is there nobody at all so inspired by Mother and Son that they are even now hunchered over the Amstrad trying to emulate his excellence? Will anyone ever own up to thinking there was the possibility of life in Family Business? Why should we have to suffer with the actors whose talents were so miserably squandered in this risible attempt at sitcom?