

**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

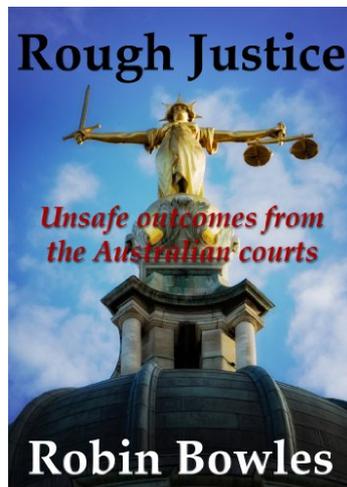
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Bowles, R. (2011). *Rough justice: unsafe outcomes from the Australian courts*. Australia: F.U.N. & K.Y.

## **CHAPTER NINE - Letting the Catt out of the bag**

In March 2007 my husband and I flew to Queensland for me to see Professor Paul Wilson at the Bond University Faculty of Criminology and to interview Graham Stafford's parents for this book. The weather was cold and wet, a big disappointment for us, but very welcome in Queensland, where some toddlers have never seen rain. We flew into Maroochydore and rented a car to take us down to the Gold Coast to catch up with friends overnight.

My plan was to complete the Queensland interviews and then fly to NSW, where I had a meeting scheduled with Roseanne Catt. I had just finished reading Roseanne's book, *Ten Years*, which tells a harrowing story of the ten years she spent in prison following a Guilty verdict in her trial for the attempted murder of her husband, Barry.

Her book tells of how she was a successful businesswoman in Taree when her business burned down at 3 a.m. on Christmas morning 1983. She says in her book that while she was watching her business go up in smoke from the safety of the median strip in the road 'a man with his tie pulled half-way down his belly' came up to her. She says that in spite of the strong smell of smoke she 'could smell the alcohol seeping out of his crumpled shirt, which was hanging out of his trousers.' She asked him his name and he told her he was Detective Constable Peter Thomas. Her book says, 'My life would never be the same again.'

She got that right.

Following a failed marriage that lasted eighteen years and produced a son and daughter, Roseanne, who was a hairdresser by trade, had moved to Taree in 1981. With a business partner she opened a restaurant-delicatessen with the eponymous title of 'Roseanne's'. She and her business partner worked long hours, employed six people and Roseanne became a local identity in the two years before her business was 'turned to cinders'. She owned and had insured all the contents, but it was her landlady who collected the insurance payout on the burnt out building, which had recently been issued with a non-compliance order from the Council.

Roseanne's relationship with Peter Thomas did not improve the day after the fire, when she says Thomas acted unprofessionally, even lewdly during her interview with him at the police station. She felt he was inferring she might have set the fire herself. She says he asked her, 'Do you make a good cup of coffee? I hope so, because we'll be seeing a lot of each other.'



*Peter Thomas, police officer from Taree, whom Roseann accused of framing her. He denied this and prosecuted her, obtaining a ten year sentence*

She says he also complimented her on her figure and pulled his chair close to hers so their knees were nearly touching. ‘I was very nervous. He said, “Don’t worry about anything. We’ve got to get the fire investigators in so until all that’s done, you can’t touch a thing in there.” He’d pulled out his wallet and was running his fingers across his money, stroking it almost. I took him to mean: either you buy me or you sleep with me.’

She says that after several episodes along the same lines while the fire was being investigated her friends in Taree, who allegedly knew Thomas’s reputation, warned her to go along with Thomas or she might have regrets. But she says, ‘I was a reasonably shy person. This sort of talk embarrassed me’. She told her friends she would not acquiesce to any demands made by Peter Thomas unless they were lawful.

Just days before the coronial inquiry into the cause of the fire (all unexplained fires are subject to a coroner’s inquest) Thomas arrested Roseanne and her business partner for arson. She had a sense of unreality while being questioned in one room and being told that her partner said she’d lit the fire. She later discovered that her partner had been told that Roseanne said he’d done it. Without making any admissions they were charged and fingerprinted and sent home.

Because charges were pending over the arson, the inquest was shelved and the insurance company refused Roseanne’s contents claim, leaving her to rebuild the deli business from scratch. She was also awaiting a committal hearing on the arson charges. During the months that followed Roseanne began collecting a dossier on Peter Thomas and his alleged mistreatment of many local people, whom she says heard of her mini-crusade and came by to unburden themselves to Roseanne. Eventually a man visited her to tell her that Thomas had also falsely charged him with arson, and he was taking a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman. He asked Roseanne if she wanted to make a complaint too, and she agreed. She also decided to take all the paperwork in her ‘dossier’ down to Sydney to complain to the Assistant Commissioner of police internal affairs

—‘little me who knew nothing about the city, let alone its power structures’.

She says the Assistant Commissioner reassured her and was polite, but she didn't think the complaint really went anywhere. She also received the results of the Ombudsman's inquiry into the complaints about Thomas. 'It wasn't very conclusive', she says, but Thomas was transferred from Taree to Newcastle, his promotion to sergeant held back two years and a question mark put against his name by internal affairs. Thomas might have thought that was quite conclusive, especially since the Ombudsman had found his tactics when interviewing Roseanne were inappropriate and commented that he seemed to lack 'discretion and maturity'. Roseanne says that she discovered that following any internal affairs investigation senior promotions are harder to come by. 'I had made myself a dangerous enemy', she writes.

In the mean time her committal hearing showed possible involvement in the deliberate fire by her landlady and the Attorney General 'no billed' the case against Roseanne and her partner. Although this meant that the case was dead, she later discovered that in spite of her efforts to move on and forget about Thomas, 'Thomas never forgot about me.'

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Some time later, her 17-year-old son obtained an apprenticeship with Taree panel-beater Barry Catt. One day Roseanne visited her son at work and thought the workshop and yard looked like 'the Taree tip'. She was horrified to discover that Catt not only worked in this mess, but also lived there with four young children. He told her his girlfriend (not the children's mother) had done a runner, leaving him with the four kids, debts and mountains of paperwork. Roseanne says she felt sorry for him and offered to try to find a way he could settle a \$27500 tax bill he couldn't pay. After hours of working with her own accountant she says they had turned this round to become a \$5200 refund. Catt's accounts had been so poorly kept Roseanne thought it was no wonder he was in debt. Catt visited Roseanne more and more frequently and his four children, aged only 13, 11, 9 and 7, came to trust her and depend on her for basic care and meals. She says one morning Catt visited her early and collapsed in her bathroom, claiming that his ex-girlfriend was trying to poison him and take the children.



*Barry Catt who claimed his wife Roseann tried to poison him. She accused him*

*of child abuse. He was acquitted. She went to prison for 10 years*

Gradually the children began to regard Roseanne as their mother. Authorities such as schools and doctors treated her as if she was their mother. She and Catt became an item and eventually, she says Barry Catt sank to his knees in a shopping centre and proposed to her. She refused, not wanting to re-marry, but he kept asking, popping up all over town unexpectedly, with his Elvis-style hair-do, driving his pink ute, yelling out 'Marry me! I won't take my hand off the horn until you say yes!' Eventually she succumbed and they married in August 1987.

Unfortunately, that was the good part. From there, she says, it was downhill all the way. He told all and sundry that he owned 'the mighty Roseanne' and according to Roseanne's book, he began badly mistreating her and his children. She says one day a psychiatrist told her unexpectedly that he was treating Barry for a manic-depressive condition and her heart sank. She had known nothing about this condition or his visits to a psychiatrist until well after they had married. She discovered he was taking heavy medication for this illness, including lithium. At least she now felt she had some explanation of Barry's erratic mood swings.

Things deteriorated over the next twelve months, with Barry becoming more violent and the kids and Roseanne more terrified. By Christmas 1988 the violence had escalated to the point where Roseanne took out a restraining order (AVO) against Barry, who accused her of assaulting him on a nature strip with a big rock. Barry agreed that he had hit his wife first, but claimed she retaliated by having him held down on the grass by Roseanne's son and a friend of his called Shane Golds while she hit him five times on the head with a 5.5kg rock. Roseanne said Barry's sister threw the rock at the fray and accidentally hit her brother. Whatever, Barry did receive four stitches to a bad cut on his head, which later became an issue at Roseanne's trial.

His children began making allegations of sexual abuse against Barry and another male friend of his. The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) got involved and Roseanne was almost at the end of her tether. She desperately wanted to leave Barry and his house and car-yard forever, but could not bring herself to abandon Barry's children. She says they pleaded with her not to leave them to him and his awful mate.

Barry ignored the AVO on numerous occasions [possibly because Roseanne was living in his house with his kids] and finally in August 1989 the Family Court ordered Barry Catt out of his home and awarded Roseanne custody of the children and the right to remain in the house. The court was told that during the

short marriage Barry had been scheduled into psychiatric hospitals on several occasions, charged with assault, was often breaching AVOs and had been accused of sexual misconduct by his children. The Court designated Roseanne trustee for the business until a divorce and property settlement could be finalised. Barry was very ungracious about this outcome and two days later phoned Roseanne, warning her that he and 'Thommo' were going to get her. They would get the assault charges (still pending) turned around to apply to Roseanne. She thought this threat was preposterous, but she was aware of a connection between Barry Catt and her old nemesis, Peter Thomas. Barry had been storing a big white speedboat belonging to Thomas in one of his sheds, but she had no idea of the extent of their friendship, if any. She later discovered that they had been drinking in the same club for years. Her friend who'd complained about Thomas to the Ombudsman warned her to leave town. He was scared for her safety, but she scoffed off his fears. Her friend told her that Barry had some kind of 'hold' over Thomas, which Roseanne also thought was a bit fanciful. She ignored the warnings.

On 22 August 1989, Peter Thomas sent a memo to the Newcastle police about the sexual assault allegations made against Barry by his children. (This memo was later tendered at Roseanne's trial). Although Thomas was not involved in the sexual assault investigations, which were under the auspices of the Newcastle police child mistreatment unit, he wrote, 'I have fully investigated the allegations. I direct that no action be taken. I accept full responsibility for the above direction and if any further allegations are made by Mrs Catt, that I be advised.'

On 23 August Thomas and a police colleague collected Golds from work and without telling him they were police, they took him to a deserted house where there was a table, a chair and a tape recorder. (This house was later to figure prominently in many witness statements made to the court during Roseanne's trial.) Golds made a new statement supporting Barry's version of the assault with the rock incident, but denied in court this statement was made under pressure.

On the morning of Thursday 24 August 1989 the police raided the house and panel beating shop, while Roseanne was still in her dressing gown. Leading the charge was Peter Thomas. She says he told her no one would help her now, not the Police Commissioner, the Ombudsman or the Attorney General. 'You'll be in Silverwater [NSW women's prison] by tomorrow,' he threatened. Thomas replaced her watch and bracelet with handcuffs and told a female officer to strip-search her in the bedroom. She had to stand naked with the door still open while this search was conducted. Three of the children who hadn't yet left for school started screaming and were removed by the female officer. Forcing her to sit on

a stool, Thomas ordered the other police to search Roseanne's bedroom. They made a lot of mess. She says they found a bag of cash she was holding for her sister from party plan sales, which she accused Thomas of pocketing and then they pounced on Barry's .22 rifle, in the back of the wardrobe. She says they took this, along with many of her valuable possessions, some new, as they moved through the house. The female officer found a pistol in the ensuite. Roseanne said she'd never seen it before and asked if it was a toy. She sat wondering where it had come from.

Outside, the media were gathering. Someone had tipped them off. Roseanne says Thomas selected one of her race day outfits— red leather suit with padded shoulders and a straight skirt—along with red high heels and a red handbag. Roseanne felt she was being painted into a corner—the scarlet woman's corner. With her hands cuffed in front of her she was led outside across the yard to the office, where police commenced a new search, breaking into filing cabinets and collecting various items. Roseanne kept asking to be allowed to make a phone call to her lawyer. She was not permitted to use the phone until she pretended she had to put off a customer who was expected with his car for service. Instead she called a close friend, giving him a garbled spiel, which she hoped would prompt him to call her lawyer. Then she was taken to the police station.

On or about the same day as Roseanne's arrest, Adrian Newell, one of Barry's motor mechanic friends, who was also a mate of Peter Thomas, initiated his own little investigation. Roseanne says he removed a carton of milk from the workshop fridge. His reason for doing this was that he thought Barry 'had been acting strangely'. He kept the milk at his house for a few days and then gave it to Thomas to get tested. During this time, Newell (who later became an important Crown witness) had been looking after Barry's children, whom Thomas released into his care.



*Adrian Newell, friend of Barry Catt, who said he found contaminated drinks in Barry's fridge*

FACS had been trying to find the children and one of their staff was told by

Thomas that ‘once the children are out of the situation they will change their sexual assault allegations.’ His demeanor compelled this officer, Greg Baggs, to write to his superior concerning ‘the threat, continual intimidation, aggression and pressure on myself and staff’. Thomas denied all these allegations Greg Baggs prepared a short report for the court on the saga as it related to the Catt children—at least the report was meant to be short, but it ran for more than twenty pages. The final page read:

This was meant to be a concise account of this case. However, as there are so many interwoven issues it is difficult to be brief.

It is my opinion that Chris, Sharon, Julie and Tony Catt suffered a wide range of abuse during their early years at the hands of a number of people. Whatever the extent of that abuse was, it ceased when the children developed enough trust in Roseann Cat, to disclose it to her. Their bonding/attachment to Roseann Catt is fact. Their dislike (hatred?) of Barry Catt is fact. Their sexual abuse is fact.

It is my opinion that there are many sinister activities associated with the motivation of many people surrounding these children.

I have no doubt that the intervention of Taree District Centre has protected these children and all of the actions taken on their behalf has been towards their ultimate welfare. Guilty or not guilty of the charges against her, altruistically motivated or not, Roseann Catt has been and is a timely saviour of the physical, emotional and sexual wellbeing of Chris Sharon, Julie and Tony Catt.

Roseanne was charged with attempting to cause Barry Catt to ingest a noxious substance with intent to injure, assault, possessing weapons, threats to kill, perjury and fraud. About a week later, the lab analysis of the milk from the workshop came back, stating that large amounts of lithium and clonazepam (Rivotril) had been found in the milk. So, Roseanne wanted to know, how did Thomas know about the ‘noxious substance’ before the results came back?

Two weeks after her arrest, Roseanne was released on bail, with the judge saying that the case seemed little more than a domestic dispute to him and he expressed ‘some unease as to the objectivity of the investigating detective’. Despite this, Thomas stayed on the case. Roseanne moved in with another detective she knew, Sergeant Gordon Henderson. He was the person who used to take the Catt children to visit Roseanne in jail after she was sentenced and Roseanne’s friends say that Henderson’s support of Roseanne cost him his job. ‘He was forced to resign,’ Claudette Palmer told me, ‘he suffered the consequences of helping Roseanne.’



*Roseann Catt (centre) with some of her dedicated supporters, including Claudette Palmer (far right)*

In November 1990, Barry Catt was tried in the Supreme Court on the charge of sexually molesting his own children. It was the first ever Supreme Court sitting in Taree, before Justice Wood and NSW Senior Prosecutor Allan Saunders.

A school teacher who lived in Mildura, but who had lived in a large rumpus room at the back of the house belonging to Roseanne and her first husband Kevin Bridge, came from Mildura to testify for the defence. He said that in November 1979 he had been accused by Roseanne of having sex with her young teenage daughter. Roseanne had complained to the police. She had also complained to his headmaster, the Youth and Community Services officer keeping an eye on Roseanne's daughter and the Education Department. The teacher gave evidence that he had not had any relationship, sexual or otherwise, with Roseanne's daughter. He said that the reality of the situation was that Roseanne herself had repeatedly propositioned him to the point where she was becoming angry with his refusals and he was becoming embarrassed, so he moved out to avoid the stress of the situation. He told the court Roseanne was furious at this rebuff and accused him of interfering with her daughter. In February 1980 a police report stated that police had investigated the allegations, had interviewed Roseanne's daughter, who denied them and 'in the light of that denial and lack of any evidence, the question of carnal knowledge could not be pursued and it was not considered the mother's allegations can be substantiated.'

After hearing this and other evidence, the prosecutor addressed the court. He said, 'I am a prosector, not a persecutor and for the first time in my long career I advise the jury to acquit Mr Catt.' The jury agreed and Catt was acquitted about fifteen minutes later.

In May 1991, Roseanne Catt's trial began. The Crown prosecutor, Patrick Power's case was that Roseanne had brainwashed or hypnotised Barry's children

to make the allegations against him; that through her connivance and manipulation, medical personnel and police had arrested and scheduled Barry on a number of occasions and that her whole relationship with Barry had been a ploy to get rid of him so she could take over his lucrative business. The trial, which ran for five bitterly contested weeks, was exhausting for all concerned. The children supported Roseanne in court and told the media she was suffering now because she had helped them. The evidence against Roseanne was circumstantial and the key witnesses were ‘the Gang of Three’—Newell, Barry Catt and Thomas, who had resigned from the police force in January 1991, one step ahead of being charged with a disciplinary offence relating to the complaint lodged by Greg Baggs from FACS during Roseanne’s committal.

As fast as the prosecution led one bit of circumstantial evidence, the defence would counter with an alternative. One strong supporter of Roseanne, the same man who’d first got her involved in lodging a complaint with the Ombudsman, told the court that Barry had told him he’d done the accident repairs on a truck damaged by Thomas’s dangerous driving. Barry persuaded the truckie to admit liability and receive a \$12000 payout, which saved Thomas’s bacon. Barry told this witness, ‘I’ve got Thomas in my pocket. I’ve done him a favour big time.’ Newell told the court about the lithium-laced milk. Roseanne denied she’d put anything in the milk.

In retrospect it seems clear that during the four-month trial with over seventy witnesses, more hard evidence should have been led rather than relying on Crown witnesses, or a vindictive husband and a cop on a vendetta against an old enemy. Roseanne says, ‘Throughout my trial, Crown Prosecutor Patrick Power made out that I was some high-powered businesswoman who controlled everything, pulling all the strings. He said I wanted to kill Barry to take control of his business.’ She says she invested \$100000 to prop the business up and cancelled unnecessary overheads, including a life insurance policy on her husband’s life. She says if she was after the business the Family Court had virtually given it to her by installing her in his house and car yard and giving her custody of Barry’s kids. She had no need to kill Barry Catt.

The judge showed her own exasperation in her summing up when she said that since the evidence was so diametrically opposite on each side, ‘many, many lies must have been told during the course of this trial’. Justice Jane Matthews said, ‘The picture which emerged at this most extraordinary trial revealed a single-minded, manipulative course of conduct over a long period of time, with the sole apparent purpose of destroying Barry Catt both figuratively and physically.’ She directed the jury that they had to make a choice: either Roseanne was an evil and manipulative woman, or the victim of a terrible

conspiracy between her husband, Barry Catt and his friend, Thomas, a former detective.

Unable to contemplate a the possibility of a terrible conspiracy of lies from the police, after deliberating for two and a half days, the jury chose not to believe Roseanne. She was found guilty on all counts except inciting a friend of Barry's to murder him. The judge sentenced her to fifteen months for malicious wounding and assault; three years for perjury; three years for attempting to poison Barry; six years for soliciting a friend to murder Barry; one year for possessing an unlicensed pistol—a twelve-year sentence. It didn't sink in until she got back to the prison, when all her cellmates greeted her chanting 'Twelve years! Twelve years!'

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Roseanne had a terrible time in prison, which is not that surprising—it's not meant to be the Ritz Carlton. She described herself in her book as being 'a retired deli owner who lived with a madman in a fibro shack at the bottom of a dead-end street on the wrong side of the tracks.' But the fact that she was in jail unjustly simmered and burned in her heart and mind every single day. She also had the additional trial of her son to overcome, as he'd been charged as an accessory to some of her alleged attempts on Barry Catt's life. Fortunately for him, he was acquitted.

Roseanne was not too worldly when she first arrived and was also a very personally fastidious person who had always taken good care of her face and hair and the clothes she wore. Her first husband, Kevin Bridge, told me 'Roseanne always took good care of herself. She thought she was the ants' pants.' In prison, those personal attentions are luxuries. Prison strips you of your individuality and turns you into one of the herd. But Roseanne stood out. She protested her innocence loud and long, which did not make her any friends amongst the staff and upset quite a few of the inmates too. She made enemies too. One of the inmates dobbed her in for allegedly having an affair with a senior prison officer. When questioned, Roseanne denied this, but the Superintendent admitted it to the Governor and resigned, finishing up at the end of the week. Then Governor at Mulawa, Ms Lee Downs said in an interview in 2001, 'Roseanne was confined to the compound, put in an intensive care management plan to manage her behaviour ... and was not allowed to work in one on one with any officers, particularly male where she would be in a compromising position.'

Ms Downs said, 'After this incident the deputy governor received a phone call from the sacked officer's wife asking the jail to stop Roseanne Catt from ringing their home. Roseanne then made an official complaint about the Deputy

governor, which was not sustained.'

Roseanne says that attempts were made on her life (and implies Peter Thomas was one of those behind these incidents). Governor Downs said that Roseanne's file documented numerous vexatious complaints made about staff, including an allegation the medical staff were trying to kill her. An internal investigation was carried out and her allegations were found to be without foundation. Governor Downs wanted the fact that she did not know and had no contact with Peter Thomas put on the record.

Roseanne wrote in her book that she was refused day leave as she neared the end of her sentence and that she effectively served a longer prison sentence than any other woman in NSW prison system, because she would not show remorse for her crimes. She figured if she was innocent, why did she need to repent?

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After reading Roseanne's book I was left with the strong impression that Peter Thomas was not Roseanne's favourite person. There was a single sentence that attracted me—she said Thomas had 'retired to Queensland'. Where do many Southerners go when they 'retire to Queensland'?—the Gold Coast. And that was right where I was headed as I finished reading her book. I rang around a bit and discovered that Thomas was running a bakery in an industrial estate in the very next suburb from where we'd be staying with our friends. Sometimes you get lucky.

Next morning, I crept out of the apartment at dawn to try to snare the terrible Mr Thomas in his lair. Bakers start work early and finish early, so I didn't want to miss him. This was the only day I had spare, as we were flying to Sydney next day.

I was too clever. He actually lives in Brisbane and I beat him into work. His staff was protective and suspicious when I asked them to give him a message to call me, giving them my name and mobile number. 'He won't ring you unless he knows who you are,' I was told. I really didn't want to share too much information with them, in case he hadn't, so with reassurances that I was not a journalist, I bought some pastries for breakfast and took them back to the unit.

A couple of hours later an unknown mobile number came up on an incoming call. It was Thomas. When I told him what I was doing, he said he might meet me, not sure, very busy, wanted to put all that behind him, etc. For the next couple of hours we duelled on our mobiles (I now had his number as it had registered on my phone) and eventually he agreed to meet me mid-afternoon, 'for five minutes' for a coffee in Broadbeach, having 'checked me out'. I wondered who had given me the OK. Must thank him/her some time.

Peter Thomas in person surprised me. He was wearing a pale blue open-

necked shirt, which suited him. His manner was urbane and charming, very relaxed and willing to give me his answer to almost all the quite accusatory questions I threw at him. Of course, Roseanne's book was my main source of knowledge about Thomas and his alleged behaviour/vendetta, although I had also read some relevant media articles and I was curious about why he had not taken actionable exception to some of the accusations in the book.

He laughed. 'Haven't read it,' he told me. 'Not interested. You know the saddest thing about Roseanne Catt is that she didn't spend more time in jail.'

I put to him that he and Barry Catt were mates, drinking together at the same club. 'Look, I knew Barry Catt. He was a tow-truck operator and I was a cop in the same town. Who do people call when they have a prang? The tow-truck and the cops. We met quite often, but we were not mates. As for drinking in the same club, that's possible. I was a member of the local RSL and I think Barry was too. In the country, everyone belongs to the RSL. This one had a few hundred members, so we might have been there at the same time, but we did not drink together.'

'What about her claim that you planted the pistol in her bedroom?'

'I was in charge of that search on her house, but there were nine other police there and I directed operations. Roseanne was taken into her bedroom and as I recall, she sat on the bed the whole time after she was searched until she got dressed. I did not go into her bedroom at all. A female police officer found the pistol—for which we had a valid search warrant. When would I have been able to get into that house to plant the gun?'

'But your former business partner, Peter Caesar, gave evidence that you'd told him you'd planted the gun.'

'Yes, I know he did, and that evidence was considered by Judge Davidson, sufficient new evidence to immediately release Catt from jail, three months before her due date, and which eventually saw her conviction for possession of a pistol quashed and an order made for her acquittal. But put a few things in context here,' he said disarmingly. 'Firstly, in 1991 I was involved in Catt's Supreme Court trial and that was the same time I first met Peter Caesar. I started up a private investigation business with him and to give more attention to that business I gave three months' notice in November 1990 to quit the police force. During the trial, Catt made allegations that I planted the pistol. These allegations were widely reported in the media at the time. Then, after being in business with Caesar for 9 years, in 2000 I reported Caesar to the police, alleging he had stolen money from our company. On the day he was arrested for this alleged theft, he made a statement to police to get back at me—over nine years after the fact—that I had told him, back then, when I had only just met him, that I'd planted the

pistol. In ordinary circumstances, this would be enough to deter any reasonable and prudent person from accepting it as truth.'

'I heard he was acquitted on the charge of stealing from your company.'

'Wrong! On the same day that Roseanne's hearing, with the fresh evidence from Caesar was being heard, Caesar was discharged from a committal hearing because the DPP was told that Caesar had repaid the money, about \$11000 or so, and that the Insurance Agent (which was our client and a friend of Caesar's) no longer wished to pursue the matter. Without a complainant, the police cannot proceed. So he was not acquitted, the case against him was dropped—against my own wishes, I might add.'

'Roseanne says you picked out a red leather outfit for her to wear in front of the media, because they were outside, having been tipped off.'

'Never went into her room,' Thomas repeated. 'And I didn't tip the papers off. I think Barry saw the police cars outside when we were searching the place and he rang the media.'

Roseanne's supporters say you left the police force only one step ahead of serious charges being brought against you for your behaviour towards FACS. Is that true?'

'I had no idea until this very minute when you told me that there were any outstanding charges against me. Anyway, I gave them three months' notice, why not charge me when they knew I was going? Or if the charges are so serious, why not after I left the job even?'

'Perhaps they were police disciplinary charges that don't apply to civilians?' I suggested.

After an hour and a half, Thomas got up to leave for another appointment. We'd both had a long day and Thomas already had spent well over 'five minutes' with me. He promised to send me a submission he'd made to the DPP and the Attorney General, outlining his refutations of Roseanne's long litany of his transgressions.

I sat thinking over yet another cup of coffee and then went back to the apartment, where I could pour myself a scotch. All the better to lubricate the thought processes. 'How did it go?' they all wanted to know.

'He's either the smoothest liar I've ever met,' I said, 'or he was just legitimately doing his job.'

'If he hasn't done what she's accused him of, why doesn't he sue?' my friends asked.

I had to admit, I'd been wondering about that since he'd first sat down.

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My next stop was Roseanne herself. As you can imagine, she was beginning

to assume magical proportions. I remembered that I'd seen her on television, accompanied by a nun who had stood by her through her prison ordeal, after she'd first been released from prison. I said to my husband at the time that I was sure that pair had a story to tell, not thinking at the time that several years later I'd be on my way to see both of them.

Roseanne lives about an hour's drive south of Sydney near a small farming hamlet. A close relative has built a 'granny flat' into the soft green hillside behind their house, where Roseanne has all the mod cons and an excellent view of the winding dirt road approaching her refuge.

As she was certain I'd never find her on my own (she would've been dead right about that) she'd sent a friend to meet me in the carpark of the local hotel. When we met, I realised she was Claudette Palmer, the nun I'd seen with Roseanne, although now she was wearing sensible country clothes, not a habit. She shook my hand vigorously as she got out of her car. She barely came up to my eyebrows, but radiated warmth and energy. After our greeting she wasted no time getting back into her car.

'Follow me,' she said cheerfully and took off like a rocket. I've always believed that nuns drive with gay abandon, as they know God is looking out for them. We left town and began winding our way through back roads and byways, passing contented cows and full dams. Not much sign of the drought in this little corner of the world. My mobile shrilled. It was my publisher wanting a word about something. 'If I fall off the net,' I said to her, 'it's because I'm in the dead of some country area, no idea where, following a speeding nun, going to visit an ex-convict.' She was worried immediately. 'Oh, do take care,' she said, not realising I was joking. Well, sort of.

'My husband knows my last known location, so if he doesn't see me safely by the end of the day, no doubt he'll send out a posse,' I told her. 'But I'm not worried. I think I'm bigger than both of them.'

Roseanne was even tinier than Claudette. She was impeccably made up and her short, blonde hair was perfectly coiffed. Her home was bright and spotless and she'd made lunch. I was planning to get an update on what had happened since her book ended, but we covered lots more ground.

She told me that she was still fighting to have the two charges of malicious wounding and stabbing set aside as she will not rest until she is seen as completely innocent. Before Justice Davidson's inquiry set her free on bail in 2005, one of her greatest supporters was a woman with whom she had several nasty encounters in prison, who had been released. 'She had a lot of credibility,' Roseanne said. 'As an ex-convict, she had first-hand knowledge of the way I was treated in prison and she was the one who started "Justice Action", a support

group to agitate for my release.’ Roseanne’s lawyer friend, Bruce Miles, joined forces with ‘Justice Action’ immediately. He told Roseanne, ‘This is the gravest miscarriage of justice I’ve seen in my 50 years in practice.’

I discovered that Claudette had met Roseanne when she was the Catholic chaplain at Mulawa Women’s Prison. She became so supportive of Roseanne that she was warned by her church superiors that she would be banned from working at Mulawa. Governor Downs had said that she was confronted by Claudette the day the Governor arrived at Mulawa. ‘She demanded to know why Roseanne could not go out on day leave. ‘ The Governor said she explained that those decisions were the responsibility of the Serious Offender Review Board, but she did allow Roseanne out on escorted leave to see her family on Christmas Day. Soon afterwards, Governor Downs said, ‘Claudette demanded she have access to Roseanne’s file. She was told this far exceeded her professional boundary as a chaplain and had nothing to do with her.’ Claudette made complaints about the Governor to the Justice Minister John Watkins’s office, telling him that Downs was ‘evil’ and that Roseanne, unlike most other prisoners who begin their gradual re-integration to society from about half-way through their sentences, was one month off getting parole after nine years locked up and had not commenced her re-integration program.

Claudette’s parish priest did not support her actions and told her she would have to leave the prison. She took this reprimand very hard and resigned from her order for health reasons. I had no idea that nuns could resign and said so.

She explained she is still a nun, but without a parish. A bit like an exiled king without a country, I thought. She now works on the Roseanne case files full time. She was amazed and a bit shocked to hear I had actually had coffee with Peter Thomas. Several, actually. It seemed to rate on the same level as supping with the Devil. Both Claudette and Roseanne were very keen to hear what he had said and this presented me with a dilemma. Ethically, I try very hard not to ‘cross-pollinate’ interviews and pass on information given to me by one person to another. I think this is why so many people trust me with all kinds of things. So I dodged the question by saying that he had an amazing amount of details stored in his head—names dates, places, events—I had been quite impressed and said so to him.

He’d replied that once Roseanne started saying untrue things about him at her trial he knew he had to watch his back. ‘I kept every bit of paperwork involved with that case,’ he’d told me. ‘I thought if this jury acquits her, what prospects have I got for a future if I don’t keep all this insurance?’

This reply had interested me because he’d already left the police when Roseanne came to trial. It interested Roseanne and Claudette too.

‘Do you know,’ they both spoke excitedly at once, ‘at the Davidson inquiry he answered nearly every question with “I can’t recall.” How his memory seems to have improved!’ Claudette clapped her hands together like a little kid. ‘Did he say he had all that paperwork still?’

‘I presume he has,’ I told them. ‘If not, he has almost a photographic memory for lots of it.’ I told them that in my experience lots of police give the “can’t recall” answer in the witness box. They are taught that at Police School, to avoid perjuring themselves, or answering questions that could get them into strife.

Roseanne also had a big grudge against Crown Prosecutor Patrick Power. ‘He kept representing that I tried to kill Barry and painted Peter Thomas as the good guy.’ She did not know then, but she was soon to have a lot of fun and public exposure to even her score against Mr Power.

Claudette laid a soft white hand on my arm.

‘You didn’t believe Thomas, did you?’ she almost pleaded. ‘I know what he’s like. Roseanne is innocent. I’ve been supporting her for over ten years.’

‘Claudette, I don’t make judgements,’ I said. ‘He was very believable and there are always more than two sides to the stories I write. I just give everyone a go, a chance to have a voice.’ She didn’t look convinced, perhaps because I wasn’t completely convincing.

After following Claudette again out to the main road, I had much to think about on my way back to Sydney. When I recounted my day to my husband I said, ‘I’m in a pickle now. What if Thomas is telling the truth? No wonder the judge at her trial gave such an unusual direction to the jury.’

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After my return to Melbourne I received many emails from Roseanne, keeping me up to date with her battle for justice. She did an interview on the top-rating Alan Jones radio program and sent me the transcript. She kept me informed about her speaking engagements, including one on International Women’s Day, which she thought went over very well. But her most voluminous set of emails related to the very public downfall of one of her old enemies—NSW Deputy DPP Patrick Power.

In 2006 a technician repairing Power’s computer discovered approximately 29,000 images, including 433 photos and 31 videos of children, some under the age of 10, engaged in a variety of sex acts with adults. In January 2007 Power pleaded guilty to possessing the images and was sentenced to 15 months’ jail with a non-parole period of at least eight months.

Power appealed the severity of the sentence in June 2007, with his lawyers arguing that the disgraced prosecutor could not stop himself downloading child

pornography even though he knew it was wrong. He had been punished severely, losing his reputation, his job and his peace of mind and was virtually a prisoner in his own home, unwilling to venture out because of the shame and embarrassment he felt. They submitted that Power was an "internet addict" seeking escape from a chronic depression, brought on by life stresses. They argued the child pornography was downloaded compulsively and not for sexual gratification.

Prosecutor Jeremy Rapke QC, who was familiar to me from the Tanner cases, was flown to Sydney to act for the Crown to ensure an independent prosecution. He told the court, "His senior position in law must have meant he was aware of the illegality of his conduct and the link between the possession of child pornography and child abuse." Rapke described the penalty as "merciful", adding it was towards the lower range of appropriate sentences.

The judge said he'd reserve his decision, but the media (and Roseanne) had already made theirs. Articles portraying Power as the lowest form of human being were sent to me almost daily by Roseanne. I guess if you think someone has sent you to jail unjustly you want to see him serve a sentence for something he has done.

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At our meeting over coffee in Queensland Peter Thomas told me he'd send me some documents supporting his position. They were a long submission to the DPP and a two-page letter to the Shadow Attorney General of NSW, prepared after Roseanne's successful outcome at the Davidson inquiry.

Both were, as you would expect, self-serving in attempting to refute allegations made about him and pronouncements on his character and actions by various judges and others. However, they were public documents (if you knew where to look) and he had made a lot of refutations about evidence given about his professional reputation. Both documents mentioned 44 names of people who would have supported his side of the story if they had been called to give evidence at any of the many hearings, but at the Davidson hearing in particular. He said the trial jury had found Roseanne guilty, implying that decision should be respected. But we all know juries get it wrong sometimes.

I was more interested in talking to some of the people he'd mentioned. Roseanne's sister, who brought up the four Catt children after Roseanne went to jail; Roseanne's first husband, Kevin Bridge, who was the father of her own two children; and Adrian Newell, the man Roseanne accused of lacing Barry's carton of milk with lithium. Thomas had asked me, 'How hard do you think it would be to get ordinary people to give false evidence under oath if they are not crooks doing it for money or favours?' I resolved to obtain a few of those phone

numbers and see what that lot had to say outside a witness box.

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Kevin Bridge, is retired now, but he earned his living for most of his life as a miner. He was Roseanne's husband from her 17th to her 35th year. He sounded meek and timid when I caught him unawares by phone one Saturday afternoon. At first he was anxious about speaking to me, but when I told him I was just trying to obtain both sides of the Roseanne story he relaxed a little. He was still reluctant to say much, but one of the reasons for this, he told me, was that his second wife had gone through a lot because of the notoriety associated with this case and Roseanne's claims. For a long time they couldn't go to work or into Dapto without feeling everyone was talking about them and pointing their fingers. Kevin said his children from his first marriage, his daughter and his son, don't speak to him at all, even though his son lives not far away. He thinks they have turned away from him because of what they have been told about him by Roseanne.

'Don't think I'm a bitter man because of the day I came home from the mine after 18 years of marriage and found the house stripped of everything that could be moved and my kids and wife gone. No! Not a bit! Apart from losing my kids, she did me the biggest favour in the world by leaving me. Our marriage was a failure from the word 'go' because of the way she carried on. They always say the husband is the last to know. I support that 110%. It was a very painful part of my life.'

I believed him. He sounded as if he was keeping back tears.

'Did Roseanne work while you were married?' I asked him.

'Not really. She had a go at minding some kids for money, but that didn't work out after she came on strong to the kid's mother's husband. She's one person God should never have put breath in. I've heard she says I hit her. May God strike me dead this very minute if I ever raised a hand to her. She's the greatest lying conniving person that ever drew breath.'

As I hung up I hoped that my ex would give me a better reference than that.

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Adrian Newell has been collecting a lot of documentation because he's planning to write his own book. He is not one of Roseanne's fans either. I asked him what he had to say about Roseanne's accusation of lacing the milk from Barry's office with lithium.

'That's rubbish! For weeks before Roseanne was arrested I noticed Barry not being quite right. He was always a bit funny, because he's bi-polar, mood swings and so on. But he'd be zonked out, or dishevelled and silly as a chook. His solicitor noticed it and so did his psychiatrist. The psychiatrist suggested that

maybe some of his pills were being substituted for other pills and suggested I get a sample of a few and take them to the chemist Brian Owens, to test and report if they were fair dinkum. Owens was to leave the pills he'd tested and a report for Barry's lawyer to collect. The pills were OK. So then we thought someone might be putting stuff in his food. Barry's like a flying fox with fruit, loves it, so we were looking at fruit as well. Dr Sandford, Barry's doctor, gave me four little jars with yellow lids and suggested I get some sugar, or any other food I could, to get tested. I planned to get the samples from Barry's office fridge, as it was easier to get to than the house.

'On the Sunday, the day before Roseanne was arrested, I went into the office and looked at the orange juice. When I held it up I saw a gray sediment. I saw the same at the bottom of the milk bottle, but I couldn't see any in the chocolate milk. I took all three drinks with me to my caravan out the back of my place and put them in the caravan fridge, then locked the caravan door. No-one could have accessed those containers.'

He said that the next day, Peter Thomas came to see him and he told Thomas about the stuff in the fridge. Together they went out, shook up the containers and put samples of each in the small containers Newell had been given by the doctor. Thomas took away the original containers and Newell took the samples to the doctor, to send for testing.

'Blow me—the tests came back lithium and some stuff called clonazepam. Both were present in the samples and this was confirmed by the police tests.'

I looked up clonazepam on the web. My recollection from my nursing days was that drugs ending with 'pam' were 'benzo' derivatives. Benzodiazepines are anti-epileptic, anti convulsant drugs. Those taking clonazepam, sold as Rivetril in Australia, should use caution when driving, operating machinery, or performing other hazardous activities. Clonazepam will cause drowsiness and may cause dizziness. Alcohol should be taken cautiously. Alcohol may increase drowsiness and dizziness while taking clonazepam. Alcohol may also increase the risk of having a seizure.

Then I looked up lithium and found that lithium has a narrow therapeutic/toxic ratio—blood tests to measure lithium concentrations must be done regularly. In other words, an overdose can be toxic. The drug information also said that use of lithium if taking anticonvulsants could create an increased risk of central nervous system toxicity. Patients should pay attention to dizziness and decreased mental alertness—especially if driving. Of course if Barry Catt didn't know his doses were being exceeded, he couldn't pay careful attention to any of the above.

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There's no sisterly love between Lawson and Roseanne. Dawn is Roseanne's older sister by eighteen months and one of seven siblings. The older two had left home by the time Dawn and Roseanne came along, but despite the closeness in their ages, they were not close as kids—'we had totally different natures, I was shy and Roseanne always knew how to get her own way'— and now there's a Grand Canyon between them. Dawn says all of Roseanne's siblings rallied to help her at first, thinking from what they'd been told by Roseanne that she was the victim of a terrible conspiracy. 'We all wanted to help her, but we didn't know how, except to give her our love and support,' Dawn told me. 'We knew nothing about courts and police issues. All I could see at the time were four young children [Barry Catt's kids] who were caught in the middle of this dreadful situation. They were terrified, shaking and clinging to me. During Roseanne's trial, Roseanne wrote a letter to the court and me, begging me to look after the kids. She stipulated they were not to go back to Barry or to any of his family.'

Dawn said both she and Roseanne were in shock when the guilty verdict was handed down. 'She asked to see me straight away and pleaded with me to look after the kids. As she had custody of them, her wishes were important and although my husband and I were in our late forties, we couldn't refuse.' Dawn told me that one of her sons had been killed at his workplace and the other had left home. Nevertheless, she and her husband took the Catt children in. They were 11, 13, 15 and 17 at the time, the oldest, Chris and youngest, Tony, were boys. Tony stayed with Dawn for about 15 months, returned to his own mother, and then moved back in with his father.

Dawn was born a Catholic, but she has become a committed Christian. She defines a Christian as 'someone who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ'. She says Roseanne is not Christian at all. 'The first two fruits of being a true Christian are 1. Love and 2. Forgiveness. She has neither of these—just the opposite really. She is full of vengeance and hate.'

I said she did seem that way towards Patrick Power, the former DPP in NSW, recently badly discredited by revelations he was a paedophile. I'd been getting almost daily email bulletins from Roseanne updating me with the fall from grace of her former prosecutor.

'Well, Patrick Power has more than that to answer for,' Dawn told me. 'The report about those kids being abused while in Roseanne's care was given to him very early on, but he did not follow it up. The long procession of people wanting to give evidence against Roseanne, almost beating the court door down, made it easy for Mr Power to get a conviction in that case.'

'Some time after Roseanne went to jail she tried to get her son, Peter to take

over the kids, claiming I had “loose morals”, or some such rubbish. That’s ridiculous because I’ve been happily married for forty-four years. Naturally I opposed that. Peter was still quite young himself and the kids were terrified they’d be moved yet again, back into Roseanne’s orbit. So they didn’t go.’

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None of the children have returned to be with Roseanne either, since her release from jail. In fact, a 60 Minutes program, which went to air in October 2001, two months after her release from jail, sprung a nasty surprise on Roseanne. The producer rounded up the four Catt children, now adults, and asked them to comment on Roseanne’s claims they were sexually abused by their father. The story opened with Tony Catt saying, ‘I’ve kept it all bottled inside, okay? This is the first time I’ve come out and talked, okay? That’s why I might cry.’ The 60 Minutes team had not only assembled the four children for this program, but also Peter Thomas, Barry Catt and Vernon Taylor, the man who’d given evidence that Roseanne had offered him \$20000 to kill Barry Cat. You could say that Roseanne was severely outnumbered—and outmanoeuvred.

Thomas introduced himself by saying, ‘My side of the story was told by the witnesses and [through] the physical evidence, and she was convicted.

Roseanne responded with, ‘I was dealing with a very dangerous, ruthless man that would stop at nothing to achieve what he wanted.’

Overton asked Barry Catt,

‘Did you ever sexually abuse your children?’

‘Never. Never, ever entered my mind on my children or anyone else’s.’

‘Why did they say you had abused them?’

‘Because Roseann, is a very vindictive, manipulating bitch of a woman that used psychosomatics with my children and manipulated them into making these false allegations.’

Vernon Taylor, a friend of Barry Catt, told Overton, ‘... she asked me if I would shoot Barry, and she offered me \$20,000 at the time, and I thought it was a bit of a joke. But about three weeks later, she asked me again, and I realised that she was serious ... She asked if I’d get a handgun for her so she could do the job, and I declined doing that, too.’

When faced with Overton’s question about why so many people would have lied under oath at her trial, saying she had firearms in her house, had spiked Barry’s food, had offered large sums of money to three different people to kill Barry, Roseanne responded, ‘It’s amazing. I don’t know why he would say that. Possibly, he may have some reason that Thomas was able to do to him what he did to many. "Look, if you don’t, I will do this to you." Or maybe he had a little skeleton in his cupboard that he didn’t want people to know about that Thomas

did know about. This is the way Thomas operates. These people were never mentioned. They were only brought in after, when Thomas would see a hole in what he was saying, he'd bring someone to fill it.'

'So are you saying in 2001, Thomas was still working the witnesses?'

'Oh exactly, right until this minute.'

Thomas denied intimidating witnesses, even though his approach may have been unorthodox or even overbearing or threatening during questioning, he saw no problem with that. It was the way the police had to work to get results sometimes, in his opinion.

There seems to be plenty of comments made by judges in courts, as well as others, that Thomas's methods were at times overbearing, or worse.

Since Roseanne's conviction, the NSW Director of Public Prosecutions has paid more than \$300,000 in court costs to others acquitted after other prosecutions led by Thomas failed. In one case, Judge Harvey Cooper in the District Court found that Thomas would use 'fair means or foul' and 'unfairly and improperly pressure witnesses' to obtain a conviction. In another case, the judge told Thomas, 'your investigation was illogical, factually inaccurate, quite improper and singularly unprofessional'. [That] he had 'failed to appreciate the distinction between suspicion and evidence.'

Back at 60 Minutes, Peter Overton moved on to his most sensational revelation. He had interviewed the two Catt brothers in 2001, when they were approaching young adulthood. Chris, the older brother had told Overton that he'd been forced by Roseanne to crush up his father's tablets and put them in his milk or his food.

'Roseanne, you were found guilty of spiking Barry Catt's milk with lithium and another drug. Did you do that?' Overton asked her.

'No, I didn't. I have never spiked anything for anyone. Wouldn't dream of it. And that's the most ridiculous thing, absolutely.'

Chris Catt had a different story. 'She used to make me crush it up. Rivotril, lithium, and just put it into the milk, orange juice or whatever. This happened a lot, mainly before the court cases. It was to make him look stupid when he went to court.'

'Roseanne, Chris says that he used to crush the lithium with you,' Overton put to Roseanne.

'Well, that's sad, but this is something he has only come up with of recent times.'

Chris Catt then told Overton, that he'd seen a pistol, or part of one, partially covered in the drawers of the ensuite and a .22 in the cupboard.

Roseann totally denied this, then shook her head. 'Oh, see, now, there you

go,' she said.

'So, who is putting all the fairytales in their minds?'

'Well, you don't have to be a genius to work it out.'

'Well, forgive me, but tell me,' Overton asked her.

'It could only be Barry Catt and Peter Thomas, can't it?' Roseanne responded.

The most damning evidence against Barry Catt was that given by his own children, who, in lurid detail, swore they had been molested by their father.

Tony Catt denied this evidence on the 60Minutes program in October 2001.

'Back then, we were telling a lot of lies, okay? Which makes it a lot easier now because I'm telling the truth now, okay? Which is going to be a lot easier, okay? When you lie, it's a lot harder,' Tony said.

'What sort of lies were you telling?' Tony challenged.

'Lies, okay, about the sexual assault.'

Overton told the audience that Tony and Chris now alleged that Roseanne manipulated them and schooled them in making false allegations against their father. That they would have to copy in their own handwriting and learn by heart over and over again statements she'd written.

'Would she write things out? Of course she'd write things out herself. That's how she's got us to do that. You've got the statement in front of you, so you know you're going to have to go to court, so she'd make us write it out word for word and we'd sit up [for] endless hours, you know, days before, weeks before, you know. It's not just one day, you know. She wanted to get it exact, so she'd work on us all week to make it look good for her.'

Overton read out an example of what the children wrote: 'Barry and Lorraine had sex in front of me. He made all four children come into the bedroom.'

And this is a copy of a note made by Roseanne and later seized by the police: "Barry and Lorraine had sex in front of children. He made all four children come into bedroom. Had sex. Word for word,' he said, 'they appear virtually the same.

This document here, Roseanne, is that your handwriting?'

'It appears to be.'

'And then the kids, through these documents, basically write out what you've written on the front page in similar ways and they say they write it until they got it right.'

'No, that wasn't correct.'

'Well, you say that's your handwriting.'

'Yes. It appears to be my handwriting, but this would be only whatever the children had said. Whatever they had said.'

Overton then asked the two young men if the statements he was showing

Roseanne were examples of the ones they were talking about.

Chris Catt replied, 'She would write out what she wanted you to say and you'd go and write your own statement and she'd make you write it over and over again, read it, read it, read it. You had to know it by heart. When you repeated it, she wanted you not to sound like a parrot.'

Turning back to Roseanne, Overton said to her, 'The children have reversed their statements about Barry sexually abusing them. They said their father never, ever touched them. Why do you think they changed their minds, Roseanne?'

'Because they were threatened.'

'By whom?'

'Peter Thomas.'

'How do you think he threatened him?'

'Well, [by saying] they'd go to jail, they would be charged with perjury, yeah.'

Overton asked Chris Catt, 'Why didn't you tell the truth originally?'

'She's manipulative, controlling and the people that are backing her up ... they'll find out. She'll shit on them.'

'Tony and Chris told us that they and their two sisters were sexually abused, but not by their father. They claim they were sexually abused by Roseanne. Did your father ever sexually abuse you?'

This time, Tony Catt responded. 'Not at all, no way, no way. None of us, not me, not Sharon, not Chris, not anyone. The only one that sexually assaulted us or anything in any way was Roseanne Catt.'

'Well, Roseanne, serious allegations there from Chris and from Tony. Tony says you sexually abused him as a child.'

'That's terrible. But that doesn't surprise me, because this is the same thing that they've said right along.'

'Why doesn't it surprise you? They are adults [now].'

'Yes, but I also realise that I've been away for 10 years and that is how they have survived.'

'Roseanne, did you sexually abuse those children?'

'Oh, for goodness sake! Never!'

'Barry's two daughters have both told 60 Minutes that they were also abused by Roseanne and support their brothers' claims,' Overton told Roseanne.

Tony Catt has the last word. 'It's just that, it's just the loss, you know, and now he would have been a good father, okay? But back then, I sort of meant, he would have been a good father but now it's all the loss, all the ... you know? He's like a stranger to me. Both my parents are, even my brother. Now it's just gone, you know? I don't need anyone now. It's just hard talking...'

A couple of weeks before I rang Dawn to talk to her about her time of caring for the Catt children, the then 27-year-old Tony Catt was killed in a car accident. A sad ending to a troubled life.

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Roseanne's most dedicated supporter is Claudette Palmer, the nun without parish who works tirelessly on the Roseanne files. She is planning to release another book that will tell the whole story of the persecution and prosecution of Roseanne Catt. The impetus for the long hours she spends at her computer is her 'outrage' at the way Roseanne has been treated. 'This woman has been vindicated,' she said a little shrilly, 'and no one wants to know. The police brotherhood protects people like Patrick Power; they don't want to put him in jail, yet they put an innocent woman in jail for nine years on perjured evidence. She's made legal history, you know. She's had six charges overturned in one day. Her entire sentence was overturned when the Davidson inquiry heard the truth at last. During her trial, the jury heard that phrase 'a victim of a police conspiracy or just an evil conniving woman' at least eight times. Her lawyer tried to get the jury dismissed, but the judge said she'd tell them to disregard that implication. Then she said it herself in summing up! And it's always being quoted, reinforcing people's views of Roseanne as an "evil and manipulative woman."'

Claudette said that Roseanne's trial was 'a total character assassination. Here is a lady with an impeccable reputation in the community that has been destroyed by the likes of Peter Thomas. Her supporters are outraged that this could happen to a law-abiding citizen. She represents many law-abiding people who are treated badly by the law.'

I asked Claudette when she thought she would have achieved the outcome she was looking for in her current campaign.

'When those two remaining charges are overturned and Peter Thomas is held accountable. How can he be allowed to get away with what he's done? Something that Roseanne often says is that she has a tiger by the tail and if she lets go it will come back and bite her. Not only Peter Thomas, but also the police and the DPP. They are looking for another way to set her up. Their fabricated evidence sent an innocent woman to jail.'

Claudette is very passionate about the Roseanne Cause. I didn't like to remind her that Peter Thomas is now running a bakery in Queensland, far in distance and circumstances from Roseanne's case; Patrick Power is now a discredited DPP (nothing to do with Roseanne's case) and trying to keep himself out of jail; and most young police would say Roseanne Who? as the ones who knew her are all retired.

I asked Claudette if there was anything else she'd like to say. 'I've been with Roseanne for so long I know how she thinks and how she speaks. She's a good woman, a strong woman. She's given so much hope to others. Their problems pale into insignificance when they see what she has survived. If she comes through this she will go into the history books forever.'

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This has been the most difficult to write of the stories contained in this book. The supporters and opposers of Roseanne and her case are so diametrically opposed to each other that I was struggling to present a fair cross section of opinions. Most people had plenty to say, for or against. This story illustrates to me how difficult it must be to fairly present a case in court under the adversarial system. It was obvious from the start that as there was absolutely no middle ground, Roseanne would either win handsomely or lose big time at her trial. Even the judge was exasperated by the forcefulness and totally opposite evidence presented by the opposing sides. When Roseanne had her new day in court at the Davidson inquiry, it was once more a win or lose situation. Nobody in Australian legal history has had six convictions overturned in one day—after serving the full sentence for all of them. Roseanne received no time remittance from the length of her sentence and to date, has been given no compensation for wrongful conviction either. In this case I am going to throw myself on the mercy of the court, ie, you, the readers and leave it to you to decide.

Read Roseanne's own story of her battle for justice in *Ten Years* (Macmillan)