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Independent Report

Examples Of Media Hostility And Propagandistic Output With Respect To Schapelle Corby

The Expendable Project
www.expendable.tv

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1. INTRODUCTION

From an initial position generally supportive of Schapelle Corby in May 2005, the Australian media quickly reversed course. A myriad of smears and wholly false stories began to appear, and vilification of Schapelle Corby's struggling family became commonplace.

However, this was not merely an example of chequebook journalism. It was a sustained agenda, consistently and ruthlessly undermining Schapelle Corby and her family, despite their desperate pleas for help and support.

Internet media blog, *JournOz*, commented upon this as follows: "*Neither is it a question of the odd rogue article or broadcast; it has been systematic. We have seen countless examples of unsubstantiated allegations and in some cases outright lies. We have seen wide scale censorship, in the form of hard news stories being completely ignored.*

For any ethical journalist this is deeply disturbing. The fact that it has continued for so long reflects upon the profession as a whole."

The underlying reasons for this position are detailed throughout *The Expendable Project*, with the influence of government being documented in a number of reports, and in particular, *The DFAT Network Report*.

THE ANATOMY OF OPINION MANAGEMENT

In 2008 a research group produced a *YouTube* video which mapped the crude methods being used:



[View video on www.expendable.tv](http://www.expendable.tv)

The transcript from this follows:

THE SIX STEPS VIDEO: SCRIPT

1) *"Shift focus from the facts, from what people have seen. Stop reporting the show trial, legal abuses and Schapelle Corby's lost human rights".*

EFFECT: *"Reporting bogus, irrelevant stories creates distance between then and now in the public psyche".*

If you live in Australia, when did you last see any reference in print, or broadcast, to any of this? The answer is, probably, over seven years ago.

The systematic abuses of the human rights of an Australian citizen have been almost totally ignored by the mainstream Australian media, since the case first unfolded. Instead, the media have produced countless stories with little or no foundation, a large number of which comprise the type of flimsy gossip, usually reserved for music or movie stars. The reality of the human rights abuses at the trial, and thereafter, were quickly shifted to yesterday's news, where they have remained.

A range of techniques were deployed to deflect attention, including subliminal political messaging within adverts [Note: see the video on *Expendable.TV*].

2) *"Routinely and repeatedly refer to her as 'Convicted drug smuggler Schapelle Corby', giving credibility to the wholly discredited trial".*

EFFECT: *"This connotation invokes powerful negative imagery in the public mind, re-enforced consistently by repetition".*

Given the scale of this, it is not tenable that the national and long term deployment of exactly the same terminology and technique could be anything other than a shared agenda or position.

3) *"Invent stories and present doubt, using unattributed innuendo. Use stock phrases such as 'A source claimed', 'It is believed', 'It is alleged' ".*

EFFECT: *"The 'no smoke without fire' card is usually effective. Fill the column inches with smoke, and much of the public will consume it as fact".*

Creating smear is not a new phenomenon, but its application to Schapelle Corby was unique in many respects, not least because of the underlying political issues and her grave personal circumstance. A range of techniques were applied, often including *opinion* pieces, and some journalists even engaged in long term projects, manufacturing a whole series of fabricated stories and supporting angles.

The staggering volume of such output can be readily established via a *Google News* archive search.

4) "Smear her family, constantly present them in a negative manner, ridicule them, and use their desperation to help Schapelle against them".

EFFECT: *"The 'guilt by association' approach is invariably effective."*

Schapelle Corby's family were subjected to an unprecedented media assault. Ridicule of the mentally ill Schapelle Corby was even embedded into *humour*.

The purpose of this approach was to undermine the affinity and empathy of the public with Schapelle Corby, by seeking to characterize her family as undeserving of support. It was extremely effective.

5) "Publish outright fabrication. Pay enormous sums of money for ridiculous stories that have so little basis in truth that the police are forced to dismiss them."

EFFECT: *"More smoke and a more rapid shift of focus from the show trial and the human rights abuses."*

This approach was ruthlessly adopted. In Australia, dead men cannot sue, and the death of Schapelle Corby's father was timely.

The scene was set for a series of stories which had no substance whatsoever, and by applying the main focus on her father, the journalists involved were largely immune from litigation for defamation. [Note: see the *Expendable* report: 'Primary Sources of Character Assassination'.]

In broadcasting, smears were backed up by the crudest of production techniques.

6) "Bury real news, such as the remission refusals, lower sentences for terrorists, human rights abuses, the real severity of her illness, and supportive stories".

EFFECT: *"Blinding the public from her real life, and the truth, prevents widespread sympathy from developing".*

The level of news management was unprecedented. Even significant news events, like the Schapelle Corby global protest, were completely withheld.

The severity of Schapelle Corby's deteriorating mental condition, the frequent abuses of her human rights (including by the Australian media itself), and her relative maltreatment by authorities in Indonesia, were amongst the aspects which were largely ignored.

[Introduction]

The validity of these claims is readily confirmed by countless examples. For example, the issue of terminology can be addressed directly via Google (courtesy of *JournOz*):

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

When describing Schapelle Corby in a textual context, there are countless terms and phrases that could be employed. For example:

"Imprisoned Australian, Schapelle Corby"

"Wrongly convicted, Schapelle Corby"

"Human rights abuse victim, Schapelle Corby"

"27 year old Schapelle Corby"

Or perhaps plain and simple *"Schapelle Corby"*.

The possibilities are endless and, of course, span supportive, damaging and neutral terminology.

For a single publication to select the term *"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"* from all the options available, and then repeat it for years, almost by rote, is more than suspicious. For almost the entire mainstream media of Australia to adopt exactly the same phrase is rather more serious.

I recently undertook some research into this aspect using the JournOz archive database. The results were staggering. However, to present this in public via a trusted third party archive database, albeit a much smaller one, I used Google News:

- A search on the phrase *"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"* reveals **357** published returns (**1,680** without the quotes).
- A search on *"Human rights abuse victim, Schapelle Corby"* reveals **0** published returns.
- A search on *"Imprisoned Australian, Schapelle Corby"* reveals **2** published returns.
- A search on *"Wrongly convicted, Schapelle Corby"* reveals **0** published returns.
- A search on *"27 year old Schapelle Corby"* reveals **0** published returns (ditto 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33).

The search terms themselves are simply illustrative, but the actual search results clearly demonstrate the point. This is also just one of a number of analytical approaches I adopted, all of which indicated exactly the same pattern.

THE STATISTICAL IMPLICATIONS

A key aspect here is to look at the wide range of Australian media organs using precisely the same, starkly accusing phrase: Melbourne Herald Sun, News.com.au, Sydney Morning Herald, ABC Regional Online, The Australian, Radio Australia, The Age, The West Australian, Livenews.com.au, Cairns Post - this list just goes on and on.

Are we to believe that they all chose to routinely use the exact same phrase [*"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"*], with its hugely harmful and negative connotations, by a coincidence of monumental proportions?

Statistically, this is no coincidence; it is outside the parameters of random chance. And again it surely raises questions regarding the agenda adherence and orchestration frequently suggested by analysts.

[Introduction]

This report considers a number of these aspects, through the examination of a selection of the countless examples available.

It considers the role of the state's own broadcasting organ, the ABC, the delivery of output through a number of commercial broadcasters, and the disturbing impact of this sustained agenda upon the Australian public.

2. THE ABC

The ABC has been central to the management of public opinion in Australia throughout the case. Such has been the intensity of its campaign, that in 2009, four parts of a preliminary investigation into its conduct were published on the *JournOz* log. These are reproduced below in their entirety.

2.1 THE JOURNOZ INVESTIGATION

The *JournOz* ABC Investigation appeared in four instalments:

JOURNOZ PART ONE

In an ordered world, one might imagine that a state owned broadcasting corporation may uphold a higher level of reporting ethos and journalism with respect to the Schapelle Corby case than some of the other media organizations. Equally, its position within the structural fabric of Australian society might lead one to believe that the corporation would be sensitive to the need to ensure balance and transparency with respect to stories with complex political and social implications.

However, not only is this demonstrably not the case, but due to its consistent and long term adherence to an extremely controversial government position, it is also at risk of being perceived as an organ of state by increasing numbers. This apparent lack of independence clearly has some potential to embarrass both the ABC and the Australian government internationally. It could also fuel increasing distrust from the general public if and when the detailed pattern of events becomes more widely known.



THE STORY

The main chapters of this part of the story began to unfold when AFP Commissioner Keelty, backed up by the 'Minister for Justice and Customs', Ellison, made a number of public utterances which can only have been damaging to the welfare of Schapelle Corby, and simultaneously music to the ears of an Indonesian regime and judicial system, which will no doubt have been delighted to interpret them as a "*do as you want with her*" signal. Signal is a word of choice here, because indications of position do not require formal, contractual or explicit words. Certainly the President of Law Council of Australia received the signal clearly enough, stating that "*It is potentially damaging to the Corby defence, as it will no doubt be transmitted to Bali*". Schapelle Corby's lawyer also received it, calling it "*an absolute disgrace*". The same signal will have been received all too clearly by the Indonesians.

The question of why those parties were actually making such startling, and hugely damaging, comments regarding Schapelle Corby, one of their own citizens, is outside the scope of this project. The most commonly suggested reason however is that the government was desperate to protect its strategic relationship with Indonesia, and the Corby case was causing significant issues stemming from public opinion. In terms of international politics there is no doubt at all that the relationship with Indonesia was, and is, far more important to them than Schapelle Corby's interests or human rights. As was the need to hide the post 9/11 scale of domestic airport criminality from the United States government.

Of course, words expressed through government, or state agencies, also send signals to those within its own national borders. In this case, signals are received by both the population and the media, and in the case of the latter, by everyone from journalists and editors, to proprietors. Note also that with respect to the ABC and the media, a number of private channels of communication are also available.

The script which followed this crude intervention is visible to all. The very existence of this investigative project is a direct result of what occurred in the subsequent months and years. The ABC was as enthusiastically loyal to the message apparently supplied by government as any other mainstream player. Indeed, the ABC was actually responsible for some of the most damaging of the false allegations and proven smears.

EXPOSING THE SCRIPT

Against this political landscape some of the ABC's, and Australia's, most popular news and documentary productions were pitching high profile broadcasts against Schapelle Corby's interests, and those of her family. The broadcasts were clearly having a major impact upon public perception of the case.

A range of specific examples of these false allegations, proven smears, and patent censorship of positive or supportive Schapelle Corby news will be exposed by our forthcoming series of articles on the ABC, as will details of our research into the activities of particular journalists and employees. Note that similar JournOz initiatives are also underway with respect to the other Australian mainstream media organs involved.

ABC CENSORSHIP: EXAMPLE CASE 1

Because it is topical and timely, our first port of call has to be censorship, and the most recent example of this to unfold: the [global protest in support of Schapelle Corby](#).

This was in fact an historical event, from a number of perspectives:

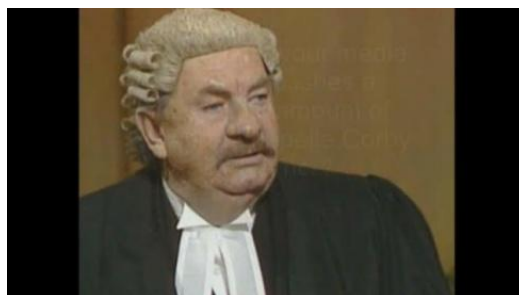
1. It was the first ever global protest in support of an Australian in the entire history of the nation.
2. The accompanying video had been described as "ground breaking" and "landmark" by European critics.
3. It was the first "cyber-driven" protest to end at the United Nations in the history of the world, as far as we have been able to establish.
4. And yes, it was actually delivered to the United Nations in New York by indie-pop singer Tara Hack.

Now, even a schoolboy journalist can see the possibilities here for all sorts of compelling stories. There are simply so many winning cards in play from a journalist's point of view: an historical event both in national and international terms, innovative arts and music, politics, internet/technology, people friendly images and photographs, a household name (Schapelle Corby), a well known location, a singer... it just keeps getting better and better.

The story practically writes itself in a multitude of ways, and would clearly stimulate public interest.

Yet the ABC didn't cover it at all, and nor did any other mainstream organ.

Before we look further at the ABC though, we should view the video which was produced prior to the emergence of the United Nations development:



View Video 61 on the Expendable CD
or visit www.expendable.tv

That video was made before the UN news broke. When that news actually broke, therefore, *JournOz* decided to perform an experiment courtesy of the ABC itself. I had received an email from a leading Schapelle Corby advocate stating that there was about to be a significant development and that it would be censored by the media. I therefore decided to intervene myself, and test the ABC directly and specifically.

The PR for the protest, and the story, were sent to every contact I could find within ABC News, including use of forms provided specifically to notify the corporation of scoops and news tips. They were notified within a couple of hours of the UN press release being posted. They had the news when it was red hot, and they were sent it again on subsequent days. To make it even easier for them, they were even sent photographs and video footage of Tara Hack actually at the UN.

CONTEXT

Let's put this into wider context too. Clearly, the above is a significant newsworthy story even by instinct. But also take a look at the ABC's major news reports and broadcasts, and as a journalist, compare this story with each of those which are actually presented on air or online. It becomes rather obvious very quickly: relatively speaking the Schapelle Corby UN Protest story is far more newsworthy than a great deal of their actual content.

But despite having it on a plate, they didn't use it. In fact they didn't even refer to it at all. ABC viewers and website visitors have no idea that any of this ever happened.

Now, cast your mind back to previous Schapelle Corby stories which have been broadcast by the ABC: to the tenuous links to any form of real news, to the allegations made in them, and even to the ABC having to [apologize on air for presenting baseless allegations as fact!](#) But here we have an actual and real story of substance, and it is buried: it is not even referenced as a footnote. Not by ABC and not by any of the other mainstream news organizations.

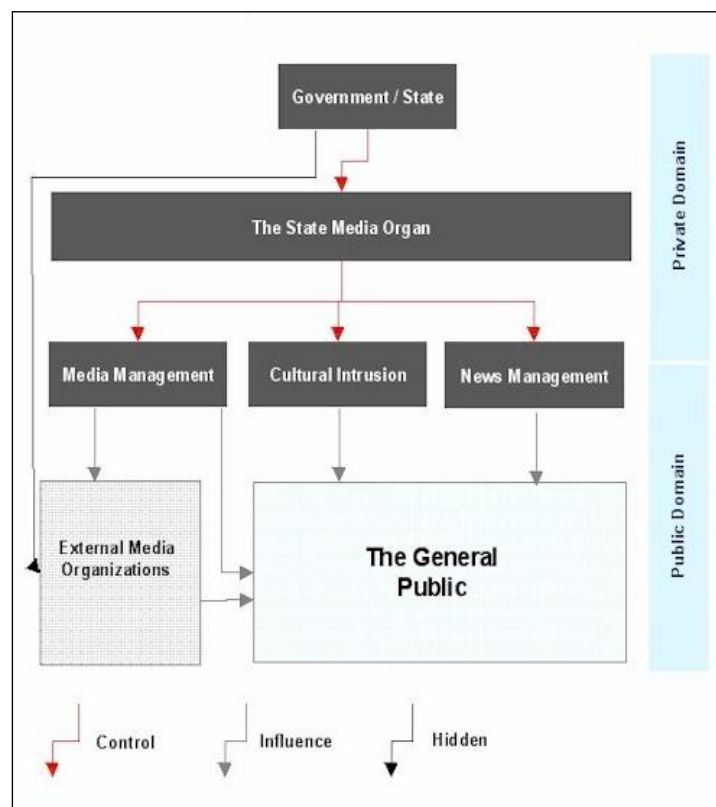
I find it increasingly difficult to disagree with Mr Rumpole, don't you?

JOURNOZ PART TWO

For a more profound understanding of media influence upon public opinion, it is beneficial to examine the generic [models and methods](#) employed across the world, both current and past. This area of research identifies a range of scenarios, with scale varying from selective and superficial influence, to unrelenting social psychological propaganda.

Within this, the role of the official state-owned media organ is often pivotal, both in terms of shaping opinion, and indeed orchestrating the process itself. Whilst this is particularly evident with respect to totalitarian regimes (such as those in North Korea, Iran and even the old Soviet Union) it is important to understand that it is in fact inherent to most nations, to some extent. Equally, whilst the degree and scope may vary considerably, examination of the actual processes used identifies remarkable similarities of approach.

The processes themselves embrace a far wider and more complex model than just crude manipulation of news delivery. They include direct intrusion into cultural output, as well as often less than subtle guidance of commercial media outlets.



This broad model is widely recognized, widely used, and extremely successful in framing and directing public opinion. It is actively used in varying degrees across the world, albeit generally with respect to a limited range of focus.

AUSTRALIA

In Part 1 of this investigation we discussed the [ABC's remarkable alignment with apparent government position](#) following the astonishing government backed statements made by AFP Commissioner Keelty, which sent such damaging signals (for Schapelle Corby) to the Indonesian regime in May 2005. We also provided a recent example of the apparent repression of news which is supportive of Schapelle Corby, to illustrate that these issues remain current to this day.

In this part of our investigation we will begin to explore a wider canopy of ABC influence, and by virtue of specific examples, consider how closely it fits the three part model described above.

PART 1: MANAGEMENT OF THE MEDIA

Within regimes such as those referenced above, management of other media outlets tends to be a particularly important aspect of the overall role of the state media organ. Direct behind the scenes communication by government is often backed up by the broadcast and publication of material critical of them, which is intended to keep them in line, and perhaps warn them that the state disapproves of their output, or simply indicate that they are out of sync with perceived national interests.

AUSTRALIA

In Australia, the ABC broadcasts *Media Watch*. This "investigates" and comments on the material and broadcasts of all media channels and publications. Naturally, it is extremely influential within the media sector itself, and attracts a very media centric audience.



In May 2005 the Australian public witnessed a number of abuses of Schapelle Corby's legal and human rights directly on television. Public opinion was overwhelmingly supportive of her and even [public disorder was a possibility](#).

Much of the media reflected this situation, reporting the actual events. Their output was also aligned with public opinion.

The public's support of Schapelle Corby was overwhelming, and it was putting the Australian government's strategic relationship with Indonesia at risk of considerable and possibly long term damage. It was potentially creating political instability between the two nations. This is frequently cited as the reason for the [astonishing government backed statements we have referenced](#), which significantly harmed Schapelle Corby's prospects.

THE ABC

On 30th May 2005 (within days of Keelty's statement), the ABC launched a series of extraordinary attacks upon Channel 9 in particular, [via Media Watch](#). In fact, almost the entire show was dedicated to this. Its ferocity and sustained nature was astonishing:

- It accused the other media of '*feeding xenophobia*' against Indonesia: "*The media who fed this undercurrent of xenophobia should hang their heads in shame*".
- It accused Channel 9 of having been '*bought*', using the painfully obvious old trick of quoting anonymous "*insiders*": "*ACA and 60 Minutes have deliberately steered away from any anti Corby stories They don't want to do anything that will blow their access ...it's embarrassing*".
- It defended the Indonesian regime which breached Ms Corby's human rights: "*Even Ch 9's prestigious 'Sunday' programme followed the station line, and included this swipe at the Indonesian legal system*".
- In an article headed "*Responsible or Responsive*" it also bizarrely tried to accuse journalists of not being hostile to Schapelle Corby because public opinion supported her, whilst at the same time accusing the media of shaping that public opinion! The irony of this contradictory line is also not lost on us.

Radio wasn't immune from the onslaught either. Media Watch vehemently attacked Radio 2GB for simply pointing out that "*the judges she addressed yesterday don't speak English and won't get a translation of her comments until today. What's that say about justice?*"

The open message to the rest of the Australian media from the ABC, regarding requisite Schapelle Corby reporting, would therefore appear to be rather clear.

PART 2: CULTURAL OUTPUT INTRUSION

The use of non-news broadcasts to condition and influence a population is an established channel within the overall framework of opinion management. It can be extremely effective, particularly over the medium and longer terms.

This channel is often used to create a common 'understanding' of values, and generic or subliminal acceptance of key messages, which for various reasons, including sensitivity, cannot be stated openly via direct news or documentary output.

It is a hugely complex field, often embracing great subtlety, but it is also widely recognized, and indeed documented, by students of propaganda and related media studies.

An example of a discipline within this channel is the use of humour or comedy. This lends itself particularly well to certain aspects, such as expanding the parameters and boundaries of political correctness or acceptability, and the insidious undermining of targeted individuals often via insinuation.

AUSTRALIA

It is a matter of record that the ABC's non-news broadcasts were awash with less than helpful references to Schapelle Corby and her family at various stages of the tragic story. This is particularly the case with respect to "comedy".

This is, in fact, evident even to this very day. Take the following, for example, extracted just five minutes ago from the ABC website:



This is far from subtle, but let's analyse it regardless.

Bush and Howard are clearly individuals for whom it is "politically correct" to target humour of the most cutting and perhaps edgy type. They were national leaders, politically hardened, and the subject of countless barbs and jokes worldwide. They effectively signed on for this, with eyes open, when they entered politics.

But Schapelle Corby? A young woman, subjected to a series of legal and human rights abuses, and struggling daily just to survive in barely imaginable conditions?

Why would the ABC place her image there, other than to signal that it is somehow politically correct and socially acceptable to malign her and her family with the same brand of humour as Bush and Howard? Some might even suggest that Bush and Howard are largely discredited (and even depicted as "bad guys"), with similar connotations signalled for Schapelle Corby by association.

It is extremely hard to find any sort of justification or rationale for this crude example of image placement which does not involve the play of negative influence on the public at large.

But it is actually the tip of a very large and disturbing iceberg.

PART 3: NEWS MANAGEMENT

The news and documentary channels of state media organs are, of course, prime vehicles for propaganda and opinion management by regimes throughout the world. The output can range from simple political spin, to sophisticated censorship and message delivery manipulation.

With respect to those individual citizens targeted by states in order to support an underlying political imperative, additional possibilities emerge, which embrace insidious and direct character assassination, false allegation, and relative news positioning.

AUSTRALIA

The ABC's news related output with respect to Schapelle Corby is a matter of record. They have pitched a variety of high profile broadcasts against Schapelle Corby's interests, and those of her family, engaging in some of the most damaging of the false allegations and smears. This has been presented on a systematic basis, over a period of years.

To illustrate that this campaign is still current, in the [first part of this series](#) we cited a recent example of apparent censorship. But their long term coverage and non-coverage of Schapelle Corby news is actually littered with serious issues and hugely damaging innuendo. Certain employees of the ABC seem to have excelled in this type of grossly unethical activity.

A simple illustrative example of such an ABC smear? Perhaps that of August 2008, when ABC produced a headline report "*Corby's dad linked to drug trade*", courtesy of its *Lateline* broadcast. It presented smear after smear, via scurrilous statements such as "*Together, the father Michael Corby senior and his daughter Schapelle Corby represent 30 years in the marijuana business*" and "*his long drug career, Michael Corby senior avoided going to jail*".

Clearly, the significant damage which this caused was not just at point and time of the broadcast itself, but was ongoing, as the seeds had been sown. The subsequent [tiny apology on their website](#) ("*Lateline apologises for a story aired last month with evidence suggesting that Schapelle Corby's father, the Late Michael Corby Senior was involved in the drug trade.*") and a 20 second snippet on air doesn't even begin to repair the harm inflicted to Schapelle Corby's welfare, which this and countless others across the media spectrum have contributed to.

I am sure that all ethical journalists will be appalled by this, especially bearing in mind the high profile nature of the original broadcast, and the fact that the ABC will surely have been well aware of the damaging nature of such smears for the very real prospects of Ms Corby. Unsubstantiated innuendo of a similar nature had been made many times previously, and even, incredibly, whilst Schapelle Corby was in legal process with respect to her appeal.

Again, these are matters we will cover in greater depth in future articles, but in truth they are readily available for readers to research for themselves.

AND THE THREE PART MODEL?

Our own opinion on the degree of alignment and correlation of all this with the three part opinion management model cited at the start of this article is not material: the information produced above largely speaks for itself.

However, the underlying issues discussed should concern everyone: not only ethical journalists. As grave and unacceptable as they are with respect to Schapelle Corby, the implications are actually even wider. If the ABC is as intrinsic to the state apparatus as the above data suggests, then what other issues are they influencing?

JOURNOZ PART THREE

I have received a number of emails recently suggesting that I should investigate the ABC Board. I fully intend to look at this area in due course, but in the meantime I had a quick scratch of the surface.

Readers will recall that [part 2 of our investigation](#) cited the astonishing ABC *Media Watch* broadcast of 30th May 2005. This was a ferocious and sustained attack on other media organs, whilst defending the Indonesian regime which had so seriously breached Ms Corby's human rights. It appeared to be a very clear and open message to the Australian media regarding the requisite nature of future Schapelle Corby reporting.

Straight out of the blocks was a journalist called Janet Albrechtsen, who two days later, produced a shocking piece in *The Australian* newspaper laced with open hostility to Schapelle Corby, and defending the Indonesian regime, astonishingly referring to "*defensible positions taken by democratic governments to deal with perceived problems*". Accusing many Australians of "*overdosing on compassion*", her position could not have been more stark.

The Australian newspaper is a News Corporation publication. With their significant investments and presence in Indonesia, this is perhaps the sort of disturbing story which might be expected to align with News Corp's general editorial stance on this issue.



But wait, Janet Albrechtsen?

Yes, the same Janet Albrechtsen who had been appointed to the governing board of the ABC by Prime Minister John Howard shortly before Schapelle Corby's imprisonment.

You might wish to read that last sentence again. You did read it correctly.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS TRUMP HUMAN RIGHTS

Amongst the general vitriol, Ms Albrechtsen did produce one noteworthy remark: "*it may damage Australia's relationship with Indonesia*". That relationship was indeed under severe threat.

This insight into the ABC's thinking, at Board level, is extremely interesting. As referenced in [part 1 of our investigation](#) the Australian government values that relationship higher than Schapelle Corby's human rights, with the apparent ABC led media campaign in support of this policy emerging simultaneously.

Ms Albrechtsen's comment demonstrates clear knowledge of the political dimension in play. Having been appointed by the government, this is perhaps not surprising. But dropping a direct reference like that amongst the general hostility to Schapelle Corby certainly is surprising, as it illustrates openly what was going through her mind at the very point in time at which the hostile media campaign actually began to unfold in earnest.

JOURNOZ PART FOUR

Parts 1 and 2 of this investigative series explored [key political drivers](#), and the [framework for the opinion management process](#) as a whole. These were illustrated and evidenced with clear unambiguous supportive examples. Part 3 revealed the [mindset of the ABC Board](#), with apparent desire to preserve the relationship with Indonesia at the expense of Schapelle Corby's welfare.

In Part 4 we will begin to investigate events at a more operational level. For our first foray into our database we will focus on what appears to pass for acceptable journalistic practice and behaviour within the ABC.

1. ABUSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE INTERVIEWING

Ethical journalists are well aware of the requirement for respect, objectivity and fairness when interviewing members of the public. Indeed, the AJA Code of Ethics covers this through a number of its clauses, amongst them "*Use fair, responsible and honest means to obtain material*", "*Never exploit a person's vulnerability or ignorance of media practice*" and "*Respect private grief and personal privacy*".

But consider how the ABC interview members of the public. Consider for example how they interviewed Mercedes Corby, in the context of her struggling to support her sister Schapelle, during her terrible ordeal. We recently discovered a recording of one such interview. Here are some extracts:

[Play Or Download The MP3](#)
(See *Expendable: The Movie*)

[Note: These are short extracts. Much of the interview is extremely unpleasant and not suitable for a public website]

Mercedes Corby in fact did very well indeed, given the sort of journalist she was confronted with. The bigger issue though is what this open hostility clearly indicates regarding the ABC's position with respect to Schapelle Corby.

Consider those words and listen to the tone in his voice.

Is that the voice of someone adopting a neutral, objective, and truth seeking journalistic perspective? Or is it the voice of someone who has a clearly entrenched hostile position, annoyed that a young woman is standing up for herself and her family?

Is it the voice of true objectivity, or the voice of subjective bias?

Is it the voice of someone you would trust to report neutrally and fairly on this issue?

Indeed. I think the same thing too.

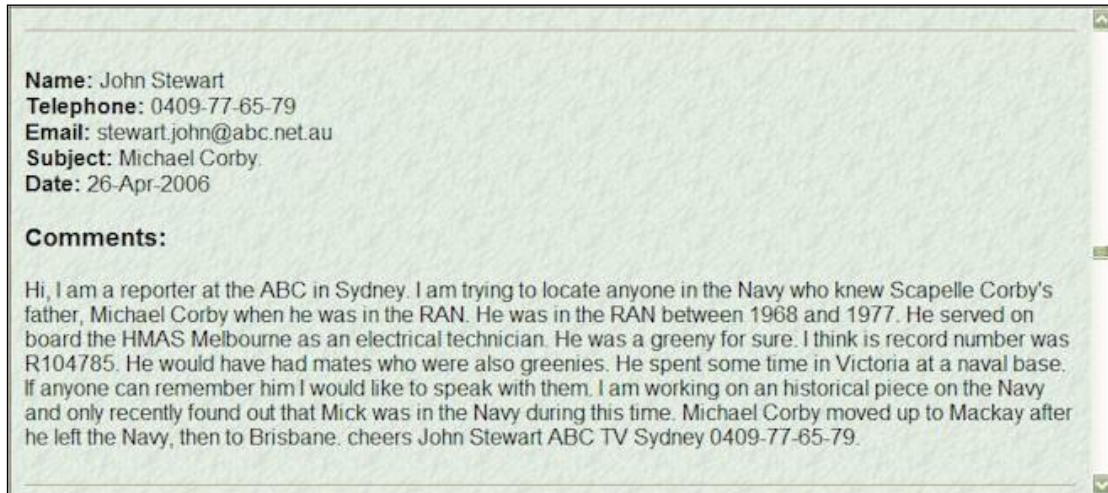
2. UNETHICAL RESEARCH & INVESTIGATION

If you were pursuing the father of Schapelle Corby instead of investigating the real case issues, how would you research him? Perhaps you would use the internet to search for background information.

Or perhaps, because Mr Corby served in the Navy, you would post a question on a naval message board, stating clearly that you were really working on an historical naval piece, and not on Schapelle Corby at all.

No, you wouldn't really do that, and neither would I.

But I'm afraid it appears that the ABC would:



Words escape me.

3. THE DELIVERY OF A SMEAR

So, after months of investigation, and after apparently using every dirty and unethical trick in the book, what did the ABC actually discover? They discovered that Mr Corby once smoked a joint at a party. No, seriously, that is what they established: Schapelle's father once smoked a joint at a party.

But what they actually reported wasn't this at all. What they reported was absolutely appalling. The fruits of their labour were embellished to make a series of false but hugely damaging allegations, and state them as fact.

Subsequently, they were forced to apologise:



View Video 62 on the Expendable CD
or visit www.expendable.tv

For the ABC, that ridiculously lame apology, and [a note tucked away on their website](#), the matter was closed. For Schapelle Corby and her hopes that Australian support would bring her home, it was devastating.

A MEMO TO MR STEWART

Allow me to help you with your *story* Mr Stewart. This is how an investigative journalist would handle it. He would actually ask the police, officially. Here is what the police had to say, for example, when they were asked if you had contacted them: "*I can advise that QPS has not spoken with any journalist from 7:30 Report*".

Here is what they have had to say on some similar fiction to your own: "*We have found no links, nothing at all...*" For the record, they even used the word "*laughable*" in that particular interview.

But more still: they are clearly sick of people creating smoke to give the public the impression of fire. They have even issued a certificate to make it plain:



That took me five minutes to find. Why didn't you find it, Mr Stewart? Or did you?

THE ABC'S ETHOS

The disturbing methods detailed in this article are apparently endorsed by the ABC, at least with respect to Schapelle Corby related stories. They make every honest and ethical journalist shudder, but the ABC would appear to be perfectly happy with them.

In fact only recently they told us that John Stewart was "*a good, honest and ethical journalist*". Apparently, he had only "*made errors in the way he described certain things*".

Ah, got it. That's ok then. Thanks for clearing it up for us!

FOOTNOTE

Michael Corby lost his battle with cancer in January 2008, and Schapelle Corby continues to suffer in her Indonesian prison cell. Much of the Australian public have accepted what the ABC told them as truth, and have had their opinions shaped accordingly.

2.2 THE CONTINUING AGENDA

Whilst the *JournOz* report provides an insight into the position of the ABC, in itself it does not reveal its sheer volume or enduring persistence. The following extracts, from an internet newsletter, reflect an example of ABC reporting some six years after Schapelle Corby's arrest, whilst her clemency appeal was actually being considered. Their *story* was syndicated in Indonesia itself the following day, during this pivotal period:

EXPOSED: THE ABC'S POLITICAL MANOEUVRE

On October 14th 2010, the ABC produced one of the most contemptible reports in the history of Australian journalism. They ran an **old** story as news, in circumstances which suggest pre-meditation, ruthlessly endangering the life of an already mentally ill woman. Here is the appalling story.

THE KEROBOKAN CULTURE

The disturbing reality is that Schapelle Corby is a valuable revenue stream for Kerobokan prison. Even a cursory surface scratch reveals a bribe culture, and that the biggest pay days of all are from the Australian media, for access to Schapelle and/or stories about her. The governor appears to be visibly desperate for her to stay, and is clearly more than happy to state that she is fine, to those prepared to report it (note also that he rarely sees her).

His *report*, to the Indonesian government, making his false and damaging claims? It came out in AUGUST. It came out then, and was reported then by a number of media outlets.

THE ABC RE-RUN

Indeed, it appears that Matt Brown of the ABC was actually there in August: a video of him reporting from Kerobokan is being passed around the internet. Like everyone else, such as his competitor journalists, he must surely have been well aware of the prison's position and report at that time, particularly given that his remit self-evidently covers Schapelle Corby issues.

So why did he report this on October 14th, let alone report it as hot news? The latter ensured that it was syndicated by other media groups, and internationally.

THE BACKGROUND

D-day for Schapelle Corby's life is looming via her clemency appeal, and the ABC know it. They know the truth of her situation: they know about her dire health. One of Australia's most eminent psychiatrists has diagnosed her very clearly. Other local psychiatrists have done the same. Journalists who have seen her recently have reported directly that she has become totally "*unhinged*". She is dangerously ill.

There is no doubt here that should the clemency appeal fail, there is every likelihood that she will die in the short term.

THE POLITICAL INTERVENTION

Why therefore, at this critical point, would the ABC broadcast extremely hostile propaganda, apparently on behalf a foreign prison, with full knowledge that it may directly damage the chances of survival of a mentally ill deteriorating woman?

Why would they broadcast to the nation a psychiatric opinion by someone with vested interest, zero psychiatric knowledge, and who rarely actually sees her?

Perhaps it is because they fear exposure of their previous manufactured reports if she is freed, and thus seek to influence the Indonesians against her. Or perhaps it is an attempt to condition the public to accept a clemency failure, given what that would mean for her life expectancy.

It is hard to look beyond these propositions. It is also hard to look beyond the evidence suggesting an ongoing political agenda by the ABC, as presented by JournOz, for example:
<http://www.journoz.com/schapellecorby/>

Again, the ABC have undertaken a clear and unambiguous action of hostility against a woman in serious trouble. Indeed, an innocent woman, the facts of whose case they have spent six years suppressing from the public psyche. Six years of avoiding the most staggering of evidence, from missing CCTV tapes, to the refusal of a court to test the marijuana for country of origin with the defendant begging for it. Six years of presenting wholly unfounded smears against Schapelle's father, on the basis that they can get away with it, because in Australia, dead men cannot sue.

THE ABC CAUGHT COVERING THEIR TRACKS

The first image below is the original post of this story on the ABC website. It reflects their nationwide and local TV and radio broadcasts. It has been digitally screen captured with Google timestamp, for evidential reasons.

It is the version which was syndicated in Indonesia, and clearly, could almost have been custom designed to undermine Schapelle Corby's clemency appeal.

BEFORE



The second image, below, is the **amended** version. It is exactly the same web page, but the content was changed after the story was picked up and re-produced by other media channels and groups.

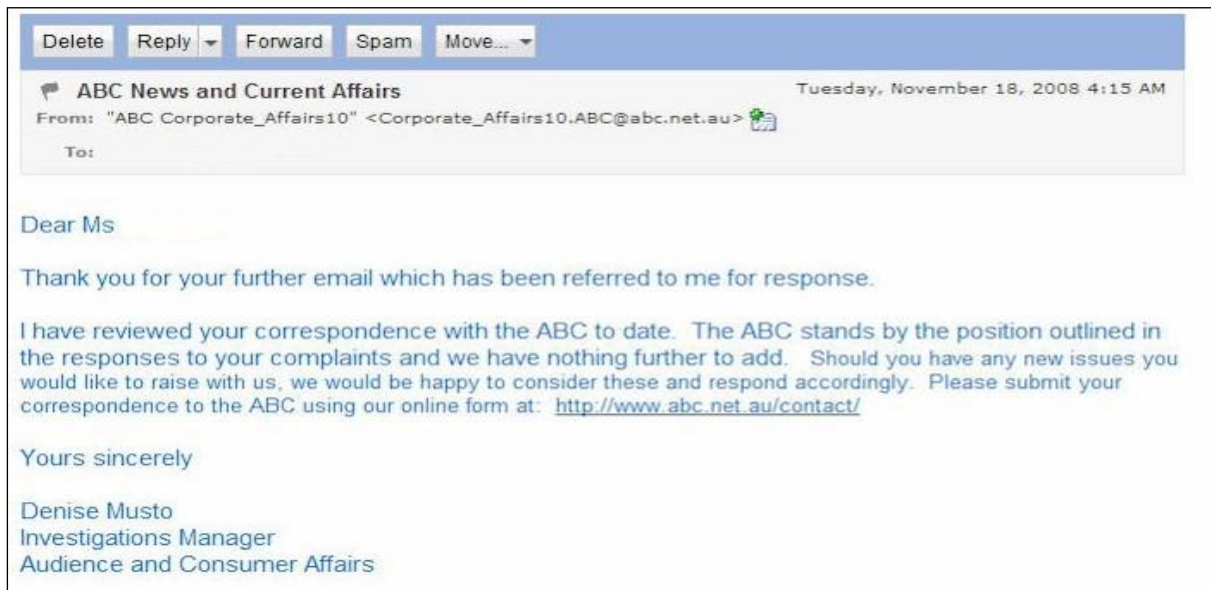
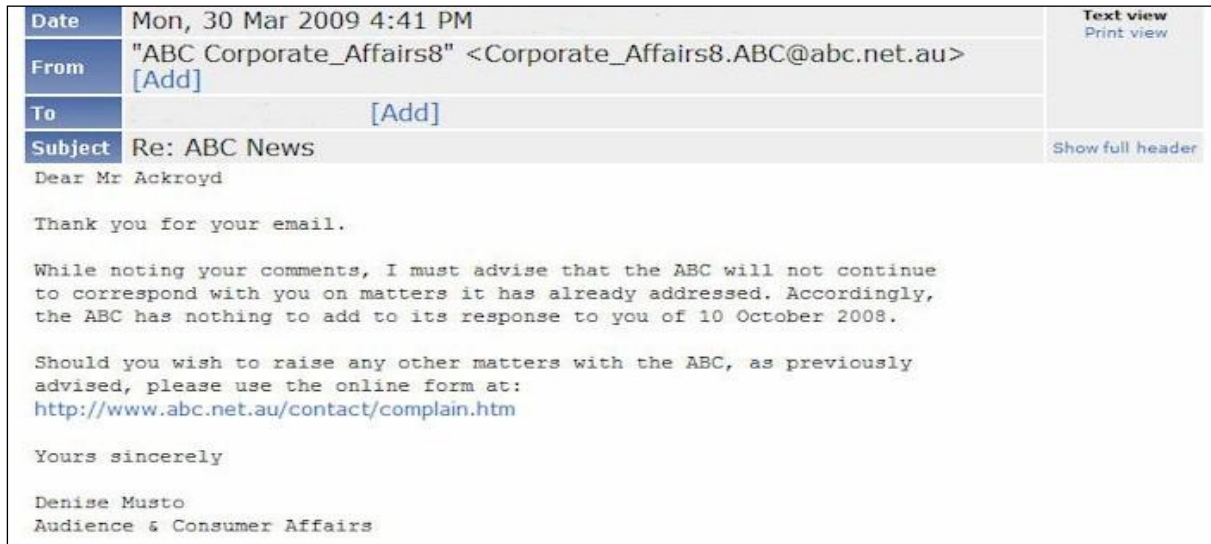
AFTER



The ABC manufactured and launched a hugely disturbing political story, and subsequently diluted the evidence.

2.3 COMPLAINTS

Over the years, many complaints have been lodged with the ABC with respect to their agenda regarding Schapelle Corby. The following are typical dismissive responses:



Despite the volume and frequency of such complaints, the unremitting hostile nature of the ABC's output with respect to Schapelle Corby has continued unabated to this day

3. THE COMMERCIAL MEDIA

3.1 BUSINESS AS USUAL

The hostile broadcasts of the ABC were just the tip of a very large iceberg. Much of the fiction printed, and many of the falsehoods broadcast, by the wider media, have been deeply disturbing.

The most callous of incidents have been regular features. They have included, for example, the promise of new evidence to lure Mercedes Corby into media situations, the use of bogus and doctored photographs to 'show' that Schapelle Corby dines out in restaurants, as well as substantial payments to criminals and other individuals to make outrageous claims and false allegations.

Just Another Dirty Trick



View Video 41 on the Expendable CD
or visit www.expendable.tv

Example of the Unremitting Background Ridicule



View Video 42 on the Expendable CD
or visit www.expendable.tv

Even when diagnosed as mentally ill, with severe psychosis creating the illusion that cameras were hidden in ceilings, and in the eyes of her teddy bear, Schapelle Corby herself was pursued. In one such case, a Channel Nine cameraman and reporter intruded into her prison cell. She ran, terrified, into a toilet block.

This particular incident caused acute distress to Schapelle Corby and significantly added to her torment. It was documented by support groups at the time as follows:

STOP PRESS

15th April 2010

by Louise Hopkins

AUSTRALIA'S CHANNEL 9 ARE TRYING TO KILL SCHAPELLE CORBY



MARK BURROWS



Channel 9, well known for previous hostile and damaging reporting against Schapelle Corby, are scheduled to sink even lower.

Schapelle Corby is seriously mentally ill, having been diagnosed by one of

Australia's most eminent psychiatrists and others. She is hanging on by a thread, and is rapidly deteriorating.



But like other foreign prisoners in Kerobokan, she is a meal ticket. They earn significant revenue from her presence, via visitors and other means, including bribes. This is no secret.

As they are desperate to keep her there, they simply deny her grave mental condition, and ailing health.

Channel 9's position? Yesterday, a reporter for Channel 9 in Australia, Mark Burrows, went to Kerobokan prison under the auspices of a story on the jail. Once inside, he headed for Schapelle's cell, with a cameraman.

Yet again, with no warning, a mentally ill Schapelle was exposed to her demons and directly confronted. Her rights were again openly breached by complicity between the prison and an Australian journalist. But obtaining this access and distressing Schapelle wasn't enough.

Channel 9 then went on to interview the Prison Governor, and fellow prisoners, and have concocted a presentation to suggest that Schapelle is fine. This is currently being advertised on their channel.

They KNOW that Schapelle has a clemency application in process, and that this is the last chance to save her life.

They KNOW what informed medical opinion is saying.

They KNOW what they are doing, and they KNOW how damaging this will be to her chances of survival.

Several calls have been made to their newsdesk already today: they simply hang up.

Channel 9 are complicit not only in the slow mental torture of a desperately ill woman, but are directly undermining any chance she has of surviving.

Email:
news@nine.com.au
news.feedback@ninemsn.com.au

By phone:
Channel Nine Sydney (02) 9906-9999
Channel Nine Melbourne (03) 9420-3111
Channel Nine Brisbane (07) 3214-9999
Channel Nine Adelaide (08) 8267 0111
Channel Nine Perth (08) 9449 9999gnosed

This sort of intrusion, however, was a regular occurrence:

Trapped And NO Where To Hide
Schapelle running to complain about the Media Invasion



This guy & 6 other's
inside the prison
grounds with Cameras



Schapelle being dragged
back to her cell, back towards
the media she ran away from.



Schapelle Yelling out she is being
beaten by the Guards.

**Prison Boss Lets Media In Then Has
The Nerve To Put The Blame On
Others? Where are the Guards?
How Many \$\$\$ To Get In This Time?**

RUN RUN RUN

COULD THIS HAPPEN HERE? 9 GUYS INSIDE
THE WALLS OF A PRISON WITH CAMERA'S.
3 MORE INSIDE AN OFFICE AREA ALL THERE
TO CAPTURE PHOTO'S OF A MENTALLY ILL
WOMEN PRISONER !!!!!



CHASED
DRAGGED
AND
BEATEN



FRIGHTENED
OF CAMERAS
AND THEY'RE
EVERYWHERE

IS THIS MENTAL ABUSE? YES!!

In this particular case, the intrusion was used to deliver yet another story, again striking at the heart of her clemency appeal, again using propaganda generated by the prison itself.

Despite multiple complaints to the government's broadcasting quango, the *Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)*, no action was ever taken to curtail or prevent these clear and documented abuses.

Sometimes, the output from different channels complimented each other. *Woman's Day* magazine, for example, published a string of hostile stories, such as the following:



This magazine is ultimately owned by CVC Asia Pacific, which also owns Channel 9. In November 2010 both the magazine and the broadcaster were at the heart of an incident which became known as the *sound bite affair*.

The sound bite technique is a hugely controversial tool of propaganda, and has frequently been employed to promote key messages regarding Schapelle Corby. In this example, Channel 9 broadcast the following advert for *Woman's Day*

SEE VIDEO ON EXPENDABLE.TV

This created the entirely false impression that Schapelle Corby didn't want to return home.

With Schapelle Corby desperately seeking to return to a hospital in Australia, and her clemency appeal at a critical stage, this crude intervention undoubtedly undermined public concern for Schapelle Corby. Indeed, it has been alleged that it was broadcast to condition the public for a negative clemency appeal outcome.

Channel 9's damaging output extended well beyond news management. In 2008, for example, they produced a re-cut of an earlier documentary, *Ganja Queen*. The title, *Schapelle Corby - The Hidden Truth*, was the epitome of irony. This was an openly propagandistic re-hash, leading public opinion sharply against Schapelle Corby and her family, in the most obvious and blatantly propagandistic manner.

Other broadcasting channels were also extremely active in producing similar hostile material. For example, Channel Seven's *Today Tonight* program constructed a series of broadcasts which seriously undermined both Schapelle Corby and her family. Yet again, they comprised of the most blatant fabrications. In this case, they paid a third party \$100,000 for what were subsequently shown to be to a pack of lies.

Seven Network settles Mercedes Corby defamation case

A NSW Supreme Court jury yesterday found three *Today Tonight* programs and one news bulletin, broadcast in February last year, had defamed Ms Corby, the 33-year-old sister of convicted drug smuggler Schapelle Corby.

The programs centred on interviews with 35-year-old Jodie Power, a one-time Corby family friend.

The *Today Tonight* programs were found to have conveyed defamatory meanings, including that Ms Corby was a drug smuggler, a drug dealer and posed a threat to the safety of Ms Power.

....

Seven's legal costs in the five-week-long case would have been considerable.

It had already paid Ms Power \$100,000 for the interviews and also gave the mother-of-two boys two all-expenses paid overseas holidays.

<http://www.news.com.au/top-stories/seven-settles-corby-defamation-case/story-e6frfkp9-1111116486765>

Latterly, Schapelle Corby's serious illness has become a regular source of perverse entertainment, frequently presented for public amusement (video courtesy of *The Elephant Channel*):

Ridicule of Schapelle Corby's Mental Illness



View Video's 43 and 44 on the Expendable CD
or visit www.expendable.tv

3.2 THE PRINT MEDIA

Two *Expendable Reports* have covered this topic in some depth. These are:

The DFAT Network Report, which reveals a long term program of government funded media influence

The Primary Smear Report, which exposes the primary sources of the main fabrications used to discredit Schapelle Corby and her family.

However, the number of Australian journalists engaging in hostile reporting against Schapelle Corby is substantial. The countless examples of innuendo, smears and outright lies, are still there to be seen, via internet archives.

The sheer scale of this suggests not only an agenda, but culturally related social assumptions, prejudice and orchestration. Clearly, these are not tendencies which should afflict the open enquiring mind of a journalist, but the evidence speaks for itself.

Despite many of the reports having been blatantly constructed and propagandistic, none of the individuals responsible have ever been called to account. This again suggests endorsement by the editorial functions of the respective publications.

RANDOM EXAMPLES

The following are just a small selection of the many examples which have been documented by media analyst Arthur Lebrock. They do, however, provide a cross section of the different approaches used to undermine support and sympathy for Schapelle Corby.

Steve Pennells

HEADLINE: **From drug courier to devoted husband, a jailhouse fairytale**

Steve Pennells

Sydney Morning Herald: 29 May 2011

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/from-drug-courier-to-devoted-husband-a-jailhouse-fairytale-20110528-1f9e0.html>

"An hour into visiting time the jail's most famous inmate, Schapelle Corby, is sitting cross-legged on the ground, cuddling and kissing her Indonesian boyfriend, a former prisoner she met inside"

COMMENT: The truth is that Schapelle Corby is seriously ill, doesn't kiss anyone, and doesn't have a 'boyfriend' as commonly understood. She cuddles everyone, desperately seeking human comfort. Yet even that is distorted and misrepresented. At a key stage of the clemency appeal, Pennells continued with more helpful commentary the following week, by implying that Schapelle Corby's supporters were racist. [Note also this journalist's previous role, as documented in *The Insider Report*].

Greg Stolz

HEADLINE: **Corby's book cash blow**

Herald Sun: June 26, 2007

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/corbys-book-cash-blow/story-e6frf7l6-1111113827680>

"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"

COMMENT: The stock, almost universal, media phrase, to imply guilt, and endorse a trial which systematically breached Schapelle Corby's legal and human rights.

Robyn Wuth

HEADLINE: **Nobody cares, Schapelle**

Gold Coast: 27 May 2011

http://www.goldcoast.com.au/article/2011/05/27/318625_gold-coast-news.html

"And now, we have the delicious "Schapelle pregnant?" Can I ask, who the hell cares?"

"Schapelle's new lawyer, former Gold Coast figure and she of the eternally bleeding heart Kerry Smith-Douglas, insists something must be done to save Schapelle."

"Actually, she hasn't served her time. She's not even half way yet at six years, 14 to go, less for good behaviour, feigning religion and reading to puppies."

"Here's one I'd like to read. Drug couriers starved of attention left to serve their sentence. It'll never happen. See ya in 14 years, Schapelle."

COMMENT: Does it actually come any more repugnant, spiteful and callous than this?

Keith Moor

HEADLINE: **Notorious offenders Schapelle Corby and Roberta Williams get short shrift**

Herald Sun: January 26, 2010 12:00AM

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/special-reports/notorious-offenders-schapelle-corby-and-roberta-williams-get-short-shrift/story-fn4ut938-1225823409135>

"VICTORIANS don't have much time for convicted drug dealers Schapelle Corby and Roberta Williams."

"Our survey found that 73 per cent of Victorians think Corby was guilty."

"But their literary efforts haven't persuaded Victorians that the pair wrote honestly of their past"

COMMENT: A wholly manufactured association of Schapelle Corby with criminality. Was there even a survey at all, or was it just a collection of Moor's equally objective colleagues? This was clear propaganda created for a purpose. [Note Moor's previous record, and his association with AFP Commissioner Michael Keelty as documented in the *Expendable Case Exhibit Library*].

Eamonn Duff

HEADLINE: **New York songbird's lament for Schapelle**

The Age: November 30, 2008

<http://www.theage.com.au/technology/news/new-york-songbirds-lament-for-schapelle-20090616-cd95.html#ixzz1Nr4CWC1L>

"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"

COMMENT: The stock, almost universal, media phrase, to imply guilt, and endorse a trial which systematically breached Schapelle Corby's legal and human rights. [Note Duff's previous contributions, as documented in *The Primary Smear Report*.]

Madonna King

HEADLINE: **Schapelle Corby not the only Aussie languishing in foreign jail**

Courier-Mail: August 29, 2009

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/schapelle-corby-not-the-only-aussie-languishing-in-foreign-jail/story-e6frerhf-1225767171455>

"There are a lot of others in the same boat"

"Corby tried to take more than 4kg of marijuana into Bali"

COMMENT: This crude diluter of public sympathy was published just days after Schapelle Corby was diagnosed as suffering a serious mental illness by one of Australia's most eminent psychiatrists. And, she was indeed *"the only Aussie"* in such a perilous state. The same piece even made negative and false allegations regarding the psychiatrist himself. The ill informed allegation of guilt, blatantly stated as fact, aligns perfectly with King's other contributions.

Naomi Toy

Headline: Misplaced sympathy for Corby is crazy

The Daily Telegraph: August 26, 2009

<http://www.news.com.au/opinion/misplaced-sympathy-for-corby-is-crazy/story-e6frfs99-1225766197496#ixzz1PHtcqypb>

"But it's different with Schapelle. The beautician from Brissie who is a bit sad, a bit mad, a bit innocent and, perhaps most importantly, a bit pretty, is a different case."

"The 'Bring Schapelle Home' campaign seems to rest solely on the idea that she's a damsel in distress who needs rescuing."

"I would rather see the Government focus its efforts on having their lives spared than pander to more stunts by a desperate family."

COMMENT: Just days after Schapelle Corby was diagnosed as at grave risk by one of Australia's most eminent psychiatrists, Toy further diluted public sympathy with this blatant and crude misrepresentation. The utter disregard and indifference for both the facts of the situation, and the tragedy of the human suffering, could hardly be clearer.

Geoff Thompson

HEADLINE: Corby may serve 9 more years before transfer

ABC: March 3, 2008

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/03/03/2178774.htm>

"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"

COMMENT: The stock, almost universal, media phrase, to imply guilt, and endorse a trial which systematically breached Schapelle Corby's legal and human rights.

Matt Brown

HEADLINE: Australian's Bali drug smuggling trial begins

ABC: Dec 10 2010

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/12/20/3097886.htm>

"Convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby"

COMMENT: The stock, almost universal, media phrase, to imply guilt, and endorse a trial which systematically breached Schapelle Corby's legal and human rights. [Note some of Brown's other contributions, which are documented elsewhere in *The Expendable Project*.]

Derryn Hinch

HEADLINE: What makes Corby so special?

3AW: 25 August, 2009

<http://www.3aw.com.au/blogs/blog-with-derryn-hinch/what-makes-corby-so-special/20090825-exv9.html?page=0>

"And through it all, even though caught red-handed, Corby has never said 'I did it'. I'd love to ignore it all today but the 'bring Corby home' campaign is off and running again. The Corby family hired a Melbourne psychiatrist..."

"Mitchell and Phillips peppered their interview today with emotive lines"

"If they're depressed should we campaign to free them too?"

COMMENT: Hinch's complete ignorance of the facts, whether genuine, or contrived for his long term hostility, is never far from the surface. Here, he simply dismisses one of the nation's top psychiatrists, sneeringly referring to Schapelle Corby's serious psychosis as depression, as he again dilutes public sympathy.

3.3 SUMMARY

JournOz further commented on the situation as follows:

"The name of Australian journalism is dragged through the gutter and the profession of journalism is justifiably castigated all too often. But why? Generally, because some people who call themselves journalists throw ethics and integrity out of the window without even a passing thought for the implications; sometimes even when those implications include a significant contribution to human suffering. This is particularly moot with respect to the Schapelle Corby case. Worse still, in this case, it has happened over a prolonged period of years."

Whilst *Civil Liberties Australia* published the following:

"The real story is how a young powerless woman is being imprisoned for a crime that she probably had nothing to do with. But the Australian media have become her persecutor"



Despite such complaints, the situation has remained unchanged to the present day.

Further information on the commercial media:

The DFAT Network Report

The Primary Source Report

The Expendable Documentary

The Prison Abuse Report

4. PUBLIC IMPACT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The exceptional intensity of the opinion management regime, and the scale of propagandistic output from the Australian media, ensured that it was extremely effective in controlling the direction of public perception, and stemming support for Schapelle Corby.

The channels deployed and the methods used were unprecedented in the case of a single individual, and alarmed a significant number of third party observers.

The effects of these broadcasts and publications upon the Australian public followed a fairly standard pattern in terms of timescale. This has been referred to as the '*Titanic*' response, largely because opinion lags behind the onset of the change of direction.

Nonetheless, within weeks, significant changes were evident, which are a simple matter to identify from closely researching archived internet forums, newspaper blogs, and other captured interactive public media records.

But there was also a significant side effect, in the form of an unforeseen tangential consequence of such rapid application of the counter message. It pushed large sections of society beyond rationality and into a state of extreme hostility towards the subject, who was already a serious victim of cultural and social structures. With respect to the '*Titanic*' analogy, this reaction aligns with the uncontrolled waves created by the stem of the ship violently turning.

The general tendency of the rapid application of propaganda often manifests itself in relatively subtle terms, but in extreme cases, such as with respect to Schapelle Corby, it is wholly transparent, and the links to the source cause are clearly exposed.

The individuals influenced in this manner tend to reflect standard representations of the opinion consumer, that is, those with low intelligence quota, those pre-disposed to hatred, and those with deep rooted psychological issues.

A distinct aspect of the Schapelle Corby case, however, is both the unusually large number of those engaged, and the apparent social profile of some of those engaged.

This combination created what is still today a particularly repugnant global spectacle, and representation of Australia, on the internet.

4.2 SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Whilst an unending number of examples of this are easily viewable online, the following provide an idea of the level of hostility and hatred commonly and openly displayed.

It is worthy of note that many of the comments we identified were grossly obscene, and not suitable for inclusion.

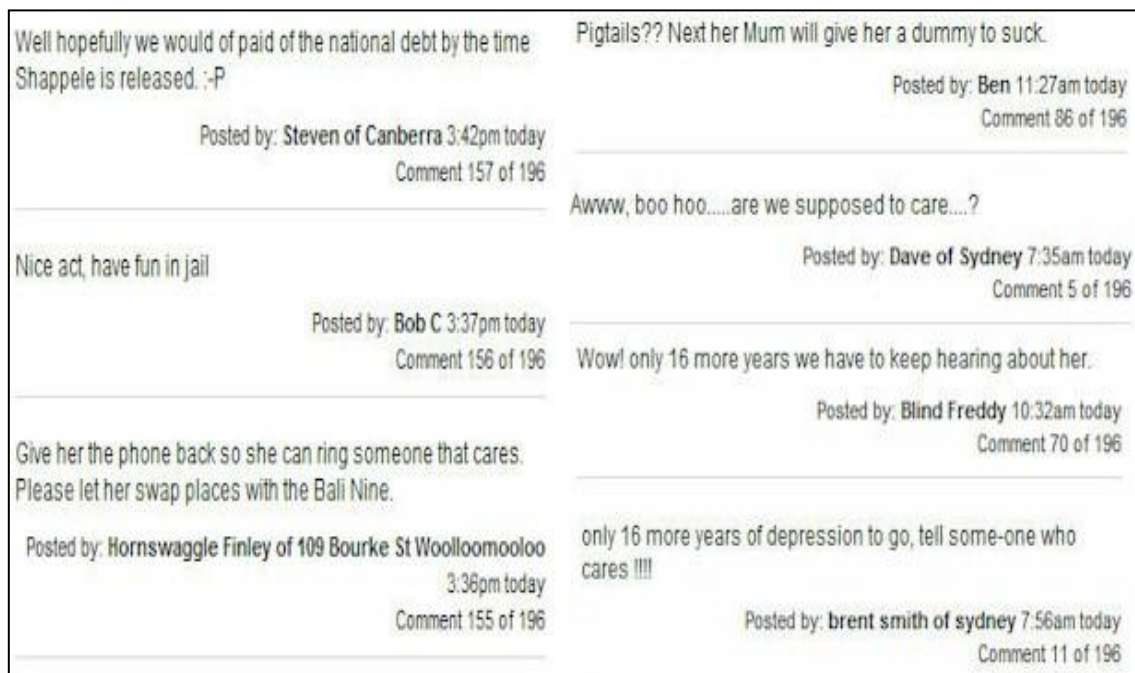
4.2.1 NEWSPAPER ARTICLE COMMENTS

Newspapers and magazines do control what is posted on their websites. Every comment posted is pro-actively endorsed for publication, by editorial staff.

Given the nature of the content with respect to Schapelle Corby, most observers would regard this in itself to be a matter of significant concern. This is particularly the case, as posters of supportive comments, vociferously complained elsewhere that theirs did not appear. The term “*comment propaganda*” has subsequently emerged to describe this phenomenon.

The following examples were randomly picked from a couple of stories which appeared in national publications. The stories they respond to covered aspects of Schapelle Corby's serious mental illness, the second reporting her reversion to a childlike state, wearing pigtails and clutching a doll.

This cruel human tragedy provided the following responses:



4.2.2 FACEBOOK

The use of Facebook as a cohesive social network presents an opportunity for the creation and development of communities of like-minded people.

The consistent flow of hostile media coverage quickly embedded cohesion within the public psyche with respect to Schapelle Corby, at least with respect to the more unsavoury elements of society. This was sufficient for structured groups to emerge to pro-actively promote the malevolence.

The following are snapshots from a couple of groups, from the many which emerged:

facebook 10 33 Search

Schapelle Corby - GUILTY AS CHARGED Join

Wall Info Photos Discussions

Information

Category:
Common Interest - Current Events

Description:
We Believe Schapelle Corby Is Guilty

Privacy Type:
Open: All content is public.

Admins

- Eliza Bramma (Presbyterian Ladies' College) (creator)

Officers

- Eliza Bramma (Presbyterian Ladies' College) CEO
- Grace Quiddington (Presbyterian Ladies' College) Secretary
- Lily Elvy (Presbyterian High School) objective third party observer

Members

6 of 426 members See All

Shane Shaw I just got home from Bali after 9 days there. The good thing is The bitch Shapelle won't be coming home for another 15 years :) hahahahahaha
April 13 at 12:44pm · Report
Caz Wood likes this.

Melissa Young <http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/group.php?gid=106003609428272&ref=ts>
Stop Blaming Everyone Else for your bad habits!
This group is for those who are sick of people blaming others for their fuck ups. Sick of those who say they are drug addicts because a doctor prescribed ADHD meds, or blame everything bad in their li...
March 21 at 8:00am · Share · Report

Luke English DIE DIE DIE HAHAHHA HOPE THE RATS CHEW HER BALLS UP waste of sperm
February 17 at 2:49pm · Report

Shane Shaw hope the bitch rots in jail
February 16 at 10:11am · Report
Josh Hickford likes this.

Melissa Young Lets face it Australia. We have a drug importer in Jail in Indonesia. Its not the first nor will it be the last. Its just this one knows how to stir up public sympathy and happens to be photogenic. If you want her transferred over here because the jail shes in is substandard fair enough, but don't go running your mouth off ...
See More
February 14 at 8:20am · Report



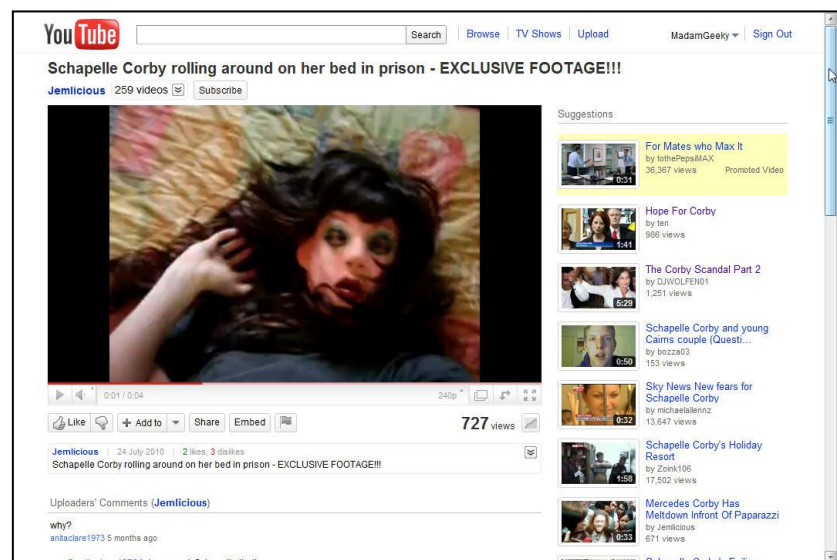
The requisite mentality to join such a group, let alone create one, could only manifest in the context of supportive mainstream media output, and the wide scale influence of national communication and entertainment channels.

International observers, unaware of the dynamics of opinion management which were actually in play in Australia, openly viewed groups like these in disbelief and disgust.

To this day, groups like these are still documenting and collecting the invidious outpourings of this online underclass.

4.2.3 YOUTUBE

YouTube was another obvious channel for the display of ignorance and hatred by those so inclined. Self made videos appeared regularly, and usually comprised crude attempts to ridicule the victim:

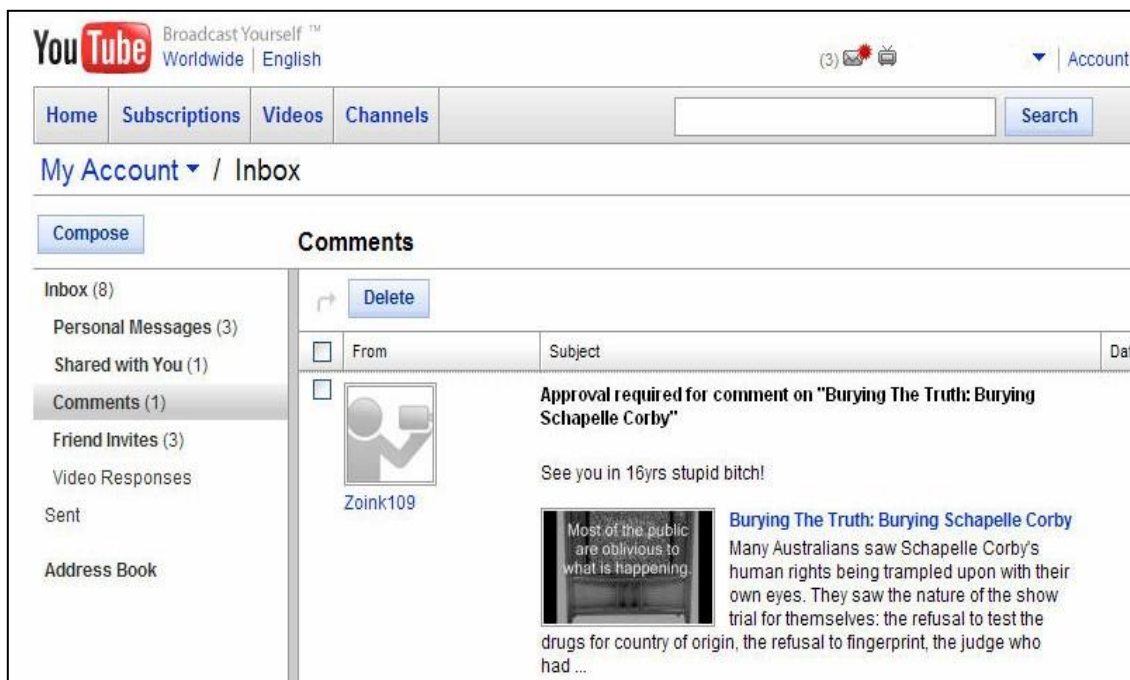
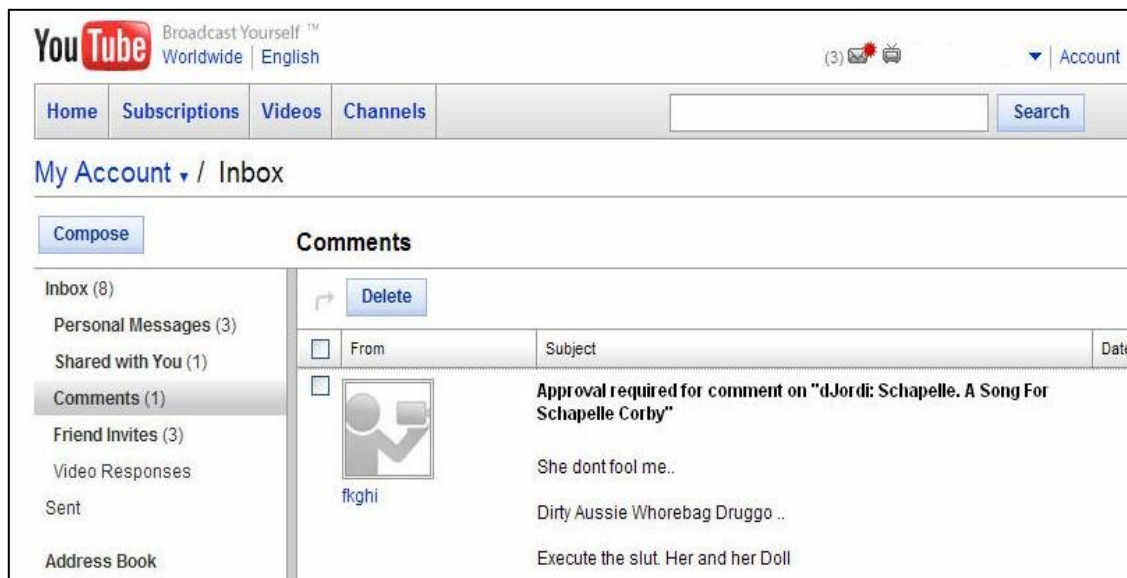


Incredibly, the first of these two videos was created by SMH journalist Neil McMahon, and is a particularly unpleasant example of playground cruelty and ridicule of Schapelle Corby's desperate family. Unfortunately, this was far from his only hostile contribution on the case.

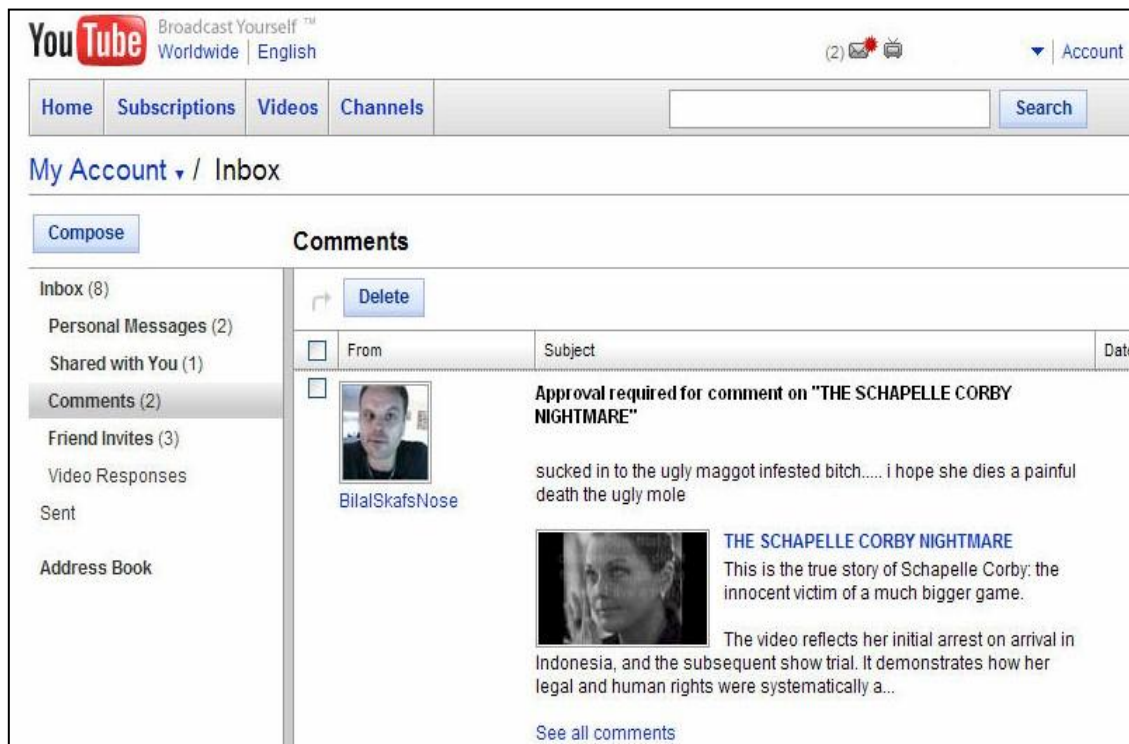
[Impact Upon The Australian Public]

Like other channels, YouTube was also awash with the sort of comments illustrated above, completely devoid of any sense of empathy, compassion, or even an elementary grasp of the case facts.

Publishers of supportive footage were confronted with messages like the following:



[Impact Upon The Australian Public]



The comment areas were inundated with similar venom (random sample):



YouTube thus provided yet another platform for the vivid and visible representation of hostile media influence. This pertains to both casual commentary and video production, again highlighting the alarming degree of malice and hatred generated amongst those susceptible and prone to such manipulation.

4.3 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The pattern illustrated above was repeated across forums, newsgroups, and every social network.

Indeed, it is still evident across every platform to which the Australian public has access.

Across these channels, the comments invariably recite the limited number of core tunes rehearsed and repeated by the media.

This correlation is direct and sustained.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

This openly viewable record of hysteria, animosity and enmity, against a wretched and mentally ill woman, has become a globally visible reflection of a disturbing and extensive underbelly within Australian society.

Its relatively high profile is undoubtedly contributing to a changing perception of Australia, from outside its borders.

With respect to the media, it is a clear example of the danger posed by unfettered domestic propaganda, particularly when unleashed against a single individual.

In a wider media context, it is perhaps yet another symptom of the relative lack of media plurality in Australia.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

To this day, the Australian government has taken no steps whatsoever to restrain the propagandistic hostile media output, which it, itself, initiated in 2005.

It also appears to be oblivious to the wider issues raised above.



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