
Who Killed Azaria? Adventists on Trial In Australia

by Lowell Tarling

Michael Chamberlain, until a few months ago an Australian Adventist minister, and his wife Lindy have been convicted of murdering their daughter Azaria. Theirs has become the most publicized criminal case in the history of Australia. Documentaries and docudramas have been broadcast on Australian national television networks, and four years after Azaria disappeared, newspaper sales still rise when stories about the Chamberlains appear on the front page.

Several books have already been written on the case; more are coming. One forthcoming volume discusses the permanent effect the case is likely to have on the Australian legal system. Issues that have been raised for Australian jurisprudence include the rules concerning changes of venue for criminal trials, when trials should or should not go before a jury, and how scientific evidence should be entered into trial proceedings. The case has even dramatized questions about the Australian governmental system, particularly ones about the relationship of the central government to the Northern territory, still not a full-fledged state.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has become increasingly visible during the intense media coverage of the case. Australian Adventists have been shocked to learn the misconceptions some of their country-

men hold about the church, the most bizarre of which is that Adventists practice ritual infanticide. In the face of such prejudice and what they consider a flagrant miscarriage of justice, Adventists who have recently been fighting the church and each other are working to free Lindy Chamberlain, a faithful Seventh-day Adventist who is behind bars and sentenced to hard labor for the rest of her life.

The following account of the case was written by Lowell Tarling, until this year a practicing member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He and Michael Chamberlain attended Avondale College at the same time. Tarling is the author of *Thank You God for the Salvos: A History of the Salvation Army in Australia, 1880-1980* (Harper and Row, 1980); *The Edges of Seventh-day Adventism: A Study of Separatist Groups Emerging from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1844-1980)* (Gailee, 1981); and *Taylor's Troubles* (Penguin, 1982), a novel based on Tarling's years at the Adventist academy in Sydney, where he attended and later taught. This telling of the Chamberlain story is adapted from an article published in the Australian edition of *Rolling Stone* (April, 1984). The story will appear in two installments; we will print the second and concluding segment in the next issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 15, No. 3).

—The Editors

“Although I’ve felt broken at times I’ve risen above it. I don’t cry myself to sleep much any more. I just grit my teeth as I know where I’m aiming. God forgive those involved in doing this to me and my family. Their action was the finishing touch—the ultimate act in framing an unworthy picture of justice. People can blacken my reputation but they can never change my character. I will present myself before the Judge of the Universe for His ultimate decisions.”

—Lindy Chamberlain
Press statement, May 3, 1984.

Azaria Chamberlain was the daughter of two Seventh-day Adventists, Pastor Michael and Lindy Chamberlain. Azaria was born on June 11, 1980, and disappeared at Ayers Rock on Sunday, August 17, 1980. Her body was never found, but one week later most of her clothes were found at Fertility Cave, at Ayers Rock, by Wallace Goodwin, a tourist. After the first flush of public sympathy, there developed strong underlying suspicions that the Chamberlains themselves may be guilty of the murder of their daughter. As practicing Christians, they were given no points for honesty. In fact, their involvement with the Seventh-day Adventist Church only deepened public suspicion.

A rumor was started suggesting that Azaria was sacrificed as the Bearer of Sin. An inquest was held into Azaria’s disappearance. Coroner Denis Barritt concluded that a dingo took the baby, but Azaria’s body was disposed of by “a person or persons, name unknown.” Coroner Barritt also quashed the suggestion that Azaria may have been ritually sacrificed as part of the Seventh-day Adventist religion. However, these fears have never been eradicated from the Australian consciousness. *Azaria, The Trial of the Century* by Steve Brien, published in 1984, has revived the theory that the religion is the key to the ‘murder.’

The results of the first inquest did not satisfy the public. After 18 months a second inquest was held, with a new coroner, and much hostile press coverage of the Chamberlains. The inquest was largely motivated by the continued investigations of Dr. Kenneth Brown, head of the Department of Oral Biology at Adelaide University, who is, coincidentally, also a Seventh-day Adventist. His forensic investigations, combined with those of the highly esteemed London expert, Professor James Cameron, led to a re-opening of the case and eventually led to Lindy Chamberlain being found guilty of murdering Azaria, and sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labor. Michael was charged with being an accessory to the murder of his daughter, and was released on a \$500 three-year bond, after being sentenced to 18 months hard labor. The date was October 29, 1982.

The Chamberlains have since lodged two appeals in 1983, one before the Federal Court and another before the High Court. Both were unsuccessful. However, the matter will simply not go away. “Lindy and I are innocent people,” Michael Chamberlain told the Australian press after the High Court decision. “We will not stop fighting to clear our names and the names of our family. This case is not over yet.”

As far as the legal system is concerned, however, the case is over. If the case is re-opened, and if Lindy is proved to be innocent, Australians will want to know how it was ever possible for the system to run roughshod over a completely innocent person. The implications are frightening, and many icons will be broken. For example, the scientific method must be held suspect—certainly at the public level. Politicians, park rangers, police officers, public servants, government officials have all somehow strengthened the case against the Chamberlains—through negligence or design. The media has virtually governed public opinion, so much so that even those Australians who consider Lindy to be guilty somehow feel manipulated by the press.

Finally, after what amounts to five court cases, the real mystery still remains. It has cost the taxpayers too much to be answered in uncertainties. Yet, to the man-in-the-street the idea that Lindy murdered Azaria is still not conclusive. Australians view it only as the most probable explanation in a series of improbabilities. In one sense the situation is still no more resolved than when, on August 17, 1980, Lindy Chamberlain's voice cracked the nighttime silence with the words, "Michael! The dingo's got my baby!"

The Issues

Since that night, thousands of words have been written about the case. Many people are famous because of it. During the course of two inquests, one trial, and two appeals, millions of dollars have been spent by the government and by independent sources. Experts have crossed continents, three books have been published about the

A Brief Chronology of the Chamberlain Case

June 11, 1980: The birth of Azaria Chamberlain.

June 23, 1980: Four-year old Amanda Cranwell is attacked by a dingo named Ding. The circumstances have a close parallel to the attack on Azaria.

June 1980: (specific date unknown) An aboriginal child is attacked by Ding. This attack is not reported to authorities. Aborigines nickname Dingo "Kul-punya," meaning, 'the Devil Dog.'

August 1980: Chief Ranger at Ayers Rock, Derek Roff, assigns rangers Rowen Dalglish and Stewart Mitchell to design a warning sign aimed at discouraging tourists from feeding dingoes.

August 13, 1980: The Chamberlain family—Michael, Lindy, Aidan, Reagan, and Azaria—leave Mount Isa for a holiday to Central Australia.

August 17, 1980: (approximately 8:10 p.m.) Lindy Chamberlain investigates a cry from Azaria. She sees a dingo moving away from the tent. She sees something in the dingo's mouth. Azaria Chamberlain disappears.

September 30, 1980: Detective Sergeant Graeme Charlwood makes an official approach to Lindy asking her to undergo hypnosis to help with her recollection of events at the time of Azaria's disappearance. Lindy refuses, on religious grounds. This deepens suspicion in the minds of Australians: rumors abound that Lindy killed her baby, perhaps as a sacrifice relating to her Seventh-day Adventist religion.

December 15, 1980: The first inquest into the dis-

appearance of Azaria begins. Coroner Denis Barritt officially pronounces Azaria Chamberlain dead.

February 20, 1981: Coroner Denis Barritt's findings are televised Australia-wide. He says, "I further find that neither the parents of the child, nor either of their remaining children, were in any degree whatsoever responsible for this death. I find that the name Azaria does not mean and never has meant 'sacrifice in the wilderness.' I find that after her death, the body of Azaria was taken from the possession of the dingo and disposed of by an unknown method, by a person or persons, name unknown."

September 19, 1981: The Chief Minister for the Northern Territory, Paul Everingham, announces that because of new evidence, the Azaria case is being reopened. The new evidence included tests done to Azaria's jumpsuit, initiated by Dr. Kenneth Brown of Adelaide, and conducted by Professor James Cameron from London. Other evidence included suspect blood found in the Chamberlain's car, a Holden Torana. These tests were conducted by Mrs. Joy Kuhl, forensic biologist for the New South Wales Department of Health.

December 13, 1981: The second inquest into the disappearance of Azaria begins. Like the first, it is held in Alice Springs. A new coroner, Mr. Gerry Galvin, is appointed to hear the case.

February 2, 1982: Coroner Gerry Galvin announces that there was sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case against both Michael and Lindy. Galvin charged that Lindy murdered Azaria at

case—all entitled *Azaria*, more are being written. Two television prime-time programs have been screened, and Australia has developed a rapacious appetite for media coverage of the latest on Lindy. But still the heart of the mystery is unsolved: who buried the body, and where is it now? That very statement is a speculation, as in the absence of a body, there is no *absolute* proof that Azaria Chamberlain is dead.

This is a murder story that begins without a body. It is an assumed murder. It later goes to court, and Ian Barker opens the case for

the prosecution, saying that he will not provide a motive—no body and no motive. the on-the-spot witnesses are to be believed, there was also no opportunity. Sally Lowe, Michael, and Aidan Chamberlain all heard Azaria cry after the time at which the prosecution claimed that Lindy Chamberlain cut her baby's throat. Yet there is no shortage of murder weapons. If the prosecution's case is sound, this was not murder, but butchery. In Alice Springs, this suggestion is not thought absurd. In giving his explanation for Azaria's disappearance, one of the

Ayers Rock, and that Michael assisted Lindy in order that she should escape punishment. They were each released on \$5,000 bail.

June 7, 1982: The media announced that Lindy Chamberlain is pregnant. Friends say the couple are "praying for a girl."

September 13, 1982: The trial begins. It is held in Darwin, the capital of the Northern Territory.

October 29, 1982: At 8:37 p.m., Lindy Chamberlain is pronounced guilty. Pressman Malcolm Brown shrieks out "You bastards!" and is not charged with contempt of court. Moments later, Michael Chamberlain is also found guilty. Lindy is sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labor. Michael is not sentenced until three days later, when he is released on a \$500, three-year bond, after being sentenced to 18 months hard labor.

After the trial there is a rush on the media. Two books are immediately released: *Azaria* by James Simmonds, and *Azaria* by Richard Shears. A rock musical, *Dingo Girl*, plays in Sydney University's Footbridge Theatre. A song, "I'll Be A Baby for the Dingo in Your Heart," is released by the Ratbags of Rhythm. T-shirts, badges ("Give Di a Dingo"), paraphernalia, cartoons, turn the case into something extraordinary.

November 1, 1982: Phil Ward and Don McNicol meet with Arthur Hawken. The three agree on a joint investigation of the Azaria case.

November 17, 1982: Lindy is allowed out of jail to give birth. The baby's name is Kahlia, a girl.

April 27, 1983: The Federal Court hands down its verdict on the Chamberlain case. They find no reason to overturn the verdict of the jury.

April 29, 1983: Coroner Denis Barritt supplies the material prepared by Phil Ward, Don McNicol, and Arthur Hawken to the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory, Jim Robertson. After the Federal Court Appeal, many Chamberlain support groups are formed Australia-wide.

February 22, 1984: The High Court votes three to two to reject Lindy Chamberlain's leave to appeal against her life sentence.

March 26, 1984: A Gallup Poll indicates that 53 percent of people believe the Chamberlains to be guilty.

April 3, 1984: The airing of "Azaria: New Facts" a documentary by Kevin Hitchcock by Sydney's Channel 10. Much of Phil Ward's new evidence is used, without naming him as the source. The program makes a big impact on changing public opinion.

April 3, 1984: Thirty-one scientists, including Professor Sir Gustav Nossal, release a joint statement expressing severe doubt about Crown evidence on blood during the Chamberlain trial.

April 6, 1984: The public hears of Michael Chamberlain's resignation from the ministry.

May 3, 1984: Under the initiative of Mrs. Betty Hocking and Mr. Guy Boyd, a hundred Chamberlain supporters hold a public meeting in Canberra. Some 131,000 signatures are displayed (7,000 from overseas), then presented to the Governor General Sir Ninian Stephen, who—even before receiving the petition—told the press that he could do nothing to help.

locals told me that Lindy took Azaria by the feet and smashed her head against a rock.

According to courtroom evidence, the Chamberlain's car, a Holden Torana, was awash with blood. More than one year after Azaria's disappearance, the following items gave a positive response to fetal blood tests: two army hats, one of the boy's shoes, the camera bag, a pair of scissors, inside the window winder on the driver's side, inside the door on the driver's side, a chamois, beneath the radio, a towel, a plastic chamois container, the console, the left side of the driver's seat, and a boy's parka. In fact, the whole surface of the carpet on the driver's side gave a reaction to what might have been blood—so much that 13 and a half months after Azaria's demise, that blood was still sticky. In the words of one Sydneysider, "She must have been a hell of a big baby."

In the absence of a body, a motive, and an opportunity, how did the defense lose the case? Taken on face value, the prosecution is offering as fact something like the murder scene out of Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*. Author of *Azaria, Wednesday's Child*, James Simmonds provides at least part of the answer; he writes, "Perhaps the dingo was on trial after all, and in a choice between the dingo and Lindy, she simply ran second." An Alice Springs T-shirt neatly summarized local public opinion. It read, "The Dingo is Innocent," and it was banned for contempt of court during the first inquest. Nevertheless, the slogan is partly true. Even Coroner Denis Barritt—still a strong believer in the Chamberlain's integrity—didn't believe that a dingo would use scissors to make his mark on a baby's jumpsuit, nor would the dingo leave handprints on clothes.

The Chamberlain case has gained the reputation of being a 'trial by media,' and this is very true of many aspects of the case. Almost immediately, the media narrowed its focus to only three real participants: Michael, Lindy, and the dingo. What of the

other 800 at Ayers Rock that night? "We knew it wasn't a dingo and that's all we needed to know," were the words of the woman behind the counter at the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Centre at Alice Springs. The inference was that if a dingo didn't do it, then all you've got left are the Chamberlains. All over the country, but particularly in Alice Springs, people were quick to condemn the Chamberlains, believing what they wanted to believe, regardless of the complex and contradictory nature of the evidence.

Just one year ago, investigators Phil Ward, Don McNicol, and Arthur Hawken went back to Ayers Rock and talked to a few of those others—rangers, eye witnesses, and a blacktracker, Nipper Winmatti, the traditional owner of the Rock. Gradually they pieced together an alternative explanation of Azaria's fate. They plan to reveal these facts in a private prosecution charging at least seven people with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Says Ward, "Lindy Chamberlain is innocent. I know who buried Azaria. I have more evidence against them than there is against Lindy Chamberlain." Before the discovery of 'fetal' blood in the Chamberlain's car, Ward might have been more popular with Northern Territory officialdom than he is now. His evidence suggests an escalating conspiracy, beginning with a cover-up that was almost humane, but leading to the forensic department of the Northern Territory Police Force receiving a public caning by Coroner Denis Barritt. For a little while, the Force was an Australian joke. But the case against the Chamberlains changed all that.

Ward's explanation has been welcomed by those around the Rock who gaze suspiciously at the new \$190 million (Australian dollars) Yulara Village. Sure, the ownership of Ayers Rock has recently been given back to the Aborigines, but that decision also closes down all existing accommodation sites, thereby creating a monopoly for the managers of the Yulara

Village, who have to find some \$15 million (A. dollars) a year just to keep up on interest payments. Prices at Ayers Rock are expected to rise steeply around the end of 1984, when Yulara takes control.

Yulara accommodation prices will certainly be too expensive for average-income earners in Australia. Yulara Village must then look to the overseas market and superannuated citizens. The assumption made by tourist departments is that such people

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dislike seeing anything unprocessed, dirty, or dangerous. That an Australian wild creature might attack a human being is seen as 'bad press' in the short term, even though a generation later they'll sell postcards of the site. Like the Loch Ness Monster, tourists might stay awake all night, hoping to catch a glimpse of Kulpunya, Devil Dog of Ayers Rock.

Right now we're living in the myth-making period. Writers are codifying the updates on the ancient Aboriginal dreamings, and while many of the agnostic Aussie journalists have alluded to the strong religious overtones of the case, the explanations needed right now are more practical. How did the blood get into the Torana? Was the syringe plunger, found in the car, in any way linked to the placement of the blood? Is it true that Joy Kuhl's reagent reacts with adult hemoglobin and certain Dulux paint products, as well as fetal hemoglobin? Could the blood have been planted?

The question as to whether the blood found in the Chamberlain's car was fetal or not has generated new controversy. Thirty-one Australian scientists, including Professor Sir Gustav Nossal, the world-renowned immunologist and director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Re-

search, have signed a joint statement expressing severe doubts about the forensic evidence. One expert, the leading defense witness at the trial, Professor Barry Boettcher, now says that further tests have revealed conclusively that there is no way the blood found in the car could possibly be fetal. Tests to replicate the prosecution's claimed findings of fetal blood have not done that job.

Significantly, all the original hard forensic evidence that put Lindy Chamberlain in jail was destroyed before the trial. Investigator Phil Ward sees it this way: "Mrs. Kuhl believed her evidence was correct at the first inquest—but after the discovery that the reagent she used to test the fetal blood was faulty, she discovered her mistake. She believed the Chamberlains were guilty. But because of her error in testing the blood in the car she felt they may escape conviction. So she did not report her mistakes to the trial—although she knew of the mistakes by then. To cover up those mistakes she destroyed the microscope slides showing her tests." Joy Kuhl, forensic biologist for the New South Wales Health Department, a key prosecution witness, testified that the destruction of the evidence was "standard procedure."

The Dingo

In 190 years of European settlement, the dingo has acquired a mythology second only to that of the wolf. The destruction wrought by the dingo has become, if not factual, at least legendary and over the years incalculable millions of dollars have been spent on its control and eradication. (Proceedings No. 36 of Course for Veterinarians, Fauna—Part B, February 6–10, 1978.)

It always seemed to me strange that people would doubt that a dingo might kill a baby or a small child. Humans do it, and they're much tamer than their pets.

Melbourne dingo-owner, Ken McVicar, owns Kuldi. He keeps Kuldi in a suburban backyard in East Ringwood. He's quick to defend the reputation of his dog. In Feb. 1981 he told the *Melbourne Truth* that, "He's a fabulous dog. He spends all day at my boat shop, then sleeps on the end of the bed at night, and he's great with the neighborhood kids." Kuldi is obviously tamer than a pet rabbit. A canary could do more damage. However, Max Williams, author of the novel *Dingo*, tells another story: "I quite believe that the dingo would've taken the child. I know how strong they are. My niece has a dingo, and it even scares me a bit. It'd put you on your back in one go, it's that big. And when you look at those eyes—they're just untamed."

The dingo's innocence is not a theory based on aboriginal or white man's history. In the aboriginal dreamings, even a nice dingo, like the repentant Gaiya-spirit, started out as a devil-dog whose immediate mission was to devour the very reasonable Chooka-chooka brothers. (Another dream-time story tells of the birth of twins to tribal women—something that happens very rarely. It is said that the weaker twin is left in the wilderness to be eaten by the dingoes.

In the absence of a body, a motive, and an opportunity to commit the murder, how did the defense lose the case?

The specific details of this story must not be publicly told. Coroner of the first inquest, Denis Barritt, apologized to the aboriginal community for even bringing the matter up.)

Unlike Gaiya, the repentant dingo-spirit, Kulpunya—the Ayers Rock devil-dingo spirit, did not repent. Some say he's still around. When I was driving to Bloods Range with aboriginal artist Ron Richards, there were some places where he refused to stop because, to him, the spirit of Kulpunya

lives in these locations. Said Ron: "If you open the window and cook some meal, that dingo spirit come after you. Coming from thataway back home. Too dangerous this one, that dingo one. See the little cut over there, that one on top of the mountain? He come from thataway." Ron pointed to hills of Bloods Range, "We don't wait too long here, just pass. He live here, spirit you know. Real dangerous."

There are also those who believe Azaria's murderer to have been the devil-dingo spirit Kulpunya in another guise. They say he came back exactly three years later and possessed the driver of a road-train who got into his truck and drove through the public bar at the Inland Motel. Five were killed, 20 injured. The time and location were almost identical to that of Azaria's disappearance.

This is the story of Kulpunya, the Docker River version: "*We're going to teach the Mala people of Ayers Rock a lesson,*" said one of the elders of Docker River's Windulka tribe. *And beginning with the backbone of a kangaroo, the medicine man began to create Kulpunya. His ears were tufts of spinifex grass, his tail was that of a bandicoot and woman's hair was plaited into his back. For three days the windulka people sang over his effigy, then the hair began to grow. Eyes grew. Teeth grew. And Kulpunya became a huge and fearsome dingo, one that roared and breathed fire. The Windulka people then headed him off towards Ayers Rock, where he massacred the Mala people, leaving only formations in the rock face. One of these is a spectacular cleft, known to tourists as 'The Brain.'*"

Professor A.P. Elkin, author of *The Australian Aborigines*, believes that we should not dismiss such stories lightly. He says, "We should not ignore the possibility that these sacred myths do often enshrine actual historical events and sequences, even though these may be somewhat symbolized and distorted." If this is true, the dingo has done some damage in its time. But aborigines never kept records of dingo attacks, and until the 1930s, injuries sustained to the blacks were not scrupulously recorded, if they are now.

On the other hand, the dingo is said to have accompanied the first aborigines to Australia. Such was their respect for *Canis familiaris dingo* that they brought the family dog on their travels. Whatever its vices, it fit easily into a small canoe. This was a significant point in favor of the dingo, Australia's only indigenous creature to be

classified as vermin, meaning it can be killed on sight, and must not be fed or kept as a pet. Has the dingo been largely misunderstood by whites? Or has it deteriorated over the last 40,000 years?

Bardios, from Alice Springs, was raised on a cattle station in Maryborough, Queensland. "Ask any cattle man or sheep man,

Australian Editorial Comment on the Azaria Case

The following is a reprint from an April 4, 1984, editorial of one of Australia's most respected newspapers, the Sydney Morning Herald:

The Chamberlains: a case for review

The Chamberlain case needs to be reviewed. It is quite clear that the High Court decision supporting the jury's verdict of guilty is not accepted by a substantial, growing and well-informed section of the community. It is equally clear that this group is mounting a case against the verdict that is becoming more vocal virtually by the day. The growing pressure of this sort of opposition allows the Northern Territory Government only two options: either it can order a review now, or it can wait until it is forced to have a review.

A peculiarity of the Chamberlain case is that no body has been found, no murder weapon has been produced and no motive has been brought forward by the Crown to explain why Mrs. Chamberlain may have done what it accused her of doing. The absence of any one of these elements in a murder case would be enough to cast some doubts on a guilty verdict. The absence of all three places a requirement on the Crown to make its case virtually watertight. That clearly has not been done. As justice Murphy pointed out in his dissenting High Court judgment, the Crown's case was essentially based on a demolition of the dingo theory.

The approach enabled the Crown to win a verdict. What is happening now is that its specific case against Mrs. Chamberlain (such as it is) is being torn to shreds by experts who have had time to analyze its content. Forensic evidence of the type raised against Mrs. Chamberlain is always liable to create controversy. But it is unprecedented in Australia for 31 scientists to express, as they have, "severe doubts"

about the Crown's evidence on blood stains. The scientists are not saying the Crown is wrong; they are saying, just as importantly, that it did not establish its evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.

This attack from the scientists has been matched by a similar assault on the verdict from eminent lawyers. For example, a former Supreme court judge, Sir Reginald Sholl, says "I feel that, on probabilities, there has been a very grave miscarriage of justice." Professor Stone, of the Faculty of Law in the University of NSW, has argued that the law itself may be responsible for "a miscarriage of justice." He has proposed that if there is another murder trial similar to the Chamberlain case the jury be given "a special warning that only the very highest degree of cogency of circumstantial evidence can ever warrant conviction in the absence of a plausible motive by the Crown."

And on top of all this, we have the remarkable spectacle of witnesses who gave evidence at the Chamberlain trial, some for the Crown, speaking out publicly about the way what they said was disregarded in the contentiousness of the trial process.

The main argument against a further review of the case is that "the umpire's decision must be respected." There must be a time, in other words, when enough is enough. After all, the original jury decision has already been the subject of an appeal before the Full Bench of the Federal Court and an appeal before the High Court. The question becomes, then, whether the Chamberlain case has reached this point of judicial exhaustion. The mounting attacks against the verdict suggests that it has not. What should happen next then? In South Australia, the Government asked a QC to investigate all the evidence, old and new, and to make a finding about a further judicial review when a public campaign several years ago established that a convicted murderer, Edward Splatt, may have suffered a miscarriage of justice. Perhaps this is a precedent the Northern Territory Government could look at.

you'll see full grown cows attacked by one dingo. They'll attack a sheep and drag it away, and half-grown wallabies. They're incredibly strong. I've seen this sort of thing many times, and it's always a terrible sight. You go to any wild cattle sale and you'll see it in every truckload—one or two with their tails bitten off. Full-grown steers! That's why they build dingo fences. Why do you think they've got dingo fence spread halfway across the country?" This is the world's longest continuous fence; the dingo fence runs for 5,531 kilometers. "It's to keep them in one area, so they don't attack the livestock."

President of the Dingo Foundation, Les Harris, was called as a witness for the defense. He believes that the dingo is not a dog, but a wolf. For years his group has been telling the government of the state of Victoria that the dingo is a dangerous pet, and existing laws should be enforced. Harris told the first inquest that he knew of "12 recent dingo attacks." When it comes to dingo attacks there is no shortage of examples. In 1981, any sort of dingo attack made headlines, ahead of wars, murders, and strikes. "Dingo Savages Baby" was the *Sunday Telegraph's* account of a dingo attack on Toni Plumb, aged four. More relevant was the story of the girl who was attacked six weeks before Azaria's disappearance. This dingo was wormed, fed, and partly housed by the family of Ian Cawood, the assistant park ranger. There is a growing suspicion that this may have been the same dingo that took Azaria.

Cawood was asked about this attack during the first inquest. He explained that the Cranwell family had checked into the camping area, and shortly afterwards their four-year-old daughter Amanda was being dragged by a dingo out of her parents' car. Cawood said, "The father came back hold-

ing the little girl in his arms. He said a dingo had attacked the girl. She had abrasions around her neck." Cawood admitted that this dingo had been in his home and was almost domesticated. The dingo had at least three names. Whites called it 'Ding' or 'Scarface,' and among aborigines it had earned the dangerous nickname, 'Kulpunya' or 'Devil Dog'. The dingo had an all-round bad track record, even among the aborigines. He had also attacked Kitty Connor's little child.

This was the dingo that blacktracker Nipper Winmatti claims took Azaria Chamberlain. Not Kulpunya the spirit-dingo, but Kulpunya the 'proper dog.' He told me this in Sept., 1983, as we sat in the red Ayers Rock dirt and talked. "I bin seen tracks," he said. "Two of 'em come running. Go around. He might be get 'em from there. Then leave blood. Dog run away. Not run away—quicker. We call 'em two names, Ding Kulpunya." Those words were transcribed from my taped interview with Winmatti, who tracked Ding. When I asked him if he was referring to the aboriginal dreamtime story he said, "Proper dingo one. Proper dog."

Shortly after the attack on Amanda Cranwell, but before the attack on Azaria, warning signs were posted around the Rock. The signs read like a confession, and the capitalization is their own. They say, "Dingoes are wild. Feeding or touching wild animals breaks down the natural gap that separates them from humans. Dingoes CAN and DO bite. For your own safety and to maintain the dingo's integrity as a wild animal, PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH OR FEED THEM."

Despite all this, the dingo didn't get the rap. Journalist Jim Oram described the scene in a wine-bar when the verdict came down. "Hey, I've got great news!" shrieked the disc-jockey, "The dingo's been acquitted."

To be continued