

17 August 2010

A Letter to Open-Minded Australians from Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton

It is hard to believe it is thirty years today since my darling baby was taken. For some odd reason everyone says you will soon forget. Why is it that people expect me to forget a part of myself? Why would you? Loss of a loved one, particularly a child is not something you forget any more than you can get out of your mind that you once attended school. That does not mean you dwell on it all the time. It is simply there in the fabric of your life and history. In some ways it seems forever and in others it is like yesterday still. Yesterday are the happy memories, and the years are the pain.

I choose to dwell on the happy memories and not on the pain. Dwelling on the pain is only something that those who wish you harm hope that you will do. They want you miserable. I don't wish to be miserable. That is why I learned what forgiveness really is and put it in to practise. You always hear people say to forgive, but they don't tell you how to do it and that is key. Once you learn that, you wonder why you didn't do it before. Forgiveness is for yourself, it puts the responsibility on those who hurt you, and lets you get on with your life. It does not say it is ok to hurt me, then hurt me again. It simply says yes you hurt me, you had no right to do that to me but you did. I acknowledge that you did that and that I am not responsible for your actions. I will not take over the continuation of you actions towards me by allowing you or them to dwell in my mind and continue to fester and ruin my life. I have taken back control of my own life and head space and move forward. I am moving forward, not looking backward.

So, have I forgiven everyone involved in creating the fiasco of the last thirty years and the public so willing to believe the worst and spread nasty rumours? Of course I have. I have handed the hurt back to those who caused it and it is up to them as individuals to ask God to forgive them for what they did, because I forgave long ago and moved on. Oh and despite what some headlines have said in the last twelve months, that does include the police, politicians and lawyers of the NT. It would be nice to get a voluntary apology, but I am no longer holding my breath.

Did you know that the truth is not a defence for libel in Australia? Ridiculous as that sounds that is the law as it currently stands. So if you tell the truth about someone you can be charged with libel if you say something a person has done wrong but which they want to remain hidden. They can have you charged in court because you told the truth and revealed their dirty dealing. Of course once you are in court (or under parliamentary privilege) you can say whatever truth or lies you like and no one can touch you for it. I believe one should be able to tell the truth openly without having to be dragged into court by corrupt people covering their trails. Unfortunately the way the law stands now I cannot tell you of any internal deals, deliberate lies, affairs or favours that I may know of that may make what happened in my case a lot clearer. If I did I would be charged with libel and the truth doesn't count in Australia yet.

Now it seems like in the centuries to come there will still be arguments over who said what, where and how. It seems to me that it is ridiculous that people will believe all that stuff. Can they not even

try to think for themselves but believe everything they are told to think by someone else? In the last couple of weeks I discover I apparently did twice the amount of time in prison that I actually did, in Berrimah Prison no less, despite it being quite obvious that I was in Darwin Prison and Berrimah was only the suburb. Berrima Gaol is in NSW. Only very subtle changes you say and nit picking. Yes you are right that the difference is small in one way – it is only one wrong word. Now look at it another way. One prison does not exist at all and the other is thousands of kilometres away. Now it becomes not such a small thing but totally misleading. This is where lies and rumours start. When the truth is dealt with this way, subtly leaving a word out here and changing one there, then it goes into the archives unchallenged because someone else thinks it is too small to matter and another mistake is let slide, or a deliberate omission or addition let go and you soon can bury the truth so deep that only the most vigilant will ever find it again.

Of courses you can start rumours like the one where I was supposed to have hit on the policemen who raided us! They wish! Of course they didn't bring that up in court. It is much easier to besmirch a person's reputation by starting a rumour or making a statement with no basis in fact that will surface accidentally or on purpose some time. Bury the fact that until the police told us we had to stay near the tent we had both searched. By belittling and burying it on the one hand and on the other use it as the excuse to say we sneaked away to bury Azarias' body, in the end was so successful that even the jury came to believe we didn't search, despite testimony to the contrary.

It is no wonder that the eyewitnesses resent being disbelieved again and again when they hear and see the stupid lies and innuendoes resurface again and again. You see it is the questions not asked in court that are often the most important. For example Murray Habys' evidence that he had found what the Aboriginals later confirmed were the tracks of the dingo that took Azaria and the marks where it had put her down. When we met him after he had given his evidence he told us he was not supposed to mention this, and only an odd question allowed him to say what he wished about what he had found. With selective or very technical evidence it is no wonder that modern day juries are no longer equipped to make an informed decision. We need an updated system for the modern age we live in so that there is less likelihood of the guilty going free (because they take advantage of the current inadequacies) and the innocent being charged because they expect the truth and fairness that once a court was based on. Now it is just a lethal game.

Come on Australia. Surely you cannot be proud of the fact that you can let yourself be duped again and again and come back for more of the same. We used to be a proud nation who saw through corruption and were willing to give a fair go. How many times do you have to be hoodwinked and led along by the nose before you demand something better from our courts, police force, politicians and media? There are good, honest, truthful people in all these fields. We need to support them in their struggle to clean up their profession and stand for truth and justice. Hitler got as far as he did because good people didn't wake up to the importance of the small details that did not look threatening on their own, until the avalanche engulfed all and it was too late to fix.

Painful as it may be at times we need to stand up and be counted. Change starts with the individual, the family, the local community, the town, the state, the country. It is not easy to decide not to let the small things slip, or give in to the bully because of the pain or embarrassment it may cause us, but if you don't do it you may as well die now. Grow a backbone before the world turns on you.

Give up the desire for gossip and sensationalism. Use your brains for something useful. You may surprise yourself what you can achieve.

I thank God that the crown eyewitnesses in my case did have backbones as did quite a few ordinary Australians who were willing to stand up and say “hey I don’t know what happened but something is not right here and we need all the facts” which paved the way for new legislation allowing for royal commissions in Australia now. This allows for all of the evidence, rumours, tip-offs and questions to be exhaustibly investigated. The commissioner in our case was asked to find our guilt or innocence. Although we argued otherwise, he did not feel he had been given the power to rule on whether cause of death was a dingo or not so did not rule on that. Despite that (the Crown always claimed that it was either me or a dingo), Moreling in his finding said we would be guilty “if, in spite of so many considerations pointing to their innocence, the conclusion was reached that it had been proved beyond reasonable doubt that a dingo did not take the baby. In the light of all the evidence before the Commission, I am of the opinion that such a conclusion cannot be reached.”

Our family will always remember today as the day truth was dragged in the dirt and trampled upon, but more than that it is the day our family was torn apart forever because we lost our beautiful little Azaria. She will always ever be what this ongoing fight for justice has been all about. She deserves justice. In light of all the evidence before the Commission, this should be reflected on her death certificate and not the open finding that is there now. It is not like the eyewitnesses are dead or that there was not a recommendation from the Royal Commission and the NT Supreme Court who quashed our convictions. It would not take more taxpayers money to do it. These courts were exhaustive, why not adopt their recommendations and stop wasting everyone’s time, money and intelligence. Lindy or a dingo was the NT claim. Their own Commission proved it was not me, as I had told them all along, so why don’t they accept their own claim now? It makes one wonder are they really after the truth, or just too stubborn or proud to admit that a mistake has been made? Who knows the reason, but most of all please do not forget that a beautiful little girl died tragically on this date thirty years ago.

Regards,

Lindy

www.lindychamberlain.com