

COURT: SUPREME COURT OF TASMANIA

CITATION: *Lakaev v McConkey* [2024] TASSC 8

PARTIES: LAKAEV, Natasha
v
McCONKEY, Carli

FILE NO: 2093/2018

DELIVERED ON: 1 March 2024

DELIVERED AT: Hobart

HEARING DATES: 28, 29 September 2023
3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 30 October
2023
2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 23, 27 November 2023
7, 8, 11, 12 December 2023

Written and closing addresses 22, 26, 28 February 2024

JUDGMENT OF: Estcourt J

CATCHWORDS:

Defamation – Justification – Truth – Substantial truth and contextual truth – Defendant admitted numerous imputations against the plaintiff including that she was a cult leader, had wrongfully indoctrinated people and was a criminal – Defendant pleaded justification pursuant to s 25 of the *Defamation Act 2005* – Plaintiff found to be untruthful and her witnesses to be in the main partial and lacking credit – Defendant found to be honest and reliable and her witnesses independent and credible – Defendant's case supported by extensive documentary evidence – All imputations established as substantially true thus attracting a defence of justification – Judgment for the defendant against the plaintiff.

Defamation Act 2005 s 25
Aust Dig Defamation [43.5]

REPRESENTATION:

Counsel:

Plaintiff: D Zeeman

Defendant: In Person

Solicitors:

Plaintiff: Butler McIntyre & Butler

Judgment Number: [2024] TASSC 8

Number of paragraphs: 327

NATASHA LAKAEV v CARLI McCONKEY

REASONS FOR JUDGMENT

**ESTCOURT J
1 MARCH 2024**

The action

1 This is a defamation action brought largely in relation to the contents of a book entitled, *The Cult Effect*, (the book), released in July 2017. The defendant, Carli McConkey, is the author of the self-published work. It was written as the defendant's first-hand account of the experiences she claims to have had over a period of 13 years in an alleged cult. The cult is said to have been conducted under the auspices of programmes conducted by and on behalf of the plaintiff, under the style of *Life Integration Programmes* (later *Universal Knowledge*) and a group known as the *Combined PMC Group* comprising persons who had completed the program known as *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling*. In the book the defendant describes the plaintiff, Natasha Lakaev, as the cult leader.

2 The action relates to specific passages from the book but also to passages from newspaper articles that are reproduced in it (the articles), as well as to published material from other sources, including the defendant's website, an article published by the *Let's Talk About Sects* podcast on 30 January 2018, the defendant's Twitter account, and her Facebook page (the online publications). The impugned passages of the publications are set out in the statement of claim.

3 The publications in the book that are claimed to contain content defamatory of the plaintiff are pleaded as follows ("the book passages"):

"5 The Book contains, in its main text, the following publications, of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) 'Group member would single people out and bring up issues with "weak" or "lazy" members, yelling and screaming at them, sometimes getting physical with them to try and Shift them (from being Stuck) so they would not fail to adhere to the rules again.

This type of behaviour was initiated and encouraged by Natasha who would scream and yell at students over an Issue regularly and set the example for all other group members to follow. A few times during the year, she hit and shoved people to make her point clear. We soon learned, if we hadn't already, that she had a very domineering, aggressive and controlling personality.'

- (b) 'Once we have completed the major portion of our PMC assignments, Natasha told us, one night in a meeting, that she had something special in store for us. She explained that, due to us counselling people from all manner of society, we had to be prepared and empathetic with our clients. Therefore, we needed to experience taking drugs.

Natasha proceeded to ask one of her Support Team members to bring our marijuana joints which she said were from reputable sources nearby, whom they had bought from previously. She told those of the group who were predisposed to drug addiction that they could partake if they wanted to, as it was under a controlled environment where the Support Team would be in close vicinity. However, once we commenced smoking the joints, the Support Team joined in, as well as Natasha.'

- (c) "No, Carli!" Natasha screamed. 'Luke manipulated you to transfer those funds to pay his own debts! Don't you know he's a gambler and a thief? You are a fucking idiot, you stupid bitch. You do whatever you want to do, you c**nt.'

I was then "In The Shit", as we would come to call it whenever Natasha punished someone for an extended period of time. The only way you came out of The Shit was by climbing your way out of it – by working harder, smarter and beyond the call of duty. This would involve being screamed at daily, and punished with menial tasks like cleaning, whipper-snipping, or office admin, all hours of the day and night, making you feel degraded and worthless.'

- (d) 'Natasha would regularly verbally abuse me on the phone from Brisbane, or while she was down at Omaroo. Constantly she would scream at me, calling me a "liar", a "selfish brat", and a "fat, lazy dog". Invariably she would finish with the line, "you are a fucking c**nt".'
- (e) 'FRESH ZEN WHOLESALE continued until it became evident that it was no longer financially viable. Natasha then worked on getting Luke institutionalised into a psychiatric facility in Brisbane. I visited Luke at the hospital one day with Natasha, bringing along paperwork that I have been asked to prepare. He looked drugged out and weak, not at all like the strong and vibrant Luke I had once admitted (sic). Natasha asked Luke to sign over his Power of Attorney to her, and she commenced the process of pursuing an Income Protection claim on his behalf. This meant she could collect this money for herself.'
- (f) 'Madeline must have been an exceptional lawyer (keeping in mind she believed everything Natasha told her) as the court concluded that the claim was legitimate. Natasha was now collecting three income protection amounts, two in her name, and the other as Power of Attorney for Luke. With Luke safely in the care of the psychiatric hospital, Natasha got back together with Jeremy.'
- (g) 'Natasha told Michael to hit and slap me and tell me what a bad person and mother I was. "Mick, you need to whack some sense into Carli. She's an absolute idiot. She has created all of this and you have let her. Take control of your 'wife', Mick. I can't do it all for you!"'
- (h) 'Whether Michael wanted to beat me or not, Natasha said that if he didn't do what needed to be done, then the guys would knock some sense into him.'
- (i) 'Soon after the incident, Jeremy ran away again, before the contract had been completed. Sometime later Ted took Natasha to court to recover his equipment and recoup a percentage of the contracts they had secured, as he had a 50:50 share in the company and had virtually set up the whole business. Natasha told each of the PMC guys to sign legal documents stating that they had been paid \$7,500 each in wages (which they had not) so she could present to the court the argument that there was no money left over from the business for Ted to lay claim to. She also included \$20,000 worth of consultancy fees to herself.'
- (j) 'Natasha flew up to the course-room in a rage, wooden spoon in hand, followed by all the mothers. She found Sebastian, who was the oldest of the kids in the room at four years old, tucked in bed, and screamed at him: "What have you done?"'

Sebastian sat up in shock. "Nothing," he said.

She demanded an explanation of what had just happened. "Stand up! Did you take off the children's nappies?"

He shook his head and trembled. "No".

Did you smear this poo all over the floor?

He again whimpered "no", his little body shaking.

Natasha started belting into him with the wooden spoon. When it broke, she yelled to Tiffany: "Get another one from the Centre Kitchen!"

Tiffany raced off to the kitchen and came back with a metal spatula. Again, Natasha started smacking him. She then told Tiffany and Kate to start hitting him as well. After they'd both smacked him, Natasha turned to me and shouted: "Carli, he's your child. You spank him! You have to teach him these lessons, not just us. Discipline now, otherwise he's going to be a monster when he grows up."

- (k) 'In a matter of minutes, with clearer thoughts, and way from the clutches of Natasha and her increasingly paranoid world, I began to realise that she was a cult leader, and I had been part of a cult.'
- (l) 'We had been taught by Natasha to smack our children with wooden spoons'.
- (m) 'She is a criminal. She has physically assaulted people, psychologically abused people and conned people out of money!'"

4 The two articles appended to the book that are claimed to contain content defamatory of the plaintiff are pleaded as follows ("the article passages"):

"6 The Book also includes by way of annexures, the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) An article headed 'In thrall to a cult: how the unwary fall victim to mind control' purportedly published by The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on 17 October 2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:
 - (i) 'Carli McConkey is not mentally ill. Neither drugs nor alcohol has led her to this point. Instead, in 1996 she joined a New Age personal development group called Universal Knowledge, seeking clarity. Once McConkey converted to its aims, the group's leader, Natasha Lakaev, manipulated her, hit her, took hundreds of thousands of dollars from her, and worked her without pay for up to 22 hours a day, seven days a week.'
 - (ii) "'These techniques appear to be for health reasons but they actually have the effect of debilitation," says Whitsett. "They reduce the person's ability to think critically, to reason, and when people are so weak the 'self' is impaired, they are easier to control and manipulate."
 - (iii) 'Whitsett says this "continuous barrage of attacks on the 'self' keeps the person in a continuous state of failure, of low self-esteem, and attached to the cult."
 - (iv) 'Once Lakaev's disciples were hooked, their critical faculties broken down and their outside support cut off, Lakaev revealed her more extreme theology. McConkey says she

claimed to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of the 12 members on the Intergalactic Council of the Universe. She came from the "Bird Tribes" from a different dimension and she remembered all her past lives. In one of them she had been Queen of Atlantis. McConkey was told by Lakaev she had been a "lady in waiting" in Atlantis and she felt she was put on earth to serve her.'

- (v) 'In December 1999, McConkey began working for Lakaev in the office without wages, and also cleaning and maintaining her properties. She and Michael bought a share in Lakaev's company, Universal Knowledge, for \$20,000, believing they were buying equity, securing their future. They received nothing in return. Company documents show \$420,000 was raised from investors in this manner, and Lakaev admits none have seen a return.'
 - (vi) 'McConkey and her husband had more than one period apart as they dealt with the psychological and financial pressures imposed by Lakaev. In the meantime, McConkey says she was psychologically abused and physically assaulted by Lakaev, and was separated from her sons because Lakaev convinced her she was a "human f--- up". Lakaev also once beat McConkey's young son with a wooden spoon, she says'; and
 - (vii) 'Finally, in January this year, McConkey could handle no more. She picked up her children and drove away into what she believed was certain death at doomsday. "I was exhausted, had been beaten up again and was unable to cope with any more psychological and emotional pressure. I just said to myself, 'I don't care if I die in two years' time, I would prefer to be free and enjoy my children.'" and
- (b) An article headed 'Alleged leader of cult works as psychologist' purportedly published by The Sunday Age newspaper on 17 October 2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:
- (i) 'A woman accused of leading a cult that has damaged the lives of scores of people is working as a psychologist with vulnerable patients at a community mental health service in Queensland.'
 - (ii) 'Natasha Lakaev's Universal Knowledge organisation was offering courses until last year that prophesied the world would end in December 2012 and almost everyone except her devotees would die.'; and
 - (iii) 'A former member of her inner circle, Carli McConkey, has told The Sunday Age that Ms Lakaev was physically violent and psychologically manipulative, and had persuaded her followers that she was the Queen of Atlantis, a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of 12 members of the Intergalactic Council of the Universe.'

5

The imputations from the book passages and the article passages are pleaded as follows:

- "7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:
- (a) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(a), (c) and (d) that the Plaintiff was a bully and had bullied the Defendant;

- (b) In respect of those referred to at paragraphs 5(a), (l) and 6(a)(i), (vi), (vii) and (b)(iii), that the Plaintiff had unlawfully battered the Defendant;
- (c) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(m) that the Plaintiff had unlawfully battered other persons;
- (d) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(g) and (h) that the Plaintiff had unlawfully incited other persons to batter persons;
- (e) In respect of those referred to at paragraphs 5(e), (f) and (i) and 6(a)(i) and (iv) that the Plaintiff had unlawfully obtained a financial advantage;
- (f) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(b), that the Plaintiff had unlawfully used illicit drugs and had encouraged others to do so;
- (g) In respect of those referred to at paragraphs 5(k) and 6(a)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi) and (vii) and (b)(i), (ii) and (iii), that the Plaintiff had wrongfully indoctrinated people;
- (h) In respect of those at paragraph 6(a)(i) and (iv) that the Plaintiff had breached Australian industrial legislation;
- (i) In respect of those at paragraph 5(m), that the Plaintiff was a criminal."

6

As to the impugned online publications the plaintiff pleads as follows:

"7A The defendant has also published and continues to publish the following further materials of and concerning the Plaintiff via the website <https://www.carlimcconkey.com>

- (a) 'I lost over 13 years in the destructive cult, Universal Knowledge (formerly known as Life Integration Programmes), run by cult leader Natasha Lakaev (a registered Psychologist with AHPRA, Australia).'
- (b) 'Myself and scores of others were abused by Natasha Lakaev, who used mind control to yield power, money and glorification within a high demand group. Cult leaders generally display the traits of a charismatic narcissist, with Antisocial, Borderline and Histrionic Personality Disorders.'
- (c) 'A discussion of the Book as: "a gripping account of the brutal impact of spiritual and violent extremism."'
- (d) 'What at first appeared professional and promising, became a vehicle for psychological and physical abuse.'

7B The defendant has also published and continues to publish the following further materials of and concerning the plaintiff via the section of her website entitled "Book Reviews" which is viewable at the URL: <https://www.carlimcconkey.com/book-reviews>:

- (a) 'I was involved with Lakaev's courses close to two decades ago and was absolutely shocked to learn that this woman went from operating her cult to becoming a registered psychologist in Australia (current) and at some stage was even working for Queensland Health as a government-employed psychologist. Unfathomable and this was despite several media exposes on her, an obviously questionable online presence and several complaints to the Queensland Psychology Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This book reveals it all, providing not only in-depth, clear and explanatory description of how this Australian cult operated but in the

final chapters also provides insights into how AHPRA and the Queensland Psychology Board allowed Lakaev to continue with her registration as a psychologist despite what has been presented in front of them.'

- (b) 'Carli McConkey has shared her journey into a New age cult with honesty and courage. This book will be invaluable in helping others who have been, or find themselves drawn into what appears to be a group offering courses to benefit their lives, often at a vulnerable time in their life.

Trapped for 13 years in a world of abuse and control Carli bravely tells her story of life in Universal Knowledge and her journey to freedom.'

7C The defendant has also published and continues to publish of and concerning the plaintiff via the section of her website titled "My Story" at the URL: <https://www.carlimcconkey.com/news:>

- (a) An article headed "Alleged leader of cult works as a psychologist" purportedly published by The Sunday Age and the Sydney Morning Herald on their websites on 16 October 2010 containing the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

(i) 'Carli McConkey, has told The Sunday Age that Ms Lakaev was physically violent and psychologically manipulative, and had persuaded her followers that she was the Queen of Atlantis, a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of 12 members of the Intergalactic Council of the Universe.'

(ii) 'Complaints against her by former acolytes have been investigated once by Queensland's health regulator, but no action taken. The national health regulator will not comment except to say Ms Lakaev "has current registration and is therefore deemed fit to practise".'

- (b) An article headed "Medium, Carli's Story: Exiting a Cult" purportedly published by the Let's Talk About Sects podcast on 30 January 2018 containing the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

(i) 'On top of the financial strain, things also often got physical. When this cult leader was bashing me up, I was feeling like I deserved this.'

(ii) 'My cult leader now as a registered psychologist, threatened that if I did leave, that she would report me to DOCS, Department of Child Safety, and have my children taken away from me 'cos she was going to say that I was an abusive mother and sign off on it as a psychologist.'

7D The defendant has published and continues to publish the following material of and concerning the plaintiff via her Twitter account at the URL: https://twitter.com/carli_mcconkey?lang=en

- (a) 'Please join me in demanding that the Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA) and the health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) de-register a Clinical Psychologist who is an abusive Cult Leader.'

7E The Defendant has published the following material concerning the Plaintiff via her Facebook account which is viewable at the URL: <https://www.facebook.com/carlimcconkey>

- (a) 'Please support this petition to ask the Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency (AHPRA) and the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) to re-investigate a Clinical Psychologist who has caused significant harm to vulnerable members of the Australian community.'
- (b) 'This psychologist "was the President of the Australian Psychological Society from 2009 to 2011 at the time when my cult leader, Natasha Lakaev was investigated as a registered Psychologist for allegations of abuse and physical assault. No wonder these criminals get away with their crimes when all levels of government and those in power do nothing and let the perpetrators continue to cause further harm to society. Natasha Lakaev is still a registered psychologist."'

7

The imputations from the online publications are pleaded as follows:

"7F The publications the defendant has made of and concerning the plaintiff as pleaded at paragraphs 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D and 7E hereof are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

- (a) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 7A(a), 7B(a), 7C(a)(ii), 7D(a) and 7E(a) that the plaintiff is unfit to practise as a psychologist;
- (b) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 7A(b), 7A(d) and 7B(b) that the plaintiff committed acts of abuse against the defendant;
- (c) In respect of those referred to at 7A(d), 7C(a)(i), 7B(b)(i) and 7E(b) that the plaintiff physically abused the defendant;
- (d) In respect of those referred to at 7A(b) that the plaintiff is likely to suffer from narcissistic personality disorder and borderline personality disorder;
- (e) In respect of those referred to at 7A(c) that the plaintiff is a violent extremist;
- (f) In respect of those referred to at 7C(b)(ii) that the plaintiff misused her position as a psychologist to threaten her; and
- (g) In respect of those referred to at 7E(b) that the plaintiff was guilty of abuse and physical assault of the defendant and that she was guilty of such conduct as to warrant her de-registration as a psychologist."

8

Subject to some typographical errors identified at paragraph 6 of her second further amended defence, the defendant admits the publication of the book passages, the article passages and the online publications, however, by way of defence she pleads justification, pursuant to s 25 of the *Defamation Act 2005* (the Act), contextual truth, pursuant to s 26 of the Act, qualified privilege, pursuant to s 30 of the Act, honest opinion, pursuant to s 31 of the Act and qualified privilege at common law.

9

The defendant agrees that the contents of paragraphs 7 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), and (i) and 7F (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g), of the amended statement of claim bear the natural and ordinary meanings of the imputations pleaded, however, she denies that the plaintiff has been greatly injured in her personal and professional reputation and by reason of those publications persons are likely to be induced to shun, avoid, ridicule or despise her, as, the defendant says, "the plaintiff's personal and professional reputation was such that she was already likely to be shunned, avoided, ridiculed or despised".

10 In her reply to the defendant's pleading, the plaintiff denies that any of the pleaded defences are applicable and says that the publications were motivated by the defendant's malice towards the plaintiff and her desire to bring about revenge upon the plaintiff.

11 Before embarking on the evidence in the plaintiff's case it is convenient to set out the text of the two impugned articles which are republished at the end of the defendant's book, the first of which is, for all practical purposes, a thumbnail sketch of the account of the experiences asserted by the defendant in the body of the book and in her oral evidence at trial.

12 That article was entitled "*In thrall to a cult: how the unwary fall victim to mind control*", written by journalist Michael Bachelard and published in the *Melbourne Sunday Age* on 17 October 2010. It reads as follows:

"As she left university to make her way in the world, Carli McConkey suffered all the workaday self-doubts. She believed she was overweight, was unsure of her chosen career and was worried about finding Mr Right. She was disillusioned with Catholicism and craved spiritual fulfilment. She was also bright, popular, academically successful. After she organised the 1995 orientation week at her university, a careers adviser wrote: 'Carli is my idea of an outstanding Australian'.

Thirteen years later, McConkey is broke and exhausted. She has been beaten up and has mistreated others. She has spent years estranged from her parents, neglected her children, misled the courts and has worked as a virtual slave. Fixed in her mind is the fear that in December 2012 the world will come to an end and all but a few of us will die. At 35, she is also sterile, having been persuaded to undergo a tubal ligation in the belief that she was an unfit mother to her three sons.

Carli McConkey is not mentally ill. Neither drugs nor alcohol has led her to this point. Instead, in 1996 she joined a New Age personal development group called Universal Knowledge, seeking clarity. Once McConkey converted to its aims, the group's leader, Natasha Lakaev, manipulated her, hit her, took hundreds of thousands of dollars from her, and worked her without pay for up to 22 hours a day, seven days a week.

McConkey spent the best years of her life in a cult. She only escaped earlier this year. What's frightening about her story is that this could happen to any of us.

Clinical Professor Doni Whitsett of the University of Southern California has been working with victims of cults and their families for 20 years. Carli's is 'a tragic textbook case', she says. Cults vary in theology and practice, but all employ similar techniques to recruit the unwary. Scientology uses the free personality test to suggest everyone has deficiencies that Scientology can best address; the Australian cult Kenja uses circus classes and the promise of counselling and personal growth; and the commune-based Australian group Jesus People uses the promise of a purer form of Christianity. Natasha Lakaev used a mish-mash of New Age theories and therapies, an end-times philosophy based on environmental disaster, and a powerful personality.

Lakaev vehemently denies all allegations, saying she does not run a cult and that McConkey is unstable. What she ran was 'just a series of workshops', she says. But for well over a decade, a growing number of former acolytes have emerged with identical stories of a high-pressure, abusive organisation.

Most of us find it hard to believe that anybody could allow themselves to be brainwashed in the way McConkey claims. But Whitsett says people do not join cults, they are systematically recruited, often by charismatic narcissists whose need for adulation gives them the power to manipulate others. Their victims are not mentally ill or stupid. They are often of higher than average intelligence, but they have vulnerabilities that the leader exploits and amplifies using powerful techniques known as 'coercive persuasion' or 'mind control'. And like religious cults, personal development cults target people looking for guidance.

McConkey was 21 when she encountered a recruiter for Universal Knowledge, then known as Life Integration Programmes, at the 1996 Mind Body Spirit Festival in Sydney. 'I was a bit lost . . . and I was definitely searching,' she says. 'I just wanted to have a psychic reading to have a bit of clarity on my direction . . . and [the reader] said basically, 'This course has everything you need to get over your insecurities, to build your self-esteem, get financial freedom, a great relationship' . . . The brochure said over 10,000 people have done the course. It all appeared very legitimate.'

According to Whitsett, McConkey was vulnerable to these suggestions in part simply because she was in her early 20s the transition from adolescence to adulthood. 'When people are 'searching', they are in an existential crisis, looking for answers to the great questions: 'Who am I? What is life all about?' They are . . . willing to suspend their own worldview and their own ideas for another that seems more promising.'

McConkey took her discovery of Lakaev's northern NSW-based group as a metaphysical 'sign'. She immediately signed up to the course, 'The Next Evolutionary Step'.

In person, Lakaev was sexy, powerful, charismatic. She told attendees to keep an open mind, to 'leave your logic at the door', to avoid 'judgmentalism' a technique cults use to silence the internal voice of reason. She introduced the group to a technique called 'accessing' beating a black mat and yelling frustrations at parents, friends, teachers. She told them they needed to cleanse their 'cellular memory' of the impurities of this and past lives, and those of their ancestors. They must live by 'intuition' alone and if they did, they could 'manifest' (or make) things happen in the real world. Wealth, happiness, success, relationships could all be 'manifested' by the truly intuitive or 'super-intelligent'.

To McConkey it was inspiring. And though she had been told that the first course would fix everything, at the end the group was informed that to become fully 'integrated', there were no fewer than 17 other courses, all at considerable expense, to do.

'It's a bait and switch,' says Whitsett. People who believe an organisation to be credible and moderate have little fear of it, and can be drawn in further. Only later are they introduced to its more dangerous (and often more expensive) elements.

Melbourne woman Madeline Hardess, a university student and former private school captain, was lured into the Jesus People in 2004 by a man she met on a dating website. He did not initially mention that the three-bedroom house he lived in was actually a commune of up to 25 people, including two families of five.

He also did not reveal that, for food, they begged compost from grocery stores and ate the less putrid scraps. Nor did he say that the women were often beaten and yelled at. Only after a series of revelations over eight months did the truth sink in. By the time it did, Hardess was engaged and was convinced that people on the outside were corrupt or evil. She wore a headscarf to signify her subservience to the men.

'Through that period you're so excited that you've found this new thing that you don't even question that much,' she said. 'But then . . . it became a lot more intense and you had to quash thoughts . . . I used to be a feminist, but then you get to the point where you're not even allowed to shake men's hands.'

For McConkey, the first Life Integration course convinced her she had dozens of 'issues'. She immediately signed up for two more. At the next course, 'The Final Step', 70 people went to a rural property in a bus with the windows blacked out. They handed over phones, wallets and identification. Their 'self' was being removed, as was any means of escape. For a week they were yelled at, punished, pressured to complete tasks in a short time. In the attempt to 'cleanse' themselves, they were made to go hungry, and would often only get two hours of sleep a night. They paraded naked in front of the group, which McConkey found humiliating.

The next course was even more extreme. Called 'Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling', it cost \$10,000 and lasted a year. It featured a punishing daily regime

including a strict vegan diet, a daily 10-kilometre run and drinking two litres of fruit juice.

'These techniques appear to be for health reasons but they actually have the effect of debilitation,' says Whitsett. 'They reduce the person's ability to think critically, to reason, and when people are so weak the 'self' is impaired, they are easier to control and manipulate.'

McConkey recalls seeing visions of 'spirits' what Whitsett says were probably hallucinations or 'waking dreams' caused by lack of sleep. Lakaev disputes these details, saying the vegan diet was only for a short time. One year's program, she admits, became 'quite extreme' but she had tried to 'settle it down'.

Always a conscientious student, McConkey was desperate to succeed. But Lakaev's comments to her and others were 90 per cent negative, convincing them they needed to work harder.

Adrian Norman, a former member of Sydney cult Kenja, said an apparently random reward-punishment system kept him on edge for years. 'You were built up as wonderful . . . and then a week or two later you are the worst person in the world and disgusting and smelly and no one would ever want to be with you. It's like couples in abusive relationships you go into a state of hyper-awareness and you can't think critically because you don't know if you're going to be attacked.'

Whitsett says this 'continuous barrage of attacks on the 'self' keeps the person in a continuous state of failure, of low self-esteem, and attached to the cult'. 'They want to improve, to be better people, but they can never live up to the impossible standards set by the leader.'

Cult members are also often deliberately disoriented, and outside influences removed to reduce their ability to distinguish what's normal. McConkey says Lakaev insisted that she renounce her parents and never discuss anything that happened on the courses, claims Lakaev denies. But Carli's mother, Robyn, remembers: 'You'd just talk generally and she couldn't answer any simple questions because it pertained to what was happening up there, and it was all so secret. So there gradually just came a line where you didn't know what to talk about any more.'

A Melbourne family, who wish to remain anonymous, say their son is being recruited by the Jehovah's Witnesses and they are watching him drift away from them as the cult's persuasive techniques prove 'more powerful than the love of the family'. 'To have a heartfelt relationship with one of your children and then to have a superficial, plastic relationship, it's gut-wrenching,' says the father.

Cults also try to make it hard to find external, verifiable information. Lakaev uses lawyers to vigorously patrol public comment about her. She has legally pressured Google to remove links to websites critical of her and she is suing some former members for defamation over information they published on blogs.

Once Lakaev's disciples were hooked, their critical faculties broken down and their outside support cut off, Lakaev revealed her more extreme theology McConkey says she claimed to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of the 12 members on the Intergalactic Council of the Universe. She came from the 'Bird Tribes' from a different dimension and she remembered all her past lives. In one of them she had been Queen of Atlantis. McConkey was told by Lakaev she had been a 'lady in waiting' in Atlantis and she felt she was put on earth to serve her.

Lakaev also claimed 'spirit guides' who live in the sky told her what to do. This gave her divine authority when she insisted that the planet would soon be destroyed and most people would perish. Lakaev, though, would survive with her followers and become the dominant political figure. Cult leaders often describe their god-like powers, saying that theirs is the power of life and death. A number of sources back up McConkey's claims, but Lakaev concedes only that 'spirit guides' sometimes give her 'very clear thoughts', and that, 'from where I sit there are other dimensions that exist'.

Of the other claims, though: 'I do not consider myself the reincarnation of anything . . . There's no such thing as 12 members on an intergalactic council. These are just stories that we talked about, just stories to describe things and discuss things . . . They're just metaphors.' The end of the world, she claims, was not a prophecy. Her 'survival' course was simply designed to help people cope if the worst did happen.

McConkey vehemently stands by her version.

In her 13 years with Lakaev, McConkey completed 15 courses, some more than once, spending \$41,395 on fees, much of it begged or borrowed from her parents. She met a man, Michael, and married him. He spent \$34,540 on fees. Lakaev insinuated herself into every aspect of McConkey's life. She was maid of honour at Carli and Michael's wedding. McConkey insisted that Lakaev, rather than her own mother, an experienced midwife, assist at the birth of her children.

In December 1999, McConkey began working for Lakaev in the office without wages, and also cleaning and maintaining her properties. She and Michael bought a share in Lakaev's company, Universal Knowledge, for \$20,000, believing they were buying equity, securing their future. They received nothing in return. Company documents show \$420,000 was raised from investors in this manner, and Lakaev admits none have seen a return.

Lakaev later came up with spurious excuses to make McConkey and her husband pay her a further \$140,000, claiming they were debts they owed. Both worked second and third jobs to pay this back. McConkey estimates that Lakaev owes them another \$440,000 for their free labour over nine years.

Lakaev also convinced McConkey to seek an apprehended violence order against her parents and her brother. The court rejected the applications after McConkey gave misleading evidence. Lakaev claims instead that she had tried to help McConkey reconcile with her parents.

McConkey and her husband had more than one period apart as they dealt with the psychological and financial pressures imposed by Lakaev. In the meantime, McConkey says she was psychologically abused and physically assaulted by Lakaev, and was separated from her sons because Lakaev convinced her she was a 'human f--- up'. Lakaev also once beat McConkey's young son with a wooden spoon, she says.

Lakaev denies any physical abuse, saying McConkey was the violent one, who had 'done some very strange things with her kids'. 'She's going to end up in court herself. Carli's one of these girls who goes to psychics 24/7; she's not really that stable.'

Lakaev's supporters, who phoned The Sunday Age after my interview with her last week, said Lakaev was the victim of jealousy because she was a strong, independent businesswoman. They said they had seen McConkey leaving her young children home alone when she went to work. McConkey admits neglecting her children at times, but says she was forced to in the attempt to fulfil Lakaev's demands.

For 13 years she stayed in thrall to the cult, living on or near Lakaev's northern NSW property, Omaroo. The promise of 'survival', the hope of financial reward (from her shareholding in Universal Knowledge), and the occasional compliment was enough to keep her loyal. But in March 2009, in a state of exhaustion, McConkey agreed to something she will regret forever.

'After the birth of my first son, from age 27, Natasha would tell me I was abusive, a liar and a manipulator and I shouldn't look after any children. She started saying, "You should get sterilised", McConkey recalls. "After eight years, two more children and being repeatedly told to get sterilised, I gave in. I was separated from my husband at that time and I just knew I wouldn't be able to cope with another child in that environment and I thought, "Well, I'll just do it now".'

McConkey is strong. Many former cult members can never speak about their experiences. But after just nine months away from Lakaev, she held her nerve

throughout her account to me. When she tells me about the sterilisation though, the tears flow.

"The doctor said, "Are you sure you want to do this? You've still got 10 years of fertility left". I said, "No, it's what I want". But it wasn't. Someone else had placed that idea in my head. I did it purely for her, to be able to focus more on her and her needs. "After I left this year, I was in the girls' clothing section at Big W and I just had to really grieve that I wasn't able to have a little girl."

McConkey says the process of cult indoctrination had led her, inch by inch, to a place she could never have imagined. But Lakaev denies having any role in McConkey's decision. "I was a friend of Carli's . . . We had a symbiotic relationship," Lakaev says.

Finally, in January this year, McConkey could handle no more. She picked up her children and drove away into what she believed was certain death at doomsday. "I was exhausted, had been beaten up again and was unable to cope with any more psychological and emotional pressure. I just said to myself, 'I don't care if I die in two years' time, I would prefer to be free and enjoy my children'.

The feeling of freedom was almost immediate. But McConkey deals with shame and guilt over things she has done to her children, her family, her husband and other cult members. Some family members still will not talk to her. And she finds it difficult to plan for anything after Armageddon, which Lakaev prophesied would be December 12, 2012.

"I believe about 50 per cent that 'Survival' is going to happen and I just hope that it's not going to," McConkey says. "If I wake up on the 13th [of December] and nothing has happened I'm just going to celebrate and hope to God that whoever is still caught up with that woman is just going to get up and leave.'

People sometimes ask why cult members do not simply exercise their free will and run away. But Kenja escapee Adrian Norman says his free will was reduced to a 'pilot light' while in the cult. Mind control techniques are subtle and powerful. They turn your own mind against you. "Prison walls and chains are not necessary when one believes these things", says Whitsett.

The good news is people can escape and recover, and McConkey is determined to do so. "I go through bouts of feeling really down but I know I can get out of them because I don't want to be depressed any more . . . I still feel angry, but I don't feel as much fear."

13

The second article is entitled "*Alleged leader of cult works as psychologist*" and was written by Michael Bachelard and published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* online on 17 October 2010. It reads as follows:

"A woman accused of leading a cult that has damaged the lives of scores of people is working as a psychologist with vulnerable patients at a community mental health service in Queensland.

Natasha Lakaev's Universal Knowledge organisation was offering courses until last year that prophesied the world would end in December 2012 and almost everyone except her devotees would die.

A former member of her inner circle, Carli McConkey, has told The Sunday Age that Ms Lakaev was physically violent and psychologically manipulative, and had persuaded her followers that she was the Queen of Atlantis, a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of 12 members of the Intergalactic Council of the Universe.

Ms Lakaev is now working as a government-employed psychologist at the Ashmore Community Mental Health Service near Surfers Paradise. However, after The Sunday Age raised questions about her history, Queensland Health agreed to investigate the claims against her, and invited 'anyone with concerns' to raise them with authorities.

Ms Lakaev denies all the claims of her former followers, saying she did not run a cult, had never been violent, and the theological claims were merely 'metaphors', adding, 'this stuff has been taken completely out of context'.

Complaints against her by former acolytes have been investigated once by Queensland's health regulator, but no action taken. The national health regulator will not comment except to say Ms Lakaev 'has current registration and is therefore deemed fit to practise'.

Ms Lakaev's lawyers wrote last December that she was working as a case manager.

'A large proportion of her clients are often initially highly unstable with disorders such as schizophrenia, delusional disorders, major depression, major anxiety and personality disorders,' the letter said. 'Forensic clients with homicidal backgrounds are also present on the clinic client list.'

Ms Lakaev has faced criticism for more than a decade about the extreme practices on her courses, and accusations that she was a practitioner of 'coercive persuasion' or mind control techniques.

Ms McConkey, who spent 13 years under Ms Lakaev's sway and only escaped in January this year, said Ms Lakaev had hit her and exploited her. Ms McConkey lived on or near Ms Lakaev's northern NSW property, Omaroo, near Burringbar, for many years, and during that time handed over \$140,000 and spent nine years working without pay in her office. 'Natasha Lakaev should in no way be a registered psychologist,' Ms McConkey said.

Ms Lakaev's business, Universal Knowledge, is styled as a new age personal development course. It has not offered courses since last year, but the program promises to cleanse the 'cellular memory' of its participants and help them take the 'next evolutionary step' by lifting them into the fourth dimension.

Ms Lakaev told The Sunday Age she had not worked with the business for many years. However, she founded the business in 1999 and she is listed on the website as 'guiding individuals and groups for over 20 years in cellular memory cleansing'. It is based at her property and is run by one of her devotees, and she and her children own 75 per cent of the shares.

She begged The Sunday Age not to refer to her work at Ashmore. She said: 'I don't harm people, I'm really good at my job, my clients are fine, my patients are fine.'

The plaintiff's case

14 The first witness called on the trial was the plaintiff.

15 At a high level of abstraction her evidence was that she really only knew the defendant from her involvement in classes which were conducted by her, although she had started receiving "love letters" from her from about 1996. She said that she had never had a cup of coffee with her, had never spoken to her on the telephone other than to ask to be put on to someone else, and had not had a one on one conversation with her, at least after 2000 or 2001. She said that the defendant quickly became a nuisance who could not observe healthy boundaries and pestered her for employment, which the plaintiff refused. She agreed, however, that she assisted the defendant with her wedding in 2005 and attended it "under duress", as well as attending that year, a "Water Blessing and Naming Ceremony" for the defendant's sons, Sebastian and Jacob, and other children in the plaintiff's group.

16 The plaintiff painted the defendant as a stalker, stealing keys to her house and being in her bedroom at odd times without her permission and taking her linen. On one occasion she said that the defendant lived in her home without permission and was heard to call her three sons by the names of the plaintiff's three son's. She described her perception of the defendant as constituting a threat to the

safety of her and her family to the extent that, in around 2000 or 2001, she and her family moved from Omaroo to Brisbane. The plaintiff said that the move to Brisbane was specifically to avoid having the defendant visit her home. Asked if the defendant was a friend of hers she answered:

"She was somebody I was an acquaintance with. I never went to coffee with her, I never went to her home, I felt for her children. She was quite isolated, she did not have many friends. When we had functions, like birthdays, I always felt that her children and her should be included, we couldn't invite everybody else around her and not her, but I only ever saw her in large group events."

Asked what her reaction was to the behaviour of the defendant, the plaintiff answered:

"I would put myself in a position where I only ever had witnesses around me. It became very obvious to me that the truth was a very difficult thing for Ms McConkey. There was many instances of behaviours and actions that were very troubling to me. I felt that myself (sic) was not safe, my family was not safe. Friends and family members. And what I did is, I made an effort in around 2000, 2001, to leave the property and move to Brisbane, and change my children's schools. And from that period on, I would remain away from Ms McConkey unless there were other witnesses. Ms McConkey was asked repeatedly, especially after the birth of her first child, to please go back to Sydney to her family. Her family wanted her there. I felt it would be healthier for her to be there. And I – it was repeated, not by just me, but anyway, I very specifically would've liked her to have gone home."

17 By and large, the foregoing is the substance of the plaintiff's account given in her evidence-in-chief of the nature and extent of her 13 year long association with the defendant.

18 At a high level of abstraction the plaintiff made a blanket denial of every one of the allegations made against her in the 120 or so pages of the annexures (in the nature of particulars of the truth of the pleaded imputations), to the defendant's defence. No concessions whatever were made by the plaintiff to the defendant's claims as to the controlling and abusive nature of the relationship between her and the plaintiff.

19 At a granular level the plaintiff responded in her evidence-in-chief to a number of specific allegations contained in the impugned publications and the annexures to the defendant's defence. The following passage from the transcript of the trial contains the bulk of the denials:

"Dr Lakaev, have you read the book, The Cult Effect?.....I have read it.

Thank you. Are you able to tell the Court what your reaction to it was?.....Horrorified.

Having read that book, if I could ask you some questions. Have you ever initiated and encouraged people to yell and scream, and get physical with other people?.....No.

In your business at Universal Knowledge – in the business of Universal Knowledge, did you hit or shove people?.....No.

And I'll – I'll preface my – all of my questions at – within that – within you association of Universal Knowledge. Did you ever tell people they needed to experience drugs?.....No. On the contrary.

Did you ever ask a person to bring their marijuana joints to the business?.....No.

To a program?.....In fact, our – once somebody comes to do a workshop, it's a line in there specifically that states that there's no cigarettes, no alcohol, no drugs of any sort, to be brought into the property.

Thank you. Did you ever, yourself, take drugs? Non-prescribed drugs. Or, perhaps if I withdraw that, say, illicit drugs?.....Well, I tried THC or marijuana when I was at

university, which is something that everybody did, I suppose, at the time. Are you asking me was I a regular smoker of any kind, or taking any drugs? No.

So within the business – ?.....No.

– were you taking illicit drugs?.....No.

Have you ever called Ms McConkey a 'fucking idiot' and a 'stupid bitch'?.....No. They're not my –

'Or', I should say 'or'..... – terminologies.

Have you ever abused Ms McConkey on the telephone?.....No, because she didn't have my telephone number.

To the extent that, a short while ago, you gave some evidence that Ms McConkey seeked (sic) to obtain a telephone number of yours?.....Mhm.

Did you ever – did you ever abuse her at any – those times?.....No.

Thank you.....I just hang up. Go change the number.

Have you ever called Ms McConkey a 'selfish brat'?.....No.

Have you ever called her a 'fat, lazy dog'?.....No.

Have you ever said to her that she was a 'fucking C-U-N-T'?.....No. Those words were not used. They're more frequently used now, and I had – took real umbrage to those words.

Thank you. Have you ever taken money, that is, unlawfully taken money, from an income protection claim, pursued on behalf of Nick – one Nick Panos?.....No.

Have you ever told Michael Greene to hit and slap Ms McConkey?.....No.

Have you ever said to Michael Greene that if he – that if he did not beat Ms McConkey, 'the guys', in quote, would knock some sense into him?.....No.

Have you ever told anyone associated with Universal Knowledge to fraudulently state that they had each been paid seven thousand five hundred dollars in wages?.....No, of course not.

Have you ever smacked Ms McConkey's then four year old son, Sebastian, with a wooden spoon and then a metal spoon?.....No, but I've seen others do this.

Have you ever, at any time, hit one of Ms McConkey's sons with a wooden spoon or a metal spoon?.....Never.

Have you ever said that you're a cult leader?.....No.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?.....No.

Have you ever – I'll put it in a manner that will, hopefully, make sense to you – physically assaulted people?.....No.

That is – that is, hit them?.....No.

Have you ever – trying to phrase this carefully, because you weren't a psychologist in 2002, were you?.....No.

But have you ever, from your understanding of psychology now, psychologically abused people?.....No.

In your association with a business, have you ever conned people out of money? I think you know what that phrase means?.....No.

When you read Ms McConkey's book, did you also read the annexures to the book, which were republications of certain media publications?.....I saw them, I didn't re-read them.

You haven't read them in any detail, or – ?.....Well, I've read them previously.

Thank you. So, if I draw on your previous reading of those publications, do you consider that you have ever manipulated Ms McConkey?.....No, the exact opposite. I've been manipulated.

Thank you. Have you ever hit her?.....No.

Did you ever take money from her, unlawfully?.....No.

Now, you've heard – oh sorry, you understand, from the book, that Ms McConkey says that you employed her. Do you recall?.....I do recall.

Have you ever employed her?.....No, she's never received a group certificate, and only those that have worked for us have.

Thank you. So, am I correct in understanding that you never paid her a wage?.....Because she was on Centrelink and collecting monies from elsewhere.

Thank you. Do you ever – do you consider that in the business – you ever – tried to critically break down the faculties of people within the courses?.....No, the exact opposite.

Have you ever claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ?.....Never.

Have you ever claimed to be one of 12 members of – on – on the Intergalactic Council of the Universe?.....No.

Have you ever told Ms McConkey that you had been a lady-in-waiting (sic) in Atlantis?.....No.

And do you know whether or not Ms McConkey ever purchased shares in Universal Knowledge?.....They did, and when looking at the records, they took a long while to pay off their shares. And I wasn't really concerned if they didn't.

Did you ever try to convince Ms McConkey that she was – what has been described as a 'human fuck-up'?.....No, but I've heard her use these words about herself.

Thank you. Are you able to say when?.....Many times. You would go into workshops, and in workshops you would hear these things. She would be in conversations, you could hear her outside. No, I never.

Thank you. Now, you are familiar with the content of your amended statement of claim?.....Yes.

Thank you. And in particular, you have knowledge of the online publications that are pleaded in – ?.....Yes.

– set out in red in the document. Correct?.....Yes.

Do you consider that you've ever abused Ms McConkey?.....No. However, I have been on the receiving end –

Thank you. Do – ?..... – and others that I've witnessed.

Do you ever consider that you've abused other people within Universal Knowledge?.....No.

Would you describe yourself as a violent extremist?.....No.

Would you describe yourself as a terrorist?.....No.

Do you consider you've ever been involved in a cult?.....No, exact opposite.

Thank you. And I ask you this question because it's slightly different to an earlier question I asked you: have you ever bashed Ms McConkey up?.....No. However, I've been on the receiving end.

Can you say what that means?.....That she has hit me, left me with bruises on my chest, arms and legs. And photos of that were sent to the North Sydney Police.

Thank you. Have you ever accused – sorry, I withdraw that. Have you ever threatened Ms McConkey that you would report her to the Department of Child Safety and have her children taken away from her?.....No. Somebody came to me, stating that they would report her to the Department of Child Safety because one of her children was very ill, and she hadn't taken them to the hospital."

20 The plaintiff described the program she ran known as The Next Evolutionary Step, as follows:

"It's primarily different forms of meditations, a range of different meditations. Some of them are very old, they come from a – like an Ayurveda perspective. Some of them have chants, some of them are quiet, some of them are open-eyed meditations, some of them are closed-eye meditations, with an exploration of each of your emotions, so that if somebody has too much of one, or not enough of another, we sort of help to bring an equilibrium. It's about working through any – for the worried well, any perceived traumas that they may have encountered during their lifetime, for them to go in and have a look at this on their own. Each individual process is done for the workshop participant, yep. Nobody guides you on what to or not do, it's your choice. This is laid out, and then they step in, and they do each of these processes or meditations."

21 She was asked if aggression was an element of the program and the exchange with her counsel, Mr D Zeeman, was as follows:

"There is a process on a Saturday, where we go through, how do you express aggression, how do you express sadness, how do you express happiness, how do you express joy, how do you express grief, fear, and – and then, an example, that lasts about one minutes, of – music comes on that represents, or could represent that emotion. And then, everybody gets up for one minute, expresses it, sits back down. And then, when you get to the Sunday, on a Sunday morning, there is a – about an hour, where each emotion has about 10 minutes, where you can express it fully for 10 minutes. And it goes anger, grief, fear, and then it goes happiness, laughter, bliss. And you do that for around 10 minutes to music, each way along. And then it finishes with a meditation.

Thank you. And fists on black mats, is that part of the program?.....It would be. You get a corner of a mat, a small corner. Someone shows you how you could express anger. Everybody has a different way of doing it. But it's only to the mat.

And not to a person?.....No, never."

22 The plaintiff said that she had never observed the defendant huddled in a corner at such a program, nor stopped her from hugging her mother, or denied her free access to the toilet, or the opportunity to eat, or in any way embarrassed or bullied, battered, indoctrinated or took financial advantage of the defendant or anyone else. The plaintiff denied that she was a criminal, used drugs or breached industrial legislation. She denied that she required the defendant to undertake a course known as *The Final Step* twice. She denied that the defendant had ever cooked or cleaned for her.

23 The plaintiff called four witnesses.

24 The first of those was Mr Alex Paine. Mr Paine gave evidence that he had read the plaintiff's amended statement of claim and the defendant's defence to that document. He was taken through the defendant's claims made in justification and denied that he had seen her bullied or assaulted by the plaintiff or unhappy in the *Universal Knowledge* workshops that they had done together. The thrust of his evidence was in line with the picture of the defendant painted by the plaintiff. He gave evidence that the defendant had physically assaulted the plaintiff in the office at Omaroo on two occasions in around 2009 and had told the plaintiff that she would go to the media with the claim that the plaintiff was a cult leader unless the plaintiff paid her \$300,000, gave her the use of a motor vehicle and allowed her to instruct courses or workshops if they started up again at some point in the future.

25 Mr Paine stated that everything in the defendant's book was a lie. Specifically, as to being involved in a cult, the following exchange relates:

"... In your dealings with Natasha Lakaev and doing the various courses with Universal Knowledge, do you ever believe that Natasha Lakaev created an environment where true believers, like you, were enthralled by her to keep you within her belief system?.....Yeah, I don't know what that means in terms of 'true believers', I mean she encouraged healthy discussion, if people wanted to raise issues with each other or whatever, so there was no common belief or common opinion or whatever. I mean, I've never, in my lifetime, come across more people that have differing views and different opinions and feel free to express those opinions.

Do you believe that Natasha Lakaev ever encouraged you to isolate yourself with her?.....Not at all. I enjoyed a strong relationship with my family all through the years and it's only since the publication of this book and what's on the internet that it's deteriorated any relationships I have with family.

Thank you. Did you ever believe that Natasha Lakaev tried to keep you within a close inner circle?.....No, I don't even know what inner circle was, if there existed an inner circle, I wasn't in it."

26 Mr Paine was not an independent witness. He was clearly in the plaintiff's camp and very supportive of her. He was very close to the plaintiff and regarded her as "familial family". She was the godmother of his daughter Ella. I will deal with my observations as to his credibility later in these reasons. I will also deal later with any other aspects of his evidence which may become relevant to a consideration of whether the pleaded imputations are substantially true.

27 The plaintiff's next witness was Ms Keicha Adams. Ms Adams gave evidence that she had witnessed the defendant "volunteering" in the plaintiff's office at Omaroo in the year 2000, that the defendant was incompetent and that she had witnessed her being asked to go home to her family "countless times". Ultimately Ms Adams said that she herself had resigned from the *Combined Personal Mastery* group in about 2006 because of the defendant's incompetence. She said that in particular the mess the defendant had made of the Sun Earth Tours business was the "last straw" for her. Ms Adams said that she had been paid for her work as a cleaner at Omaroo for a period of 8 months and that she had later worked as a nanny for the plaintiff without pay – although it had been offered.

28 Ms Adams gave evidence that in around 2008 the defendant said to her that if she ever left the plaintiff's group she would go to the media and destroy the plaintiff and her business. The relevant passage in the transcript is as follows:

"You say – you've said in your evidence that you know Carli McConkey?.....Mhm.

Did you have any dealings with her in 2008, that you recall?.....2008 specifically, some. I was working in the office, alongside Andrea and Tracy at various times.

Can you give their surnames?.....Andrea McSherry and Tracy Foster.

Thank you.....Doing – just various bits and pieces. I had a number of interactions with Ms McConkey in that time. She wasn't working in the office, but I did see her outside. It's sort of hard to pin down. On one occasion, she'd told me, directly, that if she ever left, she would destroy Natasha and the business. She was sitting on the pavers, outside, at that particular moment in time. On various other occasions, when there were interactions between Dr Lakaev and Ms McConkey –

I think if you talk about interactions which you witnessed?.....Which I witnessed and I was there for? There were – Dr Lakaev asked Ms McConkey to leave, 'Please go home to your family.' As she had said for countless times in the years prior to that.

Which you had heard, or – ?.....Which I had heard, and I had heard other people request the same.

Thank you. Did you ever speak to Ms McConkey about what you said she said about if she ever left, she would destroy Natasha?.....I was actually really quite shocked when she said that, and I said why? And she said, 'I just will.' And I said – but, then she said that she would go to the media, and use the media to do it, and that they would believe her. I initially responded, 'That won't destroy her.' And she said, 'Well, what will?' And then I realised, in my mind, or I thought that she would then take –..."

29 As with the evidence of Mr Paine to a similar effect, the defendant did not challenge this evidence in her cross-examination of Ms Adams, although she denied it in her own testimony. Apart from the issue of credit though, such evidence will only assume significance in the event that I need to consider the issue of malice. It will not be relevant, for example, in relation to the defendant's principal defence of justification pursuant to s 25 of the Act.

30 Ms Adams also gave evidence that the defendant told her that she had been sexually abused by her father and by "a black man".

31 Ms Adams gave evidence that she had completed many of the plaintiff's courses and that over a period of some ten years she had come into contact with "a couple of thousand" course participants. She said that she had read the defendant's book and was disgusted by it and that it was largely fabricated. The relevant passage in the transcript is as follows:

"MR ZEEMAN:... Is there any particular criticism you have of Ms McConkey's book?.....I – honestly, I felt violated when I read it. I think she took and – she took like a broad event or something like it and then twisted it into something that was completely untrue. The level of fabrication in it is mindboggling."

32 Perhaps of interest only, given that the relevant pleaded imputation is that the plaintiff had "wrongfully indoctrinated people" and not that she was a "cult leader", it emerged for the first time on the trial during Ms Adams' cross-examination that it was Thomas Rabold, in the year 2000, who had informed the defendant that the plaintiff's group was a cult, and I infer, that the plaintiff was its leader. Mr Rabold was the plaintiff's first husband and the father of her three children. The relevant passage in the transcript of Ms Adams' cross-examination is as follows:

"Okay, but you would agree that I wasn't the first to identify or allege that the plaintiff was a cult leader, is that true?.....No, that would be Tom.

Tom started it?.....Tom Rabold started it.

Okay.....And Tom Rabold said things to you in the house when we lived there, that you started to pick up and run with, and you ran up to Dr Lakaev and you went

HIS HONOUR: Sorry, which house?

WITNESS: 98 Hunter Street, your Honour.

HIS HONOUR: Right, thank you.

MS McCONKEY: (Resuming) And Tom Rabold is – was the plaintiff's first husband. Is that correct?.....Ex-husband, yes.

Yep. You can keep going, Ms Adams?.....You ran up to Dr Lakaev, and you said that Tom had said this, Tom had said that, and that you didn't believe him, and then – there was issues that ensued because him and his mouth just didn't stop.

HIS HONOUR: When was this?

WITNESS: 2000, your Honour.

HIS HONOUR: Mmm.

WITNESS: I only lived there for around about eight months."

33 As with Mr Paine, I am unable to accept that Ms Adams was an independent witness and I will deal with her credibility later in these reasons. She was obviously very close to the plaintiff. I will also deal later with any other aspects of her evidence which may become relevant to a consideration of whether the pleaded imputations are substantially true.

34 The plaintiff's next witness was Mr Patrick Maher. Mr Maher gave evidence that he had known the plaintiff since 1997 and is a friend of hers who sees her occasionally. Both he and his wife were shareholders in *Universal Knowledge*.

35 Mr Maher said that over a period of some 10 years, between 1995 and 2005 or 2006, he completed a number of the plaintiff's courses, including *The Next Evolutionary Step*, *The Final Step*, *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling*, *Freedom in Relationships*, and *Initiates and Survivors*, some of them completed with the defendant. He said that he was also a member of the *Combined Personal Mastery* group.

36 Mr Maher gave evidence that he had never felt threatened or fearful in the plaintiff's sphere, that he had never seen anyone threatened or assaulted and that he had never seen the plaintiff incite anyone to assault another person. He said that he had never seen the plaintiff threaten or assault the defendant. He said that the plaintiff had never told him to physically or verbally abuse Misha Del Rae and that he had not done so.

37 Mr Maher said that he had never seen the defendant working for the plaintiff as a personal assistant to the plaintiff. He said that the defendant "was often there, but not as a personal assistant, that I was aware". He said that Andrea McSherry may have been the plaintiff's personal assistant.

38 Mr Maher said that he had never felt indoctrinated in the plaintiff's courses. He said that they were mentally and physically challenging but there were enjoyable parts and he felt that he had benefited from them.

39 Mr Maher appeared to me to be a little less close to the plaintiff than her other witnesses, although he remained sitting with her in Court for a couple of days after he had given his evidence, (as did Mr Paine, Ms Adams and Ms Carroll). He was clearly in the plaintiff's camp and was not a truly independent witness. I will deal with his credibility later in these reasons. I will also deal later with any other aspects of his evidence which may become relevant to a consideration of whether the pleaded imputations are substantially true.

40 The plaintiff's next witness was her son Mr Khaney Lakaev. He gave evidence that he would describe the plaintiff's workshops as personal development courses, although he only ever did one – *The Next Evolutionary Step* at age 16. He was asked in examination-in-chief if he considered the course helpful and he answered "I had an extremely well-balanced childhood, so what I was taught wasn't anything that was new".

41 Mr Lakaev was asked about an incident in which the defendant asserts that the plaintiff battered Michael Greene. The following passage of the transcript relates:

"No? Okay, no problem. Okay, do you recall that your mum told Michael Greene, my husband, in around 2007, to tutor you in maths and physics?.....Yes.

Yep. Okay, do you recall, when Michael Greene came up one day to help you, you said that you didn't need the help?.....No, I don't recall that at all.

Okay. Well, do you admit that when your mum found out that Michael Greene hadn't helped you, she got that wooden rod that is kept behind the door of Omaroo and beat him with that wooden rod for up to 20 minutes?.....No. I've got absolutely no idea what you're talking about.

No. And that your girlfriend, Bailey, actually witnessed that?.....*Bailey most certainly wouldn't have witnessed that. Bailey wouldn't have been up then that afternoon if I was trying to study.*" (Emphasis added.)

42 Mr Lakaev had the demeanour of an honest witness but he was obviously not an independent witness and I will deal with his credibility, or perhaps more particularly, his reliability, later in these reasons. I will also deal later with any other aspects of his evidence which may become relevant to a consideration of whether the pleaded imputations are substantially true.

43 The plaintiff's next witness was Mr Thomas Rabold. Mr Rabold was married to the plaintiff for 12 years from 1985 to 1998 and is the father of her three children. He was an original purchaser of Omaroo in 1987. He was a shareholder and director of *Universal Knowledge* and was involved with the design and development of the company's workshops. He developed the logistic and adventure side of the courses while the plaintiff, he said, developed the theoretical side. He said that her curriculum was "three inches thick".

44 Mr Rabold said that he had only ever partially completed one of the courses, namely *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling*, but that he had been a support worker on numerous courses. He said that he had never seen the plaintiff punish anyone and he had never seen anyone forced to do anything. He said that he had never seen her hit or batter anyone and that he had never seen her urge anyone else to do the same to someone. He also said that he had never seen the plaintiff "con" anyone. He said that he had never seen the plaintiff bully anyone but that the courses were physically intensive and he had seen the plaintiff "encourage in a strong manner".

45 Mr Rabold explained the use of the black mats referred to in evidence, but he said that he had never seen anyone held down under them. He said:

"Right from the start, even in the very first program that anybody did, the use of those mats was explained at that point. And they were there so that if anybody needed to access an emotion, in other words – and that emotion could be – it could be brief. They may want to cry and lay on a mat and cry. It could be anger and if their anger was really intense they could physically express that physically by bashing a mat or tearing at it or doing whatever they wanted to physically get over that emotion so that they can just calm down and then get to the bottom of what that emotion was about. By removing the physical aspect. And that was the complete purpose of having those mats."

46 In 1998 Mr Rabold moved in to share accommodation at 98 Hunter Street with the defendant. He said at that time:

"I was no longer a partner in the business. I was now employed by the business, because the function centre that I had designed and project managed wasn't finished. It was at the fit-out stage, and there was a good year or probably a year and a half's work to finish that off. And I wanted to finish that off prior to moving on".

47 Mr Rabold gave evidence that he moved away from Burringbar altogether in about mid to late 2000 and that he had spoken to Ms McConkey before he left saying:

"I said to her that I believe that her and her friends, and I was relating to a younger group of people that had become more involved – I said, "You know she's gonna turn this whole thing into a cult."

48 In cross-examination Mr Rabold stated that participants on the defendant's 1996 *The Final Step* course were not denied food, but he said that the service crew had gone on strike because one of the defendant's fellow students had been disrespectful to them. Mr Rabold agreed that participants were given set toilet breaks but he said that no one complained. He said:

"I must say, that we tried to – and explained to the students right at the start that there would be toilet breaks and that way they could fundamentally know there's going to be a break coming up and maybe hold on a little bit rather than everybody rushing out wherever they wanted to go. So, there were always ample toilet breaks."

49 I accept Mr Rabold's evidence as truthful and reliable to the extent that he was in a position to speak to relevant matters. I will deal with his credibility or, as with Mr Lakaev, perhaps more particularly, his reliability, later in these reasons. I will also deal later with any other aspects of his evidence which may become relevant to a consideration of whether the pleaded imputations are substantially true.

50 The plaintiff's final witness was Ms Anita Carroll. Ms Carroll first met the plaintiff in about May 1996 when she attended an introduction night for one of the plaintiff's courses. She completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* and then went on to do a further 14 workshops over 11 years. She completed the *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling* course twice and she became a member of the *Combined Personal Mastery* group. She and the plaintiff became friends in about 2000 and she cared for the plaintiff's children between 2000 and 2007 when, Ms Carroll said, the plaintiff "was kind of most ill". Ms Carroll was in the plaintiff's house five days a week during this period. She lived under the plaintiff's house in Brisbane and she and the plaintiff later shared a house together. It is obvious that they remain close friends.

51 Ms Carroll said that *Life Integration Programmes* and later *Universal Knowledge* were "about giving life skills to help integrate ... as a person to function on an emotional, physical, spiritual level and be...integrated and be able to then go out into the world and function on a more holistic capacity."

52 She said:

"Okay, so the way the workshops ran is that when you came into any of the workshops, everyone would make agreements to keep confidential anything (sic) was divulged by other participants, as – from their personal life and the processes within the – that were done in the workshops but you were allowed to divulge any of your – your own experiences or your own – like – the own – your own kind of experience slash what you gained from the courses. That was freely for you to express to anyone. It was just more about creating a safe space for confidentiality for the other participants, so if they brought up stuff about their personal life, it was expected that that was a safe space that that information wouldn't be taken out into the community."

53 Ms Carroll said that she had read parts of the defendant's book. She said of it:

"Have you read a book authored by Carli McConkey known as *The Cult Effect*?.....I have read most of it, flicked through parts of it.

And in the parts that you've flicked through or read, do you have any conclusion as to what you talked about – what you spoke about – the confidential knowledge gained from other people, was there any breach of that in the book?.....There was lots of breaches of that. Personally, *I have a great deal of anger and resentment* and I'm quite incensed about the fact that Carli took my – like – my story supposedly, I suppose, and basically lied about lots of things.

So you don't accept that all of the representations regarding you in the book are accurate?.....I would say most of the – most of the representations are inaccurate. *Can I just say further to that, the – probably the biggest representation that was true was the fact that I had a relationship – like – my proximity, should I say, to Natasha, that was true.* It probably represented reasonably true in the book. The rest of it, I would say, is not true." (Emphasis added.)

54 To my mind this issue of proximity to the plaintiff seemed important to Ms Carroll. She appeared to me to have been resentful of the defendant before the defendant wrote the book. She said that she participated in *The Next Evolutionary Step* course in October 1996. She said that what she noted on that program "and since have reflected on is that's when *I first noticed her obsession* with Natasha. She was always looking for proximity to Natasha." Asked about this by the defendant in cross-examination, Ms Carroll elucidated in a manner and tone that I found telling as to the effect that the plaintiff seems to have had over her. The passage in the transcript is as follows:

"Yeah, okay. Okay, could you please describe how you made the observation that I was obsessive with the plaintiff on *The Final Step*?.....Okay, so you were always – whenever there was an opportunity to ask questions you always had your hand up. You were always like manoeuvring yourself to be near Natasha, *proximity* – like physically proximity wise on that program. *It was really obvious, Carli, like, so obvious.*

Okay, and you'd admit that you – ?.....I didn't even know you before that program and I went, *"That woman is obsessed."*

Okay. But you would admit that you lived with the plaintiff at various properties and that you're friends with her?.....Yes.

Yeah, so – and you've worked in all of her companies for no pay and run around her son. You would admit that you actually had close – very close proximity to the plaintiff. Is that correct?.....We – I'm not sure what you're asking me, Carli?

I'm just saying –I've answered most of those questions, I'm not sure what you're trying to imply?

Yeah but I'm stating that, more so than myself, you actually had more proximity to the plaintiff than I did. Is that correct – on a personal level?.....*Because I was her friend.*

Thank you. Okay, you stated that you – ?.....Yeah, but can I just add something to that? *I didn't seek it out, like, it just organically happened.*" (Emphasis added.)

55 Ms Carroll gave evidence about the *Combined Personal Mastery* group which I also found telling as to the nature of the ongoing relationship between the plaintiff and her adherents. The passage from the transcript is as follows:

"Yeah, thank you. Did you ever become what is known as a Combined Personal Master?.....Yes.

Thank you. How long does this take?.....This – Combined Personal Mastery is not – it's not actually a program. Combined Personal Mastery is something that at a certain

point after you've finished your task anyone that is – *any Personal Master that has finished their task has the option to join the Combined Personal Mastery*. It's a much more fluid and it's all like you can attend or not attend, *it's more like a support group for people that want to keep working on themselves and have somewhere to go that understands the processes we use*.

Thank you. So, when you speak about attending, did you attend meetings for this?.....Yeah, they – they're – they're meetings, they're – like, they were recorded with handwritten minutes. But it – *it was a cross between a meeting and a support group*.

And was Dr Lakaev ever a part of the Combined Personal Masters?.....Yes, because Combined Personal Mastery is all about – like I say, it's that support group. *So she was – she was not a leader – she was just one of the members of the jury*.

So – so not taking it but just – ?.....No, it doesn't work like that in Combined Personal Mastery.

Thank you. Thank you. Did – from your – so from –

HIS HONOUR: *Dr Lakaev had never done Combined Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling?*

WITNESS: *Well, it's not a done – it's not a to be done thing*.

HIS HONOUR: No, I understand that. She'd never completed Personal Mastery and – and Metaphysical Counselling Workshop?

WITNESS: No, she hadn't.

HIS HONOUR: Mm.

WITNESS: But as –

HIS HONOUR: But yet she –

WITNESS: *As the creator –*

HIS HONOUR: Yet, she was a member of the Combined Personal Mastery Group?

WITNESS: *Yeah, but as one of the creators of Personal Mastery –*

HIS HONOUR: Oh, I see, as one of the creators, yeah, thank you.

WITNESS: *I suppose she became an honorary member, can we put it that way*.

HIS HONOUR: Yeah." (Emphasis added.)

56

Describing some of the group meetings in 1998, Ms Carroll gave the following evidence:

"Thank you. Have you ever seen Natasha Lakaev hit Mark Goey?.....No. Mark –

Thank you.....No, exactly the opposite to that, can I say? This is what really upsets me, personally, is *some of these people that Natasha took special interest in nurturing*, that – he was one of those people that Natasha actually tried over and above with.

Thank you. No need to ask this question. Have you ever seen Natasha Lakaev urge some other person to hit Mark Goey?.....No. But Mark was quite an aggressive person, so Mark did get himself into situations in some of the meetings where people did come after him.

Thank you. Thank you.....But it wasn't at the urging of anyone, it was self-generated."

57 On the subject of another group meeting concerning a Catherine Locke, Ms Carroll was asked in cross-examination if Ms Locke had been abused. Her evidence was in the following terms:

"Okay. And so because of that, did she deserve to be verbally abused by the Combined Personal Masters?.....She wasn't verbally – that's not how it works, Carli, and you damn well know it. *It's not about abuse, it's feedback.* You – we – we use that process – we use that process where people come in, they express themselves in – *and are allowed to express themselves in a very emotional way, using mats, blah blah blah,* so we – so that they can get through the absolute heightened pressure of what's happening to them emotionally, so that – like – eventually – *and you're right, sometimes it takes an hour or two to get through all that mess* and have everyone have their turn at getting rid of the emotional heightenedness so that then we can get to the point where we can give feedback so that people can take on board their patterning in a relationship or a situation and that's what's given. It's not bullying, and if you've interpreted feedback as bullying, then that's on you."

58 On the question of the nature of the defendant's work for the plaintiff Ms Carroll, unconvincingly to my mind, said:

"... she did come in and out as a participant in lots of the programs, but Carli also basically, pushed herself into the office and – which started as her wanting to have – like, she sent her résumé in to Universal Knowledge, at the time, I think we were by then, wanting to work in the office. She was told by the office manager at the time, Natasha and some of the other instructors, that – that she wasn't suitable but *she still insisted that she wanted to volunteer.* Now, because what we knew, like, because of the time – I suppose everyone was just trying to be helpful and quite happy to have someone that we thought at that point, was just trying to be helpful. She was allowed to do volunteering, but it's then – it's – that was like, oh, gosh, *it was like the woodworm that then got in and we couldn't get rid of her after that.*" (Emphasis added.)

59 A later passage in the evidence of Ms Carroll on the same subject which I also found unconvincing, is as follows:

"MR ZEEMAN: (Resuming) What about a personal assistant? Did – did you ever observe her wanting to become a personal assistant within Universal Knowledge?.....She did want to be and she – sorry, and she did, what's the word – *masquerade as a personal assistant in her own flipping mind,* half the time.

Thank you.....But she was never a paid employee.

Perhaps, if you could just stick to answering the question rather than the descriptions of – the added descriptions. And what about a manager? Did she seek to be a manager, that you knew of, within Universal Knowledge?.....Yes, *'cause like I said, Carli's thing was she was always seeking any position that she thought would give her prestige.*" (Emphasis added.)

60 She gave the following further evidence on this subject of employment:

"So, in any of your time as a director of – sorry, when did you first become – did you say?.....About 2002-2003.

Thank you.....I think 2002. But it might – might have been 2003.

Did Universal Knowledge at that time have any paid staff?.....At that time, no, it didn't. It went on to have paid staff. It had an office manager, Andrea McSherry. For a little while before that I think Debbie – no, I think Debbie was only voluntary, I don't know that she ever drew a wage from Universal Knowledge. But Andrea McSherry definitely did as the office manager/course coordinator.

Thank you. And I think you can answer this question. During the period you've just described, has Carli McConkey ever been a paid employee?.....No, never."

61 Ms Carroll accepted however, that the defendant was working solidly at the plaintiff's property. The following passage from the transcript of the evidence of Ms Carroll relates:

"MS McCONKEY: Okay. (Resuming) Do you admit that *I was either working in the office at Omaroo in the centre, in the admin building upstairs, or out on the property whipper snipping, weeding, whatever was needed, pulling out trees from their roots; I was either doing that and I was working seven days and seven nights at least in the last couple of years, do you agree with that – or three years?.....I agree that you were doing – that you were doing all those tasks. As to the time, I don't – like – I don't know, Carli. The time that you spent there, I don't know. When you were in the office, you – like – you were sleeping – like – most of the time when you were in the office.*

So I was sleeping in the office all the time, like during the day, is that what you're saying?.....You weren't in the – look, I wasn't in the office with you at the same time during the day.

Sure, okay, thank you.....Because when you were in the office I was elsewhere, but when I was in the office with you, often you were sleeping.

Right, okay, on the floor – just laying on the carpeted floor?.....You could have gone home, I don't know, we told you to go home, Carli.

Yeah, but I was just laying on the floor, like that carpet there, just laying on the floor sleeping, is that what you're saying, in the office?.....*Or at your desk, hunched over like this over your typewriter.*" (Emphasis added.)

62 Ms Carroll also agreed in cross-examination that Kylie Bennett had worked for the plaintiff without being paid. The following passage from the transcript relates:

"MS McCONKEY: (Resuming) Okay, Ms Carroll, you're aware that Kylie Bennett worked for the plaintiff in a, like cleaning her house, for example, from the year 2000?.....Yes.

And you're aware that she also maintained the property from at least the year 2000?.....She was a part of the process that maintained the property, yes.

Yeah, and you're aware that she never got paid for any of that work?.....Correct.

And you'd agree that she was never a Universal Knowledge shareholder?.....*My understanding is that she wasn't a shareholder, yes.*" (Emphasis added.)

63 As with the plaintiff and her other witnesses, Ms Carroll gave evidence that no one was forced to do anything on any of the workshops and no one was harmed and no one was punished. She said that no one was hit, no one was protesting and no one was denied food or toilet facilities. She accepted though that on *The Final Step* course there were toilet breaks with set timeframes and that 70 people in that set timeframe had to go to the toilet in only three portaloos.

64 As to the practice of "accessing" by beating black mats on *The Next Evolutionary Step*, for which the course literature states "[t]he teaching methods we use are gentle but determined", Ms Carroll gave the following evidence:

"But you'd agree that, for example, on my Next Evolutionary Step in Sydney with 80 people all yelling and screaming and bashing black gymnastics mats, that that's not really evident in the processes outlined there, do you agree with that? We haven't been told that we're going to be – have 79 other people around us yelling and screaming and bashing black mats around us, do you agree with that?.....Yes, but I'd like to speak to the term that you don't walk in off the street and you're thrown in to bash – like – the – the point in time of which you learn to access – like – that's on Saturday and you've had several hours of talking, speaking – like – going through processes to lead you up to that point.

So the Thursday night and Friday night, a few hours?.....The Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday morning.

Sure?.....You've had quite – like – 'cause that actually doesn't happen until the Sunday, from recollection, so that means you've had – like – the equivalent of two days of activities and getting to know the support team, so there is actually a – an envelope of safety – to – for people to be able to feel safe to do that process by that point, so I disagree with what you're trying to imply. " (Emphasis added.)

65 Ms Carroll said that she had never seen the plaintiff hit the defendant or anyone else, but that the defendant was herself physically and verbally aggressive. She said that there were occasions where people had to go in and defend the plaintiff from the defendant by placing themselves in between them. Ms Carroll said that the defendant pushed her face into the dirt one day when they were working on the property, that she jumped on her and that Kylie Bennet had to rescue her. She said the defendant "literally pushed me and she was jumping up and down on me, thumping me". Ms Carroll also said that the defendant was physically and verbally aggressive towards Kylie Bennett and also Julie Townsend, and to her husband at the time, Michael Greene.

66 As to the well-being of participants on *The Final Step* course Ms Carroll said, in a manner that I found unconvincing:

"Yes.....Okay, so with the Final Step, it's a week long program. So there's a – and the thing is that people enter into that program knowing that they're addressing the emotion of fear. *So at some point in that week, you will be in a state of fear. But you also experience probably every other emotion in the rainbow as well.* So there were times where people were playing, dancing, having fun. There were times where people were under – like – experiencing fear and stress.

And did you – to your knowledge, given that you participated, were participants told they may experience fear during that – ?.....They were very much told. This is – this is very – like – very clearly explained several times to the person. If they attended the teeniest follow up night, it is extensively explained what Final Step is about. When they ring and book to go on the program, it is extensively explained that this program is for people that are ready to face their fears." (Emphasis added.)

67 In cross-examination Ms Carroll gave the following evidence, which I also found unconvincing given the witnesses' demeanour at the time:

"No. Okay, and do you agree – I put it to you that on Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling 2005 that people were forced to do their regimes and their runs and that if they didn't do one run they had to do two and that most of the students were running 20 kilometres per day and it was forced by the group – is that correct?.....*It was – mm, see, 'force' is the wrong word, okay –*

Yeah, what word would you use?.....Because if the group decides that it might be a group benefit to doing 20-K runs for a period of time, whether that be days or maybe a week, if the group decides to do that you still have the individual right to not follow the group.

Okay. Would you say –So there's no forced –

I put it to you that there was pressure for the group otherwise they were told that they had no integrity or that they wouldn't integrate and evolve. Do you agree with that?.....So, who are you saying told them that?

I'm saying whether it was the plaintiff or the group themselves said that there was pressure for the students to do their 20 kilometre runs because otherwise they were put down and told that they weren't going to shift or integrate?.....*I would say that's too much of a blanket statement. Because the reason – if – if people chose not to do it, the reason that they chose – like if they had a broken bloody leg we're not going to force*

them to do a 20-K run. So, I don't think integrity's that – I – you're using the wrong word incorrectly.

Okay. What word would you use?.....I would say that like, if you chose not to do something and you came to the group with your reason that you chose not to do it, that would be taken on an individual basis.

Okay. I put it to you that people were –I was in that group. You could – there were plenty of people not following like, following what the group had decided. There were people like – *just because the group decides to do something as a group, doesn't mean the whole group does it even.*" (Emphasis added)

68 Describing the *Survivors* course, Ms Carroll gave the following evidence in quite an emotional state:

"Thank you. And did you – did you ever participate in that workshop with Carli McConkey?.....Yes, Carli was on the *Survivors* program that I did.

Thank you. Were participants ever told during *Survivors* that a doomsday would occur on 11/11/11?.....No. The source of this – like, I really want to clear this up because *this is something that's haunted us as an organisation. We have never been a doomsday organisation.* We have never – the thing was, in the '90s when all this was happening, there was information on the internet that was flowing around about this – there was a book called 11/11, there was information on the internet about the 11/11, anyone that was – *like, we had people in our circle that were probably interested in that information. But it didn't come from us.*

Thank you. Were participants of *Survivors* ever told the world would end?.....No. *Survivors* – why would we have survivors if the world was going to end? Why would we bother? *If we were a doomsday cult, really and truly, why would be bother, we would just be all needing somewhere to go to the hereafter. Survivors is about surviving the changes that are happening as the world changes and shifts. It's not about ending it.*

Thank you. Were participants of *Survivors* taught or told to kill or be killed?.....No.

Thank you. Were participants during *Survivors* ever told that Dr Lakaev would become a dominant political figure in politics?.....No. That's not her interest. She's all..." (Emphasis added.)

69 I pause to interpolate here that the plaintiff's rather implausible explanation of "11/11" in her cross –examination was as follows:

"Okay, I put it to you that you, from a very early stage in our development courses, or our 'evolvment', as you call it, that you prophesied the end of the world for around November 2011, that's why you called everything 11/11. What do you say to that?.....I say that's completely incorrect. The reason why we used 11/11 as the title for that function at the end of each year is that at the very first time we did that very first function, it landed on an 11th of the 11th, and so we decided to keep it 11 of the 11th. It was Saturday, I think. And we decided to keep it that date regardless, just to give it a flow. So, that's absolute rubbish. And in terms of any form of doomsday, that's rubbish. Never ever suggested, never ever in any way contemplated that, and wouldn't and don't. I had children. My gosh, I'm saving my son. He's ill, he's terminally ill, his father was terminally ill. I'm working my heart out to keep these people alive. What are you talking about? It doesn't even make sense. This is some new thing that you've brought into play because you used to sit and watch the movie 2012, and we asked you repeatedly during 2009 to stop watching that movie. 'It's not helping you. Wow, you've got to stop watching that movie.' And you watched it repeatedly and repeatedly and repeatedly, and I believe that's where this concept came in. You also got very hooked into the Aztec calendar, which we had absolutely nothing to do with. Nothing to do with whatsoever. We talked about ancient civilisations, the Aztecs, the Sumerians, the Egyptians, it was a discussion point."

70 Ms Carroll gave evidence that the defendant had an interest in pornography and brothels. The following passages from the transcript set out this evidence:

"You've spoken about yours and Carli McConkey's association with Universal Knowledge, during that time, did Carli McConkey ever express to you or within your hearing an interest in pornography?.....Yes.

Of any particular kind?.....All kinds. Carli was a bit – like – always –

In giving that answer, can you confine yourself to what she said to you or you heard her say?.....Carli was always wanting to push conversations into that area and I do remember – like – one or two conversations where she was talking about the fact that she – she had been watching porn, and, like, I know the – I can't remember who was in the conversation, but it was a small group of us and we were just very confused about why she was going down that track, because this was after she was in, like, her marriage.

Thank you. What about brothels? Did she ever express to you or within your hearing, an interest in brothels?.....She was – like, yes, there was a fascination with prostitution, 'cause we – the thing is that in our work – in the work we do, different people come in from different avenues and we did have prostitutes that came and did our work. Like, we had two prostitutes on my PMC. I had – and there were people that I – like, that I had in my friendship circle within the programmes that I'd done that were prostitutes. So I suppose – the thing is, because these people were in our sphere, those topics and the – those experiences were discussed on programs, from these people's personal experiences.

Thank youSo Carli was always, a little bit, wanting to take it more than that and take it out of – out of context and out of – out of the safe space and talk about it."

71 In cross-examination it seemed to me that Ms Carroll's assertion about pornography was rather impotent. The following passage from the transcript relates:

"Didn't happen. Okay. Thank you. Okay. I put it to you that it's a complete fabrication that I – that we had conversations about pornography. What do you say to that?.....Carli, you – I – look, *at least two conversations* I can remember triggered, probably, from what I can recall, *triggered by what happened in a course room* because of other people talking about stuff. You did go down the pathway of going, '*What do you think? What do you think about this? What do you think about that?*'" (Emphasis added.)

72 Ms Carroll gave evidence that she had never felt indoctrinated by the plaintiff. She said that she did not feel she was the subject of mind control techniques. She said "this is all about mind freeing. It's not about mind control. It's like the antithesis". She also gave evidence that she had never felt like a slave in the unpaid work she did for the plaintiff or *Universal Knowledge*. The following passage from the transcript sets out that evidence:

"Thank you. In your involvement with Universal Knowledge, have you ever felt that Natasha Lakaev forced you to work harder than you wanted to?.....No.

Thank you. In the sense that most people would understand the word, you didn't ever feel like a slave?.....*I didn't ever feel like a slave because of – like not because of what Natasha was asking. Sometimes the workload was over – the workload did become overwhelming* in about 2009 with trying to balance many things, but *that was not at Natasha's bidding* that was –

No?..... – that was to do with trying to work our way through a circumstance that we were in." (Emphasis added.)

73

As to the defendant's allegation in her book that on New Year's Eve in 2005 the plaintiff had beaten the defendant's son, Sebastian, with a wooden spoon and a metal spatula, Ms Carroll gave the following evidence, which when considered does speak to the whole of the circumstances of the event:

"MS McCONKEY: (Resuming) Okay. No problems. Keep going?.....The memories I have of 2005 – of you were belting your son and us being in shock that that's what you decided to do, and then *I can't remember which one of the parents, 'cause I was standing behind everyone else, stepped forward and took the spoon off you* and Natasha grabbed Sebastian and put him in his cot.

Okay. So you were there when an incident occurred with belting with a wooden spoon, is that correct?.....*Well, it was you, Carli, no-one else.*

Okay. I thought it was you. I put it to you that the – you recall Louisa Laing coming down to the party and yelling and screaming that Sebastian had changed his pants?.....*Yeah, that's what got everyone up there.*

Yeah? Okay. And I put it to you that there was wee and poo on the floor, from the children?.....I can't speak to the wee, I can only speak that I saw faeces – like nappies off and like, poeey nappies lying all over the floor.

And you agree that there was no parent up there, it was just children under four years of age; that Sebastian was the eldest child of about 10, at least, children up in the centre?.....I can't speak to that precisely, because I wasn't a parent, so I don't know what the arrangements were with how the children were left up there.

No? No problem. *But when we got up there, there was no parents up there.* You agree with that?.....*Well, no, because by the time I got up there, there were quite a few parents up there, so I don't know who was up there or not up there prior to that.*

... do you admit that the plaintiff asked Louisa to go and get a wooden spoon from the kitchen and then she proceeded to belt my four-year-old son, Sebastian, with the wooden spoon?.....I didn't see Natasha hold or grab a wooden spoon. The only person – *by the – by the time I got there, the only person I saw with a wooden spoon hitting their child was you.*" (Emphasis added.)

74

As to the concept of multidimensionality and "shafts", Ms Carroll's evidence was as follows:

"Thank you. Okay. If we go over to the last page. It says The Next Evolutionary Step and the Cellular Memory. Down the bottom:

We look at the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual self equally and create the environment for all four levels to come into complete equilibrium, therefore, their development level is equal across the board.

This is achieved by addressing and coming to understand the following areas: (1) Holistic and complete integration; (2) who we are and who we want to become; (3) cellular memory; (4) the results of this produces – the results this produces and how to apply them effectively; (5) integrity and its total impact; (6) multi dimensionality and its implications.

Do you agree that the plaintiff taught that we exist on different dimensions in different shafts and that we can access those shafts at any given moment if we keep integrating?.....On the – as part of the curriculum on The Next Evolutionary Step, there is a piece where we explain multi-dimensionality and how that works – and how that works, yes.

Okay. So you agree that she taught about different shafts?.....I don't like the word 'she', because we – anyone that instructed The Next Evolutionary Step taught this piece of information about how multi dimensionality works.

Sure. So it was part of the curriculum?.....Correct."

75 The last passage of the defendant's cross-examination of Ms Carroll was particularly revealing as to the extent of the latter's enmity towards the former and the reason for that. The transcript is as follows:

"Thank you, Ms Carroll. Okay, I'd like to hand the witness defendant's discovery document 344 dated the – around the 20th of July 2009. Thank you. Do you recognise that document, Ms Carroll?.....It's a birthday card.

Yep, it's a beautiful birthday card. Do you admit that you gave that to me around July 2009?.....Yes. Well, I – I'd given it to you at something. I would have – I would have done that in 2009.

I put it to you that we were actually good friends, and that I never hurt you in any way, and that that card was a beautiful gift because we were friends. Do you agree with that?.....Carli, we were never friends, okay? But I never wished you ill. But, having said that, with all that's gone on the last 10 years and *with how you left, I feel like betrayed on such a level because I feel like you're a backstabbing bitch with how you left*. Because, like, I did have genuine feelings of wanting the best for you but you – you just are." (Emphasis added.)

76 Clearly Ms Carroll was not an independent witness. I will deal with my observations as to her credibility later in these reasons. I will also deal later with any other aspects of her evidence which may become relevant to a consideration of whether the pleaded imputations are substantially true.

The defendant's case

77 The defendant's case consisted of her book, which was tendered by consent by the plaintiff's counsel in his opening address, some 380 exhibits, mainly documents, tendered by the defendant through the plaintiff, including the plaintiff's book *The Next Evolutionary Step*, her extensive cross-examination of the plaintiff over a period of 17 days and the defendant's own evidence and that of her six witnesses.

78 The defendant swore that the contents of her own book are true and correct to the best of her knowledge and belief. She gave evidence that she was in no way actuated by malice in the writing and publication of the book, or in the re-publication of the articles or the posting of the online publications which she also confirmed were true and correct. She stated that her motivation in relation to all publications was the interests of members of the public and that all of the opinions she expressed in the impugned publications are honestly held.

79 The defendant first encountered the plaintiff on 3 July 1996 at the Macquarie University where she had gone with her mother and sister to be introduced to the five-night and two-day *The Next Evolutionary Step* program. Her parents had attended to ensure that the defendant was not becoming involved with a cult. She had been told about the plaintiff earlier in the year by supporters of the plaintiff who were working on a *Life Integration Systems* stall at the *Mind Body Spirit Festival* at the convention centre at Darling Harbour in Sydney. The people on the stand welcomed her enthusiastically and confirmed that their program, *The Next Evolutionary Step*, would give her the tools to make the changes in her life she wanted.

80 The program, they told her, was devised by a woman named Natasha Lakaev. They handed her a brochure with Natasha's photo on it, which stated that the plaintiff had taught 13,000 people to unlock their potential. It promised the course would "enable you to access your fullest potential in regards to all aspects of your life: health, fitness and appearance; wealth and financial security; relationships, friends and family". The people she spoke to appeared friendly and vibrant and seemed genuinely happy. They wrote down the defendant's contact details and said they would send her an information pack and telling her that she should attend a free introductory session at the Hilton Hotel, where the program would be explained more in-depth.

81

The Next Evolutionary Step brochure is set out below.

D3

"The Next Evolutionary Step

The Awakening

Presented by: NATASHA LAKAEV B.App.SC

For Life Integration Programmes

Cenelage Pty Limited Established 1982

Australian Company Number: 002 480 908

The Next Evolutionary Step

Is an experientially based programme that enables you to access your fullest potential in regards to all major aspects of your life, i.e.:

- * health, fitness and appearance;
- * wealth and financial security;
- * relationships, friends and family;
- * being able to identify the issues that create stress and deal with them effectively;
- * understanding your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual makeup.

The process comprises of a full weekend and three (3) evening sessions.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROGRAMME

The course is designed to reconnect you to the untrained or psychic areas of your mind and to show you how to remove the blockages that keep you repeating your life patterns and prevent you from recognising and following your true opportunities.

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

This system of learning revolves around awakening your potential through a series of wholistic (sic) methods that unite clearly the individual's interaction between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self.

By highlighting this interdependence you come to understand why or why not certain wants and needs elude you.

As children we were never taught to understand what we are comprised of, i.e.: how to handle relationships and your role in them, how and what it is to be male or female, how to be successful without having to forfeit any or one of the above.

Thus quite often you believe that this inner capacity to handle all facets of your being and therefore life are not available to you.

This course removes this fallacy from your belief system.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THIS?

We instruct you through a series of meditations, exercises, lectures and workshops on removing the mystery of how to become totally reliant on your intuitive capabilities.

This is achieved by illustrating to the mind how it perceives information flows and the many factors which influence this – the greatest barrier being how you contend with your current "social coding" which has been set up by your upbringing and ensuing years.

The methods used are gentle yet determined, meaning that all participants will achieve the same level of awareness by channelling energy to unlock these vital doors.

You all innately know that you have an inner capacity to overcome all trials and issues that confront you but you are not quite sure of how to go about this hence a strong sensation "that something is missing in our lives but we cannot 'pinpoint' what is is," pervades.

You therefore continually ignore the quiet guiding voice within you.

This programme concisely illustrates how to overcome this confusion and replaces it with the ability to respond to your inner knowledge.

THE RESULT	WHO DOES THIS COURSE?
<p>Each individual 'taps-in' on the energy provided by the universal light and vibration this is you hereditary right, therefore in essence you take 'The Nest Step' in to the globe's future, by absorbing this level of peace and allowing it to become an inherent part of your physical system. Consequently you gain the skills to be able to smoothly move on with your lives with grace and joy, thus stepping over any inner or outer turbulence. More specifically benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Excellent levels of self confidence. * Better relationships. * Easier communication. * Knowledge of how to release stress. * High levels of clarity. * Ability to manage emotions. * Expanded concentration, creativity, personal power and therefore self expression. 	<p>Individuals, partners and families who wish to adjust the way they handle their lives, who believe they can improve relationships, who know there is more to life than they are currently experiencing, individuals who want to move through the challenges of life with enjoyment and those who have expectations of themselves that they feel they cannot currently access.</p> <p>Therefore this programme is available to persons from all walks of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * People seeking success. * People with chronic or terminal illnesses. * Housewives/husbands. * Tradespeople. * Executives/professionals. * Teachers/lecturers. * High school and university students

Life Integration Programmes

COMPANY HISTORY AND OBJECTIVES

Life Integration Programmes and more so its parent company Cenelage Pty Limited was formed to create an present life skills programmes that do improve the quality of life for a maximum number of people (13,000 to date).

Our goal in the greater picture is to assist in the shift of human consciousness by allowing each individual to live the knowledge of their total potential, thus enabling the global social consciousness to become harmonious, this can only be attained when each individual and family group realise their own importance and self worth.

FOLLOW UP NIGHTS	OTHER COURSES INCLUDE
<p>These are held monthly to assist people in further increasing their knowledge, healing and life skills. The programme and follow up nights are available from:</p> <p>BRISBANE GOLD COAST SYDNEY. LISMORE</p> <p>For details phone (066) 77 1519.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Universal Healing.</i> How to heal yourself and others. * <i>Freedom in Relationships.</i> For couples wishing to expand and find their dual purpose. * <i>Children's Awakening.</i> Ages 5 to 13, to develop psychic and creativity. * <i>The Final Step.</i> Total integration of human potential, removal of all limitations. The art of living <i>Deliberately.</i>

YOUR COURSE INSTRUCTOR

NATASHA LAKAEV B.App.Sc.

A vibrant personality with an exceptional understanding of the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual connection.

Natasha's background includes a Bachelor of Applied Science that majored in Alternate Lifestyles and learning systems that concentrated on the principles of wholism (sic) and the psychology of how we integrate into our world and the effect this has on our overall health and wealth.

Since 1984 she has concentrated her efforts in the study of human development, potential and healing.

She has been guiding individuals and instructing groups in this area for over 11 years and is successful without exception with those who wish to partake in gathering this knowledge and ability.

Prior to creating LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES she was Managing Director of a national training organisation specialising in life and work skills, an organisation that has trained in excess of 12,000 people during those 7 years.

Natasha has a warm and humorous approach to teaching, combined with genuine care and understanding.

Her ability to unlock human potential and psychic experience is exceptional.

YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

Consists of a minimum of 12 energetic and dedicated people who are there to assist you with every stage of this exciting programme.

Each team is headed by a fully trained and licenced instructor who also presents major portions of the programme at the various locations that the course is held.

The instructors are also available for ongoing assistance and counselling within those areas which include:

BRISBANE, GOLD COAST, LISMORE, SYDNEY.

TO ENROL

Fill out the enclosed enrolment form and send to:

Life Integration Programmes

'OMAROO'

Hunter Street

Burringbar, NSW 2483

Phone: (066) 77 1519

Fax: (066) 77 1519"

82 The defendant completed that course on 8 July 1996.

83 The plaintiff's practice was then to conduct "follow up evenings". The following brochure relates.

D13

"OMAROO'
Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 2483

Phone & Fax: (066) 77 1519

Life Integration Programmes

FOLLOW-UP EVENINGS

An Introductory Evening is held just prior to each '*The Next Evolutionary Step*' programme at the Sydney Hilton.

At this time you will be invited and encouraged to bring along friends, family and interested parties so that movement can continue to grow and be it's (sic) most effective – these INFORMATION NIGHTS are the most concise way to introduce individuals to INTEGRATION PRINCIPLES.

Once this part of the evening has been completed we commence adding to your skills levels in the follow up segment.

The Introductory Evening and subsequent follow up segment will be taken by Natasha Lakaev B.App.Sc.

In between Introductory Evenings Helen Lee will hold a Follow Up night for all those people who have completed '*The Next Evolutionary Step*' in Sydney, thus making sure that you do not end up lagging behind.

A fee is charged for each follow-up evening of \$20.00.

As 1996 / 1997 calendar dates become available you will be notified by mail of the dates of these Introductory Evenings and Follow Ups.

We look forward to your company on these enjoyable evenings.

Yours Sincerely,
(Sgd "*PP Yvonne Huit*") ?

Natasha Lakaev
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Cenelage PTY Limited Est. 1982
Australian Company Number 002 480 908"

84

Another such document tendered by the defendant is as follows:

D21

"OMAROO'
Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 2483
Australia

Phone: (066) 77 1519
Fax: (066) 77 1519
International Phone: +61 77 1519
International Fax: +61 66 77 1011

Life Integration Programmes

18 May 1997

RE: SYDNEY STAGE ONE SEMINAR / FOLLOW UP EVENING

On Wednesday the 4th June 1997, we will be in Sydney presenting a Stage One Seminar evening at The Hilton in the Ballroom.

The evening will be completed by a Follow-Up Evening designed to increase you skills and knowledge base.

Date: Wednesday 4th June 1997

Venue: Ballroom
Sydney Hilton
259 Pitt Street

Time: **Stage One Seminar** 7.30pm
Follow Up Segment 9.30pm

**The topics to be covered are: The Atlanteans and Lemuria.
Material Creativism Stages I, II & III
along with any *dreams* you would like interpreted (should time permit).**

The **Stage One Seminar** evenings are an information sharing evening designed to allow you and your friends, family and business associates to gain a greater grasp of what *LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES* is all about and to educate you in areas that you would not 'normally' have the opportunity to be exposed to.

Areas covered include:

- * *How does someone move to the next level of human development in just five (5) days?*
- * *What effect will this have on myself, family, friends and my general prosperity?*
- * *Will it change the way I look and feel physically, will it effect (sic) my thoughts and conditioning, will my emotional world become healthier, will this effect (sic) those closest to me, why, and is there really a spiritual connection between all of this?*

Although we do a lot of advertising leading up to each Stage One Seminar evening we have found that this really only makes the general public aware of our existence, rarely do they step forward to come to a Stage One Seminar of their own volition.

'Word of mouth' has always been our best advertisement and although we have put marketing systems into place in Sydney, we feel it would be more effective to contact those that have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* and ask you to bring along a friend, family member or business associate, to the information night on Wednesday 4th June 1997 at 7.30pm.

We have enclosed 10 invitations so that you can distribute the details effectively and efficiently.

If everyone were to bring along at five (5) people this would create a strong **Stage One Seminary** evening and consequently a nice size programme in the month of July.

The date for *The Next Evolutionary Step* is:

3rd – 7th July 1997

Should you require brochures, explanation tapes or any information please ring the office and we will be happy to forward these to you.

On the **Stage One Seminary** evenings we give those who have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* the opportunity to step forward and give a brief testimonial on their

personal experience during and after **The Next Evolutionary Step** - this can involve the discussion of personal, monetary, family, health or emotional issues – ***we are hoping that all of you will volunteer to come forward on the evening – so come prepared!***

Perhaps the best way for the moral of this letter to come across is to present an excerpt from one of our newsletters that discussed the topic of **Stage One Seminar** evenings:

*'Please remember **The Next Evolutionary Step** is so different that it cannot be compared to anything else – 'Word of Mouth' is our best marketing approach and the **Stage One Seminar** evenings – don't be shy about what you have achieved, encourage people to grow and change but more importantly be proud of having done **The Next Evolutionary Step** – it is in your hands as much as ours to promote **The Next Evolutionary Step** – take the opportunity to make a difference – so many of you want to, but feel you do not know how – well here is your chance – Let's just keep marching on and growing and developing together – spread the word, refer people to our office and bring others along to the **Stage One Seminar** evenings.'*

*Don't forget to bring along family and friends at 7.30pm so they can become acquainted with **The Next Evolutionary Step** – its principles and meet individuals who have completed this and other programmes.*

Please remember for this movement to really take a firm grip within society it is most effective via 'word of mouth' recommendations, put effort into making this happen.

*Come on, be proud of your personal progression and achievements by allowing the flow of who you are to permeate through your circles – **BRING PEOPLE ALONG TO THE STAGE ONE SEMINAR EVENINGS.***

*Could those individuals who come into the lecture at 7.30pm please be willing to talk about their experience with **LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES** as it makes those individuals who are searching uncomfortable if no one is willing to make a move to discuss their testimonials – the hesitations in you makes them feel hesitant about making the commitment toward their self improvement.*

If you have never come forward with a testimonial perhaps this is a sign of a limitation you still have in place – now is the time to overcome it.

Should you feel nervous while doing your testimonial or while making it – then continue coming up front and practising it until it becomes second nature.

It does not matter how often you make a testimonial – if you feel good about yourself and your decisions and the direction you are heading in then continue telling everyone.

People want a piece of this energy and it is in you to share – so it does not matter how often you make testimonials we never get bored and each group of new individuals would love to hear your story.

*Please do not be shy, ashamed or feel repetitious when making your testimonials – we need your support and help to allow **LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES** to grow – it is you organisation – I am only 1 person.*

*When we ask for those who would like to talk about experiences there has to be a rush for the microphone and a number of people standing up full of enthusiasm, with a real desire to share the vibration and energy in regards to **The Next Evolutionary Step.***

The audience and myself should feel overwhelmed with willing talkers and enthusiasm.

So please decide to bring people – anyone – be enthusiastic and once you are in the room be brimming with a need to talk and share no matter how you feel internally –

*'Fake it till you make it'
'You always argue for your limitations'*

Run for the microphone, large numbers of you must stand up and want to talk (even if you don't know what to say initially), and allow your excitement to permeate through you, we have to make those in the audience feel as though they are really missing an opportunity of a lifetime if they don't enrol and definitely let them know there is nothing else like this programme on the planet."

You know yourselves how different life is and how much you would like to have more individuals around you that you can fully relate to, so, in essence the only way to really create this reality in total is for us (the office and *LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES*) and those from the Sydney region to make an intention 'that the Sydney area will have large numbers doing *The Next Evolutionary Step* and that the programme will be greeted with open arms again and again.'

I look forward very much to seeing you at the **Stage One Seminar** and ask that you refer back to your end of course manual to refresh your memories on the format for the evening – See you on Wednesday the 4th June, hopefully prior to 7.30pm so we can organise name tags etc and don't forget to bring a few people with you.

Please visit the administration desk upon arrival, finalising your follow up evening payment prior to entering the Ballroom so that you will be easy to distinguish as you will be wearing your name tag – thank you for your co-operation.

We always need helpers on the night so if you would like to help, please arrive at around 7pm to help Tania on the front desk.

Before we sign off it is probably appropriate to mention that a team of advanced students were in Sydney from 2nd – 4th May 1997 for the Body, Mind and Spirit Festival.

A number of the Psychic Readers took positions in the Psychic Reading Area, while others were doing demonstration mini Metaphysical Healings and Psychic Readings on our stand as well as giving out information about *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

Thank you to all those who volunteered on the stand for your time, enthusiasm, support and energy, and to those who visited the festival and came to the stand.

See you on Wednesday the 4th June 1997!!!

Love & Light

(Sgd. Natasha)

Natasha

NB: Enclosed with this letter is the promotional brochure we are mailing out to interested individuals and groups – perhaps you would like to pass this on to someone and if you require more copies please contact our office and we will be more than happy to forward you more copies."

85 The defendant gave evidence that she felt the need to do more courses. She subsequently completed 23 other courses.

86 All 24 courses and their dates are as set out in the following table:

1	The Next Evolutionary Step - Macquarie University, Sydney	4-8/7/1996
2	Universal Healing - 'Omaroo'	30/8-1/9/1996
3	The Final Step - Met at University of QLD. Travelled to 'Boolabinda', Glen Innes, NSW	18-25/10/1996
4	The Next Evolutionary Step Retake - Macquarie University, Sydney	6/3/1997
5	Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling Certificate - 'Omaroo'	20/12/1997-/12/1998
6	Being Male Being Female - 'Omaroo'	1/5/1998
7	Other (Past) Lifetimes - 'Omaroo'	22/5/1998
8	Metaphysical Practitioners Certificate - 'Omaroo'	30/5/1998- 13/9/1998
9	Access Day- 'Omaroo'	04/1998 approx.
10	Insights Day- 'Omaroo'	04/1998 approx.
11	Other (Past) Lifetimes (2nd time) – 'Omaroo'	22/5/2000
12	The Final Step (2nd time) - Students met at 'Omaroo'. Travelled to 'Boolabinda', Glen Innes, NSW	20-27/10/2000
13	Psychic Readers Certificate - 'Omaroo'	16/6/2001-08/2001
14	Parenting Programme - 'Omaroo'	23/7/2001
15	Complete Forgiveness Process - 'Omaroo'	18/8/2001
16	Regime Buster - Kangaroo Point, Brisbane	30/07/2001- 30/09/2001
17	Freedom In Relationships I - Hotel, Murwillumbah	26-28/7/2002
18	The Survivors Programme (Introduction)- 'Omaroo'	8/2/2003
19	The Survivors Programme (Stage I) - 'Omaroo'	12-16/4/2003
20	The Survivors Programme (Stage II)-National Park, Northern NSW	05-06/2003 approx
21	Freedom In Relationships II - Hotel, Murwillumbah	25-27/6/2004
22	The Initiates- 'Omaroo'	28-30/6/2004
23	Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling Certificate (2nd time) - 'Omaroo'	3/2007-12/2007
24	Access Day (2nd time) - 'Omaroo'	24/3/2007

87

The claims made by the plaintiff for the *Next Evolutionary Step* are set out in the following document.

D7

"OMAROO'
Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 248

Phone & Fax: (066) 77 1519

Life Integration Programmes

THE BENEFITS OF *The Next Evolutionary Step*

PLEASE NOTE:

You may receive all of these benefits or some, this greatly depends upon the effort you put into *The Next Evolutionary Step*, and the overall level of commitment you have during the time you embark upon this evolutionary development level.

The benefits listed below are not placed in an order of attainment or importance – each occurs at varying rates and different times for each individual that completes *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

PHYSICAL

- Improved physical strength mobility and flexibility
- greatly improved immunity, and with continued development it becomes invincible
- the five (5) senses become totally acute
- hair regrowth and thickening for those thinning out
- clearness in eyes; becoming brighter and wider, moving forward or back depending on need of adjustment
- body shape change; growth or reduction where necessary, more definition in shape of the overall body
- weight loss or weight gain (if underweight) and body shape shifting to become balanced overall
- chronic and long time pain diminishes and quite often gone completely
- diet stabilised and improved
- eye sight improve / changed for the better
- addictions addressed either dispelling completely or lessening to a manageable level
- posture – back improved and straightened
- face and body structure changed – improved symmetry
- disease elimination
- consistent and better health generally
- increased vitality and energy / activate energy as required
- improved and removal of scarring; especially where burns and acne scars are concerned
- allergies, diminished / removed
- scoliosis improved / cured
- knock knees corrected
- faster physical healing process
- fitness advanced and greater physical endurance
- improved digestion and elimination
- softening of features
- skin clearing / 'evening-out' in tone
- asthma eliminated or at least improved
- improved attitudes to diet and exercise
- better, restful sleep (emotional outcome as well)
- acceptance of physical body – enjoy portions that one used to dislike
- youthening (sic) – aging process halted, lose approx. 10 to 20 years off age in looks (especially noticeable for those over 40 years of age)
-

INTELLECTUAL

- improved long term memory

- greater clarity of thought and improved comprehension
- more confident expression and articulation
- stuttering stopped
- less rigidity in thought patterning
- improved logical comprehension
- greater creativity
- manifestation newly developed and improved skills eg money, health, career
- improved or removed dyslexia
- improved acceptance of all your actions as well as actions by others
- clearer purpose and direction
- greater understanding and awareness of others needs as well as own
- more productive in relationships, work and career
- less internal chatter, less confusion
- understanding of limitations that have been put in place during your life time
- more willing to express yourself and thoughts
- confident that what you are hearing and responding to is the truth
- study becomes easier
- short term memory and concentration is improved
- change of attitude to physical ailment
- attitudes and prejudices are realigned
- all learning disabilities improved
- different perspective on how the world works
- more confidence with intellectual communication with others, (individuals, groups – large & small)
- the intellectual world gets put into perspective thereby focusing the logical ability
- strengthens you intellect and remove learning limitations
- no longer get caught up in the games other people play
- improves and removes procrastination
- more clarity and the ability to see things clearly
- if you have completed any form of mind strengthening programme *The Next Evolutionary Step* will enhance and benefit this information and training 100 fold, in fact it will remove any limitations you have in regards to these prior learnt / taught abilities.

EMOTIONAL

- less stress
- more living in the moment
- higher integrity
- depression removed or decreased substantially
- decreased and removal of all negativity
- confidence developed and enhanced
- increased and improved self respect, love and worth
- respect for others developed and improved
- acceptance of your emotions and those of others
- taking responsibility for our own emotions and all your actions
- more patience and greater insight
- less arguing and disharmony in the home environment and with the external world and you own inner world
- feeling peaceful and calm
- better and more effective communication
- better and more effective relationships
- standing your ground and knowing when to say 'no' and when to say 'yes'
- less 'egoic' in your decision making processes
- emotional world stabilised and emotional confusion removed
- old traumas, patterns and habits released and realigned
- feeling more loving and giving to yourself and others
- greater desire and ability to help the planet rejuvenate and heal
- more comfortable in sharing and become totally willing to share
- more trusting of yourself and others

- less fear and apprehension in life
- more emotionally open with others and yourself, especially those in your immediate family group
- more drive and enthusiasm for life
- improved and strengthened family unit
- empathy with all living things and those things you cannot see or feel as tangible
- less sexual hangups and more satisfaction in this area
- less judgemental, forgiveness on an emotional level not just intellectually
- greater satisfaction in all levels of your world
- more sensitive and understanding
- ability to cope with pressure and stress
- greater and absolute fulfilment becomes apart (sic) of your nature
- enjoy your own company as well as others without limitation
- less fear of own emotions and those of others when expressed
- become extremely neutral in all circumstances and situations that present themselves
- laughter becomes more genuine and there is more of it
- more open to change and growth in yourself and others
- more inclined to explore your own emotions
- more accepting of the person you are now
- taking responsibility for developing into the type of person you would like to become
- more sensitivity and empathy for what others are feeling
- greater freedom in giving and receiving love
- taking responsibility and accepting the consequences of any of your life decisions
- reality improved, the world feels like a better place
- do not respond to others anger or irritability and feel less annoyed, irritable, angry as a person
- a new will to live (living not just existing) with more get up and go
- clarifies what emotions actually are and their 'true role' and what their impact 'actually' is in all areas of your life
- allows freedom and confidence to express emotions
- become more dependant (sic) on yourself – self sufficient
- more stability with moods and understanding of why they place
- ability to form a relationship / partnership with opposite gender that is, and will remain stable
- opens up ability to have a direction and purpose
- at peace about upbringing (childhood), and any other factors that have caused distress eg incest, rape, violation and understanding of why it happened

SPIRITUAL

- greater urge to live, and experience everything life has to offer
- no lethargy remains in system
- purpose and direction becomes evident and paramount
- connect totally with the spiritual world and what that actually means
- understanding and experiencing the 'whole' picture
- more ability to see and take the 'golden thread' out of all circumstances
- more innate knowing of truth
- understanding the power of thoughts
- listening to your own inner guidance
- appreciation of you spirituality
- ability to believe in your spirituality which is achieved by total acceptance of the self and others
- less taking life for granted
- seeing beyond the physical
- more contact with your own psychic, intuitive (super intelligence) ability
- understanding and connecting with all animals and plant life on the planet
- the world seems more clear, vibrant and alive
- given tools to expand your spirituality

- the sense of racing against time is dispelled
- allows you to overcome the fear of dying
- develop a sense of safety, realising that nothing in the universe can harm you
- feel and become responsible for self and others
- feeling the power of what the universe has to offer
- can feel, sense and know exactly what is happening around you and to those in your immediate world
- a deep inner sense of knowing, being aware and in 'control' of everything that is being created in your world
- learning to enjoy the journey, accepting whatever emotions come up and being thankful for these feelings, knowing this is another step forward in your growth
- feel a sense of belonging and feel real hope for everything around you
- gain a feeling of 'worth', that enables you to truly believe in something besides pessimism
- overcomes (sic) feelings of isolation and loneliness which allows serenity to emerge
- realisations occur whereby:
- you can tell exactly what is propaganda and what is not
- you can tell exactly what is truth and what is not
- you can tell exactly what is 'actually' being said, therefore seeing the hidden message between the lines
- you will become a 'better' and 'stronger' Catholic, Jew, Muslim, Christian, able to implement your indigenous religion (Aboriginal, African, Indian), because having experienced and partaken in *The Next Evolutionary Step* in a total and fully committed manner, it will build on your understanding of the spiritual and in some cases adjust your comprehension forever."

88

There was an element of secrecy associated with the courses and a clear intention to further engage participants in ongoing education or inculcation, as can be seen from the following extract from a manual tendered by the defendant.

D12

"Life Integration Programmes – Manual - Australia

Page 7

Explanation of Further Programmes

We ask all our students to make the following agreement in regards to *The Next Evolutionary Step* and all subsequent programmes:

'THAT I WILL NOT DISCLOSE OR DISCUSS IN DETAIL ANY OF THE PROCESSES THAT OCCUR DURING MY PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES DEVELOPED BY LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES THUS, I ENABLE ALL STUDENTS THAT FOLLOW IN MY FOOTSTEPS TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO FULLY RECEIVE ALL THE BENEFITS OF THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THEIR SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES AND EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT LEVELS.'

This we leave up to your individual integrity.

It must be stated however, that we do not do this to create separateness or elitism but rather to allow each person to move through their journey in an unbiased manner that has not been coloured by another individual's perspective or perception of programmes and processes.

Neutrality is paramount, perhaps this is you first real step in becoming an integrated individual ie. learning appropriateness of disclosure and integrity.

Always talk about the benefits gained by you, never the processes – why deprive another of the discoveries you have already integrated and ingested into your personal truth?

The Next Evolutionary Step

Enables you to access your fullest potential in regards to all four (4) major aspects of your life

– ie. your physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual self.

This course is designed to reconnect you to the untrained or psychic portion of your mind and show you how to remove the blockages and life patterns that are holding you back from these innate abilities and fully utilising your intuition.

The duration is a 5 day period comprising of 3 evenings and a full weekend.

The Next Evolutionary Step can be repeated as often as you wish.

The Next Evolutionary Step is held a number of times each year, in different regions – contact the office for more details or refer to your calendar.

The Next Evolutionary Step – RETAKE

Should you wish to retake *The Next Evolutionary Step*, because you feel you could really throw yourself in the second time around or simply because you want to reaffirm what you learnt, or for any other reason, it is available to those you are interested at a RETAKE PRICE.

Page 8

UNIVERSAL HEALING

"How to heal yourself and others."

This programme takes you to your next level of development, showing you different styles of healing methods, allowing you to complete your forgiveness process and fully realising, then breaking your life patterns.

Pre-requisite for *Universal Healing* is to have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

The duration is a 2 ½ day period commencing Friday evening.

Universal Healing can be repeated as often as you wish.

Universal Healing is held once a year in September.

THE FINAL STEP

Creates the environment for the total integration of the individual and the removal of limitations. It shows you what the "Art of Living Deliberately" actually is through practical application.

It reformulates your ability to function as a purposeful individual within a group situation, as well as knowing your own mind, thus enabling you to create any reality you wish.

Pre-requisite for *The Final Step* is to have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

The duration is 8 days, commencing Friday evening and is fully inclusive.

The Final Step cannot be repeated – you must achieve all your intentions in the first time.

The Final Step is held once a year in October.

THE SURVIVORS PROGRAMME

A programme designed to teach you how to survive into the 21st Century, showing you clearly your connection to the earth, the stars and the universe.

Moving between the dimensions is experienced on ***The Survivors Programme.***

This is the only programme that requires complete commitment and an intention to totally '**Walk Your Talk**'.

Pre-requisite for ***The Survivors Programme*** is ***The Next Evolutionary Step*** and ***The Final Step.***

The duration is 11 days, with two 5 day blocks spread across a 5 month period, led in by a 1 day preliminary briefing, and is fully inclusive.

The Survivors can be repeated as often as you wish.

The Survivors commences in February every two years.

Page 9

ACCESS DAY

This is a one day programme held on a Saturday and is designed for those who felt they could have released more during ***The Next Evolutionary Step*** but were not ready to at the time, or for individuals that can sense there is something 'coming up' and they wish to deal with this appropriately.

Pre-requisite for ***Access Day*** is ***The Next Evolutionary Step.*** ***Access Day can be repeated as often as you wish.***

Access Day is held twice a year in April and July.

INSIGHTS DAY

A one day programme held on a Sunday, where you learn to 'LIVE IN THE MOMENT'.

By 'LIVING IN THE MOMENT' you have the ability to let go of the past and stop worrying about the future, therefore creating your own reality in the here and now.

Pre-requisite for ***Insights Day*** is ***The Next Evolutionary Step.*** ***Insights Day can be repeated as often as you wish.***

Insights Day is held once a year in April.

BEING MALE / BEING FEMALE

A weekend where you have the opportunity of coming to terms with your sexuality and to look at how to perceive your role as a male / female within society today, as well as how and why you relate to the opposite gender the way you do.

The duration is a 2 ½ day period commencing Friday evening.

Pre-requisite for *Being Male / Being Female* is *The Next Evolutionary Step. Being*

Male / Being Female can be repeated as often as you wish.

Being Male / Being Female is held once a year in May.

FREEDOM IN RELATIONSHIPS

For couples wishing to find the real purpose for their relationship, and how to communicate this to each other effectively.

It is an intense look at your living together and intention creating skills.

Two connected individuals can create a stable and blissful reality beyond their belief.

The duration is a 2 ½ day period commencing Friday evening.

Pre-requisite for *Freedom in Relationships* is that both partners have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

Freedom in Relationships can be repeated as often as you wish.

Freedom in Relationships is held in February every two years.

Page 10

OTHER (PAST) LIVES

This is an exciting programme that takes you on a journey through and into your other lifetimes.

It is a spectacular cellular memory experience that makes you realise how much those unanswered questions stem from your higher self, other lifetimes and your many shafts.

Pre-requisite for *Other (Past) Lives* is *The Next Evolutionary Step* and *Universal Healing* and / or *The Final Step* and / or *Being Male / Being Female*.

The duration is a 2 ½ day period commencing Friday evening.

Other (Past) Lives can be repeated as often as you wish.

Other (Past) Lives is held once a year in May.

CHILDREN'S AWAKENING

This programme forms a basis for children to understand themselves better by showing them where they stand in the web of life.

The underlying objective is for your children to learn how to support each other and to accept support from others especially their peers and on a wider scale from adults.

The pre-requisite for *Children's Awakening* is that one or both parents must have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* otherwise the effectiveness and long term benefit of the programme may be lost.

The duration is a 2 day period (Saturday & Sunday) with an overnight stay.

Children's Awakening can be repeated as often as you wish.

Children's Awakening is held once a year in September.

BUSINESS AND HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

A cleansing process that enables you to put all you have learnt into practise in the real world to enable you to make money profitably.

It guides you through the process of creating a new business and / or improving an existing one, by coming to understand the nature of the financial system and how you can manipulate it for the best results, while teaching you how to remain totally satisfied with your profession or chose career direction.

This programme allows you to be prosperous while integrating.

Pre-requisite for *Business and How to be Successful* is *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

This programme takes three months to complete and includes theoretical and practical segments and is held on mid week evenings.

Business and How to be Successful commences in June every two years.

Page 11

METAPHYSICAL PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATE

This is a certificate programme that you undertake once you have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* and intend completing *Universal Healing, The Final Step*, and *St. John's Certificate & Senior Resuscitation Programme* and you want to earn an income healing and guiding others effectively as a Metaphysical Healer.

It is a certificate programme that creates the environment for you to become an aid in the healing of chronic, acute and terminal diseases along with learning methods for rejuvenating and enlivening a balanced system.

Pre-requisite for *Metaphysical Practitioner Certificate* is *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

Metaphysical Practitioner Certificate takes three months to complete and is extremely intense, it includes theoretical and practical sessions, along with a number of assignments.

Metaphysical Practitioner Certificate commences in May every two years.

PSYCHIC READER CERTIFICATE

A certificate programme designed to create 'competent and real' Psychic Readers that are cleansed and do not relay any bias in their readings, when giving members of the public guidance in regards to their current and future situations.

It is a certificate programme that you do once you have completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* and intend completing *Universal Healing*, *The Final Step*, and *St. John's Certificate & Senior Resuscitation Programme*.

Pre-requisite for *Psychic Reader Certificate* is *The Next Evolutionary Step*.

Psychic Reader Certificate takes three months to complete, and includes theoretical and practical sessions.

Psychic Reader Certificate commences in May every two years.

PERSONAL MASTERY & METAPHYSICAL COUNSELLING CERTIFICATE

A programme that you undertake upon completing *The Next Evolutionary Step* and *The Final Step* and intend completing *Access and Insights Days*, *Universal Healing*, *Being Male / Being Female*, *Freedom in Relationships*, and the *St. John's Certificate & Senior Resuscitation Programme* as well as any other nominated programmes in the curriculum.

It is an intense certificate programme which requires total commitment and it allows you at its completion to create an ongoing income centred around Metaphysical Counselling, or you may choose to use it as the ultimate in self development and personal mastery.

You must be prepared for intense theoretical, practical and support work throughout this period.

To finalise your integration process *Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate* is a must, as it gives you an opportunity to interact with others as well as yourself from a position of total understanding.

Pre-requisite for *Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate* is *The Next Evolutionary Step* and *The Final Step*.

Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate takes 1 to 2 years to complete.

Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate commences in December every two years.

Page 12

THE INITIATES

The most advanced learning process that one can embark upon.

It is designed to increase and advance your Metaphysical Counselling, Psychic Reading and Metaphysical Healing skills to their fullest potential.

Complete integrity is a necessity to be on this programme and you can only be a part of this learning process if you have been offered an invitation to partake.

Pre-requisite for *The Initiates* is *The Final Step, The Survivors Programme, Metaphysical Practitioner Certificate, Psychic Reader Certificate and Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate*.

The duration is 5 days, commencing on a Monday.

The Initiates can be repeated as often as you wish.

The Initiates is held in July every three years.

The Next Evolutionary Step INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATE

The next phase in *LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES* evolution is the presentation of *The Next Evolutionary Step* to as many people as possible, in as many areas as possible – hence we require *The Next Evolutionary Step* instructors to be created.

Those who choose to become instructors have the choice of working in a part of Australia or Internationally.

If you visualise yourself presenting *The Next Evolutionary Step*, doing Metaphysical Healing, Psychic Reading and Metaphysical Counselling you need only contact our office and we will guide you in the appropriate direction.

Pre-requisite for this programme is *Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate*.

The Next Evolutionary Step Instructor Certificate takes 5 months to complete.

The Next Evolutionary Step Instructor Certificate commences in April every three years.

ST JOHN'S CERTIFICATE & ADVANCED RESUSCITATION CERTIFICATE

These are external programmes, run by the St John's Ambulance Brigade.

It is designed specifically for individuals who wish to become members of our competent and integrated support and service teams for *The Next Evolutionary Step* and other advanced programmes.

These certificates are also appropriate for individuals who wish to do *LIFE INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES Metaphysical Practitioner Certificate, Psychic Reader Certificate, Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling Certificate*, as well as *The Next Evolutionary Step Instructor Certificate*.

These courses usually take a weekend to complete.

St. John's Certificate & Senior Resuscitation Programmes are held throughout the year and can be organised through your local ambulance or community service units."

'OMAROO'
Hunter Street

Burringbar NSW 2483

Phone & Fax: (066) 77 1519
Mobile: 018 197 328

Life Integration Programmes

THE PURPOSE OF THE FINAL STEP

The purpose of this programme is to allow you to take THE FINAL STEP in:

Breaking down and transforming all my limiting beliefs about who I am and how the world affects me.

To discover the abilities and the integrating knowledge to make the seemingly impossible become possible.

To make achieving the impossible an everyday experience where 'I CAN'T' becomes 'OH, YES I CAN'.

To realise as an individual, that simply be being and by my very presence, 'I am integral in making a difference'.

Experiencing the power and love of an unconditional, attuned group as totally unlimited and how it can project you toward your individual and group goals in a breathtaking manner.

To realise from these first hand experiences that the template for the world works on the principles of collective vision (concepts), active cohesion (cooperation and action), empowerment through relationships and holism (synergy – everything finally connecting together).

THE FINAL STEP is a place for exploding human possibility into a conceivable reality – IT IS ABOUT YOU AND ME TOGETHER.

It is about solidifying into your own mind that:

'FACT IS MORE BIZARRE THAN FICTION'

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Australian Company Number 002 480 908

AGREEMENTS IN REGARDS TO THE FINAL STEP

I make the following agreements in regards to the time we spend together during THE FINAL STEP:

- 1 I choose to allow an environment of maximum integrity to exist while participating in THE FINAL STEP.
- 2 I choose to make the following agreements fully aware that my personal integrity is vital to the integrity of the group as a whole.

- 3 I realise that by us all operating with absolute integrity that the group can align on our purpose for being here.
- 4 I have fully chosen to be on THE FINAL STEP. I
- 5 I agree to follow the course instructions impeccably and with ZEN thus everyone has the opportunity to gain full benefit from the programme.
- 6 I commit myself to a high degree of integrity in my relationship with all course participants so that I can aid them in keeping their agreement.
- 7 I agree to handle all my complaints, concerns, observations and insights by communicating them to the person concerned or to someone who can do something about the situation.
- 8 I agree not to receive from anyone complaints that I cannot do something about, but rather to direct this person to someone who can do something about it.
- 9 I agree not to swear inappropriately during the lectures or when on any outings in regards to THE FINAL STEP.
- 10 I agree to be clear as to what is expected of me at all times and will ask for assistance if I am unsure about what I am supposed to do.
- 11 I agree to attend all sessions.
- 12 I agree to be on time to all sessions.
- 13 I agreed to be wherever I have to be 5 minutes prior to commencement time.
- 14 I will bring my folder, pen and paper to every session unless told otherwise.
- 15 I will wear my name tag at all times even when asleep.
- 16 I will assist all others in keeping their name tags and folders with them at all times.
- 17 I agree not to (sic) lean my feet on any other course participant's chair.
- 18 I agree not to read or look at any other course participant's notes unless asked to.
- 19 I agreed that should I decide to become unconscious at anytime that I will leave my chair and stand at the sides of the room in the designated area, in a designated manner, and if necessary will complete the appropriate exercises until I am refreshed enough to return to my seat.

NAME: CARLI McCONKEY

DATE: 18/10/96

SIGNATURE (Sgd) CA McConkey

Page 5

- 20 I agree that when I am phasing out that I will allow other group members to nudge me and then I will go to the sides of the room.
- 21 I agree not to leave the room during any session.

- 22 I agree not to bring anything extra into the room except my file, pens, extra clothing or items I am directed to bring in.
- 23 I agree at the end of each session to straighten my chair, pick up all tissues and place them in the containers provided.
- 24 I agree to keep my agreements regarding the use of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and other contraband whilst on THE FINAL STEP.
- 25 I agree to read the purpose of the course every day.
- 26 I agree to read through my intentions in regard to the course every day.
- 27 I agree to actually participating in THE FINAL STEP ie absorbing the experience of THE FINAL STEP and therefore integrating them into my life.
- 28 I commit myself to taking these experiences into the world and making a difference in the lives of others.
- 29 I agree to respect the confidentiality of the share of all participants and to keep the names of all course participants confidential.
- 30 I agree to keep all written notes confidential to myself and others who have partaken in THE FINAL STEP.
- 31 I agree to accept gracefully any task allocated to me.
- 32 I will look and see what is wanted and needed and do it.
- 33 I intend to be highly sensitive to my needs and those of others and do something appropriate about it.
- 34 I agree to only use the bathing area and toilet assigned to me.
- 35 I intend to participate in my service tasks cheerfully and willingly.
- 36 I intend to look at my resistance / acceptance of a task in regards to my current patterning.
- 37 I agree to keep my sleeping place clean and tidy.
- 38 I agree to keep my bathroom and toilet clean and tidy.
- 39 I agree to keep my course room clean and tidy.
- 40 I agree to keep myself clean and tidy.
- 41 I agree that if someone should comment upon my personal hygiene that I will immediately or at the first opportunity do something about it.

NAME: CARLI McCONKEY

DATE: 18/10/96

SIGNATURE CA McConkey

- 42 I agree that the information furnished by me and my physician is totally correct.
- 43 I commit myself to be being responsible for my own wellbeing during THE FINAL STEP.
- 44 I acknowledge that it is not okay to harm myself physically on THE FINAL STEP and agree not to harm myself physically, intellectually, emotionally or spiritually during THE FINAL STEP.
- 45 Should I harm myself in anyway (sic) I will immediately report it to the Accident Report Officer even if it is only a bee sting, scratch, or a leech suck.
- 46 I agree that if I break agreement 44 that I will continue to participate in THE FINAL STEP fully – it will not be an excuse to quit.
- 47 I agree not to take any medicines unless they have been prescribed and have been cleared with the Medical Officer.
- 48 I agree that if I need medical help or supervision that I will immediately seek this out.
- 49 I agree to 100% commitment to THE FINAL STEP integrity, and will be 100% responsible for supporting the other course participants in keeping their agreements in relation to THE FINAL STEP.
- 50 I agree not to go near the dining area except during specific meal times.
- 51 I agree not to enter the dining area prior to the time allocated for the specific meal session.
- 52 I agree not to enter the Service and Support Teams meal area unless directed to or an emergency arises.
- 53 I agree not to enter the Service and Support Teams sleeping area unless directed to or an emergency arises.
- 54 I agree to remain in the meal area for 15 minutes after I have completed my meal.
- 55 I agree to sit only at the assigned tables and eat only the foods assigned to me (no additives etc to be used).
- 56 If I am a dieter I agree to abide by my dieter agreements.
- 57 I agree not to take any food out of the dining area other than that which has been consumed by me and is now inside of me.
- 58 I agree never to enter the kitchen area except when I am on dining duty and never to consume food unless it has been assigned to me and is on a plate at my table.
- 59 I agree to clear my place and utensils at the end of each meal and agree to leave the dining area neat.
- 60 I agree to accept the meals as presented and not to request substitutes or complain.

61 I accept that I am responsible for handling any dietary requests before the commencement of THE FINAL STEP.

NAME: CARLI McCONKEY
SIGNATURE (Sgd) CA McConkey"

DATE: 18/10/96

90 The following document sent to participants post *The Final Step* course again has a suggestion of continuity in participant's inculcation and an implied invitation to join the plaintiff and her group "completely". The emphasis is mine.

D19

"OMAROO'
 Hunter Street
 Burringbar NSW 2483
 Australia

Phone: (066) 77 1519
 Fax: (066) 77 1519
 International Phone: +61 77 1519
 International Fax: +61 66 77 1011

Life Integration Programmes

FOR THE 1996 FINAL STEPPERS WITH LOVE AND LIGHT

As you move further along your journey toward enlightenment you will notice that words to described how you feel will begin to escape you.

This is how we feel about the way you shifted through your blocks and beliefs during **THE FINAL STEP.**

Things become so expansive and limitless that you begin to understand the meaning 'I AM'.

After watching you Thomas and myself have further reaffirmed our individual 'I AM' – thankyou.

Until you join us completely simply make sure your share your knowledge and do not show it off, hence you will comprehend and be ZEN.

Let this photograph be an inspiration to your progression!!!!

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a fulfilling New Year.

Once again, Love & Light

(Sgd Natasha & Thomas)

Natasha & Thomas

Cenelage PTY Limited Est. 1982
 Australian Company Number 002 480 908"

91 The following documents detail the intensive regime involved in *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling:*

D23
Page 2

"OMAROO'

Phone: (066) 77 1519

Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 2483
Australia

Fax: (066) 77 1519
International Phone: +61 77 1519
International Fax: +61 66 77 1011

Life Integration Programmes

**PERSONAL MASTERY & METAPHYSICAL COUNSELLING CERTIFICATE
ITINERARY**

You must have completed or be prepared to complete the following programmes:

St John's Senior First Aid Certificate

Universal Healing

The Final Step

Access Day

Insights Day

Being Male / Female

Freedom in Relationships (as long as you are in a relationship)

Support Team work needs to be done on *The Next Evolutionary Step* throughout 1998, however this will be subject to invitation.

The Crisis Counselling Course will be included in your calendar, and the fee for this is **\$130.00** per person.

The following weekends are to be left free for intensive training:

WEEK ONE	- 30 th & 31 st January & 1 st February 1998.
WEEK TWO	- 6 th , 7 th & 8 th February 1998.
WEEK THREE	- 20 th , 21 st & 22 nd February 1998.
WEEK FOUR	- 27 th , 28 th February & 1 st March 1998.
WEEK FIVE	- 13 th , 14 th & 15 th March 1998.
WEEK SIX	- 19 th & 20 th December 1998.

To ensure the smoothness of this programme strong intra-communication is going to be necessary between the Personal Mastery Certificate participants and your instructor (myself), let us commence creating this open network – therefore we can all begin benefiting immediately.

I look forward to your company over the coming months.

Cenelage PTY Limited Est. 1982
Australian Company Number 002 480 908

It will be to your advantage to become support members on as many programmes over the coming months to enable discussion and comprehension of the typical personality types and possible issues that you may come up against in the field.

Please remember you will be invited onto programmes to do support and if we feel you are not yet ready you will consequently have to wait for another time.

Yours Sincerely

(Sgd. Natasha Lakaev)

Natasha Lakaev B.App.Sc.
MANAGING DIRECTOR"

D24

'OMAROO'
Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 2483
Australia

Phone: (066) 77 1519
Fax: (066) 77 1519
International Phone: +61 77 1519
International Fax: +61 66 77 1011
Email: awake@norex.com.au

Life Integration Programmes

30th & 31st January, 1st February 1998

STAGE TWO

The following assignments are to be completed across a number of dates.

As before they are to be approached from a totally individual basis.

All assignments are to be approached thoroughly and completely – no excuses will be accepted for not meeting the deadlines and all submissions are to arrive at 'OMAROO' on time – no exceptions.

No task is more important than another therefore do not try to put them into any form of priority – do each task equally.

Each task is to be handwritten up in point form NOT story or essay style.

Each assignment is to be stapled together and clearly marked with your name.

FORWARDING ASSIGNMENTS TO OMAROO

Please send via email to:

PM&MC 1998
Life Integration Programmes
'Omaroo'
Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 2483

or bus via Kirklands (Pioneer/Premier Motor Service)
addressed as follows:

PM&MC 1998
Life Integration Programmes
C/- Kelly Brothers
Pacific Highway
Mooball NSW 2483

When sending assignment via Kirklands (Pioneer/Premier Motor Service) you must telephone the office, to notify that the assignment is on the bus.

DO NOT FAX YOUR ASSIGNMENTS!!!

ASSIGNMENTS

DAILY SPEECH DIARY – is to be kept on how you felt when talking to individuals, groups or to yourself.

DIARY – is to be kept up to date.

DREAMLOG – is to be kept up to date.

BOOK REVIEWS – are to be completed by the designated dates.

TAPE REVIEWS – are to be completed by the designated dates.

EXERCISES, MEDITATION & DIET – are to be continued as per the original outline.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS – are to be completed following all instructions.

Cenelage PTY Limited Est. 1982
Australian Company Number 002 480 908

BOOK REVIEWS

1. Reach each book completely and thoroughly.
2. Each chapter is to have a written review which includes your interpretation of the information detailed along with a succinct summary of the chapter.
3. There are a total of ten (10) appraisals due at 'Omaroo' on the following dates:
 - 5th February 1998
 - 12th February 1998 x 2 Books
 - 17th February 1998 x 2 Books
 - 20th February 1998 x 2 Books
 - 24th February 1998 x 2 Books
 - 26th February 1998
4. The books to be investigated and digested ie it is not be done on a superficial level are:
 - Unicorns** by Michael Green
 - Prisoners of Belief** by Matthew McKay, Ph.D., & Patrick Fanning
 - Bodymind** by Ken Duchtwald
 - Jonathan Livingston Seagull** by Richard Bach
 - Taming Your Mind** by Ken Keyes Jr
 - Parables from Other Planets** by Hugh Prather & Gayle Prather
 - Nothing is Impossible** by W.R. Gresham
 - Wheels of Life** by Anodea Judith
 - Celestine Prophecy** by James Redfield
5. **One copy of each of these books will be supplied between you,** these books are to be returned to 'Omaroo' on the 28th February 1998 in exactly the same condition you borrowed them in – they are not to be any worse for wear.

Only the books given to you are to be used – no photocopies or your own copies of books are to be utilised.
6. **How you distribute these, between you, is up to you,** however each person is to have equal access, therefore changeover points and times will need to be predetermined.
7. Remember no discussion of the data is to be entered into nor is it to be shared amongst you – I leave this up to your integrity, I also point out that these reviews are not to be discussed with anyone else as I want a true perspective of where you are at individually.

RE-DO ASSIGNMENTS

All re-do assignments for all assignments are due:

26TH FEBRUARY 1998

Please complete the following **Assignment Sheet** which is to be handed in on the weekend commencing **27th February 1998**.

Ensure you fill out the reason why you need to re-do an assignment.

Possible reasons needing to re-do an assignment:

Assignment was not handed in.

Assignment was late.

Assignment was typed.

Assignment was incomplete.

Assignment was not done thoroughly.

You need to re-learn these principles.

You need to re-absorb these principles.

Lost assignment.

Assignment not clearly named on front cover.

Other you must specify what this is."

92

The defendant was given personal feedback on her development by the plaintiff. It was not always encouraging as can be seen by the following assessments:

D43

"IN SUMMARY – WHERE ARE YOU AT?"

STUDENT NAME: Carli McConkey

DATE: December 1998

1 Do you need to work on the following areas?

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| a) | Victim Consciousness | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| b) | Martyrdom Consciousness. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| c) | Poverty Consciousness | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| | i) Money | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| | ii) Time | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| | iii) Health | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| | iv) Giving Support | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| | v) Taking Support | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| d) | I Centredness Overt | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| e) | I Centredness Covert | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |
| f) | You Centredness Overt | <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES / NO |

- g) You Centerdness Covert YES / NO
- h) Needy Dependant Overt YES / NO
- i) Needy Dependant Covert YES / NO
- j) Disassociated and Withdrawn Overt YES / NO
- k) Disassociated and Withdrawn Covert YES / NO
- 2 What % neutrality do you currently have in place: 0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
 50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
- 3 What % integration are you currently up to individually: 0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
 50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
- 4 What % integration are you currently up to within group framework: 0%
10%
20%
30%
 40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
5. What major emotions do you need to access:
"All dense emotions & integrity!"
- 6 What % performance rating did you have in the 11 : 11 task as an individual: 0%
10%
20%
30%
40%

50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

- 7 Are you ready to counsel? YES / NO
- 8 Do you have to do more work on your:
- Diet YES / NO
- Exercise YES / NO
- Mediation YES / NO
- Intuition YES / NO

If you have received a YES for any of these it means you must develop a strict regime to following that particular area **PERMANENTLY.**

- 9 Are you prone to exaggerating your situation to others and yourself?
YES / NO
- 10 Do you have an integrity issue on any level?
YES / NO
- 11 Are you actually happy with everything that is happening around you?
YES / NO
- 12 Do you need on going personal counselling?
YES / NO
- 13 Which programmes do you need to redo to move your progress along?
'Parenting & any you choose!'
- 14 Do you need to share more openly with people what you have learnt and know?
YES / NO"

"D47

"IN SUMMARY – WHERE ARE YOU AT?"

STUDENT NAME: Carli McConkey

DATE: December 1999

- 1 Do you need to work on the following areas?
- a) Victim Consciousness YES / NO

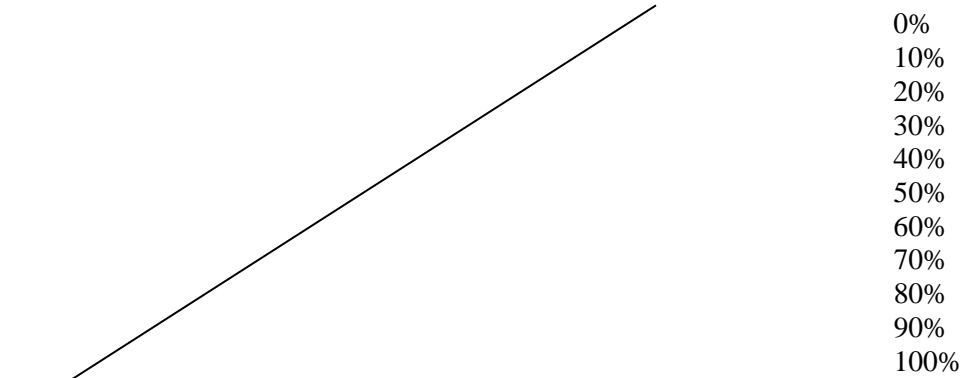
- b) Martyrdom Consciousness. YES / NO
- c) Poverty Consciousness
- i) Money YES / NO
- ii) Time YES / NO
- iii) Health YES / NO
- iv) Giving Support YES / NO
- v) Taking Support YES / NO
- d) I Centredness Overt YES / NO
- e) I Centredness Covert YES / NO
- f) You Centredness Overt YES / NO
- g) You Centredness Covert YES / NO
- h) Needy Dependant Overt YES / NO
- i) Needy Dependant Covert YES / NO
- j) Disassociated and Withdrawn Overt YES / NO
- k) Disassociated and Withdrawn Covert YES / NO
- 2 What % neutrality do you currently have in place:
- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%
- 3 What % integration are you currently up to individually:
- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%
- 4 What % integration are you currently up to within group framework:
- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%

90%
100%

5 What major emotions do you need to access:

"All"

6 What % performance rating did you have in the 11 : 11 task as an individual:



7. Are you ready to counsel? YES / NO

8. Do you have to do more work on your:

Diet YES / NO

Exercise YES / NO

Mediation YES / NO

Intuition YES / NO

If you have received a YES for any of these it means you must develop a strict regime to following that particular area **PERMANENTLY.**

9. Are you prone to exaggerating your situation to others and yourself?

YES / NO

10. Do you have an integrity issue on any level?

YES / NO

11. Are you actually happy with everything that is happening around you?

YES / NO

12. Do you need on going personal counselling?

YES / NO

13. Which programmes do you need to redo to move your progress along?

'As you choose!'

14. Do you need to share more openly with people what you have learnt and know?

YES NO

93

The last of the course documents tendered by the defendant that I will reproduce in these reasons is the course outline for *The Survivors Programme*. I interpolate here that in its terms it appears to be wholly consistent with the defendant's claims about the philosophy behind the course and wholly inconsistent with those of the plaintiff. It is as follows:

"D46

"OMAROO'
Hunter Street
Burringbar NSW 2483
Australia

Phone: (02) 6677 1519
Fax: (02) 6677 1011
International Phone: +61 2 66 77 1519
International Fax: +61 2 66 77 1011
Email: awake@norex.com.au

Life Integration Programmes

THE SURVIVORS PROGRAMME

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 13th February 1999

COMMENCEMENT TIME: Saturday, 10.00am – please be ready to commence the programme at 9.30 am ie you must be ready to assemble in front of the 'Omaroo' training facility at this time.

TIMETABLE: **Preliminary Day**
10am – 5pm, 13th February 1999

Stage One & Stage Two
Participants will be notified at an appropriate time.

CALENDAR 1999: **Preliminary Details and Outline** 13th February 1999
Stage One 12th – 16th April 1999
Stage Two 13th – 17th June 1999

DURATION: 11 days and 10 nights which as the above dates indicate are broken into two distinct segments.

COST: \$2 850.00

COURSE FEES: Commitment to this programme needs to be finalised by a 10% deposit and a completed questionnaire being sent to our office as soon as possible so that interviews and final details can be organised as necessary.

To hold you position please ensure that course fees have been finalised in full prior to course commencement date, due to the limited numbers for this programme.

It is preferred that all payments be completed prior to commencement of **The Survivors Programme**, due to the tightness of the agenda for the programme.

COURSE PRE REQUISITES: That you have completed **The Final Step** and **Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling** (or be currently enrolled on **Personal Mastery & Metaphysical Counselling**) and that you have oved through all the processes which determine your capacity to gain total benefit from **The Survivors Programme**.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Natasha Lakaev B.App.Sc will instruct this programme.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: As the name states it is about training you, showing you how, and allowing you to develop the skills to be a survivor into the year 2000 and beyond.

This programme creates the environment that will enable you to consciously blend with the other realms and dimensions.

It will provide the skills and knowledge for future changes in planetary conditions and inevitable social and climatic disruption.

As in nature, survival is always attained by the best prepared (fittest).

The Survivors programme deals with:

The physical: In showing you how to ensure an abundance of food regardless of the climatic or planetary situation, and also how to maintain health in times of chaos and disruption.

The intellectual: Understanding future planetary shifts, social patterning, monetary manipulation and individual and group survival techniques.

The emotional: Further developing inner emotional strength and the ability to cope with extremes of external turmoil.

The spiritual: Further attunement to the higher self and the ability to merge with other energies and dimensions.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: **Preliminary Day** – Pen & paper, swimwear, beach towel and bathroom towel, your comfortable clothes, walking shoes, torch, hat, vegetarian finger food, along with your enthusiasm.

MEAL REQUIREMENTS: Vegetarian finger food.

DRESS: Very neat, comfortable clothing that allow for body movement and walking.

ACCOMMODATION & TRAVEL: Included in the course fee, except for the Preliminary Day, or when otherwise stipulated due to course curriculum requirements.

VENUE:**Preliminary Day**

'Omaroo'

Hunter Street

Burringbar NSW 2483

Stage One & Stage Two

Participants will be notified at an appropriate time on both occasions.

DRIVING SPEED:

Please maintain a speed limit of 40km/hour once you enter Greenvale Court off Main Street, and a speed limit of 10km/hour once on the 'Omaroo Westgate' driveway.

Anyone who breaches these speed limits will be asked to discontinue the programme they are on, as we want the fact that there are children walking and playing on country roads acknowledged and respected.

Also notate that you are driving through a residential area.

Please shut your windows, lock your car, placing your car keys in an accessible (sic) place with the personal gear you are bringing with you to the 'Omaroo' Training Centre.

TRAVELLING DIRECTIONS: Preliminary Day***From North***

Drive straight down the Pacific Highway going south until you come to Murwillumbah, continue south on the Highway (following signs to Ballina) for a further 15 minutes until you see a sign on your left that says BURREINGBAR, turn right into Main Street

From South

Drive North up the Pacific Highway following the signs to Murwillumbah. Go through Brunswick Heads, continue for a further 15 minutes (approximately) until you come into Mooball. Drive through Mooball and into Burringbar, take the second turn left into Main Street....

....From Main Street

Drive down Main Street past Burringbar Primary School, turn left into Greenvale Court, take the second right into Hinchinbrook Road, at the end of the culdesac (sic) follow the dirt road on the left until you get to the top parking area.

Follow the walking track down to *Omaroo Centre*.

Take your meals to the staircase near the kitchen, delivering it to the kitchen crew, then take your belongings to your designated area.

CAR POOLS:

Those who wish to organise car pools should contact the office and a list of names will be given so you can make arrangements.

Car pooling is a sensible way to economise on travelling costs, please indicate your willingness to be a part of this.

Please fill in the enclosed enrolment form and return with a recent photograph."

94 The defendant gave evidence that she worked for the plaintiff from the end of 1999 to the beginning of 2002, with the plaintiff always promising that she would pay her. The plaintiff did give her a cheque for \$5,000 wage in mid to late 2000 but that was all. The defendant said that the plaintiff went on overseas trips from the end of 2000, she had money to pay the defendant but she did not. The defendant said "I've called her my employer, she's called me her employee, and I've never called myself a volunteer and I never ever called myself a shareholder during the whole time I was with her".

95 The defendant gave the following evidence:

"My testimony is that I was working long hours for the plaintiff and putting everything of myself into the work that I did believing that I was contributing to her and the planet, because I held the belief that we were going to – the world was shifting and was going to – we would have to kill people and fight in 11/11/11, and that we were integrating and cleansing ourselves of memory to move from the third to fourth dimension, and I thought that I was helping the universe – the planet and the universe in everything I did."

96 Cross-examined about her outside employment, the defendant gave the following evidence:

"Am I correct in understanding, Ms McConkey, that during your period with Universal Knowledge, between 1996 –Mhm.

– and 2010 –Yeah.

– you had outside employment, if not, all – most of the time?.....Not most of the time. So, well, yeah, I had outside employment until I started – normal outside employment, I was a junior consultant in public relations firm, after I got out of uni. I'd already been temping when I first got out, and then yeah, I had a year with a public relations just one other lady, and then I, towards the end of 1998, of my PMC, I moved up to Brisbane for six months and I did more temping in you know just doing either reception or administration, and then I obviously asked the plaintiff for a job, part-time or full-time, and then I met Michael in May 1999, we moved down to his – it was either his – well, his mum lived near Lismore, his dad was down with his partner at Byron Bay, we lived at both places I believe, and then I was doing some waitressing down at Byron Bay and then when the plaintiff told me, you know, to come and work with her, I just had to obviously still earn some money, so I had casual work, so just some waitressing jobs or whatever, and then after I said the plaintiff told me that I needed to pay the fifty thousand dollars back after the ATO came in, I went and secured a job – I have – stated in some things that it was May but I've seen from the group certificate that it was April 2002. So soon after I left the plaintiff's property I went and got that job as manager of the Civic Video South Tweed Heads. I worked there for a year full-time but I still went to Combined PMC meetings and things, but I was being shunned and people, you know, I was trying to basically just be as nice as I could and – because I still obviously wanted to keep involved with the course to evolve and I believed in the period of survival etcetera. So I just was as nice as I could, paid the plaintiff back her five or six hundred dollars a week, and then, as I've explained, when it – we did Survivors in around May 2003, I got fired after I came back and then I went back to work with the plaintiff full-time just doing whatever I needed to do for her, whatever she wanted me to do, and then I – to make money I went and secured a job at Birch Carroll & Coyle Cinema and I ended up doing that at – like, you know, whether it was two or three nights during the week and weekend work casually. I was never put on, you know, permanently, it was casual. I did that for four years until just almost up to the birth of Hamish, and then as I've explained, Michael left me at the end of 2005 and I went and lived with Julie Townsend, and the plaintiff told me to go on Centrelink payments, and from then on I

was always on Centrelink payments till the time I left, and then I would obviously just, you know, do a bit of – I think there was some waitressing in there and McDonald's, and obviously you have to tell Centrelink what you're earning, so then whatever I earned was in addition to Centrelink payments. But I was still working full-time for the plaintiff with all of her companies, including her personal, and maintaining her property until the time I left."

97 The defendant gave evidence that a letter she had written at the plaintiff's bidding to assist in the plaintiff's claim against ING Insurance to have Nick Panos' disability insurance paid out, contained mistruths because the plaintiff wished to be able to blame the defendant for Nick Panos not having banked cheques for large sums which the plaintiff had the defendant fraudulently create and pay into the business *Fresh Zen Wholesale*. These cheques were relied upon to establish Mr Panos' income from that business when the defendant claims there was none. Mr Panos was a former romantic partner, business partner and adherent of the plaintiff.

98 The defendant said in her evidence that she believed that the plaintiff was a deity. She said:

"And in my testimony I would like to reiterate that did believe that the plaintiff was Jesus Christ reincarnated, that she was a deity due to the stories that she told and that to me, placed her in Jesus' time, and that, you know, she told stories, as I've mentioned in cross-examination, about the red marks on the forehead and the wrists and the ankles et cetera, and that I did, while we were by ourselves, I think it was in the office, I asked her who I had been in that time, and she told me I was Judas.

And I did believe that I was Judas and – in a past life – sorry – and that, you know, I thought that I had to serve her and that I was doing everything for her and, as I said, for the planet and the shift and everything else, and that I did believe that she was, like, the Queen of Atlantis because when she told stories about Atlantis, you know, she acted as if she'd been there, she'd lived there, she knew exactly what was going on.

And she'd tell stories that you know it – it – peoples – people were turning bad, and you know doing bad things and they destroyed Atlantis and that's why it sunk. And I specifically asked her who I was in Atlantis, and she told me that I was a lady in waiting and I thought that I was like her servant and that's what I believed my role was in this life.

And I just wanted to say that I remember, I think – I think it's in my book anyway but because I'd been told by everyone that I was a horrible, bad person and a lot of things were my fault there was one day I think Misha was around, and I didn't say anything about it, but I remember her being with me for some reason and I felt shunned and humiliated by everyone and I was in the access room and I really did think that I should just die and kill myself so that I – my children would be better off without me and I was scared. I felt scared because I didn't like want to come back again in another life.

That's why I kept going and going, because I didn't want to have to go through all the crap again in another lifetime..."

99 The defendant denied that she ever threatened the plaintiff before she left her sphere by saying that she wanted \$300,000 or she would go to the media and call her a cult leader.

100 The defendant stated that she never physically harmed the plaintiff in any way although she had seen the plaintiff batter other people.

101 The defendant gave evidence that her honest belief was that the Australian academic stress questionnaire on which the plaintiff's doctorate was based was fraudulent, and invalid because the defendant herself had completed two fabricated surveys at the request of the plaintiff. She said:

"She asked me to complete two questionnaires, pretending that I was university students, and I completed one as an Asian – I've – my mind is a blank about what they're

called, like a foreign student, an Asian student, male, young, and then I also completed one as a mature aged female"

102 The defendant gave evidence that she believed she was recruited into a violent extremist group. She said:

"And my testimony is that I formed the opinion that – the belief, I formed the belief that as I've mentioned, my – the group that I belonged to, lead by the plaintiff, was a violent, extremist group because she perpetrated violence and was an example for all of us and we in turn became very aggressive and at points became violent ourselves. And I wrote my book because I wanted to educate the public –...

Sorry, I wrote my book to educate the public about cults and violent extremism and I was honest in everything I wrote because you know, I said that I hit – beat my husband with a stick thinking he had psychic fleas and I also slapped Kylie in the face when I was under a lot of pressure. And I wanted my book to be a testimony of how someone who is in a vulnerable position – like had for example, child sexual abuse and was vulnerable and had just finished university and I got involved in this group.

And I – and my belief was that I was recruited because I went to the Mind Body Spirit Festival to have a psychic reading and I did not intend to go to any stall, stands or anything and the psychic reader was a member of this group, and she told me to solve all of my problems essentially to go to the stand and to do that course. And she told me that I wouldn't have to do any other courses that that Next Evolutionary Step course would give me all the tools that I would ever need to reach my full potential.

So, I believe that I was recruited, I went to the stand and then the rest of the story unfolds. So, yep it was my honest belief and – that, yep the group that I was involved in was a violent extremist group..."

103 Cross-examined about this, the defendant said:

"You've already said that you don't know of anyone that's been killed – ?.....No, but – in Universal Knowledge?.....But it was moving towards a period of time – so she was already being violent, so that's extremism and violent extremism. And she would've got to the point where she could have committed murder because that's what these cults did. No one knew these cults were going to do it until, like, the police and everyone came to – what's it called, the – sorry, I wish I knew. Over in the United States. That cult that, you know – the police and a parliamentarian went, and David Koresh, yeah, told everyone to kill themselves or gave them this, you know, poisonous drink and everything else.

Yeah?.....My belief is that, if I had have stayed there, the plaintiff would've got so paranoid and so violent that I could've been killed and others could've been killed. That is my absolute belief.

But it's correct to say, isn't it, that you're not aware of any state or federal authority ever shutting down Universal Knowledge?.....So I'm aware, and the plaintiff has admitted, that she was investigated by ASIO. And ASIO only investigate people in Australia that are a possible harm to society."

104 The defendant's evidence in full is contained in her book, of course, and as it covers 13 years of her life it is far too long to recount in detail here. And as I have already noted, the first of the two impugned newspaper articles I have set out earlier in these reasons, are effectively a thumbnail sketch of the plaintiff's experiences while in the plaintiff's sphere.

105 Again, as already noted, I accept the defendant's evidence over any evidence of the plaintiff. I regarded the defendant as honest and forthright. I will make some remarks about her demeanour when she was being cross-examined, when I turn to consider the issue of credibility. And I may return to

specific aspects of the defendant's evidence which may not have been touched on above, if they appear relevant to my consideration of the question of whether the admitted imputations are substantially true.

106 The defendant's first witness was Mark Goey.

107 Mr Goey is a social worker who completed the *Next Evolutionary Step* in early 1996. It was then known as *The Awakening*. He was 17 years old. He was asked what he recalled about the program and replied:

"Well, we were recommended to go on a vegan diet, we were – what Natasha had taught us was that – well, she introduced us to this idea of 'light beings', there are other dimensions, and that through releasing our emotions we could lighten our vibration, we could deal with this idea of cellular memory, that is, your cells carry a memory, and through catharsis which is purification, you can clean this memory, lighten your vibration and then you get access to the fourth dimension. And in that dimension, there are light beings, and – she was trying to introduce us to a new way of living, a new ideology."

108 Mr Goey confirmed much of what the defendant had said in her evidence about the way the program was run and about other courses and workshops they had each attended as well. He also described how he was recruited onto those courses. He said:

"... I used to receive invitations via mail to do further courses, and there were – on the courses that we did in the Awakening, there were these other people around called support members, and they had done more courses. And they – it was sort of – it was stated that they were more evolved and that they were more integrated, was the term that was used. And if we wanted to be like them, then we should do more courses."

109 First, he did *The Awakening* course for a second time, and he did *Universal Healing, Personal Mastery, Healing Certificate*, and then he completed *The Final Step* in late 1996. He completed that course with the defendant and about 80 other people. He described it:

"Well, the Final Step to me was – it's actually one of the few courses that I still remember to this day in terms of some of the things that happened on the course were so disturbing, for me, they were akin to date rape. We were put on a black bus, blacked out, didn't know where you were going. When we got to the course, we were made to line up and had to involve in this thing called genital rubbing. So you got the person in front of you and you had to rub their genitals whilst the person behind you rubbed your genitals. So if you picture a train of people rubbing each other's genitals, where everyone is looking in the same direction. And this was demonstrated to us by the support team members on how to do it, and they all thought it was pretty funny, actually. I wasn't very comfortable with it. And then, it was kind of like we were treated like it was some sort of military operation, and we were spoken down to and humiliated, sworn at. We had to stand naked in front of people. We took our turn at that. Everyone got up the front, you had to strip down. I was forced to watch pornography, which was – as I say, it was just disgusting. I was 17 at the time. I turned 18 on the course, because I had my 18th, but I didn't tell anybody because I could see that the environment, I'm not – it wasn't going to be a positive experience. And it was the most peculiar – the whole thing was just awful. I actually wanted to run away. I thought this is – the thing it was – it was psychologically disturbing, and it's – I – the things I saw on the course and I witnessed, the things people said to me, you know, I've never forgotten, and – you know, and we had to ask to go to the toilet. We weren't allowed to go to the toilet. We were given a time limit to go to the toilet, I had constipation. The whole thing was – it made no – it was just disturbing, actually. It was disturbingwe were denied food, and then we were given an exercise on how to get food, and then when people went and took the food they were ostracised for getting the food. It was just – it was yeah, it was like a concentration camp."

110 Mr Goey described being required to swim naked in a pond. He said:

"... We had to get naked. We would jump in this pond, and in that time of the year it was freezing cold. And we had to stay in the pond until Natasha said we could get out. And well, it was kind of like an open air torture session. People were shouting and very uncomfortable and she – we were just kind of all freezing. And this would go on for 20 minutes to half an hour, and she would stand on the side of the pond, and I remember saying something and I can't quite remember, but she started shouting at me, and I remember just seeing this hatred coming from her towards me. So, I'm in the middle of this freezing pond, I'm naked and she's shouting at me in a derogatory fashion from the edge of the pond, and this happened pretty well five or six days we were on the course, every morning we would go for a run, we had to pick up manure, cow manure, and she made us pick up the manure because she said, you know, you're doing push-ups in cow manure, you must want to be around cow manure. So, we all had to pick up cow manure with our bare hands, and then we would do these runs, and then she would dunk us in this freezing pond, and we couldn't get out 'till she said so."

111 Mr Goey was asked whether he got much sleep that week and he said no, that he would sleep anywhere from two to three hours a night, and he said if participants fell asleep at other times then they had to go stand at the edge of the tent and hold a big rock over their head. He said "if you fell asleep, the rock would fall on your head. That was the idea. So, you better not – you know, we weren't allowed to sleep".

112 Mr Goey completed *Personal Mastery* in 1998. He described the 12 month long course as follows:

"It was a vegan diet, so deprived of all forms of animal protein. We were told that we should run 10 kilometres a day, drink a litre of vegetable juice and a litre of fruit juice. That sleep was just an emotion. That we were sleeping too much. That you shouldn't be sleeping so much. And we were given a – a regime that was designed to keep us busy, and malnourished the whole time. And, it's – it's my experience that after watching people start that course and finish that course, they were both physically and psychologically compromised."

113 He was asked about the regime of course assignments on *Personal Mastery* and said:

"We were supposed to read a book once every – could be every three days or every four days. We had to give that book to another person. And then we had to write an assignment, a handwritten assignment. Assignments couldn't be typed. There was only one copy of the assignment. And we had to write an assignment on the book. And there might be – you might have to read 40 books or 50 books in the whole year. So you would write an assignment, and then you had to send this assignment down to Burringbar, where Natasha lived. And these assignments, once you sent them, if they didn't arrive, it was your fault. So, for whatever reason, assignments would go missing en masse, and sometimes assignments would go missing two or three times, which would mean that the person that had written the assignment, would have to rewrite – re-read the book, rewrite the assignment three times. What this did, is that people couldn't finish the workload because they were given more workload, because they couldn't finish the assignments, and they had to do it in an allotted time. So, you had people having to make up for these assignments, getting sleep deprived, and malnourished, and not sleeping enough. And there were numerous situations of people falling asleep at the wheels of their car, myself included. Because we were so tired, and so exhausted."

114 Mr Goey also confirmed the defendant's description of being placed under black mats. He said:

"So, Natasha had this exercise where we – she would surround us in these black mats. They were size of mattresses, an average single mattress. And they were covered in nylon. And she would put people under these mats, and other people would sit on the

mats. And – so they couldn't breathe or get out. And in this state of – it's – it induces a state of utter panic. Because you can't breathe and you're getting crushed. And –

... I went under the mats. People jumped on the mats. My head was crushed into the ground. I ended up screaming for help, because the weight was so significant. I couldn't get out. It was like being crushed alive. And obviously, someone had heard my screams, and they had taken off a little bit of the pressure. And Natasha attempted to pull me out. The only thing was, was that she wasn't strong enough, so I ended up pulling myself out...

The other people were just getting crushed, and in some cases begging to be let out, pleading to be let out, in a way which would be like, 'Okay, guys, this is getting serious,' and in some cases Natasha was telling them that they were being victims."

115 Mr Goey confirmed the defendant's evidence about being given marijuana cigarettes to smoke once all of the assignments were done on their *Personal Mastery* program. He said that participants were told they were going to smoke marijuana as it would "open their auras", and was an experience that "we needed to go through."

116 Mr Goey confirmed the defendant's evidence about the plaintiff's use of violence. He said:

"One of the people that was on the course with me by the name of Mark Wiemers put up his hand and suggested that if people aren't moving, if they're not evolving, we should be able to help them evolve by physically assaulting them. Okay. Now, Mark's a solicitor, I might add, okay. Because I'd grown up and I'd seen a lot of physical violence, I put up my hand and I said, "I don't think we should do that." The other person put out their hand was Misha, and she said, "No, I don't – I'm not comfortable with that either," and Natasha said, "All the victims, just open (sic) their mouth (sic)." Okay, so Mark was serious, she was serious, and in retrospect, you know, I almost wish I'd said, you know, "Physical violence, okay, we should start with you two guys since you're so big on it." But I didn't. I didn't have the presence of mind. But Mark was fixing (sic) and Natasha in – was in support of using physical violence, well, to brutalise people to do whatever they wanted them to do."

117 Mr Goey recalled the plaintiff bullying the defendant on that course, he said for whatever reason, the plaintiff demonstrated an open dislike for the defendant. He gave examples of the plaintiff bullying people on courses. He said:

"I witnessed Natasha assaulting other support members physically. I witnessed Natasha beating up John Jansch. They were sitting together. We were in a group of people. And apparently John Jansch had said something under his breath, and he had referred to another female as a slut, okay. I didn't hear it, but Natasha jumped up and started beating him, beating him in the head, and he kept saying to her, 'Stop hitting me. Stop hitting me,' and she wouldn't stop. And eventually, he just sat there and took it. And at the time, you were sitting across the other side of the room, you said, 'I have an issue' – you said something like, 'I have an issue with you two guys and your little lover's tiff,' between John and Natasha, because they were behaving inappropriately. There was another time Natasha – I was hitting a bag with a baseball bat. We had boxing bags set up in the room, and we would hit them with these metal baseball bats and enter a state of catharsis. Shouting and screaming, and shouting and verbalising things. And I hit the bag, and I called the bag 'an effing bitch' but I wasn't talking about Natasha, but she was in the room. And she said, 'Are you talking about me,' and I said, 'No'. So she grabbed a baseball bat and she was chasing me around the room, and I was hiding behind the boxing bags in light of the fact that we all had baseball bats, and I could see where this was heading. And she kept looking at me, and she is trying – she was trying to catch – stare into my eyes, and she's saying, 'Don't you talk to me like that,' and I was saying, 'I didn't talk to you – I'm not talking to you,' right..."

118 Mr Goey gave another example involving the plaintiff battering a man named Richard Willigen. He said:

"So, it was around the time that we used to use the boxing bags. The older support team members, which means they'd been there longer with Natasha than us, had an issue with Richard about something. It wasn't clear. And they – Richard protested, he – he started to shout. He said, 'No, that's not true, that's not true.' And Pirjo Dickinson, Deanna, Natasha, all started physically assaulting him. And he started to scream, 'F off.' And he was pushing them away. And they were just attacking him. And it was never clear, what their issue with him was. It was never clear what he'd done. And this – this whole thing just erupted, and then it ended, as quickly as it began. It was just this thing that happened. And I remember being shocked by it, because there's the physical assault again. You know, it's just – you know – that's what it was – that's what – what it came to."

119 Mr Goey also gave some evidence about the psychic or intuitive betting scheme known as *Litespeed Investments* (which I note that the plaintiff, in her evidence, at first denied, but later admitted was a "psychic betting scheme.") He said:

"Yes, I attended some of the meetings which this Litespeed Investment horse racing thing had taken place, and Natasha said that the reason it wasn't working the way it was promised to work by Natasha was because people's victim consciousness was slowing the horses down. So, the horses weren't winning, because people didn't believe they deserved the money, was what was said and she said, 'What I will do is I will white-light one of the horses to win.' That horse apparently won, and when the horse won, Natasha said to the group, 'That horse won because I white-lighted it and I'm not a victim.'"

120 Mr Goey gave further evidence about the plaintiff's behaviour during his *Personal Mastery* course in 1998. He was asked if he remembered an incident involving Julie Townsend. He answered:

"Yes. So, in PMC 1998, we arrived one night and Julie had her face covered, and Natasha had told us as a group that Tim, one of the other support members, had punched Julie in the face. So, Julie took off her mask and she revealed a huge, swollen lip and it almost looked like her nose was broken. It was a serious facial injury, and it was gouged. And some of the males in the group were so horrified that Tim would do this to Julie. One particular male, Andrew Dixon, wanted to fight Tim, right. He was so disgusted with Tim's behaviour ...

... So Julie reveals her face, she has this huge injury, and there's all this stress in the group. Everyone is outraged, everyone is disgusted. And then Natasha proceeds to tell us after this – the group is now disturbed and we're all horrified, that in actual fact, Julie had tripped while she was running and had failed to put down her hands and had hit her face on the ground, and as a consequence of that, she deserved her injuries.

And so we'd gone from this crescendo, from this stress, that Tim was this evil person, to now he wasn't an evil person, and that somehow Julie – this was something Julie was going through and Tim wasn't involved. And this took place in about an hour. This whole drama. And Natasha was at the centre of it, and actually found it, in the end, quite amusing."

121 Mr Goey also confirmed the defendant's evidence as to the plaintiff claiming to be a "shard" of Jesus Christ. He said:

"Natasha liked to refer to herself as a descendent and 'shard' of Jesus Christ, ... And at various times on the courses, in 1998 in group meetings, for example, Leonie Hegvold who was on the course, asked Natasha if she was a descendent of Jesus Christ, and at the time Natasha just gave her a smile. She didn't protest, she didn't say, 'No, I'm not,' she just gave her a gleeful smile."

122 He elaborated on that answer in re-examination, saying:

"Natasha said to us that there were a group of people that surrounded Christ called the Essenes. And that – yeah, she contained a 'shard' of – from that era, and that – you've

got to understand that Natasha taught that all these lifetimes we have are linked together like a chain, you see. So, that was part of her whole past life, bring future life, fourth dimension mythology."

123 He also confirmed in re-examination, the defendant's evidence about Atlantis. He said:

"[S]o Natasha used to talk about Atlantis, and according to Natasha, the Atlanteans – their third eye, which I'm – the third eye, so the pituitary gland, the third, I don't know, was exposed. And they were highly psychic, and that she was in touch with these other civilisations or lifetimes. And Natasha had this whole mythology that surrounded her and how she spoke with people, and that was her, that's how she did things."

124 Mr Goey confirmed the defendant's evidence about a world collapse. He said:

"So, in the future, we were told this in late 1998, the world is going to collapse, we're all going to go to the fourth dimension, it's going to be very hot, it's going to be very uncomfortable, and only those people that can take the discomfort of the transitional process will survive. In the fourth dimension, we will be in the same room when we all enter the fourth dimension, we will be in the same room with murderers and rapists. Because in the fourth dimension, according to Natasha, there's only neutrality, which means there's no judgement..."

125 He also confirmed her evidence about "psychic fleas". He said:

"[S]o at a certain point in late 1998, it was suggested that we needed to increase the intensity of our catharsis and exercise and diet, because we all had 'psychic fleas'. Now, my – the way this was explained is that as a conscious being, you attract other negative entities which live in your psyche and seek a point of release, and need to be expressed through your personality, and these were called 'psychic fleas'. So, now that we had reached a certain level, we had to go to other levels, because now we all had psychic fleas, was what we were told. So, I remember watching one of the support team leaders, Tim, the same Tim that apparently assaulted Julie, was in catharsis. He was hitting a mat, he was talking in a strange language. And I said to Natasha, 'What's he doing?' And she said, 'He's accessing psychic fleas.'"

126 Finally, in examination-in-chief, Mr Goey explained why he left the plaintiff's sphere. He stated:

"I left because I had seen enough, and you know, Natasha had physically threatened me a couple of times, with her support team members, with violence. This – this was witnessed by the whole group. And I – I – I looked at what was happening to the people around me. When I started these courses, I met good, healthy – good, healthy people. This includes yourself, Carli. When I first met you, you were young, and you had your whole life ahead of you. By the end of two years of this process, I could witness that people were physically and psychologically unravelling. And I was unravelling too. No two ways about it. So, I – I'd left. I'd seen enough, I'd done enough. It was unfixable."

127 I regarded Mr Goey as a truthful and reliable witness. He was taxed in cross-examination about why he had stayed for so long in the plaintiff's group if everything was as bad as he claimed. I will return to this when I deal with the question of his credibility as a witness.

128 The next witness for the defendant was Bayley Facer.

129 Ms Facer first encountered the plaintiff in 2003 when Ms Facer was 13 years old. She said that she started dating the plaintiff's son, Khaney, when she was 14 or 15 and she moved out of home with her mother and went to live at 103 Hunter Street on the property of Omaroo at what she called the lower house. Living there was the defendant and, Ms Facer said, "several other members and some children as well."

130 Ms Facer said that her initial impression was that she was really scared. But she said, everyone seemed to be understanding and nice, although "also very much under the control of whatever Natasha says goes". She said:

"So, for example, I wanted to see my boyfriend. But, you, for example, Carli, could not let me see my boyfriend. And you couldn't answer why. So, I felt like a lot of people involved, you know, were just telling me what I wanted to hear, at that – that time. And not necessarily what was actually going on."

131 She was asked about the adults working hours and she answered:

"I was up very late at night, as I usually am. I noticed that several of the adults coming back, wouldn't be back until well after I went to sleep at 2 am. And I was waking up, probably around 8 o'clock. And they weren't there then. So, sometime between the hours of 2 and 6 am, I would say, was when people came back to sleep. It wasn't very long."

132 Ms Facer was asked about an incident with Debra Lee and said:

"So there was an incident – an instance when I was about 16, or possibly 15, like on the cut-off, in the – earlier in the year. And I was woken up at around 6 o'clock in the morning. Without any knowledge of this ever happening. And Debra Lee said to me, 'Natasha wants you to get on contraception, she's not ready to be a grandmother.' And then she took me to the doctor at 6 am, to get on contraception, without my knowledge or consent. I didn't have a choice."

133 Ms Facer was asked if she had witnessed the plaintiff bullying the defendant and she said that she remembered the plaintiff telling the defendant that the defendant was unfit to be a mother, and that she remembered the plaintiff screaming at the defendant that she should get her "tubes tied" and that she did not deserve a daughter, and that she would "fuck up" a daughter.

134 Ms Facer was asked what she had observed the interactions the plaintiff had with those who worked for her and she said that she would regularly scream instructions. She said that she would regularly degrade everybody around her. She said that it got to the point where Ms Facer felt so uncomfortable with it that she tried to talk to her boyfriend, Khaney, about it because she felt it was not normal.

135 She was asked whether she had heard the plaintiff talk about her accounts and tax invoices and she replied:

"I only heard about the tax things just through screaming matches from being up in that bedroom we could hear everything that was kind of going on around. I would often hear her screaming that Andrea and you did not do her taxes properly and you'd lost her money or you stole her money which didn't really make much sense to me at the time, but I did regularly hear it being referred to and a lot of the blame being put on the people working at Omaroo."

136 Ms Facer was asked who she observed to be cooking meals for the plaintiff and her family and Ms Facer and she said it was the defendant, Kylie Bennett and Debra Lee. She was asked whether she heard any comments that the plaintiff made in regards to the food and she said "she would always say, 'It's shit', and push it aside or have some problem with it". Ms Facer said that if someone put onions in something the plaintiff would scream at the person or possibly slap them and that it happened quite a lot. Ms Facer said that Ms Bennett on one occasion failed to change the sheets on the plaintiff's bed and she was slapped and yelled at by the plaintiff. She said that she thought, that had happened "multiple times". The plaintiff had denied in her evidence that the defendant had ever cooked or cleaned for her.

137 Ms Facer was asked if she had seen anything of the working hours of the defendant's Michael Greene and Greg Proctor. The following passages from the transcript contain her responses:

"Could you describe what you observed of the working hours of Michael Greene and Greg Proctor?.....Both of them I know were working on the garden at the bottom of Omaroo, and they were working there, and I know that Michael Greene as well had another job. I'm not sure about Greg's other job. I know Michael was working as – in a theatre, I think, or something. He had another job. Anyway, their working hours were so long that I never actually saw them not working, and that would lead to them falling asleep at the wheel and doing some really bad damage to themselves.

Did you hear the plaintiff talking about them in a derogatory manner?.....Yes, I regularly called them – heard her – heard Natasha call them idiots, stupid and lazy, especially if they didn't do something fast enough for her.

Thank you, Ms Facer. And how did their appearance look, from your observation?.....They were always tired. They always had bags under their eyes, and I don't think I ever had a conversation that was one hundred per cent coherent with any of them just because of the fact that they were tired."

138 Ms Facer gave evidence that in early 2006, she moved into the plaintiff's house at 103 Hunter Street. She said that when she did, the plaintiff asked her, in around mid-2006, to complete *The Next Evolutionary Step* course. She said that she did not want to do the course but that she was told by Khaney Lakaev that if she wanted to stay at Omaroo, she would have to.

139 Ms Facer was asked what her experience of the course was and she responded:

"I experienced first of all, we weren't given enough food, so I was very dizzy a lot of the time. We were expected to be on an all juice diet. I couldn't think properly, just from that. On top of that, we were asked to sit between two mats and people would sit on us, and we were asked to scream and force hysteria, and then we were asked to put our hands above our heads and walk around for maybe an hour, and if we dropped our hands we were told we were weak, or – I can't really remember much about the hands thing. We were locked in a room and I believe I was drugged. I'm not really sure exactly what happened, but I remember passing up and waking up and I think I was hallucinating. I don't remember ever feeling like that ever. And then, after that, we were put into a room where we were told we were going to see spirit beings, and all the lights were turned off completely, and I think we were in darkness for maybe an hour, I'm not sure 'cause they took all of our watches, we weren't allowed to see the time. But when they turned the lights on, they sat us all in a room and asked us if we saw anything. I said, I didn't see anything. Everybody around me said they did, and when I said that I didn't, they told me I wasn't spiritually mature enough to be in the course, and unfortunately I – it made me feel very uncomfortable at the time, but I didn't know what was going on until after."

140 Ms Facer was asked if she recalled an occasion when her group was dancing to music and she said:

"Yeah, every time we were going out to eat our vegan food or the juice, we would be brought back inside with a song called Changes by David Bowie. Whenever we'd play – whenever they'd play that song, we'd all have to come inside and start dancing. And, one instance, we started dancing, and Natasha was also in the room. And she was encouraging people to get undressed by – you know, she was just dancing and taking her clothes off slowly, like a striptease. Like going up to people, taking a shoulder off, and encouraging it. So, some people were fully undressed. She came up to me and did the exact same thing. I said no, I did not want to get undressed. I didn't even want to be dancing in this situation. So, I stayed clothed, but a lot of people around me, from 60 to 80 years old, to 20 years old, were naked. And I was 16."

141 Ms Facer said that there was one instance after the group came in from dancing, that the plaintiff came in with them and she sat down in the centre and said that everybody in their life has sects or

channels that connect them to their past lives and that they were going to find their past lives. The plaintiff then said that one of her past lives, or shafts, was Jesus Christ, as she had a direct connection.

142 Ms Facer also said that on one occasion when they were talking about the spirit beings in "the spirit area" the plaintiff told her that she "wasn't spiritually mature enough [and] it was implied that I would not get onto the spiritual council for that reason". She also said that the plaintiff talked about Atlantis on the course but it was not something that Ms Facer remembered "as much as the Jesus Christ comment".

143 She gave evidence that she had seen the plaintiff physically beat Michael Greene and slap Chris Wellington and Kylie Bennett. The transcript of that evidence is as follows:

"Yep, can you describe that incident?.....Yeah, we – it was during our mid – mid term HSC exams. We were both studying, Khaney and I, and Khaney, I believe had a physics exam coming up, which Michael had experience in, I believe. And Natasha asked him to help Khaney study, and he was in his car, somewhere else, doing something else – maybe working. He was late. He came back late. And he entered the fireplace room, and Natasha grabbed a dowel rod, and started beating him, like across the back, with a dowel rod. I went up stairs halfway through this, and I could hear her saying, "Remove your hands from your face," so she could beat him up more. That's – that's all I can remember about –

Thank you, and how long – how long do you believe that went for?.....About 20 minutes.

Yep, thank you, Ms Facer. And do you – did you see her physically batter Chris Wellington?.....I've seen her slapping Chris.

Yep.....I didn't see anything more than that.

Yep, I guess that's – well, did you – what sort of physical – how did – what did she physically do with her body against Chris Wellington's body?.....It's just slapping, slapping, that's all I saw.

Yep, whereabouts – whereabouts on the body?.....On the face and like the – up here.

Yep, yep, thank you. And did you see her physically hit or physically batter Kylie Bennett?.....I saw her slapping Kylie in the same way. At the time, the slaps didn't register to me very well, because I – it had been normalised from my mum. So the only thing that really stood out to me at the time, was the dowel rod incident and a lot of the slapping and stuff was, I registered it and passed it through..."

144 Ms Facer was asked what happened towards the end of her time with the plaintiff before she left. She said:

"I was asked to start uploading things on Geocities, rebuttals to people that I didn't really understand the context and then I eventually just started feeling unsafe and not good. I went back to my grandma's house. She moved back to Australia from the UK after I asked her to. I said I needed some help and then I quietly made excuses as to why I could not be living with Natasha anymore and moved out for my own safety.

Yep. And at that time – or was you – well, did you ever have a belief that the plaintiff was running a cult?.....Yes.

Yep. And when did – when did you form that belief?.....Probably after I did the course and – and maybe even before because I realised that there were similarities between Natasha and my own mother that I could identify which helped me not fall for a lot of these tricks.

Yep.....So, during this time I believe I was seeing things for what they were and not through a brainwashed lens, if that makes sense."

145 Ms Facer was briefly cross-examined. It was put to her that the things she had said in her evidence were not true, but she staunchly maintained, in a firm but polite way, that they were. Ms Facer was asked if she recalled telling Khaney Lakaev that the reason she wanted to end her relationship with him was because she had fallen in love with a boy she met on the internet. She answered that she had told Khaney that she could not be with him because she no longer wanted to be associated with his mother. She said that it might have been the excuse that she made but the reason was that she did not want to be with his mother.

146 To my mind Ms Facer was a most impressive witness. I will say a little more about her credibility shortly.

147 The defendant's next witness was Julie Townsend.

148 Ms Townsend is a physiotherapist who first met the plaintiff in 1994 at an information evening for her courses. She did the *Awakening* course and found herself in awe of the plaintiff. She felt the need to do more courses and said that in the end she did all of them and then did *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling* in 1995. She said that she "was on a high". She subsequently joined the *Personal Mastery Group*.

149 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence about the black mats exercise as follows:

"And when you were on PMC '95, did you participate in a black mat process, where each student was held under the mats?.....Yes.

Could you please describe that to the Court, what happened. What you observed and what happened to you?.....So the process was to – to, kind of, get you to fight – fight for your life, really – fight for your – so that placed black mats over the top of you and you had to, basically, fight your way out.

Yeah. Do you recall – ?.....I didn't – I didn't – it was scary, but I didn't – I felt like the person – people that were holding the black mats around me weren't going to kill me, and that it – that it would – I felt they gave – they allowed me to fight my way out, so they didn't, you know, they could've – they were strong, they were men, they could've stopped me from getting out, but they allowed me to fight my way out. Yeah.

Great?.....But I – I did notice later, I think, with some people who were in trouble, that the process had a little bit more of a negative energy attached to it."

150 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence about being required to smoke marijuana during the *Personal Mastery Course* and as to the plaintiff smoking marijuana as well. She also confirmed the defendant's evidence as to the use of punching bags and baseball bats. The following exchange relates:

"Thank you. Did you join the Combined Personal Mastery group after PMC 2005?.....Yes.

I mean, 1995, I apologise? You did?.....That's right, yes.

Okay, and can you describe to the Court what those meetings involved, and what was the environment with the boxing bags and the bats et cetera?.....Okay. So, to start with, those weekends were – it was a weekend, and it was set up as a weekend of issues. So, it was basically the combined PMC would support each other to work through our issues. So, it was a full weekend of bringing up your issues with someone and then, you know, getting to resolution, I suppose. So, when the centre was built – I don't remember those meetings before the centre was built, so can't remember, but when the centre was built, there was – yeah, there was hooks in the ceiling, that must have happened in the shed before the centre was built. Anyway, there was hooks in the ceiling, four hooks and there were punching bags hanging from them, and there was like a baseball bat that you used. And when you had an issue with someone, so

everyone sort of took turns whenever something came up, you had an issue with someone, and you get up and as you were, you know, yelling out whatever your issue was, you were hitting the punching bag with your baseball bat.

Thank you?.....And then someone would, you know, whoever was sort of running the meeting would, I guess, help resolution happen through that process. Later, the Combined Personal Mastery meetings were working bees, and there was all day working on the property and then meeting would happen at night time."

151 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence about the plaintiff's claims as to her past lives. The transcript reads as follows:

"Yep, thank you. And do you recall the plaintiff mentioning Jesus Christ and the times he lived in?.....She made reference to Jesus Christ a couple of times, so I recall her saying something like, when we were in the desert for 40 days, we weren't having a picnic, you know, we were sorting out issues. And so she never said she was Jesus Christ but she alluded to it. What else was there – at the end of one program, she said she'd been a leader on the planet many times, so that was another alluding to it. [indistinct words]

That's okay, did you – did the plaintiff talk about Atlantis?.....Yes, she talked about Atlantis often, and that yes, and that she was a leader at Atlantis, so the leadership structure that she talked about was that there was three people in the leadership position, always two males and a female or two females and a male, and that she and Ron and Pirjo were – is that right – were the leaders at that time. So – and then it was her and Nick and Deanna, her, Nick and Deanna at one point."

152 Ms Townsend gave evidence as to what occurred at the end of *The Initiates* course as follows:

"And Ms Townsend, you mentioned the initiates course. At the end of initiates, did the plaintiff tell you about her role on an intergalactic council?.....Yes, so there was a ceremony that happened. Was that Survivors – I've forgotten. Yes, anyway. Yes, she definitely said that she was a member of the Intergalactic Council at the end of that program. It was like that was sort of the culmination of the program was to be given that information."

153 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence as to the nature and philosophy of *The Survivors* course. The following extract from the transcript relates:

"Thanks, Ms Townsend. And do you recall the plaintiff talking about the end of the world around 11/11/11?.....Yeah, so the end of the world scenario was really forefront, right from the beginning. So, it was talked about in the – in the first program, in *The Awakening*, where there would be a time – she called them the changes – when there would be a time when the – the planet and society would go through upheaval and this would be – it – it could take any form. It could be, like, economic, nuclear, climatic. Whatever it was that wasn't sure yet, but it was going to be a time when the planet went through huge change and shift and she talked about it being a shift from the third to the fourth dimension and so, the – the purpose of the – *The Awakening* and the program was to get people through the program so that when the time of the changes came there would be, you know, enough people in – in – awakened to be able to anchor the planet through that change, kind of thing, was the premise of it. But it was – so, it was – it was talked about right – talked about right from the first program and it was talked about it all – all the time and – and it became kind of a like almost a threat like you'll – you know, 'If you don't do what I say, you'll – I won't ensure your safety through the – through the changes.'

So, did you –She never said, like –

Sorry, keep going –She never said when it would happen. It was always – it was always a – the time – she said the timeframe of the universe wasn't exactly clear so, the 11/11 and 2012 calendar was, you know, didn't definitely happen then. It was – it was

– time – time is irrelevant, you know, in – in the universe. So, yeah. It was definitely a time, it was just always something that was going to happen.

Yep. And do you recall the plaintiff mentioning that the people that would be with her or at – at the end with those changes, would have to kill people?.....We definitely – we definitely would have to – so, she talked about there being the society going crazy. So, like, there would be people starving and needing food and violent. Everybody's stuff would come up, kind of thing and that, yes, we would have to defend – defend our property – defend the property. So, at that time we thought we'd all be at Omaroo when it happened and yeah, we'd have to defend ourselves. So, I don't know if she'd mentioned – yeah, probably – I can't remember, she might have said killing people, but we definitely would have to defend, with force, ours – our property – the property.

Yep. And did you visit a gun range on Survivors?.....Yes.

Yep. And did the plaintiff ever mention to you or others around you that there were guns buried on her property?.....Yeah. So, she purchased a gun, I think it was like a handgun, and my – my at the time husband, Tim, was told to bury it on the property and then later after he had left she asked to me to ring him up and ask him where he – where it was buried which I did, but he couldn't remember where he buried it.

Thanks, Ms Townsend. Okay. Did the plaintiff talk about how many people on Earth needed to complete The Next Evolutionary Step later on to ensure that the changes were passive not aggressive?.....Yep. So, it was three – I think it was three million people. So, yeah – so, if – she talked about the hundredth monkey principle and that if there's enough people who have done that program and made that shift in themselves then it would effect the consciousness of the planet and allow the change to happen passively not aggressively.

And did you feel that you had to remain around the plaintiff to move to the fourth dimension?.....Yeah. I – yeah. For a long time I felt – I felt like that. I felt like I had to, you know, to be safe. That that was the place to be and that, you know, she would protect – protect us and we would be protected in her – with her because of her, you know, universal connections that she always talked about her connection to the universe and how she was protected by beings on the other side. And so, yes I – for a long time I felt like that's where I had, you know, that's what I had to be. I was very loyal to her, but you know, things got so bad that I – you know, I made the decision that it was – it would be better to die than to stay there."

154

Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence as to the plaintiff's manipulation of the relationships of those within her sphere, including Ms Townsend's own marriage. The following extracts from the transcript relates:

"And – so you mentioned you were in a relationship with Tim Johns. Could you describe to the Court if the plaintiff had any input into that relationship?.....Yeah. So we got together in 1995, in September of 1995 in the PMC year, and we – so he was living in Brisbane, and I was living in Stokers Siding, at the time, and she – she gave him a job on the property so that he could move down and live with me, which he did. We – we then – after we were living at Stokers Siding, she needed some money and, you know, the whole – had the Current Affair thing happened? No, I don't think it had. She – it was before Current Affair, 'cause I think Current Affair happened while I was living at Omaroo. So we – we moved into Omaroo, we lived in the – in the house, in the back bedroom for some months, maybe four or five months. So – and that was, you know, like a rent situation. So, we lived there and when – and then when we broke – when we left, so she asked us to leave at the end of '98, and that was after A Current Affair, and we broke up. We separated, and we stayed separated, but then the next year she called both of us to the property and said that she felt like we should get back together, so she was saying, 'I think you need each other, it makes sense for you to get back together.' So, we did. So, we got back together and then what happened is at the end of that '99 year, near the end, again we were all at the property, there was Deanna and Richard and myself and Tim, and John, I think. And she said that she thought we should get married, so she said, 'I think you and Tim should get married, and you can

have the wedding here, on the property.' And then she said, 'I think you and – ' and then she turned to Richard and Deanna and said, 'I think you should get married, too.' So, she kind of instigated that we all got married.

And then where did you get married, and when?.....So, it was 26th of January 2000, we got married on the property, so Tim and I were married on the gazebo and Deanna and Richard were married on the deck and then we had a joint reception on – in the centre."

155 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence about working in the office at Omaroo. She said:

"You were definitely working in the office. I know – I know that you – so, this is what I know about you working in the office. I know you moved in to – after I left 98 Hunter Street, I know you and Mick were the next tenants and that you were – and that you applied for a job in the office. So, you asked to work in the office and I was like, 'Why would you do that?' And so, you – you were working in the office, I'm not sure exactly when. I think it was '99. You were definitely – or 2000. '99, 2000, somewhere around there and, yeah. You were doing to accounts. You were doing the – everything really. You were doing everything."

156 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence concerning the fraud around the business of JJ Steel. The following extract from the transcript relates:

"So, do you recall the plaintiff setting up the business with her partner John Jansch called JJ Steel?.....Yes, so I was working in the office at that time, JJ – so, I was there from the start of JJ Steel to when it finished. So, it was a company that did steel work. So, she – 'cause when she first got together with John, I think he had a – he just had a job somewhere, and then she set him up in the business and then he – and then it – the business, so I did its account. The business got a big contract to do awnings for some housing thing, and it was too big a contract for one man, and so lots of the PMC men had to be roped in to help complete the project and get it finished. So, I was with Greg at the time, so he was one of the ones that was – so, that must have been 2002, he was one of the ones that was, you know, I got – I asked him to help and he did, and there were other men, and it was – they were working down the shed, getting the job done.

Yep?.....And then what happened with that whole scenario was that when the job was completed, the money came in, it was like a hundred and ten thousand dollars or something, something like that, and because Universal Knowledge was doing so poorly in terms of numbers and course numbers, she got – she asked us to – she gave us – there was a meeting called up at Brisbane, where she was living, and –

Just say who she is, Ms Townsend?.....Natasha called a special meeting, I was called to the – to Brisbane and there was a group of people there, and at that meeting, she asked – she said that she needed our help to save Universal Knowledge because Universal Knowledge was saving the planet from, you know, the aggressive shift through the changes, so she needed us to – she was going to give us an invoice for the work we did, and then we had to give that money back to Universal Knowledge via a course called Advanced Personal Mastery, which was a fictitious course. So, she – so there was – so I was given twenty thousand dollars for my accounting services, and then I had to put the money back into Universal Knowledge for that course. And there were other people, I think Nick had to as well for gardening stuff, Con and Andy for cleaning stuff, I can't remember who else was at that meeting, but yeah. So, we had to give the money back so – to save Universal Knowledge.

Thanks, Ms Townsend?.....And then what happened, because the money – because I was doing the accounts, so then because all that money that had come in for the awnings had to go out to all of us, I couldn't pay the creditors who were, you know, the people – the suppliers of the awning material, so then that's when JJ Steel went bankrupt, or John went bankrupt."

157 Ms Townsend also confirmed the defendant's evidence that the plaintiff had physically battered the defendant. She said:

"So because you were blamed for the whole ATO investigation, and you also were blamed for the fact that they didn't – you weren't promoting the programs and you weren't, you know, running programs when there was – when – so say there were only two people who would enquire, you didn't run a program with two people, and so you were blamed for that and blamed for the ATO and so, yeah, so she was really angry with you and there was one time that when we were up in the office, all of this group of girls were doing the accounts, and she came up and started yelling at you and then physically dragged you around the table – the big – there's a big table in the office room. Dragged you around by your hair and slapped you around, and yeah, hitting you. And then – and then there was another time when you – she came up – I don't know if it was the same time or a different time, but she – 'cause you were basically – Carli was basically helping us. So she was in the office when we were doing this redo and we were, like, so that we could ask questions and get clarification of things in the accounts. So – so she was, sort of, around and there was a few things I remember that stand out to me from that time. So the first one was when Natasha said that we – we shouldn't be subjected to Carli's black energy, and so she sent – she said she has to go out and sleep on a – in a tent on the property. And so she kicked her out of the office, and she had to sleep in a tent and it was raining really, really hard, that night, it was, like, a storm. So we were in the office working while it was raining, and Carli was out in a tent. I remember that one..."

158 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence that the plaintiff prevented her from seeing her baby son, Sebastian, at a time she was breastfeeding. Ms Townsend said:

"... we were all called down to sort of support Carli with an access session and there was black mats, and she was bashing her breasts against the black mats with her, sort of, arms behind her back, and, sort of, screaming, 'What use are these if I can't feed my baby?' So it was then that I kind of realised – I hadn't realised until that point that she wasn't allowed to see Sebastian. He'd been passed into the care of his father, and she wasn't allowed to see him and couldn't breastfeed him, so, you know, she was denied that."

159 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence that she was made to work at night on the property at Omaroo. She said:

"Yes, so there was – so, once you got kicked out to the tent because we shouldn't be subjected to your energy, you had to work on the property, and like whipper-snip by headlights and stuff like that, yep. I was aware that you were doing that."

160 Ms Townsend gave evidence that the plaintiff had bashed her. She said:

"So, the first time I was bashed up was – yes, it was 2002, it was – and it was just after I started going out with Greg, so – which was April 2002, so it was some time after that, and because I was in the office more, I'd been given a job to do which was to get – change the name on the birth certificates of her children. So, it was something to do with the whole Gantz/Rabold thing, that – something like – Tom, their father had been known as Gantz and wanted to go back to being Rabold, or whatever. And so, she wanted the birth certificates, the names changed. So, I filled out the forms and submitted them or whatever and then one of them came back with the wrong name on it, so I'd made a mistake somehow. And so I was up in the office and I was called down and she wasn't in the kitchen. I went upstairs and she was in her bedroom, and as I approached her bedroom she dragged me, pulled me into the bedroom and threw me onto this bit of rolled-up carpet that was sort of at the foot of the bed, and then she hit me, slapped me around my head and my ears, and she used her – 'cause I was sort of sitting perched with my feet, I had a skirt on that was sort of covering my legs, but my feet were sticking out from the bottom of my skirt, and I was sort of sitting, sort of perched, she dug her toes into the tops of my feet really hard, and anyway, she kept yelling and screaming about this mistake, which I didn't know what I'd done wrong, but

– and then, and I said, 'I fixed it, I fixed it' and she said, 'No, it's too late.' And then her – nobody witnessed it, but her son Arden came running down the corridor, going sort of, 'Stop, stop,' you know, 'Stop', and she said, 'Don't think he wants to protect you, he just doesn't want me to go to gaol.' Yep, so I had – that night, Greg said to me, 'What's wrong with your face?' And my whole scalp was swollen, and it was distorting my face, so – 'cause she hit me all around my head..."

161 Ms Townsend gave evidence of another assault on her by the plaintiff. The relevant passage in the transcript is as follows:

"Yep. And could you describe that incident and why that happened?.....Yeah. So, as I said, I was in trouble for not matching all the invoices to the credit card statements and so, there was something. I don't know what it was. I don't remember what that particular incident was that had been uncovered that I'd done wrong, but I was called down to the house and I – I was in the kitchen area or just outside the kitchen. I stopped there and she – she was yelling at me and she reached up – cause I was quite pregnant by then – she reached up and put her hands around my throat and sort of, you know, was putting pressure on my throat.

Thank you, Ms Townsend?.....I lost bladder control and Greg was there and he – he had to clean it up."

162 Ms Townsend gave evidence that the plaintiff had required her to pay money when she was "in trouble" with the plaintiff. The following is the relevant exchange:

"Did you pay for any expenses or shopping for the plaintiff during your time with her?.....Yeah, so I – so, when we got back from Thailand, so I had been doing the accounts after taking over from you, and when we went to Thailand we came back and I was pregnant with my first child, then, and while we were in Thailand. When we came back, so I had been doing the accounts and she asked me if I – she found in her bag from Thailand, she found a receipt of something that she spent, and she – so she presented it to me and said you know, 'Why haven't you been looking for this invoice, you have matched all the invoices to the credit card statements?' And I knew I was going to cop it, so I lied and said yes, I had, but I hadn't, 'cause she gave me a bundle every week of credit card – of invoices, but you know, I didn't chase the ones that sort of weren't there. And so – or I hadn't – and so, I was then in trouble after that, and I can't remember your question, sorry.

That's all right, so what did the plaintiff do when you were in trouble? What did she say or do to you?.....So, I think I was leading to whatever your question was before that. But anyway, so I was in – yeah, shopping. That's right. So, then I was in trouble. So, from that moment. And one of my – because I was in this what we called 'in the sin bin', one of the things I had to do was buy shopping, so I had to pay seven thousand dollars for the accountant fee, for their yearly fee, I paid that and then I had to do all this shopping, so every week I was working, every week she gave me a shopping list and I had to buy this – wasn't her full shopping, but it was certainly shopping that I had to do and bring home, yep. And that was like to make up for what I'd – you know, what I'd – my stuff up with the accounts."

163 On another occasion Ms Townsend said:

"Alex Paine came to the house and said that – that Greg had caused the tanks on the property to be damaged and that I had to pay to replace them and it would cost me fifty-two thousand dollars and – and that she also said that he damaged all the tools and hadn't looked after the tools down in the shed so, I'd have to pay for that. And so, I sort of – I said to Alex, 'If it's fifty-two thousand dollars, why do I have to pay sixty?' Because they were – he was saying I had to pay sixty thousand and I – he said, 'Okay. I'll go and ask her.' So, he went back – she was overseas at the time. So, he came back later and said, 'Now that you've questioned paying sixty thousand, you have to pay a hundred thousand.' And so, then I kept getting harassed by Alex. He would ring me up all the time saying, 'You have to pay a hundred thousand.' And I would keep – I kept saying, 'I just want to talk her about it. I don't, you know, I need to talk to her

about it.' And he's like, 'She doesn't – she doesn't want to talk to you, she just wants you to do it.' This is Natasha, of course... [Alex Paine] turned up at my house and said – hang on – and said I – he – because I kept saying, 'No, I don't want to pay it,' and he kept saying, 'You have to.' He's turned up at the house, and Carli came to look after the kids, 'cause I was looking after the kids at the time, and then escorted me to the bank...and I had to get bank cheques for – and the money went into Earth Sense Consulting."

164 Ms Townsend gave evidence that she had been required to work for the plaintiff without pay. The relevant evidence is as follows:

"Yeah, so, what happened was I really liked working from home. I liked that I didn't have to go to the office and so, Natasha came home from uni holidays. So, there was no – for uni holidays – so, there was no more CDs, you know, everything stopped, there was no more typing to be done, but I didn't go back to work going to the office, I just stayed at home, because I didn't want to and I decided I was an adult and I could make that decision myself. So, I didn't go to the office, and a meeting was called with a few people. Carli, you were there. Kylie, Andrea, Greg, and I think Tracy. And everyone had to write down on a piece of paper what jobs they did around the place, and I had to write down what I did, and everyone had to show their jobs to me and I had to show my jobs to them so that they could – we could compare, so that it could be shown that I wasn't pulling my weight.

And who said you weren't pulling your weight?.....Natasha, she was like, you know, 'Everyone can see that you're not doing' – you know, what everyone else was doing. Everyone else's had really long job lists and I had one thing, or something. So, she'd been asking me before that to go to the – work in the shop, and I always said no, I don't want to go and work in the shop.

And what shop was that, Ms Townsend?.....The beauty salon shop. And anyway, so after that, because of that kind of shaming, it was like a group shaming, I agreed to go and work in the shop.

Thanks, Ms Townsend. And were you paid for working at Earthly Beauty?.....No."

165 Ms Townsend corroborated the defendant's evidence that the plaintiff had hit the defendant's infant son. The following extract from the transcript relates:

"Thanks. And Ms Townsend, do you recall an incident on New Year's Eve 2005 in regards to my son and kids sleeping in the course centre?.....Yes, yep. So, we were – yeah, we were having our function, and down on the – one of the decks, and there was – my, one of – the children were sleeping up in the centre, and one of – my child was up sleeping there, too. And there was some kind of thing where there was poo on the tiles, and Natasha said it was because Sebastian was exposed to homosexuality, and she got a wooden spoon and was hitting him, hit him. Hit Sebastian.

And do you recall anyone else hitting Sebastian?.....No. I don't.

And do you recall what the story about the homosexuality, what – who that involved?.....Mick, it was Mick. She said that Sebastian had been exposed to homosexuality from Mick, and that was why he'd done that, and that he was – it had to be kind of beaten out of him, and so she hit him."

166 Ms Townsend confirmed the defendant's evidence that the defendant had cleaned for the plaintiff at Omaroo and at Burleigh Heads. She said "Your job was cleaning, whipper-snipping, property maintenance, all of that stuff."

167 Ms Townsend said that she had witnessed things that suggested that the plaintiff had battered Debra Lee. She said:

"So I saw – because – I saw bruises on her arms, as well, in the office, but in terms of seeing her hit, I didn't really see her be hit. One time I went to Burleigh and I heard – when I walked in the door of their unit I heard screaming, and went to see [indistinct words] they were in the laundry and Debbie was curled up on the floor in a foetal position amongst the sheets, and Natasha was screaming at her, and it turned out that it was about – it was something about – that Debbie, who was doing the kid running around at that time, was – Natasha's children, doing stuff with them, she had said something to Nobel that was, you know, derogatory, about Natasha and Natasha was, sort of, screaming, 'I won't have you criticising me to my children', and – so that's what it was about. And so, after that time, Debbie was sort of kicked out. She was sent to England. So a ticket was paid for her to go to England, and I remember she had to sign over custody of her children to Alex, so she had to sign a document because she was, like, she had to drive down the bottom of a hill where Alex was, or something, and sign this document to say that she wouldn't seek custody of them. And then she went to England, and she had no money, and so they didn't let her in the country, and so they sent her back, and then she ended up going to Perth."

168 Ms Townsend gave evidence that the plaintiff had battered Chris Wellington and her on one occasion:

"Yes, so that happened – when did that happen. That was in 2008, 'cause Andrea had left, and I was heading to the office to do some work, I think you Carli were picking up the kids from day care, so I had some time to do some work before the kids came back, and I – so, I heard the yelling when I parked the car, and I should have left, but I kept going and I walked up onto the centre and she was on the veranda, on the concrete outside the centre and she was whacking Chris around the head and sort of, you know, and I didn't know what it was about. Anyway, then when I arrived she turned on me and started hitting me as well, and – so, at that time, because Andrea had left, Chris was paying all the bills, so he was – like, he was writing the cheques for the – to pay bills, and he – there was a bill for Belinda Eyers, who was her solicitor that hadn't been paid, and she – that's what she was angry about. So, she was – yeah, so she – and I didn't pay the bills, but anyway, I was there. So, she hit both of us. She hit him around the head and pushed, kept pushing around the verandah, and then yep, that was it."

169 Ms Townsend gave evidence about the plan to subdivide her land adjacent to the plaintiff's land at Hunter Street in Burringbar and the steps taken towards implementing that plan which ultimately caused her decision to leave the plaintiff's sphere. The following extract from the transcript relates:

"What's your recollection of who commenced the subdivision?.....Yep, okay. So, the subdivision – so, when – because this was when I was in trouble in that 2004 to 2005 time, that lasted for a really long time, and what happened is she asked me – she called me down the house and asked me if I wanted to go into a subdivision with her, and because I was in trouble, I had been for so long, I felt like that was my way out. So, I said yes and I sort of walked out of the house and then I thought no, I don't want to, but I was going to go back in and say no, but – you know, my life was pretty hell, so I let it happen. And so it was a subdivision between her property, 106, which she owned at that time, and my property. And so it started straight away, there were lots of bills because reports had to be done and all of this sort of stuff, and we both signed a contract. There was a contract that was done up that had each of our obligations in regards to this subdivision. And one of the obligations was that neither of us would sell our property. And then, without discussing it with me, she sold 106 to Anina, (sic) and so then I was in a subdivision with Anina, and then – so, there was lots of bills that we had to pay for reports and everything, and then Andrea, who was running the office at that time, told me that Natasha had instructed her that I was to cover all the costs, none of – so, it should have been a joint – because it was both properties we both owned, it should have been both of us paying the bills, but she told me that Natasha instructed Andrea that only I pay all the bills, and Natasha not pay her half, but Andrea decided that wasn't fair, so she did pay, we both – Natasha and I paid for the bills. And so anyway, that – I actually left before the subdivision was, went – got through council. But at the end, and there was lots of issues with the steepness of the property because of the fire risk and everything, because it was a steep property, so what happened was when Andrea left, she – you know, there was money issues, which there had been for a long time, but

it sort of highlighted that there was more significant money issues, and so she – Natasha needed money, so she called Anina and I down to the house, and said that we would have to pay for the work that the office had done on the subdivision, for the subdivision. So, we'd – and I'd already been paying all the way along, paying for different reports and things, so – anyway, I was presented with this invoice for three hundred thousand, so it was split between Anita and I, a hundred and fifty each, which was – and it listed all – I have it somewhere.

Ms Townsend, I can actually just show that now. Mr Rae, could you please bring up DD878, and this has not been tendered as yet. Sorry, Mr Zeeman?.....Yeah, that's it. So, it basically listed reports we'd already paid for, and like, you know – it's ridiculous if you – like, eight thousand dollars' worth of stationery, things – twelve thousand dollars' worth of telephone calls, I mean it's way blown out, but anyway. So, that's – that was the invoice, so it went – so, which I didn't have any money left, so I said to her, 'I don't have any money left.' And she said, 'You'll have to get the money off your parents.' So –

And that being Dr Lakaev?.....Yeah. Yeah, Natasha said I had to get the money off my parents. So, the lead-up to that that I haven't talked about is the pump. So, there was this pump that failed on the property, and – and Natasha said that Greg had caused the pump to fail and – so, Greg took the pump into the pump shop and they said, "No it was just old, it didn't fail," and she said, 'No. Greg's lying. You have to – Julie, you have pay the five hundred dollars for the pump.' And I kept – anyway, I decided I'd paid enough money and I didn't want to pay anymore. So, I didn't want to pay this five hundred dollars. So, Andrea kept hassling me to pay for this pump, 'Natasha wants to know when you're going to pay for the pump.' I said, 'I'm not going to pay for the pump', and then – then Andrea left and – and she – and it was obvious that there was issues with the money – with the – with the companies and the money and Natasha said, 'And you, you know, you gripe about a mere five hundred dollars for the pump.' And so I said, 'Okay. I'll pay for the pump.' So, I ended – I paid for the pump. So, I basically fought not to pay five hundred dollars for this – for months and then – and then when she presented with me with an invoice for a hundred and fifty thousand I thought well there's no way I'm going to win this so, I just decided to pay it. So, I asked my parents. I went to them and I said, "I need money to get the – to get the subdivision over the line," and they gave it to me out of their inheritance and – and it put them in stress – financial stress and I told Natasha that they were in financial stress after that and she said lots of older people are in financial stress at this time because was 2008 and the global financial crisis. So, she really dismissed it, which really pissed me off.

Thanks, Ms Townsend. And what happened in regards to giving away some blocks on that – on your subdivision, if it came through?.....Yep. So, that happened – so, Andrea left in August of 2008 and so, at – after that that's when – from that period to when I left was – so August 2008 to March 2009 was a very intense and stressful time and that's, you know, everything that had gone on before to me just completely escalated, for me personally and – which culminated (sic) me leaving"

170 Ms Townsend gave evidence that the plaintiff threatened to have her children taken away if she left with them:

"So, at one point she – I think this was after the Christmas, though. So, I wasn't in trouble until after Christmas, I was just doing the job. But then after Christmas that's when I got – I was in trouble, because Anita had checked my progress or something and I wasn't, I hadn't – I told them I was finished going through all the MYOB but there was all the paper stuff I hadn't gone through, so anyway, I was in trouble again for not doing a good job, and that's when she came up to the office and said if I leave with my – she wrote a letter to the Department of Child Safety and she handed me the letter and said, if I leave with my children, if I leave with my children, she would give this – send this letter to the Department of Child Safety and have my children taken off me."

171 What then transpired Ms Townsend said, was this:

"So, what happened is, there was a birthday party for Nobel, 26th of January down at – they were down at the pool, and I was up in the office, so I wasn't invited to the party because I was in trouble by then, and so Greg brought the kids up to the centre, to put them to bed, and I went down to say goodnight to them, and my oldest started crying when I went down, and so the next day she called me down to the house – Natasha called me down to the house and said that my presence upset them, and I was not good for them because of my energy, so that I wasn't allowed to see them. And so, I wasn't allowed to see them from then until I left on March 15th."

172

Ultimately Ms Townsend said she decided to leave anyway and this is what she said transpired:

"So Natasha called a meeting and I was in the meeting – called a meeting to go – at down the house, and in the meeting – so there was a group of people and Alex Paine and Arden and Arden's girlfriend was there, and Greg was there, and she instructed me – so she basically said, at that time, I had to go back to work in my – to my job because I had – I was still having time off on stress leave, that she told me to do. So she told me to go back to work – to my job, get my mortgage up to date, and she told me to get a job at Woolworths, night-filling, and that the money that I got for night-fill would go to her for the mess I'd made. And then – and then she said that I had to sign across two blocks of my land, one to Arden and Susan and one to Khaney, and maybe one to Nobel, I can't remember. So I had to sign over those blocks of my land – from the subdivision land, and that I had agreed to this proposal now, tonight, and if I didn't agree, then there would be universal consequences. So I said yes at the time, and then – and then what happened after that is, I was in the office and Anita, who was, you know, checking on my work, told me and Kylie to go down to the house, to 103, to fill out the online Woolworths application, so that's why we had to – that's how I'm getting to the story, we had to fill out this online application for Woolies, 'cause Natasha had told me that I had to go and work at Woolies and do night-fill. So Natasha didn't want me using the office computer, so I – we had to go down to Carly's place, and because I wasn't allowed to see my children at that time – they were asleep in the back of the house, so Anita said to me before I went down there, 'Don't go anywhere near the main house, only be in the room where the computer was', which was in the garage, that would have been converted into the room. 'Don't go into the house or into the bedroom where your kids are.' So – 'cause their energy – I wasn't allowed anywhere near them. So anyway, I did my application first, and then Kylie told me to do the dishes, 'cause there was dishes in the house, and I was in such a subservient state I basically did what anybody told me to do, so I did the dishes then while Kylie was doing her application, and then when we went up – back up the hill – and this was, like, you know, 2 am, 'cause it was all – happened in the middle of the night, when I got back up the hill up to the office and Kylie told Anita that she got me to do the dishes, Anita went off her tree, because I wasn't allowed into the house or anywhere near my children. Anita went off her tree and laid into Kylie with a – with a piece of dowel, and bit – a piece of timber, and hit me and I got a black eye. So that was the first one. That was the first time, and then the second time was on the very day that I left. So, I don't know if you want to hear the – there's a long story on everything, which I apologise for, but I basically had to borrow – they were running a program on the last weekend that I was there, and they were running a TNES and they needed a nice car to take – ferry the students down the hill to return them to their cars at night, and I had been told to go down and clean rooms at Arcadia and so – but I couldn't – they needed my car for the program so I – I had to borrow Kylie's car. So, I borrowed Kylie's car to go down to Arcadia and clean rooms and I didn't get back till 3 am and then I had to be up, you know, doing jobs at 6.00. So, I didn't – I took Kylie's car up to the top to the hill rather than leaving it at her house and walking it up the kilometre long driveway at 3 am cause I was so tired, so. Anyway, Kylie's son was doing the program so she had to walk up the hill in the morning cause I didn't take her car back and she was really angry. So, she came into where I was sleeping and beat me up – bashed me on the back of my body and, you know, I turned around and she was hitting me on the back of my body.

Thanks, Ms Townsend. So, what made you leave on that day?.....So, I'd been, you know, obviously fairly messed up for a while over what I was being subjected to and – and the – the pressure and I just – I think Kylie hitting me was the – the end of the straw. So, I went up the hill to do the sweeping of the 99 stairs, and Chris came up and said Natasha wanted to see me in the house and I knew it was to – because I hadn't

taken Kylie's car back and I didn't know – well, I knew I'd be yelled at or hit or whatever so, I – I thought to myself, I can't walk into that house. There's no way I can walk into that house. So, I just walked to the centre, picked up my handbag, got in my car and drove away.

Thank you, Ms Townsend. And so, after you left the property, what happened in regards to your children?.....So, I – so, I – I went to see a lawyer the next day and got a family lawyer involved, and I did actually – I did actually drive on the – so, I left on the Monday or the Sunday – the Sunday. It was a Sunday and they were at – at 103, so I couldn't get access to them. So, I – I – I did on the Friday after I left I actually went – I didn't – I knew they'd be at day care somewhere. I found out they weren't at their normal day care, they'd been taken out. So, I rang around and I found a day care that – that said they had new – two new children starting on Friday and I thought that that's my kids, which it was. So, I went down there with their birth certificates and I – I picked them up and I took – I drove – drove home with them, heading back to Brisbane, but because the day care centre had – had to ring the parent who dropped them off, they rang Greg, and then Greg must have followed me at the highway and when we stopped at a servo to go to the toilet, he was there and he grabbed them off me, and the police were called, and he was in Natasha's Land Cruiser, and so, he – he – the police gave them back to him because he had had them the night before. The policeman basically said, 'Whose had – who had the kids last night? You did? Okay, they go with you.' So, then I just had to wait until the Family Court process happened and, you know, that took however long that took."

173 Ms Townsend was asked if she ever formed the belief that the plaintiff was running a cult. Her reply was:

"Yes, I did. So, when I – when you know, in those last months where it was horrendous, my liberty was deprived and all of those things, I – yeah, I think slowly but surely, I had been coming to that realisation. When I worked closely in the organisation office with Andrea, we talked a lot about things, and I think it's sort of – it was just – once you're kind of in there, it's hard to get out. But yes, I think definitely through that 2008 year, I felt like I came to that opinion, and I – and when I left I researched it...'

174 The defendant's final witness was Misha Del Rae.

175 Dr Del Rae is a chiropractor who did the *Next Evolutionary Step* course in 1996. She said that it was all light and fluffy and fun in the beginning. Her evidence then continued as follows:

'Yep, and did the plaintiff make any comments to you about you on The Next Evolutionary Step course?.....Yeah, there was one time when everybody – we were supposed to stand up and say something, and then I was one of the last few people, and she went up to the front of the room, so I didn't get to say anything at that point, so when she realised that I didn't say anything, she started belittling me because I didn't get up and say something and take charge and do what she wanted...'

And did you feel at the end of the program that you needed to – that that was it, or did you feel you needed to continue with other courses with Life Integration Programmes?.....Yeah, that's a good question, because that was a nice, good, feel good – it was supposed to be good for the planet, so I thought well, if this is a step to you know, making the world a better place, yeah, I thought I would do more courses.

Thank you. And which courses do you remember that you completed, and around what year if you can remember?.....I – okay, I did The Next Ev Step, and then after that I did the following October, I think, of the following year I did Final Step, and then Universal Healing, I don't remember all the years.

That's fine.....But it was in that – yeah. I did so many courses. Universal Healing, Being Female, Past Lives, Accessing and Integration Day, Relationships, Initiates, PMC, I – and I think there were a few more that I just can't remember at the moment.

No problem. And you did The Survivors, did you do The Survivors?.....I did Survivors, yes.

No problem. And did someone from your The Next Evolutionary Step course suicide?.....Yes.

WITNESS: Yes, he did, and Natasha just said that that was because his vibration wasn't high enough to match the planet, and yeah – I think that was during the course he did that."

176

Dr Del Rae gave the following evidence as to her experience with *The Final Step* course:

"Yep, and what do you recall about The Final Step, any key events that you recall?.....The Final Step, sorry. I thought you meant – yeah, on The Final Step there were about 70 or 80 of us. On The Final Step – I mean, on The Final Step, where we were supposed to meet at the university, and so when we got there, they took all of our belongings, all of our personal things, they sat us down and just started treating us like – I don't know, like, we just – they took away all our rights, you couldn't talk, couldn't move, couldn't go to the toilet, couldn't – it was abusive, I guess, from the beginning. But then they did that and then after they processed us and put us into groups, then they put us on a bus that had all the windows blacked out so we couldn't see anything, and they took us on this drive for hours, and when we arrived at our destination, we got off the bus and one of the first things that we had to do was line up into lines and then give each other genital rubs, because that's how we'd get to know each other. That was her words and stuff. And then after that it was just ongoing abuse, degradation, all our rights were taken away and our food and sleep, drinks and we just had to work.

Yeah, and did you participate in a naked parade?.....Yes, yeah, there was a – so, one of her events was that everybody had to strip down and we had to walk across the stage in front of her and her support team, so that they could – oh, well talk about our bodies in front of us – oh you look like this, you look like that, your body is this shape because of this reason and that reason. So, they would laugh, and they would – there was one poor gentleman there, that I won't go into his personal details, but you know he had issues, and she just kept making fun of him. But everybody had to walk across the stage so that they could just stare at us, we had to turn around like, I don't know, turn around so they could just inspect us completely.

Thank you, Dr Del Rae. And did you watch pornography?.....Yeah, that was another one of her things that we had to do. We had to watch pornography and that was quite unsettling and there were people in the room that were just crying because they'd never experienced – they – and the torture, like we had to watch it, we couldn't go to sleep, we couldn't turn away, we couldn't, we couldn't close our eyes. We actually – and if we did try to do that they would come and, like in some way, I won't say torture us, you know, but yeah, it just – I mean not only was it porn, it was like just bad porn, it was gay porn, it was people porn, it was just bad stuff.

Thank you, Dr Del Rae. And did you swim in the dam naked, do you recall – yeah.....Yeah, there was a dam that was freezing cold water and so, we all had to strip down, every morning we had to get up at whatever time, we had to strip down, we had to go into this cold water and we just had to stay in this freezing water until everybody would stop shivering or until – I don't know how long it was, like half hour, an hour, we all just had to sit there and we couldn't touch the bottom, we just had to float, and then we had to get up and go to exercises, you know, for her regime, yeah.

Thank you, Dr Del Rae. And do you recall what happened in marquee when someone fell asleep?.....If someone was about to fall asleep they would have to stand up and hold a rock, this really heavy boulder, it's not – not like just a tiny little rocks but rocks that weighed like 10 or 15 pounds, we would have to hold them above our head and then if we fell asleep we would hit them on the head. So, that was one thing, we had to stand up and do that. They would come screaming at you or make us do push up or sit ups or something.

Yeah, and what do you remember about going to the toilet?.....Oh, there were only certain toilet breaks. There was one toilet for the girls and one toilet for the boys. All of these people had to use one toilet, and there was an allotted time, like I don't know, 10 or 15 minutes, whatever it was, and everybody had to use it – it might have only been 5 minutes, and if you didn't get to use it in that time it was too bad you had to wait until the next toilet break.

Thank you.....So, even the toilet was taken away from us."

177

Dr Del Rae gave the following account of the *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling* year:

"Thank you, Dr Del Rae. And what do you recall about Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling 1998?.....Yeah, so we started that and – excuse me – so, I think it was about 30 of us, that's what I seen earlier. So, we all started and right after that we were given a certain regime, which was, we were vegan – exercise, we had to exercise an hour a day and then that turned into 10 Ks runs – well, an hour a day of exercise. Our diet was that and we had – in an initial group meeting we sat around and we talked about the [indistinct words] when I say work we do work [indistinct words] and so anything like sugar, honey, anything without salt was in the diet, but then Mark Reimers pipes up and he says, 'I think we should be able to beat anybody into making them do what we want to do, if they're not doing – if they're not doing – if they're not reading their stuff, they're not reaching their goals, then we should be able to beat them', and essentially, and so, Mark – Carli and I, we both said, 'Well, I don't agree with that, I don't think that's a good way to do things', and Natasha then said, 'Well, the two victims in the room spoke up' and so we just looked at each other and go, 'This – this just isn't right', but that was the first red flag, but –

And what – and what – did you complete a black mat process where each student had to go under a set of black mats – ?.....Yeah.

– could you describe that?.....Yep, well again, this was one of her things to get people to move their stuff –

Could you describe what – ?..... – she would –

– moving stuff is?.....Yeah, your emotions, you're clearing your cellular memory, raising your vibration, making a better person for the world, so that we could be a sender – I don't know, but – yeah, so the black mats they would actually hold people down and put these huge black mats which I think were about six foot by three foot or four foot wide, and they would pile these on top of a person, however many deep, and then the people – everybody would just sit on these people, and this person underneath all these black mats and all these people had to somehow crawl out of the black mats.

And what happened to you, Dr Del Rae?.....Yeah, and so I was pregnant at the time, and she decided that I needed to get under there and I said, 'No, I'm pregnant. I don't want to do this.' And she said no, and she got people to hold me down, and put the mats on me. And I'm like, 'I'm 16 weeks pregnant, I don't want to have a miscarriage', and she just kept laughing and I – anyway, so she kept laughing, and just – that was a good move. To – yeah, so then I – 'cause then I, 'No, I don't want to get under the mat', and about a month after that I miscarried the baby at 16 weeks."

178

Dr Del Rae confirmed the evidence of the defendant and other witnesses as to smoking marijuana as part of the course. The following extract from the transcript relates:

"Thank you, Dr Del Rae. And do you recall the celebration at the end of the assignments, did you smoke a marijuana joint?.....Well, that wasn't – yeah, that was part of one of her routines, too, it's like everybody had to – we were called over to make snacks and treats, we were going to have a party, and then she had sent somebody on, I don't know who and made a rather huge joint for everyone, and then told us that we had to smoke this joint completely, and so before – we couldn't go to sleep, we couldn't go away, we had to stay in there and smoke this joint.

Yeah, and what did the plaintiff say was the purpose of smoking a joint each?.....Exactly I don't remember her words, but it was like, to move our stuff, to see what it's like to move our – alter our consciousness. Exactly I don't remember.

That's no problem, Dr Del Rae. Do you recall, or did you see anything in regards to John Jansch at that celebration?.....Yeah, John Jansch said that he hadn't done drugs before, and he'd never smoked pot and he didn't want to do it, and he didn't feel comfortable, he didn't want to do it. Well, Natasha said, 'You have to do it. You don't have a choice.' So, he was – I mean, again, she was forcing people to do things against their will."

179 Dr Del Rae went on to become a member of the *Combined Personal Mastery* group, however her reservations deepened as she was mistreated. Her evidence is as follows:

"And did you complete working bees at the property, or the plaintiff's property Omaroo?.....Yes, yeah. So, our group, PMC '98, we were doing a task where we basically cleared the land, half the mountain for her and we made a path, a stairway going down to a meditation circle, and we planted fruit trees along the side as well. So, we sat down at the beginning of the year to plan the dates and every second Saturday, and I said to the group that I work Saturdays, but I will work my Saturdays around what we decide here. So, and – so they set Saturdays for every second Saturday, and I set my work schedule to the other Saturdays. Well, it was changed – a couple of people in the group changed that so then I was not able to go down on the Saturdays.

And then what did the plaintiff say when you weren't down at the property?.....Yep, so there was one time I went down through the week, so sometimes if I couldn't go on the weekend, I would go through the week to just keep up my end of my work, and so there was one day we went down with the few of us, about five of us, Dolores, Sue, Lisa, can't remember, and myself, and she said – and then they said, well, come into the auditorium, Natasha wants to do one of her counselling sessions, and so then she started yelling at me, she had people sit on me so that I couldn't move and she started hitting me and punching me. 'Well, you're not keeping up your end, you're being lazy', and more abuse and degradation."

180 Dr Del Rae confirmed the defendant's evidence that she had been physically battered by the plaintiff. She said:

"And do you recall the plaintiff bullying me?.....Oh, yeah, that was terrible. Okay, so there was one creative time and, again, this was when we had come to the meetings and Natasha said, 'Don't look at Carli.' Mostly this is [indistinct words], these aren't exact words but they're mostly to the – mostly the words. That, 'Ignore Carli, don't talk to her, she's – she has – she's being punished, she's basically, done things wrong and now we've got to sit her straight, we've got to get her to do things right.' So Carli always – she was black eyes, bruises, you know, I don't know that I ever saw cuts, but black eyes, bruises all over, and Natasha would say, 'Yeah, we did that.' And then, also, there were some girls up in the office that – Carli's handlers, that would keep her in line and keep her in the office. Carli wasn't allowed to sleep, to go home and see her children, to do anything. She had to stay in that office to clean up whatever mess it was that she supposedly made, and getting bashed if she – like, Natasha jollied in the fact that she was bashing Carli and then other people bashing her."

181 Dr Del Rae confirmed matters put by the defendant to the plaintiff in cross-examination concerning her own mistreatment by her ex-husband Patrick Maher. The evidence is as follows:

"Did you attend any counselling sessions with the plaintiff?.....Yep, Natasha – she said she only did counselling for people that had done Final Step and PMC and above, and so we used to do personal counselling sessions, but also couples counselling with my ex.

And what is the name of your ex-husband?.....Patrick John Maher.

And do you recall any incidents that occurred during couples counselling sessions with the plaintiff and your ex-husband?.....Yeah, well, there were a couple times I'm going to talk about. One of them was we were doing, like, joint counselling sessions where we – she wanted us to go out on the mats in the big empty room, just Patrick and myself, and bash the mats and yell and scream and how we feel about each other. And I said to her, 'No, I'm not comfortable with this, because Patrick is domestically violent.' And I said, 'I don't want to do this, I'm not comfortable putting myself in danger, because I know that he – I mean, he would come up from behind at home and just start bashing me, like there's no reason, no rhyme' – and I go, 'I'm not going to put myself in danger on these mats for you or for him.' So, she kept saying, 'Well, just get on the mats and do it.' So, I did and I just walked away from that one. And another time was we were in an access room during the couples counselling session, and something was said and I replied to Patrick in something that he didn't like, and he pushed me against the doorknob hard enough that it broke my rib, and Natasha said something like, 'Well, you probably deserved that.'"

182 In 2003 Dr Del Rae completed the *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical* year for a second time. She gave evidence that the plaintiff enforced the presence of participants at Omaroo. It is as follows:

"And do you recall what happened when one of the couples on that Personal Mastery didn't come down for a weekend?.....Oh, couples were another issue, can we get back to that one?"

Yeah.....Please, okay, couples on that issue, on that course, there was a course – there was a couple, and I don't remember their names, but for one reason or another they didn't come down that week, and so we when we all got there and they hadn't arrived, Natasha is like, 'Where are they, they're going to bring you down. You guys have to go get them, they have to be here'. So, she sent us all down to Brisbane to collect this couple, oh, which was one of her things that – one of her initial things like was that if you didn't come, they would come and get you. And then our initial PMC group, what she said was – that was one of her things, like you have to abide by all the rules, and if you don't come down, if you don't come to meeting we will come and get you – and she turned to one of her support teams, 'Isn't that right, Richard?' and he said, 'Yes.' So, and then somebody else said, 'Yes, isn't that right? Yes, they came and got me before.' So, there was always that threat of, 'If you don't come, we will come and get you.' So, this was one of those words. She sent us down to collect this couple.

And what happened when you got there?.....Well, the guy was there and the girl was missing, so they would – we'd called her up and all, they're not here, you know, shall we just come back to Omaroo? And she was like no, go find them, check their phones, check every bit of their house. It was really weird, but yeah, we never found the girl but we had to check the phones, and on the phones was nothing, no messages, anything. And then she – Natasha goes, 'Well, I know this is just a drug thing, they change the SIM card and give you the blank SIM card so there's no messages.' So, I don't know how she would know that's a drug thing. But yeah, but that was it, in the end we just didn't find the girl and the guy didn't come back, either.

Yep, and did those students ever come back onto the course?.....Not that I remember ever seeing them again."

183 Dr Del Rae also gave evidence as to the plaintiff's interference with or manipulation of relationships between people within her sphere. The evidence is as follows:

"No, and do you – did the plaintiff ever interfere with students' relationships?.....Yes, she did. Absolutely, from the very beginning. Anybody that had a relationship, husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, she did her best to break up. On the initial one there was Bill, there was – like, every single relationship she tried to break up, and also friendships, she tried to come in between those, but it's like – but every single person, she would somehow separate them, she would definitely try to break them up, yes.

And do you call what – or did – what did the plaintiff say about Tracy Foster and Tim Johns getting into a relationship?.....Yeah, well Tracy Foster and Tim Johns got into a

relationship, then we came to a meeting and Natasha started belittling Tracy for being in a relationship with an older man, 'Because when he's old he's going to have saggy balls and you're going to have to change his diapers and look after him, and is that what you want in your old age?'

Thank you.....When you're half his age, yeah.

And do you recall what the plaintiff said about her on Personal Mastery 2005 with a student called Sean?.....What – Natasha and Sean?

Yep.....Yeah. Yeah, so another one of the rules was you can't – if you're not in a relationship now, you cannot start a relationship while you're doing the course. So many bizarre things. So, she came in one weekend with Sean and said that, 'I know we're not supposed to have a relationship.' But again – and – 'But Sean and I have just had the best weekend of sex ever, and do you guys mind?' Well, you know, and she's saying like – she's the teacher, the instructor, and she's having sex with one of the students, which is not right, but then bragging about it, and as I could see, she just – she wanted our okay but we couldn't say no. I mean, some of said no, that's not right, we don't accept it. It's not correct, it's not kosher, it's what – you know. But it didn't make a difference, she – yeah, she was in a relationship with Sean."

184 Dr Del Rae confirmed the circumstances of the telephone call to her by her ex-husband from Samoa and his arrival home. They were as follows:

"When Patrick and Kehlani were over in Samoa, did you receive a phone call from Patrick?.....Yeah. Well, he got on the phone to call and say hi, and he had been on like – basically all we got to do is say hi, then Natasha took the phone, and she goes, 'He doesn't want to talk to you. He's so relaxed. I'm making him so relaxed here.' And she just started, like, brain fucking me – sorry – but, like, you know, just being rude, horrible, and degrading, and just – so I didn't get to speak to Patrick or Kehlani in that, like, three minutes. It was like a, 'Hi, how are you,' and then Natasha came over and just started one of her rants, took over the phone.

And what happened when you got to the airport to collect your family?.....Yeah. Well, I went and picked them up, and Natasha goes, 'Oh, what are you doing here? You know, you should be down at Omaroo.' And I said, 'Well, I'm picking up my family.' Yeah, 'cause then it had – yeah."

185 Dr Del Rae gave evidence about Anita Carroll being forced to find her own way home from the remote property where a *Final Step* course was being conducted. She said:

"And when you did Final Support in a later year, do you recall the plaintiff telling Anita Carroll to do anything in particular?.....Oh, yeah, I wanted the trips, and again, I don't know where it was, it was New South Wales. We set up camp, and Anita apparently said or did something that Natasha didn't like, and then in true Natasha form, she bashed Anita, she belittled her in front of the whole group, and said to her, 'You have to leave. You can't take anything with you. Nobody can drive you out. You have to find your way out of here and get back to Brisbane.'

And what sort of property was that?.....That was a big cattle – I don't know if it was a cattle property, but a big farm, like, these places were in the middle of nowhere. It was just, like, again, the – it was just, like, we just drove and drove through the country, and fences and yards, and – but it was just properties, just – no houses, no – just properties."

186 Dr Del Rae confirmed that the plaintiff had at times kept her children from her. The relevant evidence was as follows:

"And were there times when the plaintiff told you you couldn't see your children?.....Oh, we had – when we had our group PMC meetings, we would take our children with us and they would be put under whoever she decided to watch from the group, at whoever's house, they would be – all the children would be there being looked after by this person or maybe, two people. So no, we couldn't go and see the kids except

for, maybe, in the evenings or like, maybe, once a day we could go and check on our kids...

And, Dr Del Rae, did the plaintiff physically beat or batter you?.....Oh, yeah. A couple of times, besides that one that we spoke of earlier. There was another time where she was coming in – we held our group meeting and she was coming in for the counselling session for the group and I said something to somebody across the room, and she's just started going ballistic, 'How dare you say something to my people' and just came over, right – beeline to me and started attacking me, hitting my head against the wall, punching on me, and just ranting – just ranting, and then said, 'You leave.' And so when I was leaving and walking down the hill – oh, and during this time my ex was sitting over on the side, just kind of, smoking, as well, so again, sadistically enjoying it, and so I was walking down the hill and Andy Wiemers, Greg Proctor and my ex were in the car and said, 'Where are you going?' I said, 'I'm going down to my car and I'm going to go and get my kids and go home.' 'No, you can't take your kids with you.' And I go, 'I'm taking my kids,' and they – Natasha sent it through to make sure that you just leave the property, and you cannot take your kids."

187 Dr Del Rae confirmed related instances of the plaintiff battering Tracy Foster and Kylie Bennett. The evidence is recorded as follows:

"Thank you, and did you see the plaintiff physically batter Tracy Foster?.....Yes. She physically battered so many people in the room, and I couldn't tell you why. Tracy said something that apparently was Natasha's trigger, so she just went over and again, abuse and batter and no reason, just continued to batter, yeah.

And did you see the plaintiff batter Kylie Bennett?.....She battered – there's so many people she battered. Kylie, yes.

And did –She did Kylie, yeah.

Keep going.....I was just going to say, and also with Kylie, she would also take her son away, she would not feed her, she would make Kylie do all these bizarre tasks for her, and Carli was having – Kylie, sorry, was having like car accidents, and Natasha would just go, 'Well, she's not integrated. She's – her energy levels aren't high enough, so we've got to do more work with her.' And so she just – poor Kylie. Yeah.

Did you hear the plaintiff call Kylie Bennett a bad mother?.....Multiple times, Kylie's a bad mother, shouldn't have her – shouldn't have access to kids."

188 Dr Del Rae corroborated the defendant's evidence that the plaintiff had told her that she was an unfit mother and that she turned her against her parents. She said:

"She said you were unfit to be a mum, you shouldn't have any more children, you should – your kids should be taken away from you. You don't deserve children. She – I remember her tearing you from your parents, you – she wanted you to write letters to your parents to not talk to your parents, and Nick, again – a couple that she kept trying to break apart, but, yeah, she said multiple times you were an unfit mother."

189 Dr Del Rae also corroborated the defendant's account of the plaintiff's treatment of Katherine Locke by confronting her with the prospect of suicide. The following evidence relates:

"Thank you, and were you at the PMC – the combined personal mastery meeting at the end of – well, in 2005 when Catherine Locke had her last night at Omaroo?.....Yes, I was. Again, I don't remember the whole lead-up to it, but she was I think breaking up with a partner at the time, I think. Not a hundred per cent positive on that one. But anyway, she goes, 'I just want to die, I just' – you know, Catherine said something to the effect of, like, 'I just want to die, I just want to kill myself.' So, Natasha took that opportunity and told somebody to go get a kitchen knife, and – which one of the guys did, and proceeded to tell Catherine, 'Stab yourself, stab yourself, kill yourself right here, put it right here.' And Catherine's like, 'I don't want to do it, I don't want to die.' And Natasha just kept hounding her and hounding her, and then she went to the

[indistinct words] and Natasha goes, 'This is how you do it, just right here' to herself, and I was going to say something else with that – it was so traumatic. I can't think of it at the moment but yeah, she was trying to get Catherine to kill herself, and then she goes, 'Well, go – somebody make a noose. Somebody – you, Craig, you know how to' – I think it was Craig – 'You know how to tie a noose, go do that so Catherine can hang herself.'

Thank you.....And that was when Natasha was counselling.

Thank you, Dr Del Rae. And do you recall how many hours that meeting went on for?.....Hours. They went on for hours, like 2, 3 o'clock in the morning. I mean, I was taking notes for that one, so, like, I know there were notes taken, and I know what was said and I know – I mean, I can't remember them all now, but at the moment I was writing everything down. So, there were – there are notes of that meeting somewhere, or there were notes at that meeting."

190 Dr Del Rae confirmed that the plaintiff had claimed that she was "an incarnated Jesus Christ and an Atlantean." The transcript reads as follows:

"Thank you. And did the plaintiff ever talk about Jesus Christ?.....Ha, yeah. Also, can we make sure – oh, yeah, okay, yeah, Jesus Christ, she always referred to herself as being an incarnated Jesus Christ, and during our – one of our PMC at the end of the PMC, I've been thinking long and hard about this, there were two times. Once she said she was like Jesus Christ and we were all her apostles, and she went on with another story, and another time was when we did Initiates and she was saying she was part of the Galactic Wall or something like that.

Yeah, thank you.....So, there's different issues there.

Thank you. And, did she – yeah, did – did the plaintiff ever speak about Atlantis?.....Yeah, yeah, that's when – yeah, she would say that she's reincarnated and she's a part of the Essene, and she's part of this and the Atlanteans, she's – we're all cellular and we're all part of this magic group that's – because our vibrations are going so high we're going to raise Atlantis. Yeah, she would also talk about how she was connected to all these places and beings and how she was a part of them and how she was destined to go back and be – and save the world, basically."

191 Dr Del Rae confirmed the defendant's evidence about *The Survivors* course. Her evidence was as follows:

"Yeah, and what do you recall about the course?.....Again, that was a strange comment, that was – we – so in that course, we learnt survival techniques, so the things that were good was like we learnt how to bake bread, how to plant seeds, how to – you know, little survival things like that, but then she took us all on a – on a big hike for like a couple of days, and at that point I had a baby with me that was just a few months old, and I was carrying it in – in my front backpack, and I still had to carry my backpack with all of my stuff and food in it. And, you know like, at that point, my ex would – he – as we were walking up hills, he would push down on my backpack and then laugh about it, and Natasha would just say things like, well, you need to be better prepared, you need to do more exercise, you need to, you know, it was always my fault. But, yeah, doing that course, yeah, and we had to go to a waterfall at one point. This – so we hiked down to a waterfall. And there were a few of us with babies, and so the babies, we had to put on the beach, on the – on the side. And the rest of the group, we had to strip down naked, swim through the ice cold water, and under the waterfall, and we had to stand under the waterfall for a period of time, until people would stop shivering, or stop talking or whatever. My body was involuntarily shaking, and shivering, and there was no – no control, and she said, 'Well, everybody, you can have Misha to thank for this because she's still not controlling things.' And then – well at one point, then, finally everybody got to swim back to shore.

Thank you. And did you attend a rifle range in stage 1?.....Yeah, she wanted to teach everybody how to shoot guns to survive when everything – when the – hits the fan, and

everything goes under, and we have to be in survival mode. So yeah, shooting was one thing that we had to do.

And could you describe what the plaintiff said about the period of survival?.....'There'll be count down, and we're going to – I mean, there's going to be mass chaos, everybody's going to be crazy, but we'll be okay, because our vibrations are – we are vibrating so high that we'll be okay. We'll – we'll – what is it, like, kind of like transcend to the next level.' Something like that.

And did the plaintiff say you would have to kill people?.....Oh, yeah. Well she said, yeah – I guess that was part of why we had to shoot – learn to shoot guns, was to kill people to survive and keep our families safe...

So, what happened – where did you sleep on – at the – on The Survivors stage 2 with your baby, and how?.....Well, mostly, we just slept outside. There was one point where we had to go on the property, and we had to make a shelter, to learn to survive. And this was when my baby was just a few weeks old. And so, we were just basically sleeping out in the open, on the ground, with the babies. And then – yeah, otherwise, yeah, it was just hiking around. And then there was a point, like when we did the next stage of survival, when we were doing this big hike, that we would pitch tents and we got to sleep with – anyway it was so cold, and she had to – so at night, she would strip us naked, and – so that nobody would leave or run away. And we had to sleep outside with the – you know, it was just bizarre.

Could you say – could you say who that was, who said that?.....Who – Natasha said that we had to strip naked. And we couldn't wear any clothes at night. So they – one night there was – there was a tepee with a fire, and – but there was like a hole in it, and so then the next day, the breeze is coming in, and the next day, she belittled everybody on the course, because we didn't plug up the hole. Well, we were naked, we didn't know what to do. She wasn't teaching us any survival skills. Again, it was just like, this is what we are doing and then afterwards she would tell us everything we did wrong. And then, another night, we just slept out under – yeah, Natasha, basically it was, we were sleeping outside in the cold, and naked."

192 Dr Del Rae then explained the circumstances in which she left the plaintiff's sphere. The relevant evidence picks up from where she had earlier said that she had been attacked by the plaintiff and told to leave, but that as she could not take her children with her, she returned. Her evidence is as follows:

"And what happened on that day, Dr Del Rae?.....I was just whipper snipping and I go, well, the initial course, Final Step was great love, but everything that we were going on and through the years, it was just getting – like Natasha's attitude, her – she was getting more, like, psychotic and abusive to people, and causing again more mass group mob mentality, and I – it just wasn't improving, it was getting worse and worse every year, and on that day, I was just – you know, doing some whipper snipping, cleaning the yard up and I just thought, 'You know what? I've had enough.' And I used different words, but I said, 'I've had enough,' and I left and I never came back."

The issue of credit

The plaintiff's credibility

193 Central to the plaintiff's credit is her account of her association with the defendant for some 13 years. As has been seen from what I already set out in these reasons, the plaintiff initially denied that the defendant had ever worked for her or her companies and then repeatedly insisted that any work she had performed was as an unpaid volunteer and/or later, in her capacity as a shareholder, after having purchased one share in the plaintiff's company Universal Knowledge Pty Ltd, (in which the plaintiff retained 51% of the shares). In fact the general tenor of the plaintiff's evidence was that the defendant was an incompetent nuisance who was not wanted and was repeatedly told by the plaintiff and others in

her group, to go home to her parents. She gave that evidence that was, to my mind, in terms which were disturbingly close to those used by Ms Carroll in making the same assertions.

194 This evidence was very much contradicted however, by the plaintiff's description of the defendant as a "past student and employee" in an affidavit she swore. I do not accept the plaintiff's babbled attempt to evade her own sworn description of the defendant. The relevant transcript passage is as follows:

"I put it to you, Dr Lakaev, in the first couple of lines of that paragraph, it says:

I am informed by Carli McConkey, a Universal Knowledge past student and past employee –

I put it to you again, do you still stick by your statement – ?.....Yeah.

– that I wasn't an employee?.....Yes, I do. I'm not sure why that's in there. But it's there.

Is this a signed affidavit that you swore on oath?.....I did sign it.

Okay. So you're saying that you were dishonest in this affidavit?.....No, I didn't think so. There's a couple of things that happened with this particular document, it was rushed through really quickly.

Sure.....For instance, the Associate Diploma doesn't have 'incomplete' next to it. 'Intern psychologist' wasn't on there. There was a few things that were a little bit not correct with this document –

Sure..... – which we discussed at a later date. I think I did this while I was at uni, looking at the dates. Trying to get – and I was working, there was a range of things happening."

195 Even more egregious in this regard, was the plaintiff's acknowledgment in her book *The Next Evolutionary Step*, published in the year 2000, that the defendant had been her personal assistant in the production of that book. She wrote in the dedication section:

"And I 'salute' the ones who dared to push me past my limitations (I never thought I had any until I commenced writing *The Next Evolutionary Step* book). I would like to say that this book is as much a part of you as me. Thank you Nick (for without your actions I would never have commenced writing this book at all), Deanna, Richard, Julie, Tim, Robyn, Thomas, Pirjo, Ron, Alex and his downline, Jorg, let us not forget Budgie and 'hats off' and a standing ovation to my Personal Assistants, Elissa and Carli, who 'hung in' through it all, staying up late and unrelentingly reminded (sic) me of my priorities." (Emphasis added.)

196 It is at this point necessary to digress, at some length regrettably, as in my view, sections of the plaintiff's book require close examination. They provide both an insight into her belief system and her teachings and claims during the relevant period, and at the same time, provide an insight into the defendant's mindset in assisting the plaintiff with production of the book some four years after she first came under her thrall in 1996, and in remaining associated with her until January 2010, a period of some 13 years. They also lend colour to the defendant's description of her experiences with the plaintiff and those around her which might otherwise appear to be incredible. I reproduce what I regard as the key chapters of the book for these purposes, namely, chapters 2, 5, 14, 32, 33, 34 and 35, as follows:

"THE NEXT EVOLUTIONARY STEP

CHAPTER TWO

CELLULAR MEMORY

To understand the need for evolutionary development, one has to enter the world of CELLULAR MEMORY (C)*. Once an individual allows the concept of **Cellular Memory** to permeate their world, it ignites an inner innate desire to evolve.

Within the theory of **Cellular Memory**, both biological and other lifetime induced, there is the secret to each individual's evolutionary development. Be aware that upon understanding these principles profound changes commence to occur in your world view, ie, your thought processes and approach to life commence changing.

When individuals work on this area of themselves, we state categorically that they should not commence this journey unless they want change in every aspect of their existence. Who you are at the beginning of your evolvement is not who you will be at the end. You will be a completely different being – a different person, so do not embark upon this journey unless you want 'real' change, not just 'theoretical' or 'Intellectual' change.

This information is about practical change, not the type of knowledge you learn and put away on a shelf to collect dust and then throw away a few years or weeks later. So the best way to handle the initial explanation is to give the following example:

Imagine you have caught a flea and have put it in a jar. You screw the lid on nice and tight to make sure that the flea cannot get out. Imagine what it must be like for this flea. Prior to being put into the jar he was jumping around at one metre to two metre distances. It jumped from dog to dog, carpet to carpet, around and about constantly. It had been experiencing an unlimited existence. But now it is in a jar that is only 99 centimetres high. But because the flea is used to jumping somewhere between one to two metres, things are going to start happening to the internal world of the flea.

What is going to happen to the flea?

It is going to bounce around constantly, jump up and down and hit its head constantly. After a while the flea will get a headache. But more importantly to avoid the headache the flea will not jump to one metre or more any longer. The flea will jump to under 99 centimetres instead.

After a while the person who caught the flea will get bored with looking after it and decides to set it free. The lid is opened and the flea is freed. As it commences to jump around again it is not going to be able to jump past 99 centimetres anymore, even though it is not in the jar.

Why?

Because the flea has been conditioned.

The principle of conditioning is not a new concept. However other modalities approach conditioning differently – we work from the arena of **Cellular Memory**.

Conditioning simply says you are 'stuck' in a particular mode of behaviour that you have acquired in this lifetime. But **Cellular Memory** goes much deeper and to understand fully a number of different processes require explaining.

Firstly, there are two types of **Cellular Memory**, Biological and Other Lifetime based. *The Next Evolutionary Step* is designed to look at your **Biological Cellular Memory**.

Other books will cover other lifetime induced **Cellular Memory** in more detail, so we will not confuse the *The Next Evolutionary Step* book by discussing it at this time.

Biological Cellular Memory originates from our DNA chromosomal structure – our gene pool. Our gene pool not only had information on whether or not 'I am going to have blonde hair or dark hair or blue or green or brown eyes like Uncle Jack, Aunty Mae, or my parent's'. It says that even though we may end up looking like Aunty Mae, Uncle Jack or our parents, we also gain information about our Emotional world, the

way we handle our Spiritual information and our Intellectual capabilities from their gene pool (**Cellular Memory**).

Let us imagine that someone in our family was involved in the Second World War and had particular traumatic incidents happen to them. And for no explicable reason they find during this lifetime that they have developed a fear of thunderstorms.

As a child they would hear a thunder clap and then run to their parent's bed, hide and scream, running around in sheer and utter panic. But if you were to watch the child from a **Biological Cellular Memory** level, you would start to realise that the child has a cellular 'hang up' that in all probability revolves around the Second World War.

The sound of the clap of thunder is similar to a bomb going off. The **Biological Cellular Memory** in that child is reacting because the person who was traumatised during the World War II never 'dealt' with these incidents and therefore left the 'baggage' for someone else in another generation to integrate or be handicapped by in a fashion similar to the originally traumatised family member.

As a result, there is now a child that behaves irrationally to loud, 'bomb' type sounds. We could react irritably towards this child and say there is nothing to be afraid of, or we could accept that this child has Biological Cellular 'baggage' which needs to be released (and understood) so the child can be a fully functioning, integrated part of our society.

For the last 2000 years or more, we have had our **Biological Cellular Memory** repressed by all sorts of different institutions and structures, from governmental bodies to religious structures. Hence the associated belief patterns have been handed down to us from our family members and our society unchecked.

We have the taxation department and its rules that control us. We have the police department and its rules that control us and so on. In fact, if we stop and look honestly, we are repressed at every corner as a society. Yet, we are 'fooled' into believing that we are not controlled because we have the modern day benefits of televisions, faxes, technical communications, good health, medication and many different forms of distractions, which allow us to entertain ourselves in a multitude of artificial ways.

Our Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual worlds are more interfered with now than at any other time throughout human history. How do we know that? After all, we are so comfortable.

The way that we know this is very simple. We do not function fully. All we need to do is look at the Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual health of our world population. It is plummeting. If we do not have a person that is ill Physically, we have a person that is ill Emotionally, if not ill Emotionally, they are Spiritually or Intellectually.

Spiritual illness is easy to detect. It hides itself in all forms of extremism. Additional to this we have a society that is Intellectually trapped and limited. What I mean by this is that we have been taught in a particular way to force us to be accepting of the things that our society expects us to be and if we do not, we are ostracised in some way. Hence, our **Biological Cellular Memory** is full of unnecessary information that is making us extremely unevolved Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally and Spiritually. This is obvious simply by how we react to each other and communicate on a daily basis, let alone when under pressure.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conscious Mind, Subconscious Mind and Biological Cellular Memory

CONSCIOUS MIND

Currently we function foremost from a CONSCIOUS MIND (A) level, and within that **Conscious Mind** are the logical things we have been taught.

The primary inputs include, our parents, our teachers, our friends and finally our spouses. As an INPUT goes in an OUTPUT automatically occurs. This OUTPUT comes in the form of our Physical appearance our likes and dislikes, our personalities, our attitudes, thoughts, Emotions, desires, passions and actions.

Attached to the **Conscious Mind** is an area called MEMORY (B). Your MEMORY consists of the things you need to remember, such as snippets of your childhood, information from school, like algebra, how to use your eftpos card, how to use your credit card, how to get on a train, bus or taxi, how to go from one point to the next, how to get back again, how to drive a manual or automatic car. Essentially, the knowledge we need to be able to function in our respective societies on a daily basis is attached to the MEMORY area.

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

Underneath the MEMORY is the large and complex world of the SUBCONSCIOUS MIND (C).

To be able to integrate you need to develop the skills of removing unreleased and useless information, and how to access the useless debris of the **Subconscious Mind**. Once this has happened, useful information is moved/emptied into the **Conscious Mind**, hence, all the information in your **Subconscious Mind** is brought in to the **Conscious Mind**. This has the affect (sic) of expanding the CONSCIOUS MIND (F).

The **Subconscious Mind** can limit you completely. Generally it has a range of things 'locked' in it, a few examples of which follow:

Cellular Memory is a concept that we have been investigating during the past seven to 14 years. My children's experiences have been utilised and those of others to verify these principles. My eldest son will be 13 years of age in the year 2000, my second son 11 and my third child will be 7. They have flourished, evolved and lived with the **Biological Cellular Memory** concept as a part of their every-day life. They appreciate it and understand it, hence, they are extremely limitless when one compares them with other children.

We have discovered that when a child is born, it is designed to progress its way through different levels of Intellectual information, Emotional growth, Spiritual development as well as the visual changes we see when watching children grow Physically.

Within the first seven years, many different aspects are 'worked' through. When a child arrives it is perfect. It looks beautiful, everybody loves it, we know it needs to be fed, we know it needs a hug by the way it cries. But, how do we know these things? How does a child so small manage to manipulate a room full of people to do everything that it wants.

From feeding it, changing its nappy, running around after it, playing with it, giving it attention, love and hugs. How does a child manage to do this? A child does this because it communicates with you telepathically, initially. It exchanges information with you from its right brain. It knows what you are thinking. It knows what you are feeling.

For example. Every time you are in a bad mood, it screams and yells in unison with you. Every time you are in a good mood, it laughs in unison with you.

Every adult has got an unbroken psychic connection to the children around them, not just the ones you give birth to or parent, but it also includes all children that are related to you no matter how removed, and any child that you come in contact with on a moment by moment basis. Children work from their right brain primarily.

BIOLOGICAL CELLULAR MEMORY

But why have we as adults lost many of these abilities?

In fact, we go to a lot of trouble to shut down these abilities in our children.

For example, when my children were born and just beginning to speak, they would tell me fantastic stories. From a **Biological Cellular Memory** point of view, they were telling me about where they had been prior to being a part of our family – where they had come from in the Universe. I found this information enlightening (as well as entertaining) as it gave me great insights into who they 'really' are and what experiences they created.

Instead, most parents would state, 'That's just your imagination. What are you doing? That's not true, that's not possible!'. By doing this you are taking your child's very intelligence, its innate self and you are saying it does not function fully or correctly. The child slowly but surely, because it requires your approval to survive, starts to shut itself down along with these abilities to conform with you to ensure your acceptance.

So, by the time we become adults, we are searching, looking, not knowing what we have lost, and wanting to find a way to get back to ourselves, or to be totally happy with something – anything. But you cannot be holistically happy if the very thing that creates you has been taken away from you.

We can take this point further. Let us take a child that is two years old and in the midst of the tantrum two's. Running around, throwing itself on the floor, throwing tantrums, and suddenly you think, 'Oh my god, my child is starting to look like Uncle Jack.' And Uncle Jack is the criminal of the family. He has been in and out of jail.

What do parents do, because their child's behaviour is irritating and making them angry? They whack the child saying, 'Stop that screaming and yelling. Stop that behaviour. Stop doing this.' And immediately the child is locked into looking like Uncle Jack.

You ask yourself, where are you getting this from?

Let us stop and have a look at children for the moment. When a child is first born it looks like Mum or Dad or Grandma or Grandpa, usually somebody in the family. A few weeks later it starts to look like Auntie Mae, a few months later it looks like Cousin Chris, and continues to swap its features from year to year, week to week, month to month.

Every time a child's features change, that child is telling you, 'At the moment, Mum, Dad, I am running through the **Biological Cellular Memory** of Auntie Mae. Now I am running through Uncle Jack's; now I am doing so and so's. Hey, look at the moment, it is your 'stuff' that I am moving my way through.'

That child is saying, 'While ever I am looking like so and so, I am releasing backlog in my **Biological Cellular Memory**. I do not understand what is happening to me. I do not know why I am behaving the way I am. I do not know why I am being nice at the moment or why I am not being nice at the next moment.'

Because our children and our society is being controlled and guided by its latent **Biological Cellular Memory**, our children and their caregivers are becoming less and less appropriate in their behaviour and more unhappy. We have repressed the individuals in our society, over generations by making them believe they must behave this way or that, or else they are 'bad'. This indoctrination is slowly killing each of us because we are becoming ill on one or more of the four levels.

You must remember also '*the world is your mirror*' and while ever your child's behaviour is annoying or agitating you in any fashion, you must have the same unreleased Emotion in you and, hence, the child can be mirroring your unresolved **Biological Cellular Memory** data back at you. So if you are feeling inappropriate around children, remember, it is probably just your stuff, so learn to do something appropriate with it. This factor alone is enough reason to commence evolving. As a result your life and that of your child's will become easier sooner and permanently.

But what would happen if we let our two year olds release all their **Biological Cellular Memory** tantrums and inappropriate behaviour? What would happen if we allow the craziness of this period and Uncle Jack's 'stuff' to be released? You would have a child that would be efficiently freeing its mind, and any good information Uncle Jack had in his system would become an asset to the child. He just may not have ever had the opportunity to utilise it appropriately. It was not all bad, he had some excellent attributes, but he too may have been like the '*tail wagging the dog*', being controlled by something he did not understand handed to him from another time and place.

Let us explore this further by looking at my eldest boy, who is brilliant at Mathematics, English, Music, actually most anything he puts his mind to.

He swaps from one thing to the other. People only have to show him a little bit of something if anything at all, and off he will go, with the ability to do it. He plays three musical instruments. Why? Because in his **Biological Cellular Memory**, he has Uncles and Aunties that have played musical instruments. Some have played clarinet, some have played guitar, some have played piano, some a brass instrument, and he can play any of those instruments with little tuition. The reason he can do this is that his **Biological Cellular Memory** is cleansed due to the work I have done on myself, that his father has done, hence there is little Biological 'baggage' left. The unnecessary information that would have trapped and limited him on a **Biological Cellular Memory** level has largely been moved and so now he can do what his heart desires with little anguish.

My grandfather was a Kozak, a gunsmith and a part of the Tzar's guard, and as a result my son can design and engineer guns and machinery of differing types.

The same child, at the age of four years, made the decision to build a flying fox. He went into the backyard and made a miniature model of a flying fox. He took strings from the house and collected wood, made perfect knots and created a near perfect flying fox.

This little boy was capable of doing the knots because his father was involved in the Boy Scouts, and I was in the Girl Guides learning similar information.

By allowing him to throw as many tantrums as he needed to (as long as he did not harm himself or anything or anyone else around him), he released much of the pent up **Biological Cellular Memory** of my family and that of his father's. My eldest son has now become a talented and gifted child capable of conquering new frontiers because he has access to the already learnt skills of other generations and family members currently alive.

As the valuable and useful data is being utilised daily and the unnecessary information is gone his mind has the room and the passion to pioneer new frontiers, hence he becomes valuable to the planet because he sees no limitations Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally and Spiritually.

My second boy, who looks Physically very different to my eldest child, had his individual form of **Biological Cellular Memory** to release. On his father's side and my side, there is a family history of at least one male committing suicide in each generation. For no apparent reason, my second boy would like on the floor and scream sentences similar to these, 'I'm going to die', 'I want to die'. 'I can't stand being alive', 'I am going to kill myself, I have to'. This would continue for long periods of time. He would tantrum and scream his way through this **Biological Cellular Memory** trauma and he would say, 'Mummy, what's going on, why am I feeling like this?'

This little man was releasing huge levels of Victim Consciousness and the cellular desire to not be on Earth because he could not cope. He had been given a Biological 'hand me down' of repressed grief and aggression through his DNA chromosomal structure, (**Biological Cellular Memory**).

He did not experience the same style of Physical, Emotional, Intellectual and Spiritual upheaval as my eldest boy because I had continued to cleanse my **Biological Cellular Memory** after having my first child and so had his father, and our second son had the additional advantage that his eldest brother was also cleansing. So the next child had a completely different **Biological Cellular Memory** avenue to travel down and one that was in some ways easier, and in other ways harder.

By the time we had our third boy, he had a cellular environment that was significantly more evolved due to both his older brothers having done significant work on themselves, because they had been allowed to release suppressed data without limitation and appropriately to ensure a positive and disciplined end result. His father and myself had also continued to release any **Biological Cellular Memory** backlog.

By the time my third son was six months old he was speaking large words. By seven years of age he had a vocabulary of a 40 or 50 year old. He is a child that is brilliant on every single level, on every plane of existence in his life. He prances through life knowing about most things, feeling safe and aware of what is going to happen next.

To him the world is a safe place, due to the 'upline' release of his pre-existing family. And he too, has the same abilities as the other children, but with virtually no trauma having been experienced to attain his achievements or abilities.

My second boy is ESP orientated. He can read your mind, and tell you what is going on. He is totally artistic and can draw and make anything you put in front of him.

The 'hand me down' from my side of the family to my second child resulted in a remedial learning problem. They told us it would take three to four years for him to be able to 'climb out' of the problem, if at all. However, within a six to eight week period, he had begun to catch up significantly and surpassed the children in his class with the same problem, simply because we allowed his **Biological Cellular Memory** to release itself, which entailed the accessing of pent up frustration, unhappiness, anger, and huge wells of low self esteem.

Out of the three boys, the youngest one has blue eyes. The second boy has green eyes, and so too the eldest boy. As you move through these evolutionary development processes, your eyes will go from being brown to a shade of green, from green to blue, and people with blue eyes will find their eyes will get bluer.

You start to change shape, your body will shape shift. All three of my sons have perfect physiques. They have tall structures, and their bodies are in alignment. But they do not look like anyone. As soon as they start looking like somebody in the family, I am immediately aware that they are releasing something from somewhere in their **Biological Cellular Memory** and space is provided for this to happen.

In fact, family resemblance will become less noticeable the more evolution we do as a conglomerate society and instead we will become a reflection of our individual personality and where we are going, rather than where we have come from on a biological cellular level.

Clients that have had children after commencing their evolution journey have found that their children and born not looking like them because they have released much of their **Biological Cellular Memory** density.

One of the greatest fears that some adults have are, 'I hope I do not ever look like my Mother', or 'I hope that I do not ever look like my father.' Subconsciously you know the instant you start looking like your Mum that you have your mother's 'stuff' in you and her 'hand me down' has been given to you.

The brilliance of this work is that if you take the *The Next Evolutionary Step* concepts seriously and implement them, the changes are miraculous. And I must stress, that nobody should coerce you into evolving; it is a developmental approach that you should only do if you want to. When and if you choose to evolve, it is a good idea to take a photograph of yourself before you start, and take shots periodically as you progress.

When adults make the choice to evolve, the immediate benefit is that any associated children will automatically enter the process of cleansing their **Biological Cellular Memory**. Better still, they will have the benefit of being able to utilise anything that was taught to their forefathers, without having to work hard. Existing examples of this can be seen in families where there is generation after generation of doctors. Put simply, the knowledge is already learnt, hence, the next generation has no trouble following in their footsteps. The above is an example of **Biological Cellular Memory** being of benefit professionally.

If one allows the **Biological Cellular Memory** concept to exist in their family, you will find that the children around you will be able to go out into existence. Children of integrating and evolving families are extremely innovative and inventive.

The concept of imagination does not exist for these children because everything they think, experience, feel and discuss with their parents is a reality. The parents of these children are integrating and they know that whatever the mind can conceive is a reality.

Imagination is a word that should be thrown away because there is no such thing as imagination; therefore the word is stating something that is not real. If we did not have the concept of imagination in our society, people would move forward at extreme rates, because whatever the mind can conceive, feel, see, think or experience, is a reality somewhere and indicates the need for it to be created or expressed.

Children that are evolving have the capacity to go forward and move past anything that anyone has already been able to achieve, in other generations. These children are born not looking like anyone.

But what happens with our existing adults?

To explain this, let us continue on with the example of the long line of family doctors. Grandfather was a family doctor, great grandfather was, the great great grandson is now a doctor. The reasons why it is so easy for the next generation to become a doctor is because they already have the information from the previous generations in their **Biological Cellular Memory**, and with each generation they find it easier to be a doctor and their skills improve because the experiences of the generation before are locked into their **Biological Cellular Memory**, hence each generation only needs to add information onto their **Biological Cellular Memory** rather than having to relearn from the beginning each time.

What if we got a whole society and applied to our adults the principle of **Biological Cellular Memory** release and evolvment. As an adult takes their *The Next Evolutionary Step* they go through the process of cleansing their **Biological Cellular Memory** and they release what they do not need, not the good 'stuff', just the 'stuff' that is of no use. A society would then exist that would not need to relearn 'old' information unless of course it had not been learnt in other generations – hence as a society we would be efficient and highly advanced rather than repetitious, making the same mistakes.

An extra factor is also instigated in that if you have a child who has got a learning problem or some other disability that is connected to your personal **Biological Cellular Memory** background that simply by you committing to the process of integration your child will shift simultaneously with you and thus you have conquered a complicated pattern simply.

Biological Cellular Memory information goes 'downline', that is, it goes down the generations. As you adjust, it automatically adjusts itself 'downline' through your family. If you are very connected to your parents, occasionally it will go 'upline' but

up until now the 'up line' shift has not been as significant or as noticeable as the 'down line' effect.

Your spouses, due to the sexual connection and the intimacy that true love and devotion brings, will also immediately do a shift with you. As will your siblings – that is, brothers and sisters.

The Next Evolutionary Step has a profound effect on every part of your personal structure and immediate world. As an adult, the more you evolve the more you will release unwanted debris and you will access, just like the children, skills and information from other generations.

If you have knowledge in your **Biological Cellular Memory** that is currently latent in your Subconscious Memory, it will surface and expand your Conscious Memory and your personal pool of available knowledge and therefore your skills levels will increase along with a quantum leap in your Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual integration.

*Once you have accessed the available **Biological Cellular Memory** and 'unclogged' the 'baggage', it becomes and is easier to learn new skills. And if you already have skills in your **Biological Cellular Memory** that you have not tapped into and you want to, you will learn it exceptionally quickly upon applying yourself or perhaps without having to be shown at all.*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Physical Reactions of the Body

and Why They Happen

People who have a tendency for broken bones or who have a brittle structure will suddenly find that it has strengthened. This metamorphosis on a Spiritual, Emotional, Intellectual and Physical plane happens because your cells commence to function at their highest and lightest vibration (healthily). As a result anything that your body needs to heal, repair, re-stabilise or rejuvenate, will happen automatically because the body will embrace the equilibrium created on all the other levels of itself.

Thus, a reversal of the aging process becomes possible, in fact all clients that choose to evolve in a committed manner immediately commence youthing – this is most visible in the 40 year bracket onwards.

Diseases such as arthritis and asthma dissipate in symptoms. Most, if not all diseases are taught to us. We listen to the symptoms, we memorise them, we imitate them, and then we manifest them.

Another reason why diseases can be classed as taught to us is because our imbalances are man made, ie, they are induced by our society and the stress we are put under by it. Consequently, all ailments and imbalances are taught and imposed upon us from the external world.

Some will be offended by what has just been stated, especially some members of the medical fraternity and the well trained Victims of our society who find it difficult to take responsibility from their life's direction and manifestations.

Those that suffer arthritis have a rigid personality that is extremely controlling and they do not allow another's opinion to be absorbed into their way of thinking. They are set in what they are doing and what they are not going to do, and no amount of advice will change their routine or their approach to life, unless of course they take that step toward involvement which usually is only induced by unbearable pain and discomfort.

Asthma sufferers, whether adult or child are stating, 'I am molly coddled, and I feel suffocated. There is something or someone smothering or controlling me constantly.' This may be an overbearing parent or a spouse. The people closest to the asthma sufferer are controlling too much of what is happening for that person and therefore the only time they can get any space to themselves is either under an oxygen tent or when they are wheezing. It is at that point that the sufferer regains control for a short while. They actually take the periods of illness as a holiday from life and those things controlling them. That is why asthma attacks only occur under certain circumstances.

To understand the evolutionary process you have to grasp what has generated the de-evolutionary process in our body shapes, our ailments and the way we function Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally and Spiritually.

AIDS and other blood disorders are generated within people that have an inability to express their hostility. These people have a sensation of guilt in regards to their sexuality internally. AIDS allows the release of pent up hostility and peer pressure. They hide within this particular disease to be able to cope.

Cancer is brought about by extreme levels of grief and anger, and can be generated by this lifetime's experience. In my opinion the reason why the number of people suffering from this disease is increasing is because of the previous generations 'hand me down' of unreleased aggression and grief.

Some would argue that our world is more polluted and that is why these diseases are so prolific but people can be in the most polluted environment and have no sign of any of these diseases, yet others will get extremely sick. Why is that?

Those that get cancer are doing so because they have a Biological Cellular Memory that is compacted, confused and full of guilt and grief due to the inability of our forebears to express themselves in an unrestrained manner as a result of the many constrictions placed upon them religiously and other aspects of their lifestyles.

While integrating you need to look at why a person or you has an ailment, consider the thought processes of the diseased person and what is going on for them Emotionally. The only way you can 'access' this information is to stop and '*live in the moment*'. This helps to remove stress because you express and live as you move through life on a second by second basis.

If you attempt to integrate Intellectually and look at the integration process as if it is a medicine, you will fail dismally. You need to actually go in and be a part of the experiential process in a committed fashion to gain the benefit of evolvment.

Fundamentally all diseases are created by stress primarily and then differing levels of guilt, grief, anger and hostility. All these Emotions generate stress release when felt, but the greatest levels of stress release occur for those who are highly suppressed. Any ailment that you have whether that be terminal, chronic or acute is generated by something that is going on within your Biological Cellular Memory.

Let us take a step further moving away from chronic and terminal diseases to Acute. While cutting up vegetables for dinner you are saying to yourself, 'I resent what I am doing at the moment. I am doing it because I have to do it.' These thoughts and feelings create a perfect situation for an accident. Should you cut your index finger, it is an indication that you feel upset and insecure with the people near you. Cutting yourself and saying, 'Ouch!' allows the feeling of anger to move through your system at a heightened level. Once released through the accident you begin to enjoy making the meal because the 'pent up' suppression has been released.

Another example is of someone riding their motorbike straight after an argument. Their system is still disorientated; they have not expressed their feelings and they have gotten on the motorbike in rage. Shortly after, they fall off their bike, breaking their leg. If it is the right leg that has been damaged, the chances are they have had an argument with the father or a person with a strong controlling right energy, a dominant energy. Had

it been the left, it could be the mother, girlfriend, a female boss or someone who is highly manipulative or covert with their control.

Why the leg and not something else? That is easy. The legs represent the way you carry yourself through life. It contains childhood hang-ups, decision-making abilities and aggression. Every occurrence in every moment, no matter how minute, plays a major role in everything that occurs for you. To '*live in the moment*' deliberately, and to choose to do it in total, is going to start to give you the answers as to why the things that happen to you, happen.

We had a girl who did *The Next Evolutionary Step* programme in 1992. She was the passenger in a car, which hit the back bumper bar of the car in front. The driver lurched forward, so did the passenger. Both drivers left the scene with nothing but a little damage to their cars. The passenger, who was sitting with the seat belt on, broke every bone in her body when she lurched forward. She could not feed herself for six months.

Now, why did this happen? We discussed with her during the programme what had happened in the last day before the accident, the last week before the accident and what happened in the year leading up to the accident. In the year preceding the accident she had decided she no longer wanted to be with her husband; she wanted a divorce.

She was a nurse and did not enjoy her job and did not want to do it any more. Her family no longer communicated with her. She felt extremely isolated and wanted their attention again.

This accident generated for her the end of her marriage because her husband could not cope with having to support her through the ailments the accident created. She could not work as a nurse because she could no longer lift anything. Her family rallied around her and she finally had their attention, love and support in the manner she wanted. So, you can see everything that occurs to you actually has an outcome and a reason you have generated. It is not an accident. It is a reality that you have created for a specific outcome.

These outlined patterns generate unhappiness. But you must be enjoying the pattern otherwise you would not keep recreating or creating it in the first place. There is something you want within the structure of the pattern, otherwise you would change it by evolving. The Intellect cannot work fully when there is an Emotional backlog. Those of you that have Physical ailments must accept that it is coming from the Emotional self. If you clear out the Emotional backlog, you will create an avenue for the mind to visualise and create a reality without the disease.

You will find people who actually do survive terminal illnesses through visualisation have had explosive Emotional reactions during the transit and period before health was regained. It is not possible to move through any kind of growth without experiencing emotional discomfort. Emotional release does not mean that at the end of the process that these Emotions will come back. If you have new things to learn or an old Emotional block coming up, the Emotions are going to come back again, but in a different form. Once you have shifted the extreme levels of the block you can handle it in a shorter time, in a more appropriate manner as you become more practised.

Just to give an idea of what some ailments represent, we have listed common ailments. However, this concept will be explored more fully in another publication – '*What You Are Telling the World*'.

DISEASES

Asthma – too much molly coddling. When you take on an asthma attack you get a break from the molly coddling.

Ovarian problems – female issues and inability to be dominant as a female.

Nervous disorders – indicate that you try to please others all the time and have difficulty communicating your inner most feelings.

Parkinson's disease – highly controlling personality.

Ross River Fever – people who have pushed themselves past their Emotional limits trying to get too many things done (pushing themselves physically), time out, relapses occur when rest is needed.

Fluid Retention – regrets of the past especially childhood relationship with mother, also present in candida and thrush.

Migraine – social constrictions. Having to perform to please everyone. Deep seated sexual tension.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

Light Beings and Extraterrestrials

Not for publication currently.

To understand this chapter you have to experience The Next Evolutionary Step for yourself first hand.

Theoretical information cannot replace or explain the experiential sensation of the Universe coming to you.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

LightWorkers

The subject matter of this chapter is not for publication because it is not just theoretical.

It is very real.

For the best possible understanding you need to experience The Next Evolutionary Step for yourself.

To be able to comprehend the totality of Chapter 33's ramifications for you, your family and the planet's future, take responsibility for yourself and commit to taking your next evolutionary step in development.

CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

Finally....

The Next Evolutionary Step

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Have vibrant, fulfilling relationships.

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Returning to the issue of the plaintiff's' credit, which in my view needs to be assessed in the context of the beliefs and opinions set out in the foregoing chapters of her book, an instructive example of her frequent garrulous and seemingly interminable and convoluted answers to questions asked of her, is her answer to a question about her health problems which she says that she endured for almost twenty years from 1999 and which she claimed left her bedridden for long periods until, she says, she cured herself. The transcript reads as follows:

"... You've stated to the Court frequently during this trial that you have been very unwell over long periods of time. Could you please describe what illnesses you've had and during what period?"

... It started somewhere around early 1999, although I wasn't well before that. I was very tired for a long period of time. It's part of the reason why I spent a lot of time training up instructors, franchisees; I was making a plan to move away from doing full-time work in terms of Universal Knowledge. My son was very unwell; youngest son. My husband – ex-husband now, having been terminally ill for 10 years, I'd been working many hours, 100-hour weeks sometimes, to provide for the family, and I think once my son got very ill I started to move away from working, and I also, myself, was very exhausted and very stressed from a range of things that occurred prior to 1998. And then that escalated into not many answers being able to be given to me as to why I was so unwell. One of the things that eventually came out, at some point around 2001, was the hyperthyroidism and the thyroid storms. I was contacted while I was in Africa doing the TNES book – in South Africa, by my GP; he'd spent a lot of time trying to find me, and was begging me to find a GP over there to get on to beta blockers, and they wanted me back in Australia as soon as possible. *And I had to find a GP, and where I was staying, the doctor that was there was actually the personal physician for the then leader of one of the South African parties – politician parties, and he was a physician for that particular person.* I went and spoke to him. He had a look at the medical results that were sent across, put me on beta blockers, and over a period of time I worked my way back to Australia, and that progressed until I eventually went to see a couple of specialists. *One I didn't particularly think was very good.* I was then on-referred to a Chris Strakosch after seeing Dr John Arbuckle, and both of those doctors were aware of what was going on with the media; they knew me; *I had a very good*

reputation amongst doctors for the work that we were doing. When I went to see Chris Strakosch, he said he was very surprised that I was coping at all, with the events that were happening. *He asked me what I wanted to do treatment-wise and I said, well, I would go Western.* He put me on some medication, and he said I'd probably be on it for the rest of my life and I spent a period of time slowly working out what to do, *weening myself off, which he was quite surprised that I managed to do.* And then the situation escalated into a range of very, very strange allergies, where I would come up with welts all over my body. My bowels weren't working...

WITNESS: – [There] was bleeding in the mouth. We couldn't quite work out what was happening. My liver was giving me a lot of problems, I was in excruciating pain with my liver. A range of things occurred. I wasn't able to run, I stopped being able to exercise. *I became very, very unwell, bedridden, basically, for long periods of time.*

Eventually, over a number of years, *I came up with a regime of what I thought would sort it out.* Went and saw three separate doctors, including Professor Peter Smith, John Arbuckle, another man called Michael Exelby. *And I suggested a regime, and between the three of them, they gave me different scripts. And then I started looking into the impact of vilification on the body...*

When I went in and spoke to Professor Peter Smith, he said that many of the symptoms come with people who *have a very heightened intuition and a very heightened ability, high sensitivity to emotional events in and around them. He agreed with a number of things that I suggested, and then he eventually wrote some papers on what I'd put together, and he started to implement in and around his patients, as did Michael Exelby.*

John Arbuckle kept monitoring my hormonal system for me, and Chris Strakosch got me to the point where I was off my medication, which he was very surprised it had occurred at all. And – but once I came off that, and I'd stabilised the hyperthyroidism, by that point, I'd lost a huge amount of bone density, and we – we kept working with it, investigating other people that had been through something similar, differing levels.

Although probably not to the intensity that I'd been [indistinct words] because people were vandalising my home, vandalising my cars, harassing my children, we were – my youngest son in particular was prone to extreme stress with the false media coverage that we'd gotten in 2010 and 2012. My oldest son wasn't coping with it. My middle son lost his position on the Olympic team for rowing, the [indistinct words] Olympic team, because of the media coverage. He was devastated...

And there was the blogging that started, blogging was horrific. Over 200 blogs were put up by one couple. I ended up going to lawyers and we were the first ones to get a private computer and a forensically checked out computer to find out that a lawyer and his nurse – wife, registered nurse wife had set up a range of false blogging. We took that into court, but I was so unwell at the time that –

HIS HONOUR: Did you have a diagnosis at this stage?

No, we couldn't work out what it was. Eventually, I started going to the John Hopkins site, because Australia only acknowledges two or three types of lupus. John Hopkins in America acknowledges more than 30 different types. *I started combing my way through it, and it ended up becoming a type of lupus that's not fully acknowledged here, and then – but if I got a bug or got sick, most people get over it in five days or a week, it would take months. It still does if I get ill and eventually, it was decided it was some type of – the endocrine system was basically shutting down and then it ended up being that reverse T3 was a problem, reverse T4.*

It took us a long time, *I requested John Arbuckle to please look at the T3 reverse, not just your classic ANA, you anti-nuclear antibody system, and I started working out that people's ANA – even though they've got a range of what's normal everybody had their own range and what is your range may not match with the studies that were done, and we started plotting the ANA and we realised when there were slight movements in the anti-nuclear antibodies that I –.*

I basically developed an allergy to everything. I couldn't even have a shower. If I had a shower my body would come up in welts, all over my back about – a good centimetre and a half thick couldn't touch my back, it was like burns. I couldn't go out in the sunlight. I went out in the sunlight, I would be burnt from head to toe. I'd be – I just couldn't. It was just – it became quite debilitating. In the end, I just put it down to just being vilified, and so, even though I was already quite a reclusive person and kept to myself, pretty much, I became even more so. And so, I've done some work since on what vilification does to the body in the hope that research – more research would be done in that area.

I got very lucky to have found three doctors that were willing to sort of walk that path with me otherwise, I don't think I would still be here. At one point, they said that I needed to prepare myself for the worst. *My youngest son, who'd been very sick and I got him well, demanded that I sort it out. And I spent quite a bit of time working out what to do and I came up with a very significant vitamin regime, because my body wasn't absorbing any minerals or vitamins from any food I ate.*

Virtually all the food I ate, I had an allergic reaction to and I was limited just to very few foods so, *I had put myself on a vitamin regime just sort of to sustain it – to sustain my body. And I figured – and then I put myself on huge amounts of antihistamine in an effort to shut down histamine pathways one, two, three and four, and a thing called Ranitidine, because the body was in such a hyper state of vigilance. One specialist said it was like I was a Vietnam war vet. You didn't know where it was going to come from next and in what form the attacks would come from. So like somebody who'd been in – dealing with the guerrilla warfare in Vietnam.*

My body was reacting that way and so, I went and saw somebody that was specialist in that area and – and so, when I shut down all the histamine pathways, that took me a couple of years. And I was on probably eight to 12, sometimes more antihistamines a day, Telfast, to try and stop the body's – the body attacking itself." (Emphasis added.)

198 Notwithstanding her statement later in her cross-examination that she is a very determined person, it is noteworthy in my view, that the plaintiff's claims in the rambling, self-aggrandising answer above are very much at odds with what she appears to have done in the period of years to which she refers. This includes for example, training up instructors and franchisees, working sometimes up to 100 hours a week in the early stages, travelling to South Africa, writing her book, studying at university to complete a Graduate Diploma of Psychology between 2001 and 2006, a Post-Graduate Diploma of Psychology between 2007 and 2008, a Master of Psychology between 2010 to 2012 and thereafter a PhD in psychology, working as a psychologist after completing her internship and defending complaint proceedings before the Psychology Board of Queensland and prosecuting a complaint against Bond University, working at a holiday dance school in Philadelphia, litigating a number of defamation and other court cases in Australia and overseas, running *The Survivors* program, leading a fitness course called *Regime Busters*, going to the beach and surfing with a partner, Chris Wellington, travelling to South America, including to investigate business opportunities with a view to establishing *Sun Earth Tours*, and skiing in France.

199 The plaintiff's demeanour in answering questions about the skiing trip was such that I gained a strong sense that she felt that she had been caught out dissembling on a particular aspect of her health at the relevant time, namely "post-concussional brain injury syndrome". I found her answers particularly unconvincing. The transcript records the following:

"If we turn over, it's on AIG's letter head, Income Protection and Benefit Supplementary Report Form for Continuing Disablement. Again, so if we turn to page 3, it's got the plaintiff's signature and it's dated the 24th of the 5th 2006, so almost a year later than the previous document. It's still got:

Natasha Lakaev, residential address Omaroo, Hunter Street, Burringbar. Monthly visit; last consultation was the 24th of May 2006.

What duties of your usual occupation were you unable to perform? Please include them: managerial, lecturing, administrative, counselling, research and development, staff management, staff training, due to memory delay of –

Something or other:

– new details and post-concussional brain injury syndrome.

So you've got staff management there. Which staff were you managing and training? Who are you talking about there?.....Staff management would have been whoever's consultancy I was working with, getting people ready to take over their own businesses, and the training of that same staff which usually, would be the person taking over that business. And then if anything needed to be done in terms of upgrading anything in the office I would, but at this point, Andrea was well and truly up and running everything, so this is what I used to do.

Okay:

What were your daily activities during the period whilst you were not working: rest, managing fatigue debt, as per the North Coast Brain Injuries Unit outline. Some daily exercise.

And then you've got:

Do you confirm that your continued access – absence from your full-time duties, either paid or unpaid, is due solely and directly to your condition and is absolutely necessary as a result of injury or illness?

You didn't tick yes or no, but you've said:

The NCBIU –

Which stands for – is it the North Coast Brain Injury Unit –

– has stated it takes a minimum of two years for the brain to heal, as long as the patient is allowed to rest and the ability to manage fatigue debt.

Okay. I put it to you that you went on a ski trip in January 2006 to Europe, to France, with your three children. If you had a brain injury to this effect, why would you go – why did you go – this is dated May 2006 – why did you go skiing, which is a high-risk sport, in January 2006?.....*In January 2006?*

Yeah. Five months before this was – ?.....That's right. And so we went overseas. We backpacked. *We went up. I did a small amount of skiing – hardly any. The headaches shot in. I then would take days off. I had the kids going in doing ski lessons and anything that shook around or gave my – my head any kind of trauma, I would stop.* It was a time-out for me and my family, and it was all done on frequent flyer points. I'm sorry, I don't get it.

Well, you're saying – ?.....*And most of the time, I was resting.*" (Emphasis added.)

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Another example of the plaintiff's frequent convoluted and in my view, Delphic and non-responsive answers to questions asked of her, is her answer to a question about the foreclosure by a building society on her property, by resort to a previously unmentioned notion of "identity theft". The passage from the transcript reads as follows:

"Do you agree that your property, Omaroo, had been on sale since 2008, and then this is eight years later that the Banana Coast Community Credit Union foreclosed and was selling this at auction?.....No, that's not what happened. The Banana Coast Union found identity theft going on, and with that identity theft they involved the police, and the police got involved strongly, and there was a large amount of identity theft going on, and when I discovered the identity theft I was threatened that if I went to the police

about it or did anything, that the person doing that identity theft would go to you and organise more negative coverage through the media on my family and myself. And so I had to sit in silence while this was happening, and I made the decision that my children had been through enough. So then as I sat and waited this out, the Banana Coast found the identity theft – I don't even know how or why that occurred, and the police were involved and then I had long conversations with the police about this and when the police asked me to give a statement, because there was other identity thefts that occurred in and around the Byron Bay Magistrates Court, I informed them that I had been put in a position where I couldn't give them a statement regarding who had done it, why it was done and how it was done. And eventually I ended up with a USB stick from a computer. I can't even remember how. Once we got everything out of the containers. And I passed that on. Trying to think of the detective's name. Anyway, there was a detective that dealt with it at Tweed Heads. He thanked me for that. And he again asked me would I step forward and get on the stand regarding the identify theft, and I said I couldn't for the reasons I've just described. And he said to me that he felt that the identify theft was connected to the newspaper articles at the time. And he also said to me that they had enough evidence to be able to deal with the identity theft without me having to get on the stand or on – in – what – up here.

Okay. Are you claiming that I had something to do with this identity theft?.....I've just stated the short sentence that was said to me. That's it.

Okay. But can you be clear and state – are you saying that I criminally organised my identity theft or something and therefore the bank came in and foreclosed on your property?.....I've just explained the one sentence that that particular detective sergeant said to me. That's it.

Okay. Can you repeat that sentence, I missed it?.....That he felt that the actions regarding the identify theft could have had something to do with the newspaper articles.

Which were published in October and November 2010?.....That's right.

And this is October 2016, six years later?.....The identity theft had been going on for quite a long period over a number of different things.

Okay –Now – and I have left that with the police to be dealt with."

201

Yet another example of an extremely convoluted and thoroughly unconvincing answer given by the plaintiff in her cross-examination, and one which also demonstrates her frequently observed ability to deflect questions by obfuscation and to refuse to make sensible concessions, is the following:

"Do you agree that you lost the defamation case against Warren and Annette Denny that ran from 2009 to 2010?.....I don't believe we lost it. We requested an extension on the 12 months for varying reasons. I can't remember all of them, but one of them was that I was unwell. The other one was that we were trying to get hold of this lost computer, because we felt that many people were being gaslit by the items coming from that computer, as is evident by some of the things that have been presented here. And we wanted to show a very clear picture of what Matt Weimers and Andy, for some reason, had started doing. I have my suspicions as to why, but – and – and why we were doing that was because we were getting threatening calls, there were threatening calls coming into the office where Matt and Andy were very high on drugs, drunk, threatening to kill myself, my children, threatened to kill Chris Wellington. It was out of hand, and looking at the pattern of the damages to the properties, including plumbing being destroyed at least four different properties, so as that we couldn't cover it by insurance, and then we'd have to argue with council to fix it up. There were so many things going on in so many varying ways, that at the end of the day the only tack we could take was to get this particular computer. So, at that point, forensically, we didn't have enough to continue. So we made the decision, and I think it was a sensible decision, to follow the evidence we had. And then we put it before the judge, the judge struck out a number of things, the judge apologised, she felt that it was a substantive defamation suit, and she left enough items in there that we could've taken to court. I was given – offered a sum of money by Warren Denny, who subsequently had many

issues at work, because his work found out what he'd been doing, and then, eventually, we settled on an apology from them and I was happy with that; just for it to stop, especially when Media Mouse provided all the IP details on top of the forensic information we had that showed very clearly who was behind it. And then, later on, we discovered that the apology had had at least one forged signature on it. So we got an apology that didn't have the signature of the people, and that was, again, reported to the Bar. There were varying things that were reported to the Bar regarding the conduct of this particular family, and they were very clever at gaslighting people, and I feel, and this is just an opinion of mine, that your parents were gaslit. And at the time, you would have agreed with that, but since then you've gone another tack, but that's fine."

202 The fact of that matter is that the order of Fullerton J in the Supreme Court of New South Wales in *Lakaev v Denny* [2010] NSWSC 1480, tendered in evidence by the defendant, was that the plaintiff's notice of motion to extend the limitation period to bring the action for defamation was dismissed and the plaintiff was ordered to pay costs. The plaintiff could scarcely have failed to clearly understand that, given that in her reasons for judgment, Fullerton J found:

"The defendants submitted that her evidence as to both issues should be rejected as *deliberately untrue. I accept that submission*. Coupled with the fact that the plaintiff was, in my view, *deliberately vague and evasive* in her evidence in crucial respects and for those reasons *not a witness upon whose evidence I am able to comfortably rely*, I consider that other evidence tendered on the motion to be a more reliable source of the plaintiff's actual state of knowledge despite her protestations to the contrary" (Emphasis added.)

203 In a similar vein, the plaintiff maintained that the defendant had never won a court case against her, when quite obviously she had done so in Queensland in 2011. In that case the plaintiff had sued the newspapers who had published the impugned articles set out earlier in these reasons, as well as the defendant and others. The defamation action was set down for trial for four weeks but the plaintiff sought an adjournment on the first day of the trial. The adjournment was refused after evidence was taken, with the trial judge saying "the plaintiff prevaricated, talked in circumlocutions, and otherwise tried to avoid anything that might ... do otherwise than bolster her case". After that the plaintiff capitulated and consented to judgment against her in favour of all defendants.

204 Another example of maintaining a line to the point of absurdity, was the plaintiff maintaining that the defendant had never worked with her and had no "proximity" to her and had never typed up university lectures for her, when in an email of Friday, 18 August 2006, from the defendant's email address – <ebooks@lightmail.com.au> – to the plaintiff at <l.natasha@student.qut.edu.au>, at 3.46 pm, with the subject, "Philip's tutorial" the defendant wrote:

"Hi Natasha,
I hope you had a good day.
Here is your tutorial with Philip in case you need it urgently.
See you tomorrow, Carli."

The plaintiff responded on Sunday 20 August 2006 with the subject "Re: assignment" as follows:

"I just wanted to say thank you for allowing me to have a breakdown this morning...
Thanks for babysitting me through this assignment...
Always will love you and your boys...
All will be well...
Natasha."

205 The plaintiff's witness Mr Alex Paine confirmed that the defendant and another person had typed up lecture notes for the plaintiff. Further emails tendered by the defendant in her evidence established this beyond doubt.

206 One final example of an answer that in my view was demonstrably dishonest is found in the plaintiff's evidence as to her encounters with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The passage in the transcript is as follows:

"Thank you. Now, earlier, you referred to AHPRA, a complaint made to AHPRA. Can you say when that was?.....Oh, there's been so many

Or when the first one was?.....Oh, look, I basically – since I started my internship in 2008, I've been constantly under some sort of investigation, generated primarily by Ms McConkey, in varying forms, through varying avenues. Some of it due to what's on the internet, some due to the book. There was one that stands out, in 2020, that went in via my – inverted commas – my 'goddaughter', Ella Paine, and then varying claims being sent in there by Ms McConkey about me using my goddaughter as a slave, and her sister as a slave. And then a psychologist did the same at the Headspace that I'd worked at. Earlier to that I'd been working at Headspace in about, probably 2016, and a psychiatrist looked me up on the internet. A big scene occurred, and he arranged for me to be sacked from that Headspace. And he then sent out emails across Tasmania, to every psychologist, psychiatrist, employable body, to have me basically blackballed. And I couldn't get employment in Tasmania.

Thank you. And when you say, there've been many, I assume – how do you know there have been many? Has that [indistinct word] to you?.....Yes.

Thank you. And from your – from the communications you've had with AHPRA, have each of those complaints been investigated?.....Yes.

And have any of them been upheld?.....No." (Emphasis added.)

207 The fact of the matter, established by documentary evidence subpoenaed by the defendant from AHPRA, is that on five occasions the agency had upheld complaints about the plaintiff and on each occasion she had been cautioned. The relevant conduct involved issues of inappropriate treatment including advising patients to undertake vitamin and sleep hygiene regimes and communicating with a patient in a disrespectful manner. Ultimately, in respect of a further complaint AHPRA accepted from the plaintiff a voluntary undertaking to practise under supervision. A sanction which has quite recently been discharged.

208 The plaintiff would often seek to evade responsibility for documents and letters that were issued by her company (and often signed or stamped by her) by stating that there were many other people in the office at Omaroo, and that she was rarely ever there at the time. The latter part of such response was at odds with the evidence, notwithstanding it is clear that the plaintiff maintained a separate residence away from Burringbar and was also pursuing university studies.

209 When questioned about group activities suggested as involving compulsion such as the "genital rub" and the nude parading and dam swimming on a *The Final Step* course, and about directing strict juice or vegan diets for participants, the plaintiff insisted that those who partook were doing so because they wanted to, that "[t]hey could do whatever they like. If they chose to take that step, they could do it." Such claims were clearly not evident from the tenor of the course material in evidence and the plaintiff's tone and words captured in addressing, in a raised voice, the participants boarding the bus, heading to the course location and filmed and put to air by *A Current Affair*.

210 When questioned about onerous tasks that were required of members of her group, such as cleaning her house and her pool and the grounds of property, the plaintiff first denied that she had required this and then suggested that this was a normal thing to expect in such situations, before noting "[w]e would go through afterwards and finish the job." This both confirmed that she had indeed directed the task and that in her view those involved did a poor job that she had to fix anyway. The assertions of forced labour were also supported by a good deal of evidence about lists of tasks to be performed by course participants at Omaroo and Ms Carroll's evidence agreeing that the defendant was "working in

the office at Omaroo in the centre, in the admin building upstairs, or out on the property whipper snipping, weeding, whatever was needed, pulling out trees from their roots".

211 When an unfavourable question was put to the plaintiff, (which were the vast majority of questions), the plaintiff would stall or prevaricate in such a way that it appeared to me to be a deliberate strategy for getting her bearings and thinking of a way to answer the question. Even then the answer given was never a direct answer. She was garrulous and excessively given to circular and unresponsive answers which often ran into minutes. Her evidence was uncomfortably replete with circumambages. It was also destructive of her credit generally in my view that in the *Next Evolutionary Step* brochure she rather deceptively claimed that she had been the managing director of a national training organisation, specialising in life and work skills, "an organisation that had trained, in excess of 12,000 people" when those skills and those people were principally in the context of courses in cocktail mixing, bar service and food and wine waiting. And her professional or academic qualification stated in that brochure was "B.App.Sc." only, when her qualification was a Bachelor of Applied Science (Agriculture) from the Hawkesbury Agricultural College – College of Advanced Education.

212 When the plaintiff was placed, by questioning, in a situation, or at a time and place that was not favourable to her case that the defendant was an unwanted pest with whom she had never had a cup of coffee or a one on one conversation, for example attending the defendant's wedding and the birth of her first and third children, the plaintiff consistently stated that she had not wanted to be there, but had reluctantly attended at the request or insistence of others. This does not sit comfortably with other evidence such as that concerning the "Water Blessing and Naming Ceremony".

213 Such answers were also greatly at odds with the very intimate nature of the events and the extent of her involvement in them. For example, the plaintiff's partner massaging the defendant while he and the plaintiff attended during the defendant's labour and the birth of her first son, the plaintiff assisting with the defendant's wedding, including driving her from Omaroo to Brisbane to purchase the defendant's wedding outfit, acting as the defendant's matron of honour and booking the defendant in for a "Brazilian waxing" as a wedding present.

214 Perhaps the most disturbing event was the Water Blessing and Naming Ceremony arranged by the plaintiff and at which ceremony she became godmother to the defendant's sons, Sebastian and Jacob, and all three of the plaintiff's sons became godfathers of those children. The plaintiff's sons were then aged, at the most, only 18, 16 and 12. Children of some six other members of the plaintiff's group also participated in this joint blessing and naming event, with the plaintiff becoming a godmother to each of the children and her three sons becoming joint godfathers to five of them, including Sebastian and Jacob. Greg Proctor was also a godfather to Jacob. One of the children was Ella Paine, the daughter of the plaintiff's first witness – Alex Paine.

215 In many areas of her evidence, including that touching her illnesses and injuries, her son's illnesses and injuries, her powers as a healer and self-healer, her own skills at many things and those of her sons', and the asserted quality of her research as a psychologist, the plaintiff was given to grandiosity and, in my view, untruthful exaggeration. The following passage from the transcript is an example.

"So, Dr Lakaev, you admit that cellular memory connection was, in so many words, the premise of the teachings of your programs?.....

Yes, and in today's science it has come of age, and it is now going into the scientific realm, which is exactly why I went back to uni, and why we went in. We wanted to be the first ones to bring this forward. There is now a department that's been set up in Monash that focuses in on exactly this, okay? A huge amount of funds was put to it, okay? And it started off being a mindfulness section, and then mindfulness went on to being taught in all the universities in all the degrees, and it is now manifested into a total department that focuses on exactly this. And there's a thing called telomeres that there were no words for at the time. When this all happened, and when we were doing

this work, there were no words for this, okay? These words are now coming into place, and there are huge levels of work into what happens to the mind when you go in and you meditate. You – and are there are – it's called allostatic load. *You adjust the allostatic load, you change your DNA chromosomal structure, and the whole body starts to heal, change shape, and your way of thinking is adjusted, okay? This now has come to the fore, it now exists,* and as Jan Coles said to me at the time when we went through all of this together, those people who are the trailblazers in something so new are quite often vilified, and vilified greatly, because they stand on the edge, on the periphery as an outlier, saying, 'Let's approach this differently.' So this whole thing has – exists now, within research and in many, many different areas. When we talk about cellular memory, they've actually discovered telomeres, and how the telomeres, when you are stressed, when there is something wrong, how everything becomes impossible to navigate. *How to then grab those telomeres like the end of a boot-lace on a shoe, bring it together, heal it, and how that then rebounds through the potentiating cells from synapse to synapse through the limbic system, the hippocampal system, frontal lobe, and finally, the master area, the hypothalamus, to generate equilibrium of the emotions, the mind, the level of thirst, your body shape, your perfect hunger, this is now there. This was new.* This was so new, and so on the edge, all right. And it was something that – I am proud of this work. Although, what has happened to it is it's been lost, and that's okay. Other people have picked it up and worked with it. In fact, one of my supervisors has worked with it, and it is an absolute – and it is true that when you do this work, your integrity increases, your capacity to cope and to accept your current situation as it stands so that you can – and there's workshops now done in degrees where students – and they are the only department at Monash that didn't take it on board was actually the law department, and I was going in to do a study in the law department. *Your book created so much confusion that that particular study was removed. And had I been allowed to do that study, I may have been a part of a Nobel-winning team, maybe.* And my PhD was dropped down to 50 per cent of what it was supposed to be because of the things that you have done. And there is a research sitting there that was approved, a very, very rare form of research, that was instantly approved by Monash because they saw the veracity of it and the importance of it, and it was going to track the cellular changes in the body by doing these things." (Emphasis added.)

There was no evidence led on the trial that was capable of bearing out any of these assertions of the plaintiff in any way.

216

The plaintiff gave implausible and inventive explanations that appeared to me to have been concocted in the moment. One example was when the plaintiff was confronted by the defendant's notes of things she was recorded as saying, which touched on the defendant's assertion that the plaintiff had told her followers that she had been the Queen of Atlantis. The transcript reads as follows:

"MS McCONKEY: Okay, I'd like to show this document to the plaintiff. Thank you. Which was defendant's discovery number 58. Dated the 14th of April 1998. Thank you. And that will be marked for identification because it's my personal handwriting and notes from the evening. Okay, I submit to you, Dr Lakaev, that you were at that night and you were speaking to us. And these are my handwritten notes where I've said what you've said at the evening:

Our society is emulating all the patterns that Atlantis began at the end of their time. Opportunity to cleanse our system to present that.

You talked about Egypt, Australia, South America, America which were colonised. You said Atlanteans had different colours when they were colonised. Do you accept that you said that?.....I find it very odd that I've been given a document that's got other topics on it, and now this is what occurred on the night. I doubt that I would market something and do something completely different...

HIS HONOUR: At Helen Lee's house, that's the one you're talking about?

MS McCONKEY: Yes, and I apologise, I've got the wrong date. I've said it's the 14th of April, but it's the 22nd.

HIS HONOUR: In any event, you're simply giving the witness an opportunity to accept or deny –

MS McCONKEY: That's correct, your Honour.

HIS HONOUR: – that she said those things.

MS McCONKEY: Yes.

WITNESS: Okay, so what do I – sorry, I've got to have that said?

MS McCONKEY: That's okay, so you've said that:

Our society is emulating all the patterns that Atlantis began at the end of their time, opportunity to cleanse our system to prevent that, Egypt, Australia, South America, America –

And then I've got like a bracket: – colonised Atlanteans had different colours –

And then an arrow: – when colonised.

Do you accept that you may have – or recall that you may have said something to that effect?.....*I would have been talking about a book that I was writing that covered these things, and it was based on some evidentiary information that was available of the potential of where some of these places like Egypt, Australia, South America, America colonised from, and it was turning into a fictional book. You were very away (sic) that I was going to do a number of fictional books, and I may have been talking about the concepts that were going to be put into the book to be told as a story.*

Sure, thanks Dr Lakaev. I've got down at the bottom of that first page:

Natasha – will give only the 'pure information/laws'. Another point, Atlanteans still looked towards external things to make them feel comfortable in their 200,000 years of stability.

...And this is a part of the fictional book that I was going to write.

On page 2, I've got that you said:

We have the technology to do anything, we don't have the guts to go against the structure. It only takes a small group –

And then I've crossed out 'shift'.

– of people to make the shift. These days, everything requires money. We need to make an abundance of dollars to rise above the structures.

And then I've got:

We can build a city, the golden gates. We have to rebuild it. Money will still exist, the sun will be the power. More important than water. We have a responsibility to our children – we don't have to die.

...Sorry, I think that this is now talking about solar power, and we've shifted to another topic in the discussion.

Okay.....*This is obviously me having a discussion, and there's certain notes that have been written.*

Sure, that's –And we do have the technology, I would have stated that at the time, and we are now currently watching a lot of these changes occur when you're looking at what's going on on YouTube as people are now going to their own podcasts and learning things, and this is what we were discussing, having an open place that we didn't

have to just take generalised information from the media magnates as they stood. This seems to be a number of things meshed together, but that's okay, let's keep going.

Okay, then I've got that you said:

In our dream state, we constantly communicate with other dimensions. Intuitive thoughts are usually from other beings – equals information. We're actually responsible for each other and other beings on –

And it's not clear here, but:

– other planets et cetera.

And then on the following page, I've got:

Atlantis – men and women equal. Atlantis –

MR ZEEMAN: Your Honour, perhaps it's fair – it's fairer to Dr Lakaev if each one – if each segment is put to her separately, rather than moving on to the next segment.

HIS HONOUR: Yep.

MS McCONKEY: I understand. (Resuming) Okay, so do you submit that you held the views that we constantly communicate with other dimensions?.....Well, when we go to sleep at night. This is talking about our dream state. When we go to sleep, when we meditate, all sorts of unusual visions come forward, and for some people that will feel like there are beings there. This is a selection of things out of what I may have been discussing with people. I don't believe that this is the entirety, and we're actually responsible for each other, I've always said that people are responsible for each other. Now, we're responsible for the whole planet, obviously, every planet as a result.

And so I've got:

Their intuitive thoughts are usually from other beings – equals information.

Do you agree with that?.....No, you'd have to look at the diagram that comes with that, Ms McConkey. You're putting that forward in a matter that's not correct.

Sure.....And I don't want to keep the courts listening to all of these minor, minor details. But there's a thing that we would do, and it would break it down, and at the bottom was the intuition. And with that intuition – and this would've been present on the night, okay? And what did you – what have you said here? And other beings on other planets, which I'm not sure what that is about, except that I know that I always said that people are responsible for each other. 'Intuitive thoughts are usually from other beings'. I don't know about that being a fact. Intuitive thoughts would be from the bottom of that cone diagram that would move up, and then what happens is it collect the dreams. Collects your dreams and takes it up into the conscious brain. And I think this is a – a not quite understanding what I was talking about, which is fair enough. When people are talking, you're taking notes, I can understand how that's occurred.

Yep. And then, on the next page, I've written:

Atlantis – men and women equal.

And then I've got:

Atlantis – capital called 'the city of the golden gates' or fountains, temples pyramid in shape, homes extremely bright colours in and out, sparse furniture, bright clothes, silver and gold jewellery. Many husbands/wives, children look to many parents for protection and love.

So, Ms Lakaev, do you admit that you might've – do you recall if you may have made these points?.....*In the context of a – of a fictitious book that I was going to write, which*

never actually occurred, and the outline for it is still sitting there. It's – it's going to be a series of books, and this was the name of the main city in it.

Okay. I submit to you that you never stated it was a fictitious book, that you stated this was real, and you spoke about Atlantis –No, what –

– to that effect?..... – what I would have stated, and I know myself very well, Ms McConkey, is that whatever the mind can produce, or whatever the mind sees as a possibility, can and may be a reality in another state. We draw it from somewhere, it doesn't just appear. That is what I may have said. It's more likely that's what I've said, and this was a book.

Okay.....And it's one of the books that I ended up losing the publication for, which we discussed the other day.

Sure. Then I've got:

Casting system, richer equals more psychically advanced – key energy channelled, ultimate aim is 'Vrill' –

– V-R-I-L-L:

– personal power, life force that could be manipulated – manifested/et cetera. Develop anything around them – abundance everywhere, 12 years of education –

Arrow:

– then specialise.

And then I've got another point:

The Essenes of Egypt –

Arrow:

– were taught everything from the Atlanteans – Essenes taught Jesus everything he knew.

And another point:

Lemurians existed at the same time as dinosaurs.

So you told the Court earlier about the Essenes, and we associate them – association with Jesus. Do you submit that you were – that you may have said the Essenes of Egypt were taught everything from the Atlanteans?.....There's a book called The Essenes. You go and you read it, it's got this in it, it's one of the books. And I think it may end up popping up somewhere in Personal Mastery. *This is the outline for a book. It's a plot, you can see the plot's in it.*

Okay, thank you, Dr Lakaev. If you just turn to the next page, my other notes are:

Egyptians utilised the song lines the most, communicated with the South Americans, Incas, travelled to Australia, Asia.

Do you recall that you may have said that?.....*We talked about portals, and how portals could work, and that that would be a part of the book, and it would explain where people get the concept – or can be explained as a concept for time travel. And that everything – one of the things that we talk about is that there is only one constant thing, it's change. And within that change, there is a situation where everything exists at the same time all at once, and this book was going to cover that concept, and it was going to be based on things that people could relate to. It – it's the outline, you can see the plots in it, it's the outline for a story.*

Okay, and you suggested – well, it doesn't matter, but if you turn over – ?.....Ms McConkey, you need to remember that you would constantly bombard people about Atlantis, and in the end people would walk away from them. They didn't want to hear it.

HIS HONOUR: Well, Dr McConkey, did – Dr Lakaev, rather, to be fair haven't I learned this afternoon that the Atlanteans and the Lemuria was a topic on one of your –

WITNESS: Exactly.

HIS HONOUR: – courses.

WITNESS: Exactly. And I can explain that as well. And I was surprised it wasn't asked earlier when we came up against it.

HIS HONOUR: Well, it wasn't lost on me.

WITNESS: Good. And I was – I was – I went to put my hand to ask why we hadn't discussed it. But I don't – that this here, okay, is not the way that that information is talked about. What we talk about – which I would explain those workshop – that – that – our workshop –

HIS HONOUR: I don't – I don't want you to anything except answer the questions that are put to you." (Emphasis added.)"

217

Another example of what I regard as a totally unconvincing and confected, non-responsive explanation was in relation to questioning which related to the defendant's assertion that the plaintiff had claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. The transcript reads as follows:

"MS McCONKEY: So you were asked at line 41 [of a transcript of the A Current Affair program of 23 November 1998]:

Are you Jesus reincarnated?...

MS McCONKEY: And then at 42 – you said:

I have never said that either and I don't even claim that either.

Did you say that when someone asked you that question, "Well, that's for you to decide"? So are you implying that it's – that you did infer that you were Jesus reincarnated?.....No, Ms McConkey, the –...

WITNESS: No, Ms McConkey, this – *this Jesus Christ reincarnated thing came from a party*, and I remember exactly when it occurred, at Park Road in around 1993, we'd finished teaching the – what was called The Awakening then, and – now The Next Evolutionary Step, and the only reason why we changed the name is that so many people took the name and started using it, so that's the reason for the name change. We were at a party, it was at Park Road in Milton in Brisbane. We'd just finished a particular Next Evolutionary Step at the university and we were all sitting around the table, we were having a really good time, laughing and joking, talking, we'd bought a whole heap of pizzas for everyone, everybody was having coffee, teas, wine, whatever they wanted to do, and there was as Scottish guy there and – or Welsh, I'm not sure which – and he used to do our music at our Final Step end of functions, *and he started joking about the Bible and he started joking about the 12 apostles and he started joking about which one was which, there was a range of names there – because what people do is they get up, they state name – 'My name is this', and it means such and such. They were taking the meaning of the names, and it became a raucous joke*, and we were all laughing. And from there, whenever there was a get-together, people would joke about that particular night. And then there are people who are on the periphery that were not there. And this just turned into something, I have never, ever said that. I don't intimate it, I have no interest in it, okay? I'm Russian Orthodox, I have no desire to be in that,

or involved in that kind of statement. And to this day, it has always shocked me that this has been taken to this level. To the day, to this moment, especially when, Ms McConkey, you know this.

Okay, so I put it to you that during PMC 1998, the course that I was on, someone asked if you were Jesus Christ after this went to air, and you told a story about how you used to get red marks on your forehead, and on –Yes.

– your wrists or hands, and your ankles, and you said that you had to wear your fringe over your forehead to cover up the red marks. What do you say to that?.....Yes, that did occur.

And –And that's not because I'm Jesus Christ, that happens to a lot of people, that they get marks on their wrists, okay? And marks on their foreheads. I don't understand how that equates.

Okay.....And when we were discussing that, from memory, it was about your third eye, and it was to do with the chakras.

Okay. Well, I put it to you that we were talking about it in context with Jesus Christ, and you being Jesus Christ?.....No.

What do you say to that?.....Absolutely not." (Emphasis added]

218 The "party" explanation was not one advanced by the plaintiff when she was asked on the *A Current Affair* program whether she had claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ or had said that it was for people to decide that for themselves. Comparing the two explanations I am of the view that the one she gave in evidence was a recent invention. Whilst the plaintiff denied in the *A Current Affair* interview that she had ever made the claim that she was the reincarnation of Jesus Christ, her denial was hedged about with rhetoric which made it unconvincing to my mind.

219 Yet another example of what I regard as a totally unconvincing and spontaneously confected explanation was in relation to questioning when the plaintiff was again confronted by the defendant's notes of the plaintiff addressing a group of students. These concerned the defendant's claim that the plaintiff was proselytising that there would be a cataclysmic event on 11 November 2011 or 12 December 2012 and the "fully integrated" would move into a fourth dimension. The transcript reads as follows:

"MS McCONKEY: (Resuming) I would like to hand the plaintiff defendant's discovery document 151, which is dated the 12th to 16th April 2003, thank you. This will be marked for identification and it's my – the notes that I took on the Survivors course in that week at Omaroo. So on page 2, I've got:

Crisis situation, need to get to Omaroo.

Page 3:

Iraq, chemical bombs.

I don't even know what that says?.....'Famines'.

Famines. Climatic changes. We're not in a safe situation.

Page 4:

Dangerous people likely to rape, steal, et cetera. Shock, will make people move very quickly or zombie state, fodder, sorts of people that will be raped, stolen from.

Page 5:

We will get an adrenaline buzz. Adrenaline will give us clear thoughts, what to take, how to go.

I've got:

Don't –

In capital letters:

– relax. As soon as we do we are vulnerable. Human nature is disgusting, in a crisis it brings out the worst or the best in people. Eat very light meals. Don't drink first day. Don't eat till fourth day.

On page 6, I've got in inverted commas:

'Kill' should be the primary energy/thought process. Government is aware of dimensional shift. Social breakdown, that's why we have been disarmed. We have been primed for a police state. Best time for movement is 2 to 4 am and 5 to 8 pm.

Do you admit, Dr Lakaev, that you were anti-government – ?.....No –

– and said – – I'm not anti-government.

Do you agree that you said the government knew exactly what was happening and was keeping us in the dark?.....In what way? What are we talking about here? These are some notes –

That the government was aware that we were moving from the third dimension into the fourth dimension?.....I don't believe that that was ever said. I don't understand what this is anyway, this part of it is. *I know that we talked about dimension shifts in terms of the Indigenous Aborigines believing in the Dreamtime, what occurred in the Dreamtime. And that their belief is that within the Dreamtime everything still exists intact and that in this time that we're in now, that it's cut off from it. I know we talked about that from that perspective.*

Okay:

We need to defend ourselves against these people.

Page 7:

Anyone in a state of fear will hassle people, will be hassled by people, will kill, will be killed.

.....And what are you talking about there? You're talking about people staying within their emotional stability so –

I'm – I'm saying here that you've told us that people will try and kill us and that we had to kill them before they killed us?.....Sorry? I don't believe that's the case at all there. So, people stay centred then it doesn't attract it towards themselves. Similar to what you learned about in aikido. Where when – and this concept was discussed many times over and over – I think there was some self-defence that was taught somewhere in this, where this was used, where if somebody is full of anger and has – is in an aggressive state, that what you can do is draw that anger through yourself through martial arts or Zen martial arts so that it moves through you and it doesn't affect you and then you move around it.

Okay. On page 8:

Integrity and honesty will be best friend. Important to access before the event not during the event. All this will occur during time warp/dimensional shift.

I put it to you that you've said here, it's important to access before the event not during so that you kept us in your sphere to continue to access – ?.....Nah.

– because you continually told us that we had not integrated fully –Rubbish. Accessing, I don't think you're portraying it as what it is. Accessing is, if somebody has an over-access of emotions which therefore makes them imbalanced. Whatever that emotion may be fear, anger even joy or bliss can be too much. So, what you do is you go in and you release your overload so that you can remain in a neutral state. Use each emotion as you need it appropriately with whatever environment you're in so that you don't get drawn into anything by anyone. That's what accessing was about. And if you kept accessing the same thing over and over and it never changed, then there's a problem with that particular issue, then you would need to go and see somebody about that issue. All right. So, it transforms its form as to how you do it, depending on the situation you're in.

Sure. Okay. Over on page 9:

If have a problem with leader of group, leave. Don't create a mutiny. No advantage to integrate during survival. Should have done it. I-centred people will only want to sleep. Four hours day sleep enough in this situation. Two hours –

Something or other.

– is enough.

.....I don't know what that says. But it would say probably 'isn't enough'.

Okay. Well, I couldn't read it –If you're in a high survival mode and there's a lot of stress, whatever the scenario may be, a war zone or whatever and Vietnam vets and other vets will tell you that you can learn to sleep for very short periods of time and get a full sleep. Even just 20 minutes depending on it and the adrenaline carries you through. That would have been the discussion there.

Okay. On page 10:

With children. If someone dumps on kids they will be left behind. Biggest thing to occur will be –

.....I don't know what that means.

In capitals:

– heatwave conditions. Two thousand years ago was major floods in all religions.

I put it to you that you're brining religion again into your teachings?.....No, we just talked about the similarity of each of the different religious books. The Koran, the Buddhist teaching, the Catholic, Protestant and other religions that they all talk about the major floods that occurred at some point. It was just interesting that it's on cave walls, it's everywhere. It was just a discussion like any other discussion.

Sure.....And I don't even think – somebody asked about that.

Sure. Okay. On page 11, I've got:

This time the planet is going to get ill, get a high temperature to fight off her illness. This means killing all things that are parasitic. Example, humans, plastic, anything artificial.

I put it to you that you installed a fear of the earth, the planet, in use that she was going to kill us?.....*I think there's some pages missing here.* We talked about the concept of Gaia, that the planet is a living organism that is alive and well and knows what's going on it – going on it. *And what's missing here is the very fact that I've stated and am now proving it and I learnt this many years earlier, is that as much the planet's temperature*

goes up there will be other portions where the planet's temperature will go down. And the biggest issue isn't so much the heat it's when it all gets cold.

Sure. Down the bottom:

There will be a 24-hour period where anything that can die, will.

Page 12:

Shift will be passive or aggressive. Only way possible is to access cellular memory, biological et cetera. Focus, it can then be a conscious shift.

No, no, I apologise:

For us, it can then be a conscious shift.

Page 13:

Will take four to five years to prepare for survival. Expect 20 years of imbalance.

I put it to you that stating that it will take four to five years to prepare for survival kept us enthralled to you and your belief systems – ?.....Absolutely not.

– in your vicinity?.....I don't believe anybody thought about Survivors again after they finished that particular workshop. Not a single person. The only person that seems to have taken it to this extreme and this strange interpretation is yourself. Nobody else has got this interpretation. This is something that you have done and I don't understand it. It's similar to the way you treated your family. It – I don't understand it.

Okay:

Have two plans. Prepare house to stay there for two weeks. (2) To move to Omaroo.

Page 14:

This area is safest on the planet because volcanoes have already exploded. Sits on a coordination point. Anywhere where there hasn't been a volcano erupted will have problems.

I put it to you that you advocated that your property and around that area near Mount Warning was the best place for the period of survival?.....Absolutely not. *I explained that that would be a good area because the largest volcano in the southern hemisphere was there, that the outer rim of that volcano meant that that area is stable. We also talked about the fact that Australia is on its fourth erosion cycle and it's also – the soil is not as nutritious as other places as well. This is just a portion of what was said. This is the bit you've extracted.*

All right. On page 15:

To get through this shift, you need to get on with the bird tribes. They are not angels like the Bible. They are winged custodians. Acknowledge your source to move through the shift. They have strong facial features but half-human, half-animal features. Mentioned in Bible as Archangel Gabriel. Carried weapons.

On the next page:

Holocaust. Likely that a nuclear war will happen. In survival must start off healthy. May not be healthy during/after, then healthy afterwards. Regime is key. Discipline will help us cope with situation.

.....A very important point that you're not putting forward here is preparation, preparation, preparation, which means that when you're prepared, it very rarely happens if at all. So it's getting caught off guard...

Tension between siblings will be most argumentative than parents because parents in survival mode. All people will shift passively or aggressively. If you learn to accept, the lessons will shift. All children under 12 will move across. Move to peak spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical states. We need all four levels to be in equilibrium, neutrality. Accept all circumstances of shift and don't judge it.

Page 22 –Yeah, we're talking about large societal changes that are very possible and that people, if they're going to be involved with those societal changes, and our society has been changing very rapidly and it had started at that point, and all of this work came from things like SES and other places and then we were looking at different – we even looked at the New Zealand system, where the New Zealand system already had whole areas of New Zealand setup for should there be something similar to COVID occurring, and that people couldn't get in and out of their countries. There was a whole range of things we discussed and a lot of that is not in here.

Okay. Page 22:

Groups will only move across, not individuals. Only families or social groups or relationships will move across and be able to cope with the shift. Those with dense emotions will be caught in trauma. Those in third dimension will remain there. Catholic Church will collapse. Will be first sign for us that change is coming – big signal. Other churches will collapse as well. We'll be on the news as big as Iraq War is. Born-again will probably go nowhere – judgemental.

.....Are you asking me to input here or just continue reading?

No, no, no just – just reading. Page 23:

Those who can't believe – those who don't believe in anything will not move across. What method universe uses to shift through who/what will stay behind, don't know. As our dimensional shift occurs on earth, all other planets will shift as well. Our beings that help us and bird tribes more obvious and visible. For people really connected to the planet will have visits from angels.

.....This is connected to the American Indians and a lot of their beliefs, and that's what the bird tribes relates to, that's how they describe it, and when you look at the way they dress, they dress like bird tribe members. That's what this is connected to.

Sure.....*We were discussing all sorts of different Indigenous beliefs across the planet.*

Sure. Page 24:

No fear, teachable. If not honest, unteachable. If suffer from flight fright, don't have truth or integrity. You need to be deep down willing to die to get through shift so when die don't see it as death. Won't be scared. Can move through consciously. Repopulate and build next.

.....Again, this is from the American Indians and all of their beliefs regarding all of this. They've gone and built houses and homes up in the high mountains and hill areas with no – only with wood, wood nails, wood everything in preparation for climatic changes. We've already seen the rail lines bend and melt and all sorts of things that have occurred. This is all connected to that.

Sure. Okay:

Dimensional shift will feel like millions of lessons moving through body. Starships will hover overhead for a 24-hour period. We'll learn how to hope with planet on the other side – will learn how to cope with planet on the other side.

.....And those starships is where we're talking about the UFOs that have now been stated as real.

MS McCONKEY: (Resuming) Okay. On page 25:

Planetary remains intact –

No – hang on. Primary – I'm not exactly sure what that first word is:

– remains intact. Psychic ability intact.

Oh, so:

Memory remains intact. Psychic ability intact. Have no anxiety. Sensation of butterflies in system. Sign reading your highest –

Oh:

– reaching your highest potential. By releasing control you gain control.

Okay, I put it to you that this sort of terminology encouraged us to give us our own self-control to be controlled by you?.....Untrue. It's – it's describing what anxiety can feel like and, if you stay calm, your intuition will help you move through it rather than the anxiety controlling you and you freezing. The flight fright freeze that can happen in high stress situations. Absolutely untrue. The exact opposite." (Emphasis added.)

220 Demeanour as evidence is often fraught, given that allowance needs to be made by the judge of fact for everything personal to the witness. I have done that in this case but I have also been careful to make observations not only as to the plaintiff's appearance and of the tone and quality of her voice in answering questions, but also as to her manner and style of answering. The foregoing examples which evidenced both aspects of the plaintiff's demeanour, which I noted as her cross-examination progressed over 17 days, coupled with those of the examples which also demonstrate her lack of candour, leave me persuaded, to a very high level of satisfaction, that the plaintiff was an arrant liar. In my view her evidence, where it differs from that of the defendant or her witnesses, should not be accepted unless it is supported by truly independent evidence or by ontologically objective fact.

Alex Paine's credibility

221 I turn now to Mr Paine's credibility as a witness.

222 Mr Paine was not an independent witness.

223 He first met the plaintiff in 1994 and they have been friends for 30 years. For some 10 of those years he completed numerous of the plaintiff's courses, including completing the 12 month long *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Council* program twice. His evidence about this is as follows:

"So, September '94, The Next Evolutionary Step. Then 1995 it would have been around about September – no, sorry, October of '95 I did the Final Step. I did a retake or a redo of the Next Evolutionary Step in June-July of '96 which Ms McConkey was present for. I then did Universal Healing in September of that year. I can't recall – there was a couple of smaller courses in between but I did Personal Mastery in 1999. Did Freedom in Relationships, there was a part 1 and a part 2. Did – in amongst that I did what was called Being Male, so combined with Being Female but obviously if you're male you do Being Male.

Mhm. And can you again tell the court if you know the year, or roughly the year?.....I couldn't tell you off the top of my head.

No. Thank you.....Then I did the Survivors program which if I recall correctly was possibly around about 2003. 2004, I did what was called the Initiates Workshop. They're probably the ones that I can think off the top of my head.

Thank you.....I did Personal Mastery again in 2002."

224 The plaintiff is the godmother of Mr Paine's daughter, Ella, and the plaintiff's three sons are among Ella's godfathers. He said that he regards the plaintiff's family as "familial family".

225 Mr Paine clearly shared the plaintiff's beliefs and said that he did not become a shareholder in *Universal Knowledge* for a "monetary return" but so that the courses could continue to be held, I infer, for the benefit of others who might take them. He said that the courses had changed his own life for the better.

226 It is entirely feasible of course, although not necessary for me to find, that Mr Paine was so completely immersed in the plaintiff's group and/or the *Combined Personal Mastery* group that he lacked insight into the effect of the plaintiff's teachings on others, or lacked the ability to see any wrong in them. He was certainly, on the defendant's evidence, a staunch defender of the plaintiff in his emails to members of *Cult Information Family Support* (CIFS). In one of them, Exhibit D 268, he wrote:

"This has been taken out of Natasha's hands because she was too kind and too soft, and quite frankly she was a deadset idiot for allowing people like Carli McConkey to be a part of Universal Knowledge. Enough is enough. I'm over the lies and fabrication. I want my family to have a life, and you and your organisation CIFS (Cult Injection Family Services), labelling me and many others as members of a cult. It's just a whole bunch of lies to cover up your own dysfunctional families.

Who is the leader of your cult? You, Warren Denny, Tess Bell, Mary Garden? Why isn't the leader saying anything now that the truth is coming out? All of you have dragged innocent families into the gutter with your lies."

227 The evidence Mr Paine gave that he had not witnessed the plaintiff's behaviour as asserted by the plaintiff, and the defendant's for that matter, must be taken in the context that he was not always present at Omaroo and when he was, the plaintiff may not have been. Mr Paine lived and worked in Brisbane except for a short period when he was living rent free at 103 Hunter Street. A number of his answers to questions in cross-examination were answers such as "I wouldn't know because I wasn't there every day" and "that never happened that I saw".

228 Mr Paine's demeanour was calm until he became angry and swore at the defendant. I have reached the view that the isolated violent outburst was more likely than not, feigned anger as opposed to the dropping of a façade of calm. The following passage in the transcript relates:

"Do you agree that your relationships and – with friends and family has benefited in the last 30 years to where you're at today?.....It did until they read your book. So I enjoyed wonderful relationships and healthy friendships and very close relationships with all my family members until they now believe I'm part of a cult, which is absolute fucking bullshit.

Okay.....Like, I live in a different city. I have virtually no contact with the supposed cult leader and you managed to convince my family and my ex-partner that I'm part of a cult, which is absolute bullshit, and they believe the shit that you put in a book.

Okay, Mr –It's absolute fucking lies."

229 Were I to be wrong in my assessment, then genuine anger at that level on the part of Mr Paine as a result of his wife and family distancing themselves from him after reading the book would provide another reason for partiality in his evidence.

230 Given all of the above considerations and observations, I prefer the evidence of the defendant where it conflicts with Mr Paine's evidence.

Keicha Adams credibility

231 Ms Adams was not an independent witness.

232 Ms Adams has known the plaintiff for over 30 years and she has done many of the *Universal Knowledge* courses including *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling*. She was firmly in the plaintiff's group of supporters.

233 Ms Adams, had supported the plaintiff against allegations that she was a cult leader from as early as 1998 after the *A Current Affair* television program went to air.

234 Ms Adams was asked if she had cleaned for the plaintiff or nannied her children and she responded "I spent time with her family because I loved them, not because I was frickin' – I loved spending time with those kids".

235 Ms Adams gave evidence that she had resided in Tasmania with the plaintiff and her son and daughter-in-law during 2020 while the COVID 19 pandemic was at its height.

236 Ms Adams took leave from her job to be in Tasmania with the plaintiff in order to assist her with the trial of this action, I infer staying with her at her home. Ms Adams was in Court on many days after she had given her own evidence, taking notes as was Mr Paine.

237 Given these considerations, I prefer the evidence of the defendant where it conflicts with Ms Adams' evidence.

Patrick Maher's credibility

238 Mr Maher was not an independent witness.

239 He has been a friend of the plaintiff's for some 25 years and has completed many of the *Universal Knowledge* courses. He shares the plaintiff's belief system and like Mr Paine, he became a shareholder in the company to allow the courses to continue.

240 Mr Maher was generally an unimpressive witness. His demeanour was not that of an honest witness and his memory seemed unconvincingly poor at times. He said, for example, that he did not remember that the defendant was on the same *Survivors* course as he was. And his description of the "genital rub" on *The Final Step* course lacked verisimilitude. The following passage of the transcript relates:

"MS McCONKEY: Okay, yeah, break it up. (Resuming) Okay, so would you agree they've been subjected to sexual harassment and sexual violence by the genital rub activity when they first got to the property after not being able to go to the toilet on the bus and in a blackened out bus?.....No, because it was a fun moment. It lasted like 30 seconds or a minute. Okay, let's all line up. Let's all loosen up. Let's get, you know start rubbing each other and down – up and down your back, down your front, do you a genital rub if you want to, all the way up and down your legs, it's a wake up, it's a big wake up thing. It's not a standing there just specifically rubbing people's genitals. It's a complete distortion of what's going on.

Yeah, but I put it to you that's what you called it, a 'genital rub exercise'?.....Well, it – that's in the curriculum to remind people of what occurs at that point."

241 Mr Maher's description of how his wife Misha Del Rae, came to break a rib was also unconvincing. His evidence was:

"And what was the circumstances around, from your – that you're aware of?.....We were just mucking around at home and she fell against a sharp door handle.

Yeah, and what does 'mucking around' mean?.....We were just jostling each other. We weren't fighting, we were just wrestling around."

242 Mr Maher also appeared to me to be quite ready to lie to assist the plaintiff's case. The following passage from the transcripts relates to his evolving evidence on the issue of "cellular memory":

"MS McCONKEY: No problem. Okay, obviously. Lacking sleep. (Resuming) Okay, *so did the plaintiff tell you that we had to cleanse our cellular memory from this lifetime – our ancestors and past life times?* That that was, you know, the main premise of her courses?.....I can't – I can't give – so, no. I can't tell what those – *specifically that's a detail that was said to us. So, no.*

No? Can't remember that. Okay. Did –*How long ago was this?*

Well, it's 20 years ago.....20 years ago. Yeah. *So, it's a long time ago.* So, all the specifics you're going into –

HIS HONOUR: *Well, Mr Maher, it's a core tenant of Dr Lakaev's ideology. It's in the material. So, it –*

WITNESS: *Yes.*

MS McCONKEY: (Resuming) Okay. So, do you recall the plaintiff saying that we had to cleanse our cellular memory to lighten our vibration so that we could move from the third dimension to the fourth dimension?.....I don't remember specifics of that. We did talk about cellular memory. *I think that's some of her doctorate studies on cellular memory.* So, there was discussions about it, but I – no, I can't tell you details."

243 The following passage from the transcript evidences another unconvincing account:

"Yep. Okay. Do you admit that at one point you were allowed to make a – a short phone call to family members, but when you called Misha, the plaintiff got on the phone and verbally abused her?.....That's – like the question is – we were – not we were – not – we made – we did – *we could make a phone call when we wanted to.*

Sure?.....*Phones weren't available all the time.*

Yep.....And –

So, when – when you went to make a phone call, on one occasion, to Misha, do you admit that the plaintiff got on the phone and verbally abused Misha and you weren't able to speak to her over the phone?.....*I know the situation on the phone and that's not – that's not what the situation was.*

Yep.....The situation was that we weren't able to get the flight back. We were going to be a week late. *Misha was on the other phone not understanding that there were no flights and I was – wasn't able – wasn't able to explain it, and Dr Lakaev got on the phone to explain the situation."*

244 Given the foregoing considerations and observations, I prefer the evidence of the defendant where it conflicts with Mr Maher's evidence.

Khaney Lakaev's credibility

245 Mr Lakaev was not an independent witness.

246 He did not have the demeanour of an untruthful witness but I do not have confidence in his objectivity. He said when he was asked about the only course he undertook, *The Next Evolutionary Step*, at age 16, "I had an extremely well balanced childhood so what I was taught wasn't anything that was new."

247 While his evidence was favourable to the plaintiff, he was of course limited to his own observations and could not be expected to be omniscient as to events recounted by the defendant spanning 13 years.

248 I did observe, however, that Mr Lakaev had a tendency to reason to a position that was favourable to the plaintiff. The following passage from the transcript relates:

"No. Okay, no problem. Okay, do you recall that your mum told Michael Greene, my husband, in around 2007, to tutor you in maths and physics?.....Yes.

Yep. Okay, do you recall, when Michael Greene came up one day to help you, you said that you didn't need the help?.....No, I don't recall that at all.

Okay. Well, do you admit that when your mum found out that Michael Greene hadn't helped you, she got that wooden rod that is kept behind the door of Omaroo and beat him with that wooden rod for up to 20 minutes?.....No. I've got absolutely no idea what you're talking about.

No. And that your girlfriend, Bailey, actually witnessed that?.....*Bailey most certainly wouldn't have witnessed that. Bailey wouldn't have been up then that afternoon if I was trying to study.*" (Emphasis added.)

That was not Ms Facer's evidence.

249 I prefer the evidence of the defendant where it conflicts with that of Mr Lakaev.

Thomas Rabold's credibility

250 Mr Rabold's demeanour was, in my assessment, that of an honest witness. I found him to be attentive, responsive, dispassionate and ready to make concessions. Notably, unlike the plaintiff and her other witnesses, Mr Rabold was not concerned to poison the well for the defendant at every opportunity. However, although he was a support person on the defendant's 1996 *The Final Step* course, he was limited to his own observations and could not be expected to be omniscient. Moreover, his involvement in *Universal Knowledge* ceased within a year or two of the defendant's completion of that course. He cannot and did not purport to speak either of the relationship between the defendant and the plaintiff after 1998 or the way in which the courses and more particularly, the *Combined Personal Mastery* group, were run or operated after he moved away altogether in the year 2000. It is of course telling, although not determinative, that at that time he was of the opinion that the plaintiff was going to turn "this whole thing into a cult".

Anita Carroll's credibility

251 Ms Carroll was not an independent witness.

252 As already observed, Ms Carroll met the plaintiff in about May 1996. She completed *The Next Evolutionary Step* and then went on to do a further 14 workshops over 11 years. She completed the *Personal Mastery and Metaphysical Counselling* course twice and she became a member of the *Combined Personal Mastery* group. She and the plaintiff became friends in about 2000 and she cared for the plaintiff's children between 2000 and 2007. Ms Carroll was in the plaintiff's house five days a week during this period. She lived under the plaintiff's house in Brisbane and she and the plaintiff later shared a house together. It is obvious that they remain close friends and that she remains devoted to the plaintiff.

253 Ms Carroll was in my view, a witness best described as "cocky". She gave her evidence with a thin veneer of civility but was clearly capable of becoming angry and it appeared to me that she was concerned to poison the well for the defendant at every opportunity.

254 From her evidence, which I have set out earlier in these reasons, it appeared to me that she jealously guarded her "proximity" to the plaintiff and was scornful of what she described as the defendant's contrived attempts at gaining such "proximity" for herself.

255 Finally, on the issue of partiality it will be recalled that Ms Carroll described the defendant as a "back stabbing bitch" for the way in which she left the plaintiff's group.

The defendant's credibility

256 I could not have been more impressed with the defendant's evidence.

257 She was not shaken in cross-examination. It was put to her that she was motivated to pursue the plaintiff until she succeeded in having her deregistered as a psychologist and she agreed. However, if the pleaded imputations are substantially true then the defendant's campaign, or "vendetta" and her "extreme claims of misconduct" and "outlandish claims" as termed by counsel for the plaintiff in his written closing submissions, would, in my view, be wholly justified. It was put to the defendant that everything she had done was the result of the exercise of her own free will, however that begs the question of what is "free will". If the defendant was indoctrinated in the way that she claims that she and others were by the plaintiff, then her actions may have been voluntary but her will not free, in any proper understanding of the word free.

258 The defendant was also taxed in cross-examination with documents she had written which described the plaintiff in glowing terms or defended her, insisting that she was not a cult leader. However, once again, as these documents were created while the defendant was in the plaintiff's sphere, it may be inferred that if the defendant had been indoctrinated, that her views at that time do not discredit her now that she has come to realise her past subjugation. The same may be said of the defendant's happy disposition in the plaintiff's company at her wedding and her apparent support for the plaintiff in the face of allegations that the plaintiff was a cult leader, made during the period the defendant was in her thrall.

259 The defendant's demeanour was that of an honest witness. Her evidence was measured although she became emotional at times. And she remained calm under cross-examination, not seeking to gild the lily in my view and only occasionally seeking to add to an answer to inject additional information derogatory of the plaintiff.

260 In the final analysis I am wholly satisfied that the defendant, unlike the plaintiff, was a truthful witness, and that her evidence was reliable. Indeed her recall for events and detail was very good and was frequently borne out by the extensive documentation she had retained from her years with the plaintiff's group, some of which I have set out in these reasons.

Mark Goey's credibility

261 Mr Goey was somewhat lyrical in his answers asked of him both in evidence-in-chief and in cross-examination. This did not however detract from my assessment of him as an honest and reliable witness who appeared to give his account of experiences shared with the defendant and not as a loyal supporter whose motivation was to simply assist the defendant in her case. There was no suggestion that he had any significant ongoing relationship with the defendant.

262 It was put to him that despite his account of his experiences within the plaintiff's organisation of which he is now highly critical, he had nonetheless stayed within her sphere for about three years. He responded by saying that not a week goes by, where he wishes he had left earlier. He said that he went to the person who introduced him to the course and spoke to him and he said, in general terms, not to quit but to toughen up. It must be remembered that he was a mere 17 years old and he said that he was taking advice from older people who he looked up to.

263 It was put to Mr Goey in cross-examination that he was exercising his free will and that he was not forced to do anything he did not want to do – that everything was a "recommendation" from the plaintiff. I have already addressed that conundrum in the discussion above as to similar propositions put to the defendant. Mr Goey's answer was however, particularly eloquent. The following passage from the transcript relates:

"So are you saying to this Court that you weren't exercising your free will?.....I am saying that my free will was influenced by significant people that I attached significance to around me, because at such a young age, my sense of self and personality, and understanding of right and wrong, was not fully established."

264 It was put to Mr Goey that although he ultimately described *The Final Step* in 1996 as very authoritarian and akin to a concentration camp, he nonetheless went back to do *Personal Mastery* in 1998. He explained his reasoning at the time in the following passage of evidence:

"Thank you. So, you just described that it was The Final Step in 1996 was very authoritarian?.....Yes.

But you came back to do Personal Mastery in 1998, didn't you?.....Yes, I did.

Thank you. And you said in your evidence, "I went under the black mats and people jumped on them." I put it to you that's simply not true, Mr Goey?.....I would put to you I had a facial injury from my head being smashed into the ground.

You never said that.....I had a swollen eye, I had a swollen eye here, and I screamed out for help.

And you managed to get yourself out from under the black mat on your own?.....I did. They released their pressure. I couldn't get out.

Thank you. Well, you said that –If I could have got out, I would have got out. I couldn't get out, I was –

You say that –..... – screaming.

You said in your evidence that Dr Lakaev attempted to pull you out from under a black mat, and she wasn't strong enough, but you – so, you got yourself out?.....Yes, I did then, once they had released their pressure, I saw an opening and I started to burrow my way out.

Thank you. And so, you agree Dr Lakaev wasn't strong enough?.....I would agree with that.

Yes, and you would agree that Dr Lakaev is a person of small stature?.....I would agree with that.

Thank you. I put to you all these assaults that you described in your evidence this morning by Dr Lakaev simply didn't occur?.....That's really quite something to say in light of the fact that I was there.

Yep, I'm putting to you what you said in your evidence regarding assaults by Dr Lakaev is not true?.....No, I made an oath when you and I started out, and I'm telling you what I saw.

Thank you. You also said in your evidence regarding the black mats that eight other people were standing on it when a person was underneath it?.....Yes.

I put it to you that's not correct?.....Again, this is what I witnessed. And I also had major reservations about doing this to people. I wasn't comfortable with it at all, and in actual fact, Natasha said to me because at times I was standing on the sideline of this process, she said, 'Mark, are you going to be part of this group, or not?'

Well, if you were standing on the sidelines and you didn't approve of what you saw, why didn't you intervene?.....Let me think about that answer. Why didn't I intervene? I did intervene on one occasion. I don't have a good answer for you now. I think if it had got really, really bad, I would have. In terms of my level of bad, because I grew up with violence, I understand when things are going really bad, I don't know – I don't have a good answer for you, why I didn't stop the whole process. I certainly didn't have the authority to say, 'All right, everybody, stop what you are doing.'

So, would you agree, then, from the point of view that any youth you observed, on the black mats, you saw nothing that you considered really bad?.....No, I thought it was bad enough. It was memorable. It was bad enough. And one of the things that Natasha really insisted, is that we all work as a group. She wasn't big on individuals, people being individual. So, we had to all work as a group and participate together in the process."

265 I accept that explanation. It is to my mind not surprising that Mr Goey at his young age behaved in the way in which he did and the fact that he did so does not undermine the evidence he gave before me. His demeanour was that of a truthful and thoughtful witness.

Bayley Facer's credibility

266 Ms Facer's demeanour was also that of an honest adult witness recounting an unsavoury period in her childhood. She was calm and confident and did not seek to embellish. She did not rise to annoyance when it was put to her that incidents she had given evidence about were not true or had simply not occurred. She answered in an even manner with responses such as "I saw that happen – yes" and "I assure you it did happen". It was not put to her in cross-examination that she was motivated in some way to damage the plaintiff and she did not appear to be actuated by ill will. I regard her evidence as both truthful and reliable and where it differs from that of the plaintiff, or the plaintiff's son, or any other of her witnesses, (as it does on a number of significant matters), I prefer and accept the evidence of Ms Facer.

Julie Townsend's credibility

267 Ms Townsend was a credible witness who was not suggested as being in any significant ongoing relationship with the defendant or motivated to lie for the advancement of the defendant's case.

268 She did not claim to remember exactly when things happened but was confident of the occurrence of the things she described as being experiences she shared with the defendant. Her demeanour was that of a truthful witness. She was not overconfident, much less angry. She was calm and unemotional, saying things like "gee I don't remember when".

269 Ms Townsend appeared to me to be actively drawing on her memory and related the events she described to other memorable life events to assist. She was prepared to make concessions, for example she accepted that her memory of the number of women who travelled to Omaroo to assist with the Australian Tax Office investigation of the plaintiff may not be correct. Her answers gave no appearance of her colluding with the defendant in any way, rather they were different on some material points, such as the amount the defendant was said to have been required to pay the plaintiff as compensation for her accounting errors which were said to have triggered the investigation.

270 She was also prepared to make concessions as to the plaintiff's behaviour and was not concerned to embellish. For example she accepted that the plaintiff was not going to let her come to real harm in the black mat exercise where people piled on top of her.

271 It was put to Ms Townsend that the evidence she had given that was adverse to the plaintiff was untrue or incorrect and that the events she described that corroborated the defendant had not occurred. Her credit was not however, in any material way undermined in cross-examination.

272 As with other witnesses called for the defendant it was put to her that despite her reservations she had stayed within the plaintiff's sphere and had spoken of the plaintiff in glowing terms as a "close friend". Her explanation was however, as with those other witnesses, including the defendant, entirely acceptable to my mind. The following passage from the transcript relates:

"So, after getting evidence a moment ago of you being proud of those achievements, you – and then the evidence of your description of being involved with Dr Lakaev, I put to you that on each occasion that I asked you earlier on, you agreed that you were always exercising free will?.....So, I – so, yes. I – I – I was being – I was groomed into a situation where I accepted the – the narrative that was being given in terms of we were involved in a mission to save the planet, to help humanity. I – I – I have an altruistic personality, I wanted – I'm a physiotherapist, I wanted to be of service. I felt like this was where I was – this was where I was being of service to – to the world. So, *I was groomed and indoctrinated to take on board that mission and then – and then – and – and as I accepted her as she presented herself to be, as someone who was, you know, on the Intergalactic Council and had got messages, you know, psychically and whatever. I accepted all of that, initially and for – for a long time. Too long really. I accepted all of that and therefore, I followed instructions and yes, I had free will and I could have at any point said no, but I didn't because I believed the narrative I was presented.*" (Emphasis added.)

Misha Del Rae's credibility

273 Dr Del Rae was an intelligent and articulate witness. She had a good memory for events and was matter of fact in recounting events that had obviously been painful to endure. Her demeanour was that of a truthful witness. She was calm and unemotional and did not become overly angry or annoyed when it was put to her that the evidence she had given was not true. She gave answers such as "I was there and I know".

274 The following passage from the transcript of Dr Del Rae's evidence bears out my assessment that her evidence was not shaken in cross-examination:

"You mentioned, Dr Del Rae, watching pornography?.....Yes.

I put to you that was also a matter of choice?.....No, it was not a matter of choice. As I said, she forced us to watch it, we couldn't look away, we couldn't go to sleep, we couldn't leave the room, and if anybody did, then the support team would again make sure –

Yes, I know you gave that evidence this morning, I'm suggesting to you it's not true?.....I'm suggesting to you it is true.

You gave evidence about swimming in the dam naked?.....Yes.

Not everyone swam in the dam naked, did they? Not all the students, that is.....All the students did. The support team did not.

No, well, I'm putting to you that they didn't?.....Do you know who didn't?

No, it's not for me to answer your questions, Dr Del Rae, it's for you to answer my questions.....Okay, I was there and I know that all the students went in the dam, naked.

And it was a matter of choice for those who did swim in there naked?.....No, it was not a matter of choice. No.

And you mentioned allocated toilet breaks?.....Yes.

And in your evidence you said those who missed the allotted toilet break had to wait for the next one?.....Yes.

And I suggest to you that that wasn't true?.....I suggest to you that it is true.

You didn't see anyone soil themselves, did you?.....No.

Thank you. You mentioned the vegan diet, that was also optional, wasn't it?.....Not really, 'cause to do the course –

Well – – I mean, it was supposed to be completely vegan. Now, what people did in their own time, I mean, of course I don't know. But the rules were that it was supposed to be vegan, okay.

Well –So, again, whether – that could be construed as a choice thing.

Yeah.....Because again there's nobody to monitor it, yeah.

Yeah, thank you.....Sorry, sorry. Are you talking about on the course, the PMC – which part of this question?

At any time that a vegan diet was mentioned during your association with Dr Lakaev, it was always optional, wasn't it?.....Well, it was put to that it was supposed to be no option. That's all I can say. And what people did on their personal time, I don't know.

And were you aware of students at any time not sticking to a vegan diet?.....I mean, there were occasions where people would come to our meetings and say, you know, I had a piece of bread or something, so –

Yeah.....There were times, yeah.

Thank you. You mentioned being pregnant and being under a black mat?.....Yes.

I think you said you were some weeks pregnant, I'm not sure how many weeks you said.....When I was 16 weeks.

Thank you.....Well, at one point – at that point I wasn't 16 weeks, I lost the baby at 16 weeks."

275

As with other witnesses, Dr Del Rae was cross-examined as to having produced written material in the past speaking of the plaintiff in glowing terms. Her explanation appears in the following passage from the transcript:

"So, you signed it 'Dr Misha', but under there – under there are written the words 'Dr Misha Del Rae', – correct?.....Yes, doctor of chiropractic, USA.

Yes, and you put Dr of Chiropractic USA because that was your qualification at that time?.....And it still is.

Yeah, thank you. So, as a person with that qualification, you signed that document?.....Yes.

After you read it?.....Yes, under duress.

Well, you signed – what sort of duress are you talking about, Dr Del Rae?.....Well, this things that we were – not forced to do but are highly suggested to do, because of some reason, I can't remember why this was, and also because Patrick was – he wrote it and he wanted me to sign it and again, domestic violence, there was always that fear of not doing things.

So, in all of that, you would agree, you signed it of your own free will?.....Well, I wouldn't say free will, I will say that I signed it."

Conclusion as to credibility

276 I should be obvious from the observations I have set out above that I regard the plaintiff as a dishonest and unreliable witness and the people she called to give evidence as part of her case as not independent witnesses. Rather it appeared to me that those witnesses remain deeply loyal to the plaintiff and hence partial. The defendant on the other hand I regard as an honest and reliable witness and the people she called to give evidence as part of her case were not witnesses with whom she maintained any significant continuing relationship. It was not suggested to them that they were anything other than people who claimed a shared experience with the defendant.

277 It is noteworthy, although not of course determinative, that the plaintiff did not call one truly independent witness who supported her claims that her group was nothing more than a benign organisation endeavouring to improve the lives of others. Equally of interest was the following claim by the plaintiff in answer to the defendant on this very issue:

"I put it to you that people's lives did not improve, and their health did not improve, that it actually deteriorated, because they were, one, physically battered by the plaintiff. What do you say to that?.....There's thousands of testimonials and Christmas cards and good wishes cards that contradict everything that you're saying. So, you're one person's opinion versus thousands, so – ."

No such material oral or written was introduced into evidence by the plaintiff.

278 It was submitted on behalf of the plaintiff in written closing submissions that I should infer from the defendant's failure to call Kylie Bennett as a witness, that Ms Bennett's evidence would not have assisted the defendant. I do not think that such an inference is warranted when the defendant withdrew Ms Bennett as a witness on the morning she was to be called, in order to avoid prolonging the trial after the plaintiff had, the evening before or on that morning, discovered further documents asserted to be relevant to Ms Bennett's evidence and said to have been found by the plaintiff in her "warehouse".

279 It was also submitted that the same inference should be drawn in respect of all of the other people named amongst the defendant's allegations in her defence who were not proved to have been deceased during the dates of the trial. In my view the conduct of the defendant's case by her demonstrated that she called the witnesses who were reasonably available to her, as did the plaintiff. Were I to draw the requested inference then, still bearing in mind the defendant's onus of proving the truth of the imputations, I should nonetheless draw a similar inference in respect of the thousands of potential witnesses referred to by the plaintiff. Even if I did not, the credit findings I have made against the plaintiff would endure to the defendant's advantage.

280 I am conscious that I have not canvassed every piece of evidence given in this case. The reason being that it is so extensive. The transcript comprises almost 3000 pages and there were almost 400 exhibits tendered. The hearing of the action spanned a period of over two months. Furthermore, other than as going to credit, much of the evidence was not relevant to the real issue of whether the admitted imputations are substantially true. In so far as credit is concerned I have canvassed the evidence that was to my mind decisive. I have not lost sight of the evidence I have not mentioned but considered unnecessary to canvas.

281 Ultimately, based on my assessment of what I saw of and heard from the witnesses called, I have concluded that I should accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject the evidence of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence on relevant issues differs.

The imputations

282 Notwithstanding that I do not believe the plaintiff, I must turn now to the question of whether the defendant has established that each of the pleaded imputations are justified as being substantially

true. If they are then there will be no necessity to consider the remaining defences pleaded by the defendant. I will deal with each in turn, in the order in which they were pleaded by the plaintiff.

The plaintiff was a bully and had bullied the defendant

283 The case as to this imputation pleaded in the statement of claim is as follows:

"7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

(a) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(a), (c) and (d) that the Plaintiff was a bully and had bullied the Defendant;"

284 Those paragraphs read as follows:

"5 The Book contains, in its main text, the following publications, of and concerning the plaintiff:

(a) 'Group member would single people out and bring up issues with "weak" or "lazy" members, yelling and screaming at them, sometimes getting physical with them to try and Shift them (from being Stuck) so they would not fail to adhere to the rules again.'

This type of behaviour was initiated and encouraged by Natasha who would scream and yell at students over an Issue regularly and set the example for all other group members to follow. A few times during the year, she hit and shoved people to make her point clear. We soon learned, if we hadn't already, that she had a very domineering, aggressive and controlling personality."

...

(c) "'No, Carli!" Natasha screamed. 'Luke manipulated you to transfer those funds to pay his own debts! Don't you know he's a gambler and a thief? You are a fucking idiot, you stupid bitch. You do whatever you want to do, you c**nt.'"

I was then 'In The Shit', as we would come to call it whenever Natasha punished someone for an extended period of time. The only way you came out of The Shit was by climbing your way out of it – by working harder, smarter and beyond the call of duty. This would involve being screamed at daily, and punished with menial tasks like cleaning, whipper-snipping, or office admin, all hours of the day and night, making you feel degraded and worthless.";

(d) "Natasha would regularly verbally abuse me on the phone from Brisbane, or while she was down at Omaroo. Constantly she would scream at me, calling me a 'liar', a 'selfish brat', and a 'fat, lazy dog.' Invariably she would finish with the line, 'you are a fucking c**nt.';"

285 Given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence differs, for the reasons that I have explained above, it follows from the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses that I have set out in these reasons as to these issues, that I have no doubt that the imputation that the impugned passages bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning, namely that the plaintiff was a bully and bullied the

defendant is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

The plaintiff had unlawfully battered the defendant and other persons and incited battery

286 The case as to these imputations pleaded in the statement of claim is as follows:

"7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

...

- (b) In respect of those referred to at paragraphs 5(a), (l) and 6(a)(i), (vi), (vii) and (b)(iii), that the Plaintiff had unlawfully battered the Defendant;
- (c) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(m) that the Plaintiff had unlawfully battered other persons;
- (d) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(g) and (h) that the Plaintiff had unlawfully incited other persons to batter persons;"

287 Those paragraphs read as follows:

"5 The Book contains, in its main text, the following publications, of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) 'Group member would single people out and bring up issues with "weak" or "lazy" members, yelling and screaming at them, sometimes getting physical with them to try and Shift them (from being Stuck) so they would not fail to adhere to the rules again.

This type of behaviour was initiated and encouraged by Natasha who would scream and yell at students over an Issue regularly and set the example for all other group members to follow. A few times during the year, she hit and shoved people to make her point clear. We soon learned, if we hadn't already, that she had a very domineering, aggressive and controlling personality.'

...

- (g) 'Natasha told Michael to hit and slap me and tell me what a bad person and mother I was. 'Mick, you need to whack some sense into Carli. She's an absolute idiot. She has created all of this and you have let her. Take control of your "wife", Mick. I can't do it all for you!'
- (h) 'Whether Michael wanted to beat me or not, Natasha said that if he didn't do what needed to be done, then the guys would knock some sense into him.'
- ...
- (l) 'We had been taught by Natasha to smack our children with wooden spoons'.
- (m) 'She is a criminal. She has physically assaulted people, psychologically abused people and conned people out of money!'"...

"6 The Book also includes by way of annexures, the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) An article headed "In thrall to a cult: how the unwary fall victim to mind control" purportedly published by The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on 17 October 2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:
- (i) Carli McConkey is not mentally ill. Neither drugs nor alcohol has led her to this point. Instead, in 1996 she joined a New Age personal development group called Universal Knowledge, seeking clarity. Once McConkey converted to its aims, the group's leader, Natasha Lakaev, manipulated her, hit her, took hundreds of thousands of dollars from her, and worked her without pay for up to 22 hours a day, seven days a week."
- ...
- (vi) "McConkey and her husband had more than one period apart as they dealt with the psychological and financial pressures imposed by Lakaev. In the meantime, McConkey says she was psychologically abused and physically assaulted by Lakaev, and was separated from her sons because Lakaev convinced her she was a "human f--- up". Lakaev also once beat McConkey's young son with a wooden spoon, she says."; and
- (vii) "Finally, in January this year, McConkey could handle no more. She picked up her children and drove away into what she believed was certain death at doomsday. "I was exhausted, had been beaten up again and was unable to cope with any more psychological and emotional pressure. I just said to myself, 'I don't care if I die in two years' time, I would prefer to be free and enjoy my children'."

288 Given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence differs, for the reasons that I have explained above, it follows from the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses that I have set out in these reasons as to these issues, that I have no doubt that the imputations that the impugned passages bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning, namely that the plaintiff had unlawfully battered the defendant and other persons and incited battery by persons of other persons, is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

The plaintiff had unlawfully obtained a financial advantage

289 The case as to this imputation pleaded in the statement of claim is as follows:

- "7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that...
- (e) In respect of those referred to at paragraphs 5(e), (f) and (i) and 6(a)(i) and (v) that the Plaintiff had unlawfully obtained a financial advantage;"

290 Those paragraphs read as follows:

- "5 The Book contains, in its main text, the following publications, of and concerning the plaintiff:
- ...
- (e) "FRESH ZEN WHOLESALE continued until it became evident that it was no longer financially viable. Natasha then worked on getting Luke institutionalised into a psychiatric facility in Brisbane. I visited Luke at the hospital one day with Natasha, bringing along paperwork that I

have been asked to prepare. He looked drugged out and weak, not at all like the strong and vibrant Luke I had once admitted (sic). Natasha asked Luke to sign over his Power of Attorney to her, and she commenced the process of pursuing an Income Protection claim on his behalf. This meant she could collect this money for herself."

- (f) "Madeline must have been an exceptional lawyer (keeping in mind she believed everything Natasha told her) as the court concluded that the claim was legitimate. Natasha was now collecting three income protection amounts, two in her name, and the other as Power of Attorney for Luke. With Luke safely in the care of the psychiatric hospital, Natasha got back together with Jeremy."

...

- (i) "Soon after the incident, Jeremy ran away again, before the contract had been completed. Sometime later Ted took Natasha to court to recover his equipment and recoup a percentage of the contracts they had secured, as he had a 50:50 share in the company and had virtually set up the whole business. Natasha told each of the PMC guys to sign legal documents stating that they had been paid \$7,500 each in wages (which they had not) so she could present to the court the argument that there was no money left over from the business for Ted to lay claim to. She also included \$20,000 worth of consultancy fees to herself."...

"6 The Book also includes by way of annexures, the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) An article headed "In thrall to a cult: how the unwary fall victim to mind control" purportedly published by The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on 17 October 2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:

- (i) "Carli McConkey is not mentally ill. Neither drugs nor alcohol has led her to this point. Instead, in 1996 she joined a New Age personal development group called Universal Knowledge, seeking clarity. Once McConkey converted to its aims, the group's leader, Natasha Lakaev, manipulated her, hit her, took hundreds of thousands of dollars from her, and worked her without pay for up to 22 hours a day, seven days a week."

...

- (v) "In December 1999, McConkey began working for Lakaev in the office without wages, and also cleaning and maintaining her properties. She and Michael bought a share in Lakaev's company, Universal Knowledge, for \$20,000, believing they were buying equity, securing their future. They received nothing in return. Company documents show \$420,000 was raised from investors in this manner, and Lakaev admits none have seen a return."

291

Given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence differs, for the reasons that I have explained above, it follows from the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses that I have set out in these reasons (including as to the John Jenz/Fresh Zen Wholesale income protection claim and the JJ Steel transactions), that I have no doubt that the imputations that the impugned passages bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning, namely that the plaintiff had unlawfully obtained a financial advantage, is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

Plaintiff's use of illicit drugs

292 The case as to this imputation is pleaded in the statement of claim as follows:

"The imputations from the book passages and the article passages are pleaded as follows:

"7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

(f) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 5(b), that the Plaintiff had unlawfully used illicit drugs and had encouraged others to do so."

293 That paragraph reads as follows:

"5 The Book contains, in its main text, the following publications, of and concerning the plaintiff:

...

(b) 'Once we have completed the major portion of our PMC assignments, Natasha told us, one night in a meeting, that she had something special in store for us. She explained that, due to us counselling people from all manner of society, we had to be prepared and empathetic with our clients. Therefore, we needed to experience taking drugs.

Natasha proceeded to ask one of her Support Team members to bring our marijuana joints which she said were from reputable sources nearby, whom they had bought from previously. She told those of the group who were predisposed to drug addiction that they could partake if they wanted to, as it was under a controlled environment where the Support Team would be in close vicinity. However, once we commenced smoking the joints, the Support Team joined in, as well as Natasha."

294 Given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence differs, for the reasons that I have explained above, it follows from the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses on this issue that I have set out in these reasons, that I have no doubt that the imputations that the impugned passages bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning, namely that the plaintiff had unlawfully used illicit drugs and had encouraged others to do so, is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

The plaintiff wrongfully indoctrinated people

295 The case as to this imputation is pleaded in the statement of claim as follows:

"7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

...

(g) In respect of those referred to at paragraphs 5(k) and 6(a)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi) and (vii) and (b)(i), (ii) and (iii), that the Plaintiff had wrongfully indoctrinated people"

296 Those paragraphs read as follows:

"5 The Book contains, in its main text, the following publications, of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (k) 'In a matter of minutes, with clearer thoughts, and way from the clutches of Natasha and her increasingly paranoid world, I began to realise that she was a cult leader, and I had been part of a cult.'

...

- 6 The Book also includes by way of annexures, the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) An article headed 'In thrall to a cult: how the unwary fall victim to mind control' purportedly published by The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on 17 October 2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:

(i) 'Carli McConkey is not mentally ill. Neither drugs nor alcohol has led her to this point. Instead, in 1996 she joined a New Age personal development group called Universal Knowledge, seeking clarity. Once McConkey converted to its aims, the group's leader, Natasha Lakaev, manipulated her, hit her, took hundreds of thousands of dollars from her, and worked her without pay for up to 22 hours a day, seven days a week.'

(ii) 'These techniques appear to be for health reasons but they actually have the effect of debilitation,' says Whitsett. 'They reduce the person's ability to think critically, to reason, and when people are so weak the 'self' is impaired, they are easier to control and manipulate.'

(iii) 'Whitsett says this "continuous barrage of attacks on the 'self' keeps the person in a continuous state of failure, of low self-esteem, and attached to the cult.'

(iv) 'Once Lakaev's disciples were hooked, their critical faculties broken down and their outside support cut off, Lakaev revealed her more extreme theology. McConkey says she claimed to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of the 12 members on the Intergalactic Council of the Universe. She came from the "Bird Tribes" from a different dimension and she remembered all her past lives. In one of them she had been Queen of Atlantis. McConkey was told by Lakaev she had been a "lady in waiting" in Atlantis and she felt she was put on earth to serve her.'

...

(vi) 'McConkey and her husband had more than one period apart as they dealt with the psychological and financial pressures imposed by Lakaev. In the meantime, McConkey says she was psychologically abused and physically assaulted by Lakaev, and was separated from her sons because Lakaev convinced her she was a "human f--- up". Lakaev also once beat McConkey's young son with a wooden spoon, she says'; and

(vii) 'Finally, in January this year, McConkey could handle no more. She picked up her children and drove away into what she believed was certain death at doomsday. "I was exhausted, had been beaten up again and was unable to cope with any more psychological and emotional pressure. I just said to myself, 'I don't care if I die in two years' time, I would prefer to be free and enjoy my children'.

- (b) An article headed 'Alleged leader of cult works as psychologist' purportedly published by The Sunday Age newspaper on 17 October

2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:

- (i) 'A woman accused of leading a cult that has damaged the lives of scores of people is working as a psychologist with vulnerable patients at a community mental health service in Queensland.'
- (ii) 'Natasha Lakaev's Universal Knowledge organisation was offering courses until last year that prophesied the world would end in December 2012 and almost everyone except her devotees would die'; and
- (iii) 'A former member of her inner circle, Carli McConkey, has told The Sunday Age that Ms Lakaev was physically violent and psychologically manipulative, and had persuaded her followers that she was the Queen of Atlantis, a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of 12 members of the Intergalactic Council of the Universe.'

297 This imputation is of course at the very heart of this action and I have no difficulty in finding that the plaintiff wrongfully indoctrinated people. Given her egregiously untruthful evidence that her group was not a cult in the sense in which that word is ordinarily understood, and the uncontroverted evidence of the defendant and her witnesses to the contrary, I have not the slightest doubt that the plaintiff knowingly and wrongfully indoctrinated people into her bizarre belief system. That her doctrine was bizarre can be seen from the material she produced around the various courses and workshops and from what she wrote in her book, much of which I have set out earlier in these reasons.

298 The philosophy obviously had attraction to seemingly otherwise intelligent and, in most cases, mature individuals, at least until some realised otherwise, however it is not part of my role to investigate the anatomy of a cult. Suffice it to observe that whether a person recognises that something is a cult depends on whether they have insight and that sometimes can be lost, I would think, if the person is comfortable with the beliefs and the lifestyle with which they are living and those things fill an emotional or psychological need they may have. Cult members do not have to be unhappy or feel threatened and they might not understand they were being indoctrinated or regard their group to constitute a cult at the time. That certainly accords with the tenor of the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses.

299 Given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence differs, for the reasons that I have explained above, it follows from the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses on this issue that I have set out in these reasons, that I have no doubt that the imputation that the impugned passages bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning, namely that the plaintiff had wrongfully indoctrinated people, is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

That the plaintiff had breached Australian industrial legislation

300 The case as to this imputation is pleaded in the statement of claim as follows:

"7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

...

(h) In respect of those at paragraph 6(a)(i) and (v) that the Plaintiff had breached Australian industrial legislation."

301 Those paragraphs read as follows:

"6 The Book also includes by way of annexures, the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:

- (a) An article headed "In thrall to a cult: how the unwary fall victim to mind control" purportedly published by The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on 17 October 2010 containing the following publications, of and concerning the Plaintiff:
- (i) 'Carli McConkey is not mentally ill. Neither drugs nor alcohol has led her to this point. Instead, in 1996 she joined a New Age personal development group called Universal Knowledge, seeking clarity. Once McConkey converted to its aims, the group's leader, Natasha Lakaev, manipulated her, hit her, took hundreds of thousands of dollars from her, and worked her without pay for up to 22 hours a day, seven days a week.'
- (v) 'In December 1999, McConkey began working for Lakaev in the office without wages, and also cleaning and maintaining her properties. She and Michael bought a share in Lakaev's company, Universal Knowledge, for \$20,000, believing they were buying equity, securing their future. They received nothing in return. Company documents show \$420,000 was raised from investors in this manner, and Lakaev admits none have seen a return.'

302 In continuing to have the defendant work for her on the promise of payment of wages which was not kept and by paying a lump sum of \$5,000 on one occasions in lieu of wages, with no deduction for income tax and no payment of superannuation, the plaintiffs conduct would be understood by the ordinary reader of the impugned passage as breaching Australian industrial legislation in my view.

303 It was and is a requirement of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (Cth) (and later the *Workplace Relations Amendment Act 2005*) to not engage the defendant:

- without providing a proper employment contract
- without completing a Tax File Declaration form
- without remunerating them
- without completing payslips
- without overtime for hours worked in excess of normal working hours
- without leave entitlements
- without superannuation

304 Given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses where their evidence differs, for the reasons that I have explained above, it follows from the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses on this issue that I have set out in these reasons, that I have no doubt that the imputation that the impugned passages bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning, namely that the plaintiff had breached Australian industrial law, is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

That the plaintiff was a criminal

305 The case as to this imputation was pleaded in the statement of claim as follows:

"7 The Book Passages and the Article Passages are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

...

In respect of those at paragraph 5(m), that the Plaintiff was a criminal."

306 That paragraph reads as follows:

"(m) 'She is a criminal. She has physically assaulted people, psychologically abused people and conned people out of money!'"

307 The evidence establishes that the plaintiff has never been convicted of a crime however to assert that someone is a criminal does not require proof of conviction of an offence if it is established that the person has engaged in conduct which is criminal in nature. The evidence in this case establishes, to my complete satisfaction, that the plaintiff has committed assault and indecent assault and incited others to commit those crimes. She has also unlawfully obtained financial advantage and has possessed, used and supplied an illicit substance. That she has not been convicted of those crimes is not to the point in the context of this imputation.

308 This imputation is in the main covered by the findings and holdings I have already made however, to the extent that it embraces additional matters, given that I accept the evidence of the defendant and her witnesses and reject that of the plaintiff and her witnesses in all cases where their evidence differs, this imputation is absolutely true and is justified pursuant to the defence provided pursuant to s 25 of the Act. I so find and hold.

309 The imputations from the online publications are pleaded as follows:

"7F The publications the defendant has made of and concerning the plaintiff as pleaded at paragraphs 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D and 7E hereof are defamatory of the plaintiff and bore and were understood to bear, in their natural and ordinary meaning that:

- (a) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 7A(a), 7B(a), 7C(a)(ii), 7D(a) and 7E(a) that the plaintiff is unfit to practise as a psychologist;
- (b) In respect of those referred to at paragraph 7A(b), 7A(d) and 7B(b) that the plaintiff committed acts of abuse against the defendant;
- (c) In respect of those referred to at 7A(d), 7C(a)(i), 7B(b)(i) and 7E(b) that the plaintiff physically abused the defendant;
- (d) In respect of those referred to at 7A(b) that the plaintiff is likely to suffer from narcissistic personality disorder and borderline personality disorder;
- (e) In respect of those referred to at 7A(c) that the plaintiff is a violent extremist;
- (f) In respect of those referred to at 7C(b)(ii) that the plaintiff misused her position as a psychologist to threaten her; and
- (g) In respect of those referred to at 7E(b) that the plaintiff was guilty of abuse and physical assault of the defendant and that she was guilty of such conduct as to warrant her de-registration as a psychologist."

310 Paragraphs 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D and 7E read as follows:

- "7A The defendant has also published and continues to publish the following further materials of and concerning the Plaintiff via the website <https://www.carlimcconkey.com>
- (a) "I lost over 13 years in the destructive cult, Universal Knowledge (formerly known as Life Integration Programmes), run by cult leader Natasha Lakaev (a registered Psychologist with AHPRA, Australia)"
 - (b) "Myself and scores of others were abused by Natasha Lakaev, who used mind control to yield power, money and glorification within a high demand group. Cult leaders generally display the traits of a charismatic narcissist, with Antisocial, Borderline and Histrionic Personality Disorders"
 - (c) A discussion of the Book as: "a gripping account of the brutal impact of spiritual and violent extremism."
 - (d) "What at first appeared professional and promising, became a vehicle for psychological and physical abuse."
- 7B The defendant has also published and continues to publish the following further materials of and concerning the plaintiff via the section of her website entitled 'Book Reviews' which is viewable at the URL: <https://www.carlimcconkey.com/book-reviews>:
- (a) 'I was involved with Lakaev's courses close to two decades ago and was absolutely shocked to learn that this woman went from operating her cult to becoming a registered psychologist in Australia (current) and at some stage was even working for Queensland Health as a government-employed psychologist. Unfathomable and this was despite several media exposes on her, an obviously questionable online presence and several complaints to the Queensland Psychology Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This book reveals it all, providing not only in-depth, clear and explanatory description of how this Australian cult operated but in the final chapters also provides insights into how AHPRA and the Queensland Psychology Board allowed Lakaev to continue with her registration as a psychologist despite what has been presented in front of them.'
 - (b) 'Carli McConkey has shared her journey into a New age cult with honesty and courage. This book will be invaluable in helping others who have been, or find themselves drawn into what appears to be a group offering courses to benefit their lives, often at a vulnerable time in their life.

Trapped for 13 years in a world of abuse and control Carli bravely tells her story of life in Universal Knowledge and her journey to freedom.'
- 7C The defendant has also published and continues to publish of and concerning the plaintiff via the section of her website titled 'My Story' at the URL: <https://www.carlimcconkey.com/news>:
- (a) An article headed "Alleged leader of cult works as a psychologist" purportedly published by The Sunday Age and the Sydney Morning Herald on their websites on 16 October 2010 containing the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:
 - (i) 'Carli McConkey, has told The Sunday Age that Ms Lakaev was physically violent and psychologically manipulative, and had persuaded her followers that she was the Queen of Atlantis, a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and one of 12 members of the Intergalactic Council of the Universe.'

- (ii) 'Complaints against her by former acolytes have been investigated once by Queensland's health regulator, but no action taken. The national health regulator will not comment except to say Ms Lakaev "has current registration and is therefore deemed fit to practise'.'
- (b) An article headed "Medium, Carli's Story: Exiting a Cult" purportedly published by the Let's Talk About Sects podcast on 30 January 2018 containing the following publications of and concerning the plaintiff:
 - (i) 'On top of the financial strain, things also often got physical. "When this cult leader was bashing me up, I was feeling like I deserved this.'
 - (ii) 'My cult leader now as a registered psychologist, threatened that if I did leave, that she would report me to DOCS, Department of Child Safety, and have my children taken away from me 'cos she was going to say that I was an abusive mother and sign off on it as a psychologist.'
- 7D The defendant has published and continues to publish the following material of and concerning the plaintiff via her Twitter account at the url: https://twitter.com/carli_mcconkey?lang=en
- (a) 'Please join me in demanding that the Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA) and the health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) de-register a Clinical Psychologist who is an abusive Cult Leader.'
- 7E The Defendant has published the following material concerning the Plaintiff via her Facebook account which is viewable at the URL: <https://www.facebook.com/carlimcconkey>
- (a) 'Please support this petition to ask the Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency (AHPRA) and the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) to re-investigate a Clinical Psychologist who has caused significant harm to vulnerable members of the Australian community.'
 - (b) 'This psychologist "was the President of the Australian Psychological Society from 2009 to 2011' at the time when my cult leader, Natasha Lakaev was investigated as a registered Psychologist for allegations of abuse and physical assault. No wonder these criminals get away with their crimes when all levels of government and those in power do nothing and let the perpetrators continue to cause further harm to society. Natasha Lakaev is still a registered psychologist.'

That the plaintiff is unfit to practise as a psychologist and warrants deregistration

311 On the basis of the evidence in this case which bears on the plaintiff's character, her beliefs and her conduct, I find that imputations that the plaintiff is unfit as a person to practice as a psychologist and was guilty of abuse and physical assault of the defendant as to warrant her de-registration as a psychologist is, at the very least, substantially true. Whether the *Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency Psychology Board* would, as a matter of fact, at the time of the publication of the impugned assertions have deregistered the plaintiff, or now, is not to the point.

312 In my judgment, no reasonable person with knowledge of the findings that I have made against the plaintiff in this action would take the view that she was a fit and proper person to remain registered by any licensing body to provide counselling and treatment to emotionally and/or psychologically vulnerable clients.

That the plaintiff physically abused and committed acts of abuse against the defendant

313 I have already found and held that these imputations are absolutely true. There can be no sensible distinction made between the terms "physical abuse" and "battery".

That the plaintiff is likely to suffer from narcissistic personality disorder and borderline personality disorder

314 No expert evidence was called to establish that the plaintiff had been diagnosed with either of these disorders but the pleaded imputation is not that she does, but that *she is likely to*. That imputation in turn was derived from the defendant's publication of the words "[c]ult leaders generally display the traits of a charismatic narcissist, with Antisocial, Borderline and Histrionic Personality Disorders". Interestingly the relevant imputation pleaded by the plaintiff was not that she was a cult leader but that "she had wrongly indoctrinated people".

315 In any event, I have found that the plaintiff was a cult leader as well as having wrongfully indoctrinated people. That she is "likely to" suffer from narcissism and personality disorders is, in my view, substantially true without the need for expert evidence. Terms such as schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and psychopath, which are all forms of psychiatric illnesses or disorders in the expert's lexicon of diagnoses, have become part of ordinary everyday language and it is no stretch of imagination that the ordinary person, understanding all of the evidence I have accepted against the plaintiff, might say of her – "she is likely to be a narcissist" or – "she is likely to have a personality disorder".

316 I find and hold that this imputation is substantially true.

That the plaintiff is a violent extremist

317 Again although, as with all of the pleaded imputations, this one has been admitted by the defendant in her defence, it is not inappropriate to look at the impugned passage. It is "A discussion of the Book as: 'a gripping account of the brutal impact of spiritual and violent extremism.'" The imputation cannot be accepted as being that the plaintiff is a political or religious terrorist. Her ideology, spiritual beliefs and physical practices were however, in my view, so far outside the mainstream as to warrant characterisation as extreme. And they were clearly attended by violence, both physically and culturally. The notion of teaching students on *The Survivors* courses to shoot firearms was not suggested as being for the purposes of shooting game for food. The clear implication from that practice was that survival in an apocalyptic event was that to survive, a student must know how to kill other human beings. This accords with the evidence of the defendant and Dr Del Rae.

318 I find and hold this imputation to be substantially true.

That the plaintiff misused her position as a psychologist to threaten the defendant

319 This imputation is established as absolutely true by the defendant's evidence on the issue, which I accept. Moreover, it is consistent with Ms Townsend's evidence that the plaintiff threatened to report her, as a psychologist, to the Department of Child Services as being an abusive parent. In that case, Ms Townsend's evidence, which I accept, was that the plaintiff went so far as to show her the letter that she threatened that she would send, before taking it back from her.

Conclusion and orders

320 It follows from all that I have said that each of the imputations from the impugned book passages, articles and online publications are true. I have differentiated between the terms "absolutely true" and "substantially true" only as a matter of qualitative emphasis. In each case, in my judgement, the imputations are substantially true (and true in substance and fact), such as to attract the defence of justification provided by s 25 of the Act (and the common law). There is no necessity for me to consider

any other of the defendant's pleaded defences. Nor is there any necessity for me to consider any other aspects of the plaintiff's claim. I do not accept the submission of the plaintiff's counsel that this might be a case where, if I accepted "the evidence of, and on behalf of the defendant, over that of, and on behalf of the plaintiff, that such might only lead to a lesser award of damages rather than the application of any defamation defence in the context of the defendant's present day publications in light of the plaintiff's present reputation". It should be clear from the totality of my findings that this is not such a case.

321 I note that in reaching the findings of fact and the findings as to credit that I have, it has not been necessary for me to have recourse to any of the evidence I admitted on the trial *de bene esse*.

322 I point out that the names of persons referred to in the defendant's book have, in most cases, been fictionalised and do not align with the names of the real persons referred to in the evidence. A list of the real names of the fictitious characters is annexed to these reasons.

323 There will be judgment for the defendant against the plaintiff and subject to any written application by the plaintiff made within 14 days of today, the defendant is awarded costs against the plaintiff of and incidental to the action. Those costs are to be taxed in default of agreement.

324 I note that such costs will be limited to the out-of-pocket expenses that the defendant actually and reasonably incurred in the preparation and execution of her case. Self-represented litigants are not entitled to an order for costs indemnifying them for work that they have done themselves in the preparation and execution of their case: *Cachia v Hanes* (1994) 179 CLR 403. This position has been justified by the High Court of Australia in light of a number of policy reasons, not least that it would be inherently difficult to quantify the indemnity of lay litigants when it comes to the taxation of costs: *Cachia v Hanes* at 415.

325 Although self-represented litigants are unable to recover costs, they are generally entitled to compensation for the out-of-pocket expenses that they have actually and reasonably incurred in the course of their case: *Von Reisner v Commonwealth (No 2)* (2009) 262 ALR 430. The types of out-of-pocket expenses that have been recognised as compensable by Australian Courts include:

- Court filing fees: *B v P* [2000] FamCA 392.
- Transcript fees: *W (deceased) v W* [2004] FamCA 319.
- Incidental expenses relating to photocopying, postage etc: *Shephard v Blueberry Farms of Australia (Corindi) Ltd* (2001) 162 FLR 339.

326 All of these things are ultimately matters for the taxing officer. I mention them to the extent that I have for the very reason that the defendant has been self-represented throughout this action.

327 Any application by either party for costs of and incidental to the preliminary issue in this case, the subject of the judgment of Wood J of 22 September 2023, should be made to her Honour.

This is the annexure referred to in paragraph 320

Character List - The Cult Effect		
1	Abigail	Sandrene Trembath
2	Alice	Debra Lee
3	Amy	Elissa Maller
4	Anne	Helen Lee
5	Ben	Chris Wellington
6	Dave	Brad Jerred
7	Dominic	Alex Paine
8	Elizabeth	Bailey Facer
9	Eric	Patrick Maher
10	Geoff	James Bennett
11	Harriette Robinson	Annette Denny
12	Harvey	Darren de Barros
13	Heather	Kornelia Kecskes
14	Isabelle	Tracey Foster
15	Jenny	Julie Townsend
16	Jeremy	John Jentz
17	Josh	Ayden Bennett
18	Julian	Greg Proctor
19	Kate	Kylie Bennett
20	Luke	Nick Panos
21	Margaret	Andrea McSherry
22	Noeline	Eve Heit
23	Patricia	Susan Rowe
24	Peter	David Roperti
25	Rachel	Keicha Adams
26	Rebecca	Catherine Lock
27	Roger	Andrew Wiemers
28	Sam Robinson	Warren Denny
29	Sarah	Anita Carroll
30	Sasha	Misha Del Rae
31	Ted	Andy (Anita Carroll's ex-boyfriend)
32	Theodora	Danijela Zivkov
33	Tiffany	Louisa Laing
34	Wendy	Helen Pomery