

Part 3 - The relationship between the appellant and Barry Catt

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The appellant and Barry Catt first met in 1986 and were married on 14 August 1987. Prior to their marriage they had started living in a de facto relationship, first at Roseanne's residence in Cowan Road, Taree and later at Barry Catt's residence in Cornwall Street, Taree. Barry Catt was at the time a businessman who owned a number of properties and a successful panelbeating business, Catty's Body Repairs, in Cornwall Street, Taree. The Crown alleged that, from the beginning, Roseanne set about systematically to gain control of Barry Catt's assets and his business and that to do this she was prepared to have him either institutionalised or sent to gaol. Prior to meeting Roseanne he had spent a short time in a psychiatric hospital while being treated for severe stress. The Crown alleged that Roseanne took advantage of the situation already existing, provoked and encouraged bizarre behaviour in Barry Catt and disturbed the level of his medication in order to have him committed. Eleven days after the marriage Barry Catt was committed to a hospital in Newcastle following an incident in which Roseanne complained that he had been violent and abusive towards her and his children. He was diagnosed as suffering from mild manic depressive illness and advised to take Lithium tablets, a drug he continued to take thereafter. His condition settled and he was sent home after about a week. A few days later he was re-committed to the same institution, again after a complaint from Roseanne. This time he remained in hospital for three weeks before being discharged. After a few days at home he was again sent back to the hospital, and on this occasion a psychiatrist refused to admit him and sent him back to Taree. His only admission to a mental hospital thereafter was in June 1988 when he voluntarily attended the Northside

Clinic for diagnostic purposes.

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In time Roseanne began making allegations that Barry Catt was and had been sexually and physically assaulting his four children. The Crown alleged these allegations were made for the purpose of alienating Barry Catt from friends and associates and encouraging people to side with Roseanne. It was alleged to be the reason Roseanne gave to people for wanting him put away. The children, whose natural mother had left home in 1981, when they were quite young, were allegedly manipulated by Roseanne and confirmed the story of abuse. On 26 November 1990 Barry Catt was arraigned in the Supreme Court at Taree to answer charges of sexual assault of each of his four children. He was tried and acquitted.

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When Roseanne moved into Cornwall Street, with Barry Catt's consent, she not only took over the running of the household but assumed effective control of his panelbeating business, leaving him to do only manual work on the floor of the workshop. The Crown alleged that Barry Catt never agreed to Roseanne being a partner. He said he had no idea until after the event that she had notified the various organisations involved with his business, such as the Department of Motor Transport, that she had become a partner. The Crown alleged that she forged his signature on a number of documents and also forged requests for the surrender of various insurance policies. Barry Catt's previous girlfriend, Charon Napper (Clarke), gave evidence that, contrary to what Roseanne alleged, she had never signed a surrender of insurance policies in her name. The Crown accepted that Roseanne had put money into the business. The amount she had injected was not agreed. The Crown alleged that Roseanne sought, for the purpose of Family Court proceedings

heard in August 1989, to exaggerate her financial interest in and control of the business and denigrate its condition before she became involved with it.

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After the events known as "the rock incident", a summons was taken out against Barry Catt for apprehended violence by the appellant and each of the four children. In consequence he moved out of the main Catt residence at 1 Cornwall Street and lived in the office on the other side of the road. According to him he continued to visit the appellant at No 1 but only at her request and usually late at night. His understanding of the order of apprehended violence, as explained to him by the appellant, was that he was prohibited from seeing her or the children at his own behest, but was permitted to do so if she or they requested it. In early February 1989 he was arrested and charged with the sexual assaults on his four children for which he was later acquitted. Despite this event, he said that he was continuing to see the appellant from time to time on an intimate basis, although only when she requested it.