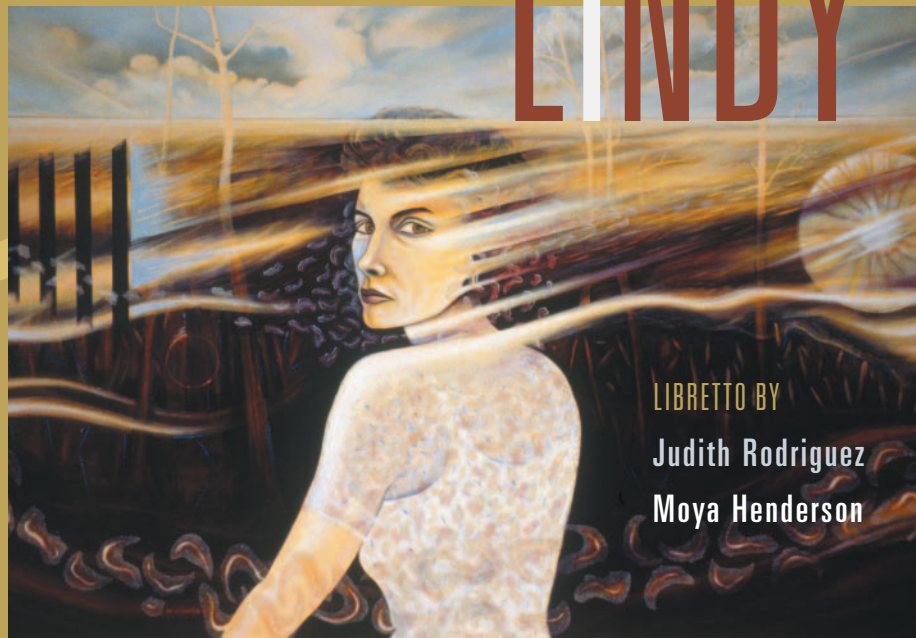


  
ABC  
Classics  
476 7489

MOYA HENDERSON'S

# LINDY



LIBRETTO BY  
Judith Rodriguez  
Moya Henderson

  
ABC  
Classics

Opera Australia



*Lindy* by Neville Dawson

# Lindy

Moya Henderson

Opera in Two Acts

Libretto by Judith Rodriguez and Moya Henderson

# Lindy

Moya Henderson b. 1941

**Lindy**

Libretto by Judith Rodriguez b. 1936 and Moya Henderson

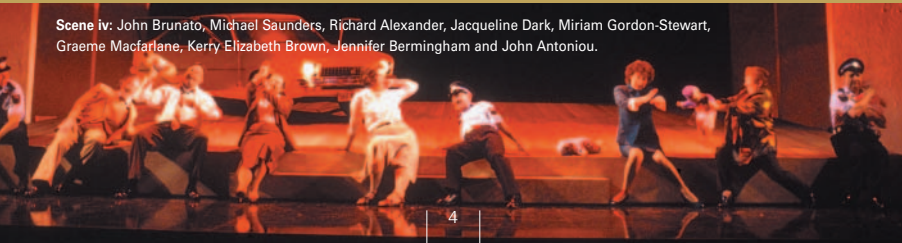
Lindy	Joanna Cole
Michael	David Hobson
Prosecuting Counsel / Prosecution QC	Barry Ryan
Defence Counsel / Nurse Downs / Defence QC	Elizabeth Campbell
Judge / Commissioner	Malcolm Donnelly
Aidan	Karl Goodman
Reagan	Ruben Sewell
Scoop / Woman / Spirit of Azaria / Textile Expert / Aboriginal Inmate / Searcher 2	Miriam Gordon-Stewart
Belle / Forensic Expert / Searcher 3 / Drunk Stringer / Sally Lowe	Kerry Elizabeth Brown
Scribbler / Warden / Searcher 4	Jacqueline Dark
Ding / Solicitor / Warder / Searcher 1	Jennifer Bermingham
Morgue man / Greg Lowe / Blood Expert	Graeme Macfarlane
Dong / Man / Policeman / Court Officer	John Antoniou
Devil Boy / Ranger / Superintendent	John Brunato
Cadet / Sergeant / Teeth Expert / Searcher 5 / Forensics	Michael Saunders
	Richard Alexander

Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra

Sun Yi *concertmaster*

Richard Gill *conductor*

**Scene iv:** John Brunato, Michael Saunders, Richard Alexander, Jacqueline Dark, Miriam Gordon-Stewart, Graeme Macfarlane, Kerry Elizabeth Brown, Jennifer Bermingham and John Antoniou.

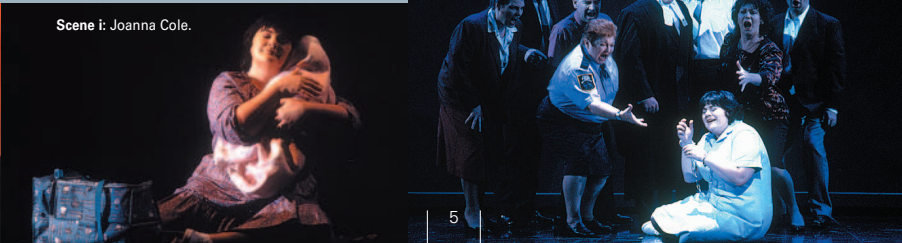


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Biography – Judith Rodriguez	19
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Libretto	24
Credits	45

Right: **Scene ii:** Jacqueline Dark, Michael Saunders, Graeme Macfarlane, Jennifer Bermingham, Barry Ryan, Richard Alexander, Joanna Cole, Kerry Elizabeth Brown and John Antoniou.

**Scene i:** Joanna Cole.



## CD 1

	[64'11]	<b>12</b> It had something in its mouth <i>Lindy</i>	2'57
Act I: Darwin Prison Dreaming Scene i: Dingo		<b>13</b> Mrs Chamberlain, Lindy, I'm a nurse <i>Nurse Downs</i>	2'51
<b>1</b> Sometimes it's hard to make out the lines <i>Lindy</i>	2'54	Scene iv: Blood	
<b>2</b> Ancient mothers from the Dreaming <i>Lindy</i>	1'45	<b>14</b> Police on red alert <i>Ensemble</i>	2'21
Scene ii: Mother		<b>15</b> All this mail keeps pouring in <i>Michael</i>	4'03
<b>3</b> Anderson, Barrett, Chamberlain...Chamberlain? <i>Warden</i>	2'28	Scene v: Trial	
<b>4</b> Azaria, Azaria! Where are you? <i>Lindy</i>	2'27	<b>16</b> Order in the Court <i>Court Officer</i>	3'14
<b>5</b> I'm feeling queasy myself <i>Prosecuting Counsel</i>	1'22	<b>17</b> Mrs Lowe, what do you remember <i>Defence Counsel</i>	4'08
<b>6</b> Right at the outset I told ev'ryone <i>Lindy</i>	2'36	<b>18</b> I am a top expert on textiles <i>Textile Expert</i>	4'50
<b>7</b> We were ordinary people <i>Michael</i>	1'32	<b>19</b> I call upon Mrs Lindy Chamberlain <i>Court Officer</i>	2'11
<b>8</b> Azaria, Azaria <i>Lindy</i>	2'30	<b>20</b> When was it, Mrs Chamberlain <i>Prosecuting Counsel</i>	4'01
Scene iii: Kill		<b>21</b> A split second later I realised <i>Lindy</i>	4'23
<b>9</b> What beautiful singing! <i>Sally</i>	2'53	<b>22</b> This has been going on and on <i>Lindy</i>	2'08
<b>10</b> Our name is Lowe by the way <i>Greg</i>	3'07	<b>23</b> <i>Dance of the Lindy and Michael look-alikes</i>	2'13
<b>11</b> Was that Bubby crying? <i>Michael</i>	1'16		

## CD 2

[30'14]

Act II Awakening Scene i: Jacket			
<b>1</b> After careful consideration <i>Superintendent</i>	4'18		
<b>2</b> That little jacket is mine <i>Lindy</i>	2'55		
<b>3</b> Lindy, your time as a prisoner is over <i>Warden</i>	1'48		
Scene ii: Inquiry			
<b>4</b> Good luck, Lindy <i>Stringer</i>	1'34		
<b>5</b> This is forensic alchemy <i>Defence QC</i>	2'57		
<b>6</b> Your Honour, I now introduce the evidence <i>Defence QC</i>	4'59		
<b>7</b> Your Honour, the Crown contends <i>Defence QC</i>	5'02		
<b>8</b> Ah, the jacket is stiff with red earth <i>Lindy, Michael</i>	4'29		
<b>9</b> My family stands steadfast <i>Lindy</i>	2'13		
		Total Playing Time	94'25

## The composer 'on the spot' about Lindy

## Why this opera, why Lindy?

Borrowing from local idiom for the all-Australian hamburger, this is a plot with the lot, including, dare I say it, the beetroot.

It suits my style to create a work which plays off the sacred against the profane, the ingenuous tenderness of the individual against the irrational rage of the mob. Then there's the opera's location: the heart, or more graphically, the umbilicus of the country, Uluru, one of the most mystical wild places on earth. This is an opera teeming with demons, but would the real ones please step forward into the footlights. Lindy Chamberlain, now Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, was treated like the she-devil from hell, but she wasn't any such thing.

The nation put on a performance worthy of the Dark Ages. We trilled and aped like grylluses (crickets) and babewyns (baboons) cut loose from the pages of an ancient psalter. Those ugly T-shirts and the never-ending supply of dingo jokes are modern 'howls' of the same phenomena. We 'believe' our culture to be so modern – its youthfulness sometimes an embarrassment to us – as our European forebears settled here less than 250 years ago. In fact, the baggage we trail after us, and may never manage to jettison, has origins which claw back through countless centuries.

What cannot be denied is that Australia's response to baby Azaria's disappearance at Uluru on the night of 17 August 1980 became increasingly frenetic, to the point of religious hysteria. What was fought over at every dinner table, night after night, right through the 1980s, were people's personal beliefs and opinions about the case. Not that many amongst us, not enough, were interested in the facts. The trial of Lindy Chamberlain was the inquisitorial culmination of the frenzy that had addled and raddled us all.

#### Why choose a contemporary subject about which to write an opera?

These are my times. Who better to write an opera about the Lindy era than a composer who lived through it? For just this kind of opera am I inclined and trained. [See composer's biog.]

Almost all of us accepted the forensic testimony presented in the trial of Lindy Chamberlain as 'gospel', even if we didn't actually understand it all that well. We were all so close to this case, we could smell the blood. Consider the plethora of scientific terminology which was put before the jury and the rest of us: tests for the specificity of the antiserum, reagents, foetal haemoglobin, orthotolidine tests, etc. Impossible for the laity to remember such details, but when it comes to the overall impact of the case, which of us will ever forget?

Why have I resorted to some gender re-allocation in the opera by changing one or two real-life, male characters from the Lindy Trial and Inquiry into female personae in the opera? Vocal balance, primarily, but such 'switching' gives me a chance to take a pot-shot at a typical institution in Australian society, the Law. Assigning the roles of Defence Counsel and Defence QC to a woman translates expectations for future gender equity into the present, if only on stage. (As I write, only one of the 23, newly appointed senior counsels here in the state of NSW is a woman.)

#### What about the dingo, that foxy-red coat, the fixed stare, that swagger?

I think this opera demonstrates that there's a little bit of dingo in all of us. Perhaps it is the dualities of this animal which fascinate us: dog or wolf, feral or native, wild or family pet ... which line do we 'buy'? Does the Australian dingo remind us of the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood*; the Roman she-wolf and nourisher of the twins Romulus and Remus, the ravenous wolf packs on the Russian steppe ... the devil him/herself? In this opera, the devil dingo of the Dreamtime, Kurrpanggu, haunts Uluru and reappears in testimony in the Commission of Inquiry. In Aboriginal Dreaming, this 'phantom' killer was treated to the weaker baby of twin births. The Traditional Owners of Uluru have ageless knowledge about how the muzzle of a 'dream' might snatch away something so precious from our everyday lives as a tiny, tiny baby.

I would like to acknowledge the use of David Lumsdaine's brilliant recording of the pied butcher-bird. This call is transcribed for flute at the opening of 'Kill' scene.

Finally I want to give an acknowledgment to Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton herself. What an inspiration she has been and continues to be to me. What a triumph for me that the heroine of this opera has survived such insurmountable setbacks. LINDY LIVES!

Moya Henderson

#### Writing Lindy

The opera *Lindy* was Moya's idea, a splendid one. The story of the loss of Azaria Chamberlain and the persecution of her parents combines so many issues that matter – and I believe great opera is about things that matter, like ageing or national liberation. While the Chamberlains were being tried, from 1980 to 1987, we'd all followed another trial – the trial of the media, the law enforcers and law courts, and the responses of the Australian public.

I read everything I could find about it, from the scurrilous to the scientific. The judgements delivered on the appeal in the High Court are fascinating reading. The newspaper accounts, of court appearances and the evidence given in two coroner's enquiries and the Supreme Court trial, were amazing. The photographs. The cartoons. We lived a nightmare with the

Chamberlains in the 1980s and Moya and I lived it again, for months and years, the events and issues and the details that built its deep public significance.

We discussed and rediscussed the inherent shape of the whole seven-year horror. We wanted to realise the tragedy, a very Australian one, a modern story of a Lost Child in the Bush. We were conscious too of its enormous importance as an exposé of media-stimulated public opinion escalating into a witch-hunt. It's as though by over-reaction those social forces described themselves clearly for all to see. I find it interesting that one of the earliest media commentators thought it was a 'tacky' subject to choose.

In August 1991 Moya and I went with my eldest daughter, Sibila, to Uluru. We needed to feel the country and the stories that made the country. The story was there of Kurrpanggu, the Ancestor Dingo. He came from the north-west and massacred the mala Wallabies in their camp at Uluru, and then ran on south-east along the line of the buried range. That story of murder resonated with the Chamberlains' experience. The changing colours of the country inspired us. Moya found in it the voice of the butcher-bird that she put in the opera, the honey grevillea that's there too.

We asked the Mutitjulu Aboriginal people for permission to use the names of their trackers Nuwe Minyintiri and Barbara Tjikadu. I remember

the light touch of the hand of the elder who met us at the house of the white mediator and granted us permission. It was a special experience.

I found among the Aboriginal tools that Mutitjulu people sell at their Centre, a delicate blade of stone with resin one side to hold it by – a knife shaped by Nuwe Minyintiri. Is it childish to have a talisman? This is my talisman for the truth of the opera. Aboriginal evidence was not given weight during the Supreme Court trial that produced such a mountain of false and contrived evidence. The Aboriginal trackers had seen the signs and knew the truth and that was heard in their translated evidence to Justice Morling, respected and at last used in the Morling Report.

We walked around the Rock. We also hired sparky little mopeds. Sibila's a veteran motorcyclist and chose a large red specimen and kept watch over us on the road. Moya and I had each a smaller pink version. I vividly remember Moya, who didn't at first realise the handle contained the accelerator, standing there with her moped powering round and round her. The only time I've ever seen Moya less than fully powered herself.

Late in 1991 I sat down to a summer of writing a first draft in 14 scenes. They hung like roller blinds from the shelves in my study. The 14 scenes of 1992 had become seven by 1993, thank goodness. They've changed since, and there's more continuity, but in essence they're there.

It's been a long process, and the process of a friendship too, with lots of writing and visits to Moya in Sydney. I believe we've both put in several times the work we'd need for any later opera either of us might work on. That's natural. It happens with first novels. There were bouts of re-conceptualising and re-shaping. Moya is a wonderful composer for voice, who has chosen and devised texts for many works. She had many radical ideas and made many energetic interventions, and the libretto is rightly attributed to both of us.

A high point in the making of the opera was the 1994 workshop presentation of two scenes in Sydney and in Canberra. In Sydney, it was performed where it had been rehearsed, before an invited audience. I'd heard the music, of course – Moya gave me an idea of it with her computer's sound technology. But what an experience, to hear operatic voices project the triangular struggle of the accused, the Law, and public opinion. Even done as an afternoon performance in street clothes, on the bare wood of large slab-like boxes, it was absolutely moving. In Canberra there was the added thrill that the audience actually paid to hear these two scenes, along with some from *The Eighth Wonder*.

I've felt rather far away from the opera for a while. It's been Moya, in Sydney, who's done the major work of completing the score and parts, discussing, cutting, working with Richard Gill, who's been supportive from early on. I felt re-

involved at the unbelievable moment in 2001 when we sat around a table, with Simone Young at the first meeting – Richard Gill, and Moya and I, and Stuart Maunder. Yes, as a words person I specially enjoyed the completion of the team with the appointment of the director. The whole thing began to seem real. It comes back a bit to the words side, to drama and the stage.

**Judith Rodriguez**

### *Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war.*

– William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

*A century ago the sons of my great-grandparents at Bunyah, who ran a beef business in conjunction with their farming and grazing, used to have to throw heads and offal to the dingoes on Bulby Mountain as they drove over the pass there, to save their horses from being savaged by the packs. Several men were bailed up by dingoes on remote tracks, and had to defend themselves with their axes, and John Startin of Bunyah, now middle-aged but a champion axeman all the same, was almost taken by dingoes out in the paddock next to the state forest boundary when he was a toddler; only prompt intervention by his father Tony saved him. No one of the older generation around home doubts the ability or the readiness of a dingo to take a small baby such as Azaria Chamberlain.*

Les Murray, *The Quality of Sprawl*

On the morning of Monday 18 August 1980, every newspaper, TV channel and radio station in Australia ran a version of the screaming headline: 'A DINGO TOOK MY BABY!' It was the beginning of one of the most widely publicised and controversial legal cases in Australia's history.

On the previous day, Sunday 17 August, Alice Lynne Chamberlain and her husband, Michael Leigh Chamberlain, were staying in a tent at a campsite near Ayers Rock (now officially known by its Aboriginal name, Uluru). With them were their two sons, Aidan (aged six) and Reagan (aged four), and their nine-week-old baby, Azaria. In the evening Mrs Chamberlain, known to her friends as Lindy, put Reagan and Azaria to bed in the tent and joined her husband and other tourists at the camp barbecue. A cry was heard, and Lindy went to check on the children. She came running back, screaming that a dingo had taken the baby, Azaria.

What ensued was a chaos of disorganised and inept police investigation, media hyperbole, legal bungling and public outrage, and over the following eight years an epic legal drama unfolded. In the search that followed Azaria's disappearance, no trace of her was discovered except some of her clothing, and the first coronial inquiry found, on the basis of the condition of the clothing, that there had been 'human intervention' in the disposal of the body. This first inquest exonerated the Chamberlains, but subsequent investigations justified, in the view



of the police, a further inquest: the Chamberlains were committed for trial, Lindy for infanticide and Michael as accessory after the fact.

The trial took place in a blaze of publicity, with the media and the nation effectively sitting in judgement. There was the utmost difficulty in finding an unbiased jury, and those who survived the selection procedure had to be sequestered for the duration of what came to be known as the trial of the century: six agonising weeks, from 13 September to 29 October 1982. Lindy was found guilty and sentenced – in extraordinary 19th-century terminology – to ‘hard labour for life.’ Michael received a suspended sentence of 18 months. The fight for freedom that followed lasted for six years. From their initial pro-dingo position, most of the media had swung round to an aggressively pro-Lindy stance, and the general public followed. Politicians and deeply concerned private citizens campaigned tirelessly for Lindy’s cause, donating money, collecting 130,000 signatures on a petition for her release and acquittal, and mounting a nationwide ‘Free Lindy’ drive with leaflets, T-shirts, bumper stickers – all the paraphernalia of a 20th-century publicity campaign. One man is reported to have spent five thousand dollars of his own money on advertising his belief that the responsibility for Azaria’s death lay with the Northern Territory Government, which allowed wild dingoes to roam around family camping sites.

At last, in February 1986, another tragedy at Uluru swung the balance and forced the reopening of the Azaria Chamberlain case. A tourist fell to his death from the Rock, and when his body – partially devoured by dingoes – was recovered, a baby’s matinee jacket, badly stained, was found close by. It was new evidence, bearing out Lindy’s claim that Azaria had been wearing such a jacket when she disappeared, and accounting for a key point of the prosecution’s case – that no trace of saliva had been found on the other clothing. A Royal Commission of Inquiry was held in May 1986, and the Commissioner’s Report stated that physical evidence had been carelessly handled and inadequately protected; that eyewitness accounts from fellow tourists had been ignored or played down; and that much of the expert testimony had been misleading or downright incorrect. It also emerged that, to the concern of rangers, dingoes that frequented the campsite in quest of food had previously attacked children, and that the testimony of Aboriginal trackers who had been involved in the search for Azaria’s body had been virtually ignored in the inquests and the trial.

The Royal Commission pardoned the Chamberlains, but – such an ass is the law – their convictions were to stand. Not satisfied, Lindy and Michael went to the Northern Territory Court of Criminal Appeal, and in September 1988 their convictions were finally quashed. In

1992, twelve years after Azaria’s disappearance, they were awarded 1.3 million dollars in damages, plus legal costs.

Involving battalions of lawyers and a long succession of expert witnesses, the legal costs of the prolonged battle to exonerate Lindy Chamberlain have been estimated at 20 million dollars; the costs in terms of human suffering are incalculable. During the early stages of this infamous case, rumour and innuendo flew rife and unchecked, like the contents of some modern Pandora’s box. The Chamberlains, devout Seventh Day Adventists, were suspected of belonging to a sinister cult that practised human sacrifice, and it was claimed that the child’s name, Azaria, meant ‘sacrifice in the wilderness’, and that her parents had taken her to Uluru in order to kill her because she was imperfect in some way; this story was fuelled by Lindy’s becoming pregnant again while she was serving her sentence, reportedly with the object of ‘replacing’ the ‘imperfect’ child. Those who believed the dingo story suggested that the baby had been killed by a pet dingo belonging to the ranger or his wife, who had meddled with the clothing to protect the animal. For a while the story spread that one of the Chamberlain boys had killed the baby. At the bizarre end of the spectrum, a value of \$500,000 has been placed on the so-called Azaria Chamberlain Collection, which includes a black baby’s dress that at one time lent colour to the ‘cult’ theory.

During the lengthy legal proceedings Lindy was vilified as an uncaring mother because of her demeanour in court, which was calm, even impassive; Michael was perceived as a weak and vacillating person whose response to the baby’s disappearance was sometimes strangely phlegmatic, sometimes over-emotional. Their family was broken up and their marriage, which had to all appearances been a strong and happy one, was destroyed and ended in divorce. Thanks to the relentless media spotlight, the case became a trial by media and, by extension, by the nation.

*In the deeply truthful world of opera everything is believable, from inviting a statue to dinner to carrying your dead daughter around in a sack.*

John Mortimer, *Character Parts*

In the late 1980s Moya Henderson conceived the bold idea of writing an opera about the Chamberlains’ story. Henderson wanted to explore, through this ‘deeply truthful’ medium, the aspects of the national psyche that had generated the unprecedentedly strong public feeling aroused by the case. In line with The Australian Opera’s policy of supporting new Australian work, Moffatt Oxenbould, at that time Artistic Director of the company, agreed to commission the work with the backing of funding from the Australia Council. Poet Judith Rodriguez was approached to write the libretto, and after years of close and intensive collaboration the

opera was completed by 1997. But a full-scale production remained a dream until the arrival of music director Simone Young, who rescued it finally from the filing cabinet and put it onto the stage of the Sydney Opera House.

The story of Azaria, Lindy and Michael Chamberlain certainly contains the elements of conflict and tragedy that are the stuff of grand opera – but it is also extremely complex and in some ways deeply shaming about our national attitudes and about some of our police and legal practices. The two collaborators were faced with the challenge of condensing and simplifying months of witness and expert testimony and legal argument, and of finding underlying themes that would support a dramatic musical treatment of the Chamberlain story.

Henderson and Rodriguez have hit upon a workable dramatic structure for this sprawling, confusing and disturbing story. The opera takes place in two antithetical worlds: one is the natural world of the Australian landscape – specifically the Rock at Uluru – and its wildlife; the other is the man-made world of law courts where the long and painful aftermath of Azaria Chamberlain's disappearance was played out. The Rock is a sacred site for Indigenous Australians, and a source of awe and even fear for European visitors. It is a haunting place, at once beautiful and intensely strange, the focus of many of the Aboriginal Dreamtime stories, a

place where non-Indigenous Australians can only ever be tourists, allowed there on sufferance. Law courts, on the other hand, are purely of the western world, places where – at least in theory – evidence is rigorously tested and then lawyers employ their adversarial skills to convince a jury that those in the dock have committed the crimes of which they stand accused.

Lindy operates in the nexus between these two worlds, an interface where western civilisation, symbolised by a perfectly ordinary modern family, is pitted against primitive natural forces, symbolised by 'Kurrpanggu, the devil dingo of the Dreamtime ... golden, golden, golden,' as Lindy sings of him. And in the exploration of this interface, it becomes clear that the two worlds are in fact frighteningly similar: the predatory instincts of wild creatures are mirrored in the no less predatory behaviour of the human creatures who persecuted Lindy and Michael Chamberlain. In an audacious and brilliantly successful coup de théâtre, Henderson and Rodriguez have highlighted this parallelism by double-casting the dingo pack, led by Ding, Dong and Belle, as the media mongrels who first howled for Lindy's blood and then screamed just as vociferously for her acquittal. The opera presents us with both a moral and a physical landscape against which we are asked not to judge Lindy and Michael Chamberlain but to evaluate the deep-seated prejudices and atavistic fears that made Lindy, for a while, the most hated woman in Australia.

As the quote from John Mortimer suggests, the world of opera is a world of profound psychological truths that reach beyond the facts.

Henderson and Rodriguez have pared the cast of characters down to its bare bones, and have structured their treatment around the pivotal discovery of the *matinée* jacket, which was a key element in Lindy's eventual acquittal. Hence the opera falls into two parts. Act I takes place in the jail where Lindy spent three years. It is the evening before she is to identify the jacket, and she experiences a series of flashbacks as she relives the whole sequence of events, from the family's arrival at the Rock to her conviction for infanticide.

Various elements of the story are interwoven in a surreal blend of daily life, emotional response and nightmare. There is Lindy's premonitory memory of seeing the painting of Kurrpanggu, the devil dingo, on the wall of the Fertility Cave, its eyes fixed on her 'darling child' as she nurses her. There is the simple ordinariness of an inexpensive family holiday – arriving at the campsite, admiring the scenery, dealing with the kids, making new friends, taking photographs. There is the solemnising beauty of the place – the glowing primal colours of the Rock, the brilliance of the night sky in the desert. There is the dark underside of the natural world – the butcher-birds, with their incomparable song, are nevertheless birds of prey and carrion eaters. There are Lindy's nightmare recollections of the

chorus of jeering, accusing voices during the various hearings, harping on the blood that is the colour of the red sand, the red Rock. There is the mocking fancy dress ball of 'Lindys' and 'Michaels' as the jury considers its verdict.

The music reflects this kaleidoscopic quality, leaping with constant shifts of key and tempo from Lindy's elegiac utterances to her dead child, to lyrical evocation of the sounds and colours of the outback, to the harsh, staccato jeers and torments of the court scenes, to cheerful chatter at the campsite, to ominous chromatic passages prefiguring the dingo attack.

Act II takes place in real time. It begins when Lindy, still in prison, identifies the *matinée* jacket as Azaria's, and moves on to the Commission of Inquiry that exonerated Lindy. The media pack and the public, personified in Ding, Dong and Belle and their entourage, are by now determinedly pro-Lindy, and their exultation mounts as expert testimony from previous hearings is discredited. The evidence of the Aboriginal trackers that dingoes do take babies and that this was what happened to Azaria Chamberlain is at last acknowledged. Finally the Chamberlains are exculpated, having come 'to the very end of the law', and Lindy acknowledges God's support in this trial of her faith.

On one level, this second part of the opera deals with the facts: with the gradual and painstaking unravelling of a web of complex evidence, and



with the vindication of Lindy and the triumphant justification of her long fight for justice and freedom. But on the moral and psychological level it moves towards an astonishingly serene closure. When Lindy identifies the jacket, she mourns Azaria's death but sees the jacket as a sign that God will reunite their shattered family, though this reconciliation must wait until after death.

Lindy and Michael imagine that Azaria's spirit lives on in the air of Uluru, in the call of the butcher-birds, in the scent of grevillea, even in the howl of dingoes. Azaria has become 'red sand', part of the Australian earth; she now forms an indissoluble bond between the two worlds of the opera – the ancient landscape of the Rock and the modern world of western civilisation. Here, and in many other scenes throughout the opera, we feel the presence of a ghost-heroine, a character in the drama who often seemed to be forgotten in the frenzy of accusation and counter-accusation that marked, and marred, the long-drawn-out processes of the law: Azaria herself, a victim as innocent as Lindy, now becomes a symbol of reconciliation, of resignation, and of peace of mind. Lindy is able to declare that her spirit is unbroken and her faith intact, and to rejoice in her newfound inner resources.

*Here is lying ... a great, new music hid. He who makes it, he will put into it the thousand feelings awoken in him by this emptiness and space, this desolation; with always the serene blue heaven*

*above, and these pale, sad, so grotesque trees that weep and rave.*

Henry Handel Richardson,  
*The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*

Richardson, writing in the early years of the 20th century, foresaw that the 'great, new music' of Australia would draw heavily upon the strangeness, the alien quality – to European eyes and ears – of the Australian hinterland. Up to a point she was right: in *Lindy*, Henderson explores the rich field of musical inspiration afforded by the vast emptiness of the Australian outback, with the great, glowing, mysterious Rock at its heart, the dazzling night sky above, the lyric music of the butcher-birds, and the wisdom of the Aboriginals who are its traditional guardians.

But Henderson also incorporates a purely modern take on the contradictions and cruelties of human nature and the underlying savagery and prejudice that made Lindy Chamberlain, for a while, a scapegoat for the subconscious fear and distrust of powerful women that characterised Australia in the early 1980s: Lindy is a strong and steadfast woman who refused to be intimidated by the vindictiveness of public opinion or sold short by the machinery of the law. Henderson perceives this as 'sideshow-alley madness', to quote an interview with Jill Sykes in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and draws on the contemporary rhythms and harmonies of cabaret and vaudeville, with their undertones of hysteria,

to emphasise this dark side of the national psyche. In the same way, the dingo is perceived as both beautiful and menacing, and the song of the butcher-birds is counterpointed against the description of their predatory behaviour. Fast-moving and frenetic passages of constantly shifting tonalities and rhythms are interwoven with moments of melismatic lyricism to create a human tapestry of unflinching psychological reality.

In April 2001, 21 years after the Chamberlain case made headlines and divided a nation, a nine-year-old boy was attacked and mauled to death by dingoes on Queensland's Fraser Island. Inevitably, it brought the Chamberlain case to mind; probably few now doubt that Lindy Chamberlain was speaking the truth, even though all the facts may never be known, but in those nightmare years after the loss of her child she experienced a unique purgatory. Henderson's opera documents, above all, Lindy Chamberlain's achievement in rising above the scorn and contumely that masked the atavistic terrors aroused in the people of Australia by her ordeal in the heart of this ancient land.

**Janet Healey**

## Moya Henderson

Moya Henderson graduated from the University of Queensland with first class honours in December 1972. Her first professional appointment as a composer came the year after her graduation, when she was appointed resident composer to The Australian Opera during its inaugural season at the Sydney Opera House. This first 'job' as a professional musician has had a lasting impact on Henderson. The 1973 season was a brilliant one for The Australian Opera, as it then was. Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, its ravishing music and powerful drama, was for Henderson the most inspired work experience.

'As composer-in-residence – too grand a title in reality – I attended many rehearsals and production calls for the season's major offerings. No work thrilled me more than *War and Peace*. It was performed in English, so no language barrier. This was a role model indeed.'

Towards the end of that year Henderson was awarded a West German student exchange scholarship (DAAD) and a travel grant from the Music Board of the Australian Council for the Arts, now the Australia Council, which enabled her to continue her post-graduate music education in Germany.

From 1974 to 1976, Henderson attended the Cologne Musikhochschule, where she studied with Mauricio Kagel (music theatre) and Karlheinz

Stockhausen (composition). In 1974 she took part in the Darmstadt Summer Courses for Composition and Performance. The short music-theatre piece *Clearing the Air* was written during that two-week period in Darmstadt, and on the strength of it, Henderson was awarded the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis for composition at the course's end.

'As I had only just started work with Kagel, he advised me not to write anything for the 1974 Darmstadt concerts. Best just to observe. Well I got this great idea and wrote a little piece for some of the characters [colleagues] at the Summer Courses. That was the last time Kagel was cautious on my behalf. He actively encouraged me to write that other myth-destroying, iconoclastic music-theatre piece, *Stubble*, and laughed off my initial timidity about the work.'

*Stubble* was a highlight of the 1976 Darmstadt Courses. Henderson returned to Australia towards the end of 1976 and has been a freelance composer in Sydney ever since.

Some important works are: *Six Urban Songs: The Patrick White Song Cycle* (1982); *Sacred Site* for Organ and Recorded Sound Effects (1983); *The Dreaming* for String Orchestra (1985); *Songs about Music: The Gwen Harwood Song Cycle* (1987); *Pellucid Days: The Bruce Beaver Song Cycle* (1989); *Meditations and Distractions ...* Radio Play for ABC Listening Room (1990); *G'day*

*Africa I, II & III* (1991, 1995); *Wild Card: The Dorothy Hewett Song Cycle* (1991); *In Paradisum* for Choir (1996); *Lindy* (1997); *Ku-ring-gai Chase* for Violin, Viola, Cello and Orchestra (1999); *I Walked into My Mother: Radio Play* for ABC Listening Room (1997); *Verklärung* for Solo Cello (1998).

Throughout her career Henderson has received many awards and fellowships, including the prestigious Don Banks Fellowship (1993); two three-year fellowships, one from the Pratt Industries Scholarship Fund and the other from Frank Lowy's Westfield Group; and an AM for services to music (1996).

On-going projects include an extended scena for soprano, chorus and orchestra, commissioned by Liz and Ken Nielsen, called *I'd Like to Name Them All by Name: Anna Akhmatova 'Requiem,'* translated by Judith Hemschemeyer. Also, the building of alembas and Tosca bells – in this instrument-building mission, Henderson is collaborating with the renowned instrument-maker John (Ben) Hall.

For Henderson, Prokofiev is the consummate exponent of 20th-century opera. Kagel, great creator of music-theatre works that he is, has always questioned (mercilessly sent up) conventional opera: its archaisms and pomposities.

'I am challenged, but not in the least unsettled, by both strands of contemporary musico-dramatic art. All my life I have pursued the synthesis. Very Australian really, wanting the best of all worlds.'

## Judith Rodriguez

Judith Rodriguez is a poet whose first collection was published in 1962. Of her later books – four of them with her own linocuts – *New and Selected Poems* (University of Queensland Press) and *The Cold* (National Library) are in print. A book of her poems, in translation, has been published in Romania.

Rodriguez has edited anthologies and also *Jennifer Rankin's Collected Poems*. As well as creating the opera *Lindy* with Moya Henderson, she collaborated with Robyn Archer to write *Poor Johanna*, a play with songs produced in 1994 by Living Voice Players in the Cardwell Street Theatre, Adelaide. The text was published in Dale Spender's 1991 Penguin compilation *Heroines*.

The libretto of *Lindy* is not Rodriguez's first words for music; her words have inspired song settings by Colin Brumby and Mary Mageau. She also worked with Abbotsleigh schoolgirls who provided texts for Anne Boyd's large work *Dreams of the Earth*.

During the 1990s Judith Rodriguez was poetry Series Editor at Penguin Books Australia, with a list of 50 titles. A teacher of Professional Writing at Deakin University and Australian Literature at the University of Madras, she serves on committees of the Australian Society of Authors and International P.E.N. In 1994 she was awarded membership of the Order of Australia

for services to Australian literature, and the FAW Christopher Brennan Award for Poetry.

*The Hanging of Minnie Thwaites*, a long ballad with lyrics, appeared as the only poem in Kerry Greenwood's 2000 non-fiction compilation *On Murder: True Crime Writing In Australia*. Rodriguez's most recent writing is a group of poems for *TERROR! THE EXHIBITION* at the Dandenong Ranges Community Cultural Centre. They are being translated into Spanish, Persian and Catalan.

## Synopsis

### ACT I: DARWIN PRISON DREAMING

All the scenes in Act I are presented as flashback, dream or nightmare.

#### Scene i: DINGO

Uluru, August 1980

Lindy is nursing Azaria inside Fertility Cave at the base of Uluru. Michael and the two boys, Aidan and Reagan, are sight-seeing in nearby caves. Lindy notices the painting of Kurppangu, the devil dingo, on the rock face in one of the caves. She is in awe of this sacred place and calls out to her family to quieten down a little. Unseen voices warn about not disturbing the spirits of the Dreaming. Lindy's initial apprehension gives way to delight to be visiting at last this ancient birthing cave. She acknowledges the sacredness of the site and rejoices that now she is here with her own children.

#### Scene ii: MOTHER

Darwin Prison, Berrimah 1986

Suddenly we are transported to Darwin Prison where Lindy has been incarcerated. It is the night before she is taken to Police Headquarters to identify Azaria's matinée jacket.

Lindy has just been informed that her baby Azaria's matinée jacket has been found. This jacket was the outermost garment worn by the child on the night of her disappearance from the

camp site at Uluru. Lindy has insisted that she be permitted to identify the jacket. Even so, she cannot believe that a positive identification of the tiny garment might be the catalyst for her release from prison. In her grief and anguish, Lindy calls out to her daughter. The Spirit of Azaria comforts her mother.

Meanwhile, Lindy is constantly taunted and ridiculed by a spectral Prosecuting Counsel (P.C.) and his sidekicks, the Media Mongrels, Ding, Dong, Belle and Co. The mongrels act out badly and mouth off ... 'Lindy's in hell, Lindy's in hell.'

After the success of the Prosecution in the Lindy trial, the P.C. is flabbergasted about the unexpected turn-up of the matinée jacket. This is the last thing he needs. Five years after Azaria's disappearance, a British tourist fell to his death from the summit of Uluru. A searcher looking for the remains at the foot of the fall site stumbled upon Azaria's matinée jacket, half-buried in the red sand. The P.C. rants that we should all 'forget that wretched rag and remember the blood in the car.'

In another dream episode, Michael appears and apologises for the whole sorry saga. 'We never meant to trespass,' he cries. The Media Mongrels keep yapping on about 'sacrifice in the wilderness' and the P.C. taunts Lindy to tell us the real reason why she visited Uluru.

#### Scene iii: KILL

Uluru, August 1980

Lindy, Michael and Aidan are gathered around one of the campsite barbecues at the base of Uluru. Another tourist couple, Sally and Greg Lowe, are also preparing their evening meal. They all listen to the glorious singing of the butcher-bird. Tourists close by comment on the butcher-bird's treatment of its prey. It's not called a butcher-bird for nothing. In the Outback, the night sky is brilliant, especially when it's a moonless night. Lindy attends to her baby Azaria and puts her in the tent for the night.

As Lindy returns to the barbecue, Michael thinks he hears Azaria cry. Sally Lowe is sure she heard the crying as well. Lindy, disbelieving, goes back to the tent to check. As she approaches, she sees, incredibly, a dingo emerging from the little tent where Reagan and Azaria were sleeping. Lindy thinks she noticed what must have been a shoe, in the dingo's mouth. Realisation of what had actually happened is slow and rapid all at once. Shocked and horrified, Lindy sees that the tent has been trampled ... 'marauded.'

Finally she wails that the dingo has taken Azaria and the entire campsite is galvanised. Couples from other barbecues move in on the scene. Searchers, police, trackers, rangers and even a nurse are brought in to look for the missing baby, assist the Chamberlains and try to establish what has happened.

A ranger explains to Lindy that if a dingo has taken the baby, death would have occurred very quickly. Nurse Downs attempts to comfort Lindy. Lindy can only think about what she will have to say to her little boy, Reagan, when he wakes up in the morning and wants to know where his baby sister is. Michael, in shock, tells the crowd gathered in the darkness that he is a minister of religion and that their baby has passed from them into God's care.

Suddenly, we are jolted back into the present ... back to Lindy's prison cell. Lindy wakes up and once again remembers with dread how, in the early morning, she will have to identify Azaria's matinée jacket.

#### Scene iv: BLOOD

circa 1982

All of Australia is obsessed with the Chamberlain story. The Media Mongrels are in a frenzy about the baby's blood purportedly drowning out the Chamberlain car: blood all over everything ... EVERYWHERE.

Lindy and Michael are in their living room at home. Nothing protects them from a continuous bombardment of hate mail. They are anxious about the impact this crazy notoriety will have on their children.

Then police turn up to search the Chamberlains' house. They want anything worn by Azaria. Michael is going to tell them that his wife needs

these clothes for their new baby, as she has become pregnant again. Lindy refuses permission for this and warns Michael that the police are out to prove that she has murdered Azaria. Michael, clutching at remnants of hope, exclaims that in the end the Law will save them. Lindy is convinced it is all too late.

Scene v: TRIAL  
Darwin Supreme Court, 1982

The trial begins. Lindy is big with child. The Media Mongrels are all lined up in the courtroom. They give Lindy heaps. Maintaining propriety in the courtroom is a tall order. The first witness is Sally Lowe. She testifies to the well-being of Lindy's baby before it disappeared. And then, how later she saw blood on the bedding inside the Chamberlain tent. The Prosecuting Counsel trivialises this eye-witness account. He claims that he can prove events very much to the contrary, and that the Chamberlain car was 'awash with blood.' The Textile Expert, the Teeth Expert and the Blood Expert are called upon to present their findings. The Media Mongrels are chipping in all the time with vulgar comment. Finally, Lindy is called to the stand. The cross-examination of Lindy by the PC. is virtually all transcript material from the actual trial. This is the major contest of the opera. Lindy is courageous and forthright, an unexpected match for the wily and brilliant PC.

As the Judge calls for a stay in proceedings, a fancy-dress ball spills onto the stage. All the

dance couples are Lindy and Michael lookalikes with the 'Lindys' grossly pregnant. A drunken woman staggers on to the dance floor. She wails, 'Life'll be fuckin' awful if they let Lindy off the hook!' Just as suddenly the dance floor scene dissolves and the Judge calls on the Members of the Jury to bring down their verdict. Their response: GUILTY!

## ACT II: AWAKENING

Scene i: JACKET  
Darwin Prison, Berrimah 1986

The nightmares and dreams that comprise Act I are over. We are in clinical 'real time' now. Lindy is already at Police Headquarters in Darwin. She is instructed to inspect the *matinée* jacket. She does this slowly, then acknowledges that the jacket is indeed Azaria's. Lindy is then left alone. She is heartbroken; the sight of the jacket, now torn and filthy, awakens all her pain. The jacket is hers of course, but the police officer and the forensic scientist wouldn't let her touch it. She knows her family has been shattered by Azaria's death and her long imprisonment. The days ... years of waiting (for justice) have been too long. However, when Lindy's solicitor assures her that there will be a Commission of Inquiry and that she is 'released on licence', she hopes that people will acknowledge the truth at last. Her faith has sustained her; she has survived.

Scene ii: INQUIRY  
The Inquiry, Darwin 1986

Surprise, surprise, the Media Mongrels are now on the side of their favourite underdogs, the Chamberlains. The Prosecution QC continues his harangue about murder in the car and a baby's throat cut with scissors. The Forensic Expert reiterates the frenetic blood-evidence from the Trial. The Defence QC counterclaims that the Crown case is based on forensic alchemy rather than scientifically proven fact. The blood in the car is a 'desert mirage' – nothing other than spilt drops of caramel milkshake, industrial sound deadener sprayed under the car's dashboard and above all, Mt Isa copper dust. (The Chamberlains were residents of Mt Isa at the time of Azaria's disappearance.) Likewise the Blood Expert's evidence is discredited: the stains on the back of the baby's jumpsuit are red sand rather than blood. And any staining is certainly not in the shape of a small, adult hand.

The Defence QC delivers the testimony of the Aboriginal elders and trackers, evidence that was not heard in the original trial: they saw the tracks the dingo left in the sand.

The Defence QC also argues that Lindy would not have been able to commit the crime as the Prosecution described it, in the confined amount of time available to her. Finally the Defence QC reminds the Commission that with the discovery of Azaria's *matinée* jacket the Crown's case is

utterly discredited. With no evidence of substance (no body, no motive), the Crown clung tenaciously to its claim that Lindy was a liar. The unexpected discovery of the jacket was persuasive testimony that Lindy, from the outset, had been telling the truth.

The Commissioner declares that the evidence against the Chamberlains, as it now stands, would not lead to a conviction. With their convictions finally quashed, Lindy and Michael grieve that their lives have been changed forever. The journey towards justice has taken them right to the very end of the Law.

Lindy acknowledges that God helped her stand upright. Finally, her faith and courage have been vindicated. She has survived. She 'walks out of the stifling darkness into the Light.'

Moya Henderson

**CD1****ACT I: DARWIN PRISON DREAMING**

*ALL the scenes in Act I are presented as flashback, dream or nightmare.*

Scene i: DINGO  
*Uluru, August 1980*

*Lindy is nursing her baby, Azaria, inside Fertility Cave at the base of Uluru. Michael and the two boys, Aidan and Reagan, amuse themselves in neighbouring caves. Lindy catches sight of a rock painting of the devil dingo, Kurrpanggu. The grotesque image fills her with foreboding.*

LINDY

- 1** Sometimes it's hard to make out the lines of ancient paintings.

Too many hands touching the walls,  
the ochre has faded.

MICHAEL (*off-stage*)

I've brought plenty of film, but I need more light,  
more natural light.

AIDAN (*off*)

I can touch the roof. I can touch the roof.

LINDY

Don't disturb the paintings, children, children.

MICHAEL (*off*)

Come on, kids, c'mon, c'mon! Come on!

LINDY

Don't disturb the spirits of the Dreaming.  
Least of all that one they call ...

VOICES (*off and amplified*)

Kurrpanggu, Kurrpanggu.

LINDY

The devil dingo of the Dreamtime.  
Its image is grotesque, frightening.  
But here in these caves it's so safe and still.  
Secret places where women came to give birth.

REAGAN (*off*)

Take my photo, Daddy.  
Take my photo.

MICHAEL (*off*)

You can't keep still long enough.

LINDY

- 2** Ancient mothers from the Dreaming

are ranged around the low cave,  
in the womb of the red rock.  
We know this is where from ancient times  
the mothers came.  
One with the red land, owned by this red land.

They say that even today  
young mothers come here to give birth.  
This place is sacred.

This place, this place is sacred.

Now, now in my time  
I am here with my children,  
here with my new baby, Azaria,  
my darling Azaria ...

Scene ii: MOTHER

*Darwin Prison, Berrimah 1986*

*Suddenly, it is night in Darwin Prison, where Lindy has been incarcerated for the past three years. She knows that at first light, she will be taken to Police Headquarters to identify Azaria's little jacket. This is the jacket that Lindy insisted Azaria was wearing the night*

*she disappeared. After nearly six years, and most unexpectedly, it has been found at the base of Uluru. During this night of anguish, Lindy calls out to the spirit of her dead child for solace, but she is taunted repeatedly by the Prosecuting Counsel from the Trial and a mob of Media Mongrels (uncommonly like dingoes from time to time) called Ding, Dong, Belle, Scoop, Stringer, Scribbler, Morgue-man, Devil Boy and Cadet.*

WARDEN (*yelling out the midnight muster*)

- 3** Anderson, Barrett, Chamberlain ...  
Chamberlain?

*Lindy, handcuffed, is brought forward.*

LINDY (*distraught*)

- 4** Azaria, Azaria.

ABORIGINAL INMATE (*off*)

That white woman dreaming ...  
That Lindy.  
Nightmare ... nightmare!  
Still 'Sorry Time' for Lindy.

ENSEMBLE

Lindy's in hell.  
Who put her there?  
We don't know, we don't know!  
(*suddenly revealing dingo characteristics*)  
We wouldn't have the faintest notion.

LINDY

Azaria, Azaria!  
Where are you, my darling daughter,  
my darling child?

PROSECUTING COUNSEL (PC.)

The woman's a killer.  
It says so in the Sunday papers.

ENSEMBLE (*snaffling through the litter at the camp site*)  
It was all over the fish and chips.  
Nah, nah, ne-nah, nah. The fish and chips!

PC.

This woman murdered her baby daughter,  
her baby daughter!

BELLE (*dingo persona*)

She blamed us!  
What a fuss, what a fuss!

SCRIBBLER (*dingo persona*)

Oh, what a fuss!

DEVIL BOY (*dingo persona*)

Thanks to her our numbers were thinned.  
We'd like to skin her alive!

PC.

The Nation has pronounced ...

SPIRIT OF AZARIA (AZARIA)

The mother is deeply troubled ... troubled.

DING & CADET

Throw away the key!

AZARIA

Mother ...

PC.

Alice Lynne Chamberlain ...

ENSEMBLE

... known to every son-of-a-dingo as Lindy ...

AZARIA

... as mother

PC.

Consigned to prison for *LIFE!*

AZARIA  
Mother, Mother!  
ENSEMBLE  
Life, life, life!

PC.  
5 I'm feeling queasy myself.  
Some filthy little jacket's been found.

SCRIBBLER (*howling*)  
Out of nowhere.  
Out of the blue!

PC.  
Confound it! A man falls  
from the top of Uluru.

MORGUEMAN  
He thuds to earth ...

ENSEMBLE  
... only a short sprint from where ... the jacket lies buried.

DING  
... as in only half-buried.

LINDY & AZARIA  
Where butcher-birds sing,  
and grevilleas grow at the rock.

PC.  
A searcher at the fall site  
finds the blasted jacket,  
that filthy jacket!

LINDY  
6 Right at the outset I told ev'ryone that  
my little baby was wearing a knitted jacket.

PC.  
Forget that wretched rag.  
Remember forensic evidence.  
Remember, remember the blood,  
the blood in the car.

LINDY  
In the morning the mother will have to see  
the torn and bloodied jacket ...  
the torn, bloodied jacket.

PC.  
An 'ident' is required.  
Mrs Chamberlain herself has demanded.

LINDY  
Ah, the jacket is stiff with red earth,  
and aged to orange, and black with dry blood.

AZARIA  
Still the mother is troubled.

PC.  
Confound that *bloody* jacket! What idiot dug it up!

DING  
What idiot dug it ...

DING & MORGUEMAN  
... up?

DONG  
It wasn't buried deep enough.

DING & MORGUEMAN  
Irresponsible pups!  
Irresponsible pups!

MORGUEMAN  
Irresponsible ...

PC. (*interrupting*)  
Stop all that crap!  
Remember the car *awash* with blood!  
And bugger the jacket!  
Bugger the jacket!

*Michael slowly emerges from the darkness.*

So give account,  
Lindy and Michael Chamberlain.  
What were you doing at Uluru?

MICHAEL  
7 We were ordinary people, unsuspecting tourists.  
We didn't mean to step outside our Church and family,  
or out beyond our everyday lives.  
We never meant to trespass.

ENSEMBLE  
Remember it was 'Sacrifice in the Wilderness.'

CADET  
Remember it was 'Sacrifice in the Wilderness.'

DING (*softly*)  
Remember that Azaria means 'Sacrifice in the Wilderness.'

LINDY (*loudly*)  
Remember that Azaria means 'Blessed of God.'

STRINGER (*softly*)  
Woo, woo, woo, woo, wilderness.

AZARIA  
Small wonder that the Mother is troubled.

LINDY  
8 Azaria, Azaria.  
Why should this jacket save me now?

After five years of hell, three of them in Darwin jail.  
Left to rot for years inside Darwin jail. In jail!  
Will God let Azaria's tiny garment save me now?  
Will He use this jacket to save me ... finally?

Pity, pity the mother.

AZARIA  
Pity the mother,

LINDY & AZARIA  
Pity the mother.

PC.  
Come along, Mrs Chamberlain, a plain answer.  
What brought you to Uluru?

ENSEMBLE  
'Sacrifice in the wilderness' ...  
Such a scandal!

Scene iii: KILL  
*Top Camp, Uluru, August 1980*

*Darkness has fallen. Lindy, Michael and Aidan are gathered around one of the campsite barbecues at Top Camp, Uluru. Another tourist couple, Sally and Greg Lowe, are also preparing their evening meal. They all listen to the song of the butcher-bird. Lindy attends to her baby daughter and puts her in the tent for the night.*

SALLY  
9 What beautiful singing!

GREG  
You come out here for the Rock.  
Then a bird sings at night.  
Things like this make the trip unforgettable.



MAN  
That's a butcher-bird.  
That's some of the loveliest  
birdsong in the country.

SALLY  
How can a bird that sounds like that  
be called a butcher-bird?

WOMAN  
That's a butcher-bird, alright!

MAN  
They swoop on their prey.  
But if it's too big to swallow at a gulp,  
they hook it up in the fork of a tree,  
or on a barbed-wire fence ...

WOMAN  
... even a Hills hoist!

MAN  
That's right, and then they dismember the creature.

SALLY  
Agh, the laws of nature!  
But the song of the butcher-bird is glorious.

**10** GREG  
Our name is Lowe by the way.  
I'm Greg, and this is my wife, Sally.  
I know your name is Michael,  
I heard your wife calling you.

MICHAEL  
Chamberlain. (*shakes hands*) How are you?  
My wife's Lindy. Our kids are Aidan,  
come here, Aidan, and Reagan ...  
(*looks about for the younger son*)

AIDAN  
He's in his sleeping bag.

MICHAEL  
And Azaria is our baby.

AIDAN  
Azaria Chantal Chamberlain,  
and she's only nine weeks old.

GREG  
Our little girl is Chantelle.

AIDAN  
Great minds think alike.

LINDY & GREG (*ignoring Aidan*)  
Isn't that a coincidence.

SALLY  
Move away from the glow of the fire  
and the night sky is dazzling.

LINDY & SALLY  
Sapphires, rubies and amethysts.

MICHAEL (*holding Azaria*)  
High above the world so high,

LINDY & SALLY  
Like a diamond in the sky.

AIDAN  
Daddy, where's the moon?

MICHAEL  
Funny you should ask that. That's what's unusual about  
hearing the butcher-birds tonight; they usually sing at  
night time only when there's a moon.  
Eerie, that.

GREG  
That's the mysterious bush for you  
it comes to life at night time.  
It comes to life at night time.

*A baby's cry is heard over a clutter of plastic plates  
and laughter.*

**11** MICHAEL  
Was that Bubby crying?

SALLY  
Yes, it was. It was.

MICHAEL  
Was she settled?

GREG  
Better check.

LINDY  
She was fast asleep ...

MICHAEL  
Better go and check, better check.

GREG  
There's not much room in those tents.

LINDY  
... sound asleep.

MICHAEL  
Maybe Reagan knocked the bassinet.

LINDY  
I'll go and see.  
(*goes off towards the tent*)  
Surely nothing could have happened.  
(*from near the tent*)  
Ah a dingo golden, golden!

Now I am afraid.  
**12** It had something in its mouth.  
What on earth ...  
Was it Michael's shoe?  
(*looks in the tent and gasps in horror*)  
Ah, the tent's been trampled ...  
marauded!  
Michael heard Azaria cry!  
The others thought they heard a cry, a cry.  
(*screaming*)  
No, Azaria's gone!  
The dingo has taken Azaria!  
Azaria, Azaria, my baby, Azaria.

MICHAEL  
What, what?

LINDY  
The dingo's taken the baby!

MICHAEL  
Where is it now, Lindy?  
Where did it go?

LINDY  
It's no good, You cannot see.

MICHAEL  
God ... Help us! Please come and help us.  
Help us. Help us!

*Other tourists including Searchers 1-5, the Ranger, etc.  
are disturbed by the noise at first, but then they assist  
with the search for Azaria.*

SEARCHER 1  
What's going on?  
What's the racket in aid of?

SEARCHER 2  
That woman over there says  
her baby's been taken by a dingo!

SEARCHER 3  
No! That's horrible.

SEARCHER 4  
Terrible!

GREG  
Best if we all try to stay calm.

SALLY  
Someone get the police.

GREG  
It's so dark. We need good torches.

SEARCHER 5 (*going towards Lindy*)  
How big was the baby?

LINDY  
Tiny! She was only nine weeks old!  
(*despairing*)  
I want to run all through the scrub to find Azaria.  
And I want to get my boys away from this place.

MICHAEL (*dazed*)  
We've got to keep searching.  
There's still *some* chance.

SEARCHER 4  
The rangers are here.

SEARCHER 1  
Black trackers too.  
And the police are on their way.

RANGER  
I know what dingoes can do.  
In an instant all would be over.

SALLY (to Greg)  
Their baby has been hurt.  
I've seen ...  
I've seen the blood in the tent.

GREG  
Was there much?

SALLY  
Enough.

NURSE DOWNS  
13 Mrs Chamberlain, Lindy, I'm a nurse.  
We're arranging a motel room.  
We'll take you there as soon ...  
as soon as we can, Lindy.  
You'll probably need tablets ...  
Tablets to dry up the milk,  
in case. Yes, just in case.

LINDY  
What about our tears?  
What will dry up my children's tears,  
my children's tears?

NURSE  
It will take time to adjust, Mrs Chamberlain.

LINDY  
In the morning my little boy Reagan will wake up  
and he'll want to know where his sister is.

What am I going to say to him?  
What am I going to say to my frightened sons?

MICHAEL (*shocked, dazed*)  
Thank you, to all of you for helping us.  
Nothing happens without God's will,  
without God's will.

I am a Minister of Religion.  
My wife and I know  
our baby has passed from us into God's care.  
(*staggeres off*)

LINDY (*alone suddenly and once again shrouded in the  
darkness of the prison cell*)  
Little and lost Azaria ...  
Now in the morning I will have to see,  
the torn and bloodied jacket.

Scene iv: BLOOD  
*circa 1982*

*The Media Mongrels, in fact people everywhere, are  
in a frenzy about the police evidence which alleges  
that foetal blood is spattered all over the interior of the  
Chamberlains' car.*

ENSEMBLE  
14 Police on red alert.  
The nation's in a frenzy,  
a frenzy, a frenzy, a frenzy!  
We're talking hot, hot, hot, hot, hot!  
We're talking HOT here!  
Blood samples,  
Hair samples,  
Scissor cuts in cloth.  
Scissor cuts in cloth.

Blood on the car console.  
Blood on the door handles.  
Blood on a ten-cent coin.  
Blood in the seat hinge.  
Blood on the seats.  
Blood on the carpet.  
Blood on a steel plate under the dash.

*Under the seat, blood.  
Over a buckle, blood.  
Blood inside the camera bag.  
Blood along the zipper clasp.  
Blood sprayed, dripped, rubbed.  
Baby's blood everywhere!*

SCRIBBLER  
That's grotesque!

LINDY  
And you know none of it is true.  
Not true!

SERGEANT  
Baby's blood everywhere.

MICHAEL  
The Coroner poured scorn on your forensic evidence.

CADET  
The Coroner's a prick!  
And there's a score to settle.

LINDY  
So you maul me to get even with the Coroner!

ENSEMBLE  
That woman has got a tongue on her.  
So throw her to the wolves!  
(*wild laughs then exit*)

MICHAEL  
15 All this mail keeps pouring in.  
We need protection.  
We need protection!

LINDY  
They scratch and gouge at our lives.  
Lock away that rubbish from their eyes.  
Save the children from reading such venom.

SERGEANT

We'll need a list of everything you had with you at Uluru, Mrs Chamberlain ... Mrs Chamberlain.

MICHAEL

We need protection.

We need protection!

SERGEANT

We'll take a look around while we're at it.

Oh ... and we want all your baby clothes ...

Anything worn by Azaria.

LINDY

Baby clothes, Azaria's clothes ...

They are all I have left.

I need to keep them.

I need to have them.

SERGEANT

This is a lawful search, Mrs Chamberlain.

We would appreciate your full co-operation,

Mrs Chamberlain, Mr Chamberlain.

*(continues searching)*

MICHAEL *(to LINDY)*

I'll tell him you need them for the new baby, Lindy?

LINDY

No, Michael.

Michael, listen!

Why should he be told

that I am pregnant again.

They are out to prove that I *murdered* Azaria.

Too many hands ...

touching, clawing, scraping.

*(doubles up in pain)*

MICHAEL

We need to be protected from police, and even from the people.

But in the end the Law *will* save us.

LINDY

What end? What end?

For us in the end the Law will be too late!

Too late, too late, too late, too late!

Scene v: TRIAL

Darwin Supreme Court, 1982

*Lindy and Michael are ushered into the Courtroom.*

*Lindy is demonstrably pregnant and is subjected to vulgar ridicule. In due course, the witnesses are called to the stand to give their testimony.*

COURT OFFICER

**16** Order in the Court.

*The Courtroom gradually quietyens.*

LINDY

Hostilities recommence.

MICHAEL

It will be different this time, Lindy.

*The female Media Mongrels swoop on Lindy.*

SCOOP

Pregnant!

ENSEMBLE

She's gone and got herself pregnant!

*(ribald laughs and rude gestures follow)*

SCRIBBLER

Judicial proceedings have caught her out!

ENSEMBLE

Out like a football! *(laughs)* Out, out, out!

MICHAEL *(to Lindy)*

Don't look as if you're angry.

LINDY

What difference does it make.

Whether I laugh or cry wrong!

Whatever I wear wrong!

So I can't be worried what anyone thinks.

MICHAEL

But this is the Supreme Court.

LINDY

Tell me about it!

COURT OFFICER

All in the Court will rise.

*The Judge enters the Courtroom and is seated.*

All in the Court will be seated.

JUDGE

Members of the Jury,

defendants are entitled to fair trial.

You will remove all prejudice from your minds.

*Two women don "THE DINGO IS INNOCENT" T-shirts and prance about. All hell breaks loose.*

DEFENCE COUNSEL (D.C.)

Welcome to Darwin, your Honour!

JUDGE *(solemnly)*

They have been warned.

*(T-shirts disappear)*

PROSECUTING COUNSEL (P.C.)

Your Honour, we know this baby's throat was cut by its mother.

Murdered. A normal baby, murdered by its mother.

We'll prove it. Beyond all reasonable doubt we'll prove it.

*Sally Lowe is ushered in and takes the stand.*

D.C..

**17** Mrs Lowe, what do you remember about this child?

SALLY

I had only met the Chamberlains that night.

There's no doubt that the child was alive.

D.C.

You saw it kicking?

SALLY

Yes, and I saw its live little face

and Lindy shone with the glow of a new mother.

Then later I heard it, I heard the baby's cry.

I saw the blood ...

The cry of that baby stopped suddenly.

I saw the blood-patch soaking into the bedding.

DEVIL BOY

He's getting her out of the way early.

DING

He wants the Jury to forget her.

*Sally Lowe leaves the witness stand.*

P.C.

Soon, we will convince the Court

that whatever Mrs Lowe claims to have heard that night

could not have been the cry of Azaria Chamberlain,

for by then the child was already dead.

Dead!

As for the blood in the tent nothing but transferred droplets.  
It's the car that was awash with blood. We'll prove it!

BELLE  
No wonder they call him a beaut Q.C.

SCRIBBLER  
A cute Q.C.!

P.C.  
We offer the Court our experts!  
My witness.

*Experts for the Prosecution are brought into the Courtroom and sworn in.*

SCRIBBLER  
Lets hear it for science!

DONG  
Nah, this is preamble,  
wait till they get to the blood.

ENSEMBLE  
The blood.

TEXTILE EXPERT  
18 I am a top expert on textiles.  
Dogs' teeth cannot cut fabric.  
They rip and tear,  
gnaw and grind,  
But ... they cannot CUT!

SCRIBBLER *(with some pantomime)*  
Even humans have got incisors.

TEXTILE EXPERT  
This was no dog's mouth, cutting,  
but a little pair of nail scissors, snipping, snipping.

DEVIL BOY  
That weakens the case.

SCRIBBLER  
Lindy'd need a rasp to sharpen her claws!

*A cacophony of snipping sounds drown out the Courtroom.*

DEVIL BOY  
You're brutal.

DONG  
Come off it, mate, she's fair game.

P.C.  
My witness.

TEETH EXPERT *(demonstrating all the while)*  
I am a top teeth expert.  
Now here are the jaws of a dingo  
which at widest open – this far.

ENSEMBLE  
That far.  
Nah-nah, ne, nah-nah.

TEETH EXPERT  
This far.

JUDGE  
Enough, enough, enough!  
Continue with your evidence.

TEETH EXPERT  
Well, here is a baby-sized kill.  
*(demonstrates using a dingo skull with apparent lockjaw and attempts to shove the head of the baby doll into the dingo's mouth)*  
It doesn't fit!

ENSEMBLE  
Anyone can see it doesn't fit at all!

D.C. *(to Teeth Expert)*  
What about this?  
Could I ask you to consider this?  
*(demonstrates with a different dingo skull – this time the jaws are well extended – the doll's head fits comfortably in its maw)*

TEETH EXPERT *(discouraged)*  
That evidence looks contrived.

LINDY  
Was there ever any of their evidence  
that didn't look contrived.

P.C. *(dispensing with the Teeth Expert and ushering the Blood Expert to the witness stand)*  
My witness!

BLOOD EXPERT  
I am a top *foreign* expert on injuries.

ENSEMBLE  
He's foreign! Wuh! He must be good.  
He must be good!

BLOOD EXPERT  
I examined the blood-stained jumpsuit.

*Lindy and Michael Chamberlain react with alarm.*

No canine saliva at all.

LINDY  
What about the *matinée* jacket!

DEVIL BOY  
She's making that up.  
She's just trying to save her neck.

BLOOD EXPERT  
And on the jumpsuit I detect  
*(signals for photographic evidence)*  
the mark of a blood-stained, adult hand.

ENSEMBLE  
A blood-stained, adult hand.  
A bloody, blood-stained adult hand.  
  
*Another bout of uproar breaks out.*

JUDGE  
Order, order!

BLOOD EXPERT  
A small adult hand.

ENSEMBLE  
A small hand,  
a woman's hand.  
The hand of Lindy Chamberlain.  
Who else could it be?  
*(riotous laughter)*

JUDGE  
Order, order ... order!

COURT OFFICER  
19 I call upon Mrs Lindy Chamberlain.

ENSEMBLE *(whispered)*  
Lindy, Lindy, Lindy.  
  
*A Court Orderly hands Lindy the jumpsuit.*

JUDGE  
Order, order!

D.C. *(to Lindy)*  
Do you confirm that this was the garment  
your child was wearing the night she disappeared?

LINDY (*greatly moved*)

Yes, it was.

D.C.

Was this the only clothing your daughter was wearing?

LINDY

She wore, over the jumpsuit,  
a pure white knitted jacket  
with a pale-lemon edging.  
It was called at the time  
a *matinée* jacket, a *matinée* jacket.

ENSEMBLE (*raucous*)

The jacket's a figment  
of Lindy's imagination.

P.C. (*aggressive from the outset of the cross-examination*)

20 When was it, Mrs Chamberlain,  
that you called out that the dingo had the baby?

LINDY (*never cowed*)

Just before I went into the tent ...  
and again, just afterwards.

P.C.

When you called that out the first time  
there was no doubt in your mind  
that the dingo had the baby, was there?

LINDY

That's correct.

P.C.

Where were you then?

LINDY

When I first called out?

P.C.

Yes.

LINDY

Somewhere between climbing the railing and diving  
into the tent.

P.C.

Were you at the railing when you  
called out that the dingo had the baby?

LINDY

I was somewhere between the railing and the tent.  
I was running flat out.  
I didn't stand still at any stage.

P.C.

Where was the dingo then?  
Where was it then?

LINDY

It had left and gone ... gone south!

P.C.

On your story, it must have been  
carrying the baby?

LINDY

Yes!

P.C.

But you did not chase it?

LINDY

I did, I did chase it.  
I checked the tent first, in case  
it had dropped it, then I chased ...  
I chased it.  
I did chase it!

P.C.

What were you checking the tent for?

LINDY

To see whether she'd been dropped.

P.C.

Did you think she might have been  
dropped inside the tent?

LINDY (*full of anguish*)

I hoped she had.

P.C. (*merciless*)

What was the dog doing  
when you yelled out?

LINDY (*stunned by recalling the event*)

Shaking its head.

P.C.

Here was a dog emerging from the tent,  
shaking its head, with, as you believed,  
your baby in its mouth. Is that right?

LINDY

With, as I believed, a shoe in its mouth.

P.C.

When did you decide it was the baby?

LINDY

21 A split second later I realised  
that she'd cried and been disturbed.  
I started to run as I neared the tent.  
I could see that the tent was empty.  
That's when I realised it was the baby.

P.C.

And the dog was then  
going past the front of the tent?

LINDY

Where was the dog when I had that thought?  
I couldn't tell you where the dog was  
when I thought that.

P.C.

You watched it leave?

LINDY

Just a few feet ...  
just in a split second.

P.C.

It turned and went south, did it?

LINDY

It came out the tent going south.

P.C.

And you maintain that you  
did not see anything in its mouth?

LINDY

I do.

P.C.

Why?

LINDY

My view was obscured  
by the scrub and the railing.

P.C.

You say that you did not see the  
baby in the dog's mouth?

LINDY

That's right.

P.C.

At any stage?

LINDY

That's right!

PC.  
Your evidence is that you saw it shaking its head vigorously, and it was moving the flyscreen of the tent in the process.

LINDY  
I don't know whether its head was shaking the flyscreen, or whether what it had in its mouth was hitting against it.

PC. (*more aggressively*)  
And what it had in its mouth, we know now, according to you, was a bleeding baby.

LINDY (*showing irritation*)  
That's my opinion.

PC.  
Pardon?

LINDY  
That is my opinion!

PC.  
Well, is there any doubt about it?

LINDY  
Not in my mind.

PC.  
Mrs Chamberlain, you say that the child was in the mouth of a dingo, which was vigorously shaking its head at the entrance to the tent. The dog having taken Azaria from the bassinet ... Mrs Chamberlain, is this correct? Is this correct?

JUDGE  
Take it steady, Mrs Chamberlain.

PC.  
Is that correct?

LINDY (*distraught*)  
Yes, yes, yes, yes, YES!

JUDGE  
Would you like a spell, Mrs Chamberlain?

LINDY  
[22] This has been going on and on for over two years. I'd like to get it over and done with, Your Honour. I'd like to get it over and done with.

PC. (*picking up one of the exhibits*)  
So the blood on this parka, which was inside the tent, must have come from the baby?

LINDY (*at her wit's end*)  
Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, YES!

PC.  
When it was in the dog's mouth?

LINDY  
Somewhere around that time.

PC.  
What other time could it have come from the baby?

LINDY  
Look, the truth is, I wasn't there. I can only go on the evidence of my own eyes. We are talking about my baby, my baby daughter. Not some object, not some object!

JUDGE  
The Court will adjourn until tomorrow, until tomorrow morning.

[23] *The scene instantly transforms into a typical Australian Town Hall where a Fancy-Dress Ball is in progress. All the dancing couples are Lindy and Michael look-alikes. The 'Lindys' are padded out to appear heavily pregnant. The excitement of the revellers is in anticipation of a guilty verdict. Towards the end of the dance, a Drunk staggers down stage.*

DRUNK  
Life'll be fuckin' awful if Lindy gets off the hook!

*The scene suddenly changes back to the austerities of the Courtroom.*

JUDGE  
Members of the Jury, have you arrived at your verdict? Members of the Jury, how do you find?

ENSEMBLE (*chanted over and over again in militaristic fashion*)  
Guilty, guilty, guilty!  
We got her!  
We had her from the start.  
We got her in the end!

PC.  
We've won, we've won, we've WON!

## CD2

### ACT II: AWAKENING

Scene i: JACKET  
*Darwin Prison, Berrimah 1986*

*The nightmares and dreams that comprise Act I are over. We are in clinical 'real time' now. Lindy is inside Darwin Police Headquarters. She is about to inspect Azaria's matinee jacket.*

SUPERINTENDENT (*brusque*)  
[1] After careful consideration please identify the garment for us Mrs Chamberlain.

SOLICITOR (*taking Lindy aside*)  
Lindy, take your time. Our scientists need photos from every angle. Close-ups of the cuts; clear shots of the stains. Don't be rushed. Take your time.

SUPERINTENDENT  
Forensics!

*(The Forensics assistant puts on white gloves and spreads out paper on the table where Lindy is seated, in case 'evidence' falls from the matinee jacket when it is removed from its box.)*

Only Forensics may touch the garment, Mrs Chamberlain. You may ask for its position to be changed.

*Forensics takes the stiff and stained jacket out of its box and holds it up for Lindy's inspection. A photographer manoeuvres for advantageous positions and takes photographs.*



LINDY  
Please turn it over. I want to see both sides.

*Forensics turns the jacket over.*

SUPERINTENDENT  
So tell us what you think ... (waits)  
Well, is it the jacket?

LINDY  
A button is missing.  
I heard you'd found it.  
I want to speak to my lawyer.

SUPERINTENDENT  
Is this the jacket?  
I need to know that now ... Now!

LINDY (*resolute*)  
I want to see the button.  
I want to see it!

*Forensics fishes the button out of his pocket.*

SUPERINTENDENT  
Is this the jacket?

LINDY  
All this time the red earth kept it hidden,  
but I'm certain that this is my daughter's jacket.  
Yes, yes. It is Azaria's jacket.  
Yes, it is Azaria's jacket.

*Forensics returns the jacket to its box and folds up the paper. He then fumbles and drops the lot. The Superintendent looks on in disgust as Forensics picks up the now-contaminated evidence from the floor. The police depart hurriedly and Lindy is left there alone.*

LINDY (*full of yearning*)  
[2] That little jacket is mine.  
But they wouldn't let me touch it,  
That little jacket is mine.  
The sign God sends in your image, Azaria.  
Darling child I know I shall see  
when God restores every family  
broken by death ... separation and death.  
Only the waiting is long,  
the days of waiting are long.  
Far too long.

*The Solicitor and Warden return on stage during the last bars of Lindy's aria.*

SOLICITOR (*gently*)  
Lindy ... Lindy!  
There will be a Commission of Inquiry.

WARDEN  
Lindy, you are released on licence.

LINDY  
What's that supposed to mean?

SOLICITOR  
Lindy, it means you won't ever be back  
inside this place. It means you'll  
never be coming back.

LINDY  
And Michael ... does he know?

SOLICITOR  
Yes, your family is waiting ...  
preparing a huge 'welcome home' for you.

WARDEN  
[3] Lindy, your time as a prisoner is over.

Scene ii: INQUIRY  
*Commission of Inquiry, Darwin 1986*

*Once again, Lindy and Michael are ushered into a Courtroom. The Media Mongrels are now vehemently pro-Lindy and yell out their support.*

STRINGER  
[4] Good luck, Lindy!

MORGUEMAN  
Go for it, Lindy!

DING  
We're with you, Lindy!

MICHAEL (*surprised at the sympathy*)  
Cheers from the media!  
What's going on?

LINDY (*unimpressed*)  
We must be the under-dogs at last!

MICHAEL  
At the very end of the law ...

LINDY (*dryly*)  
... and our tether.

COURT OFFICER  
The Court will be upstanding  
for the Commissioner of the Inquiry.  
The Court will be seated.

COMMISSIONER  
The Crown's case against Alice Lynne Chamberlain  
and Michael Leigh Chamberlain.

PROSECUTION Q.C.  
Murder in the car, your Honour.  
A quick and brutal job.

The throat cut, cut, cut with scissors.  
The tiny body buried in the sand.

*The Forensic Expert and Defence Expert rise. As the Forensic Expert begins her 'statement', interjections such as 'Rubbish!' and 'Nonsense!' are called out by the public.*

FORENSIC EXPERT  
Blood on the car console,  
Blood on the door handles.  
Blood on a ten-cent coin.  
Blood in the seat hinge.  
Blood on the seats.  
Blood on the carpet.  
Blood on a steel plate  
under the dash ...

LINDY  
Enough, enough, enough!

DEFENCE Q.C.  
[5] This is forensic *alchemy!*  
Alarmingly, the Crown confuses  
caramel-milk for blood;  
industrial sound-deadener  
for arterial blood spurts, blood spurts.  
And Mt Isa copper dust  
for gore from a murdered child,  
*a supposedly murdered child.*

ENSEMBLE  
A miracle of science changes  
rust-coloured copper dust,  
hard globs of sound deadener,  
and split caramel milk ... into blood,  
her daughter, Azaria's blood.  
*Blood!*

DEFENCE Q.C.  
Your Honour,  
the blood in the car is a desert mirage.

PROSEC. Q.C. (*flustered*)  
Not so!

If the child wasn't murdered in the car,  
it was murdered somewhere ... somewhere!  
What about the neck of the jumpsuit,  
clear signs of a cut throat,  
and a blood-stained, adult hand!

DEFENCE Q.C.  
Then why is there no stain at all  
on Azaria's matinée jacket?

ENSEMBLE  
The night the baby vanished,  
Lindy said it was wearing  
that hand-knitted, matinée jacket.  
So where are the signs,  
where are the signs of that bloody,  
hand-print all over the back of that jacket?  
Where ... where are the signs, where are the signs?

DEFENCE Q.C.  
6 Your Honour, I now introduce  
the evidence of Elders from the  
Mutitjulu Community at Uluru.  
They followed the dingo tracks  
the night Azaria disappeared.  
Mr Nuwe Minyintiri, Your Honour.  
(*spoken*)  
And I quote "I saw the tracks, the tracks it made.  
He's big, the wild, wild dog.  
He goes around the tent, behind the tent,  
around, behind the tent.

I saw the same tracks out on the hillside.  
I saw them. I saw them."

PROSEC. Q.C.  
Did he happen to say what the dingo was carrying?

DEFENCE Q.C.  
"It was that tiny, tiny baby.  
I saw the patterns in the sand.  
That dog, he stops and puts the baby down,  
he stops and puts it down.

A round imprint marks and patterns; clear line, without  
any blur.  
That baby, that baby,  
it not move any more."

PROSEC. Q.C.  
Could he have been mistaken  
with only torch light in the pitch dark?

DEFENCE Q.C.  
"The Chief Ranger, he saw the same thing:  
where that dog put that baby down."

Your Honour, Mrs Barbara Tjikadu,  
probably the best tracker in the district.  
She followed tracks near where the  
baby's clothes were found.  
I asked which dingo that was?  
"That same wild dog.  
Same one we saw at the tent."

ENSEMBLE (*off – a mysterious, pervasive,  
echo-like sound*)  
Kurrpanggu, kurrpanggu!

DEFENCE Q.C.  
Kurrpanggu ...  
Isn't that the devil dingo of the Dreamtime?

She told me that women at Uluru  
are not allowed to say that name.

ENSEMBLE (*off*)  
Kurrpanggu, kurrpanggu!

DEFENCE Q.C.  
Because it's very sacred.  
7 Your Honour, the Crown contends  
that for blood to have reached the tent and the rugs,  
blood had to be on Mrs Chamberlain.  
But no one saw blood on her,  
no one, all night.  
Further more, further more  
to successfully execute a crime  
takes ... time.  
The Crown wants us to believe that  
whereas Lindy Chamberlain was  
away from the barbecue for  
five or so minutes ...  
less than ten minutes.  
She was able to return to the tent,  
but distract Aidan from following her.  
Don her tracksuit pants,  
take Azaria to the car,  
take Azaria to the car.  
Don't forget this is where  
all the blood is meant to be.  
Possess herself of a murder weapon  
to cut Azaria's throat.  
Cut, cut, cut Azaria's throat.  
Drain off some of her blood,  
and allow sufficient time  
for the child to die.  
Hide the body.

Clean up ... clean up the car.  
Remove her tracksuit pants,  
and remember the can of  
baked beans for Aidan.  
Remember, remember!  
Then return to the tent, and there  
spatter certain things with Azaria's blood.  
And this, this, this, to implicate the dingo,  
but without disturbing the sleeping second son.  
Rejoin Aidan and stroll with insouciance  
back to the barbecue.  
Does the Crown honestly contend that Lindy ...  
that Mrs Chamberlain had sufficient time?

ENSEMBLE  
If Lindy did it, someone ought to  
nominate her for a place in the  
Guinness Book of records.  
'Cause when, when was there time,  
when was there time for this woman  
to do all the things that the  
Crown said she did do?  
When was there time?

DEFENCE Q.C.  
Finally there is the recent coming-to-light  
of Azaria's matinée jacket.  
Its very existence denied by the Crown.

LINDY & MICHAEL (*ethereal*)  
8 Ah, the jacket is stiff with red earth  
and aged to orange  
and black, black with dry blood.  
LINDY  
The jacket is black with blood.

COMMISSIONER

I find that the Chamberlains are honest witnesses.  
And that the evidence as it now stands ...  
as it is now,  
would not lead to a conviction,  
would not justify a conviction.

ENSEMBLE

So at last a judge finds that the evidence  
would not justify or lead to a conviction.

LINDY & MICHAEL

Locked up in prison for three years  
with a conviction marked against me,  
blackening my name.

I feel no ecstasy, none at all,  
now that our names are cleared.  
Both of us have been too abused.  
Our lives are changed forever.

Unto the upright, light rises out of darkness.  
But all too slow to shine,  
all too slow to shine on us.  
But where is perfect justice.  
Our God has brought us to the very end of the Law.  
Our God has brought us ...  
right to the end of the law.  
Our lives are changed forever.

*Michael moves away. Lindy is left alone on stage.*

LINDY

9 My family stands steadfast to receive me.  
Throughout, I proclaim my innocence.  
People of goodwill now acknowledge the truth.  
I have survived.  
This day I walk out of the stifling darkness  
into the Light.  
I have survived.  
I walk away from darkness  
to the Light.

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This libretto corresponds to Opera Australia's 2002  
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While as a courtesy Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton has been  
informed of the development of this work, her endorsement of  
it has neither been sought nor given.

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