

One of our contributors last week taped Mark Latham's interviews on both Radio JJJ with Chris Taylor and Craig Roecassel, and Breakfast with Mike Carlton on 2UE. In typical Latham style, anybody and everybody gets a serve. The allegations are just that, and no inference about people's conduct should be drawn from them. We publish these edited transcripts as part of the continuing story of The Latham Diaries. They give more of an insight into the mind of the man Labor tried to make Australia's Prime Minister. Make up your own mind, and make any further use of the transcripts pending advice from your own legal sources.

MARK LATHAM -----JJJ ----

MARK LATHAM INTERVIEW WITH CRAIG ROECASSEL & CHRIS TAYLOR  
Triple J, Tuesday, 20 September 2005.

JOURNO

Here to spurt some more bile across the studio desk from us, Mark Latham, how are you doing?

LATHAM

I am doing pretty well. What about you guys, I have not seen you since the chaser days.

JOURNO

No, no I haven't seen you since the days you used to belt me around with a nerf bat. You know, they were the days.

JOURNO 2

It is of course the great unspoken story. I mean there has been a lot of media attention on other claims or points made in the diaries, but no one has really told the real story behind the time you bashed Craig Roecassel over the head outside Parliament. What went on, Mark?

LATHAM

Well, there is a story there. I had to cut it from the diary for legal reasons, but the truth is that that bat had other uses that night.

JOURNO

Is that right?

LATHAM

It wasn't just the head that I applied it to. Craig, later on behind the bushes in Parliament House, in a different position to upright, and I applied the bat to a different part of his body. It had to be cut but its Triple J's exclusive here; I can reveal it (inaudible) the factor.

JOURNO

Can I ask you as I have always spread the rumour that the reason you hit me was because you had been on the sauce a bit, you know you might have had a few under the belt?

LATHAM

A couple – why not? There're all into it at Parliament House.

JOURNO

Exactly. Well, the booze is so cheap at Parliament House.

LATHAM

I'd had a couple of beers; most of them had a couple of kegs by that time of night.

JOURNO

Exactly, you got Andrew Bartlett going, so it's a big night.

LATHAM

He was chasing a Sheila round the room.....grabbing bottles of wine.

JOURNO

Exactly!

LATHAM

Of course he is exhausted. They know it's on for young and old....

JOURNO

Do you think he is just a .....

LATHAM

.....and I was relatively cogent at that time of night, but some of the others there, they couldn't have held the bat let alone.....

JOURNALIST

Well you called me a fucking idiot and that seemed .....

LATHAM

.....let alone shove it. Oh the fact that I could speak is a tribute to me, compared to some of them. You know ..... that night and others, totally legless, totally speechless....

JOURNO

The great thing about that bit of footage is when there was a moment of violence in your life with the incident with the cab driver, no one had any pictures of anything, no one could depict your aggressive temperament, and they always went back to you belting Roecassel over the head. How does that make you feel?

LATHAM

Well, there was a bit of déjà vu because me staff were there. He looked a bit like that guy dressed up as the refugee....

JOURNO

.....Yeah! Everyone thought I was the cab driver, they are going 'gee, he's broke his arm with a nerf bat, that's strange..

LATHAM

Yes. Andrew Bolt went off about it, "Nancy Boy Bolt" thought I'd whacked you with a baseball bat or something but it you hit him ----apparently if you hit Andrew Bolt with a nerf bat you'd knock him right over so.....

JOURNO

Speaking of conservative columnists, am I right in saying ----I see you have said that you regret calling Janet Albrechtsen a shanky hoe, is that just because you got the term wrong, it was actually skanky hoe, not shanky hoe?

LATHAM

Yes, I fumbled. American rap music, I am a dunce and give me Midnight Oil or Split Enz any day, that American rap stuff, it's too much for me, too complicated. I'm not intelligent enough to handle it.....

JOURNO

You should not be quoting it in Parliament then?

LATHAM

I know, I know – bloody hopeless, honestly and that was stone cold sober in the morning and I still couldn't get "skanky" out, I went "shanky" like it was a pony or something. I put in a shocker!

JOURNO

Or a piece of lamb.

LATHAM

I put in a shocker honestly and I –they say I don't admit to errors in this book. There's the big one.

JOURNO

There's the only one.

LATHAM

The big blight on my Parliamentary career...

JOURNO

Is it true though.....

LATHAM

I couldn't even get the American skanky hoe out.

JOURNO

There is a big attack on you.....my girlfriend says I am defensive and I never own up to anything, I think she'd really get on you because it is the case that .....

LATHAM

Hey, hey, go easy----your girl friend will get on me? Turn it up!

JOURNO

No, she would kind of say: 'Mark, you are being too defensive. Why don't you own up to what you have done here, because on Tony Jones you kind of said; 'Look, I take responsibility for this. But look at all these people who actually did the wrong thing. Can you name something, what you did wrong, just personally, Mark?

LATHAM

No. Well, I've owned up to the two big ones, the hoe and the ultimate fate of The nerf bat!

JOURNO

That's it? That's it?

LATHAM

Well.....

JOURNO

They were big ones that let you down.

LATHAM

You know, losing the election, bombing with the forest policy, financial issues with Medicare Gold, mere bagatelles, just trivia compared to the things that I regard as important from my time in politics, which was hanging out with you guys and chewing the fat and shooting the breeze.

JOURNO

Maybe if you concentrated more on the others, who knows? But you know, one of the other big mistakes, there was a very big rumour going around at the time of your resignation that suggested that.....

LATHAM

I had a brain tumour?

JOURNO

Well no, not that one.

LATHAM

That I was barking mad?

JOURNO

No!

LATHAM

That I was howling in my back yard at the moon?

JOURNO

No, that you'd cut your own hair, and the reason you hadn't resigned earlier was because you had such a shocking haircut at your resignation, people said that you'd cut your own hair and you didn't resign earlier because you were too embarrassed to face the public with it?

LATHAM

Where did you hear that? Your girlfriend?

JOURNO

I heard that from a lot of people, I heard that from people within the Labor Party.

LATHAM

Oh, they'd know! Well, look, one good thing about hair is that it grows back and compared to...

JOURNO

You're avoiding the question, Mark. Did you cut your own hair?

LATHAM

Bobby came over and so forth; mine can grow back because I still got some.

JOURNO

What was the real issue behind the hair cut?

LATHAM

Well, I mean it was a boiling hot summer. My brother in law next door sports a crew cut. His wife, my sister, has been applying that crew cut for years, and I thought it was time to get with the strength.

JOURNO

So it was not that Kim Beazley cut your hair like that, so that is why you hate him now?

LATHAM

Kim Beazley cut the hair, and he missed my throat and got the top of my head.

JOURNO

We are chatting to Mark Latham on Triple J this afternoon; this is Spectrum Now ....music break.....

JOURNO

We are still chatting with former Opposition Leader Mark Latham, and I just wanted to ask him, if the aim of these diaries was to, you know, cause a little bit of damage to Kim Beazley and Labor and the Labor Party, is it possible that they have backfired a little bit and hurt your reputation more than other people's?

LATHAM

Well, I am out of politics and what the media has got to say about me, you know, who cares?

JOURNO

So you don't care if it's a bit of collateral damage on yourself?

LATHAM

Well, what's it to me? I am happily a home dad, happily a 'has been' in political terms and you are out of the system, who cares? See, I know these people, I know what they are like and to have people who go through your garbage bin to get stories saying; "Oh, this bloke's not only unethical, he's got this problem, that problem. I know, they're the ones with the problem, so for me it's a bit of a hoot, quite frankly, their criticism of me, is a bit of a hoot and a bit of entertainment, here as I break from---temporarily break from home Dad duties to hit the microphones.

JOURNO

But Mark, it is not just journalists who are saying these things, I know.....

LATHAM

Hey, take a break, are we getting serious here?

JOURNALIST

No, we are getting a bit of both. I want to show the genuine insight, a lot of my friends have been saying over the last couple of days watching the coverage and the promotion of the book --- these are friends who have voted Labor in the last election and now feel ---they've said they are really grateful that you didn't become Prime Minister, given some of the things that have come out in these diaries. How does that make you feel?

LATHAM

Well, they should read the book and have a look at it, you know? I mean, do you really try and get information from the Daily Telegraph as your source of record in Sydney? You'd be hard up, wouldn't you? You might as well--- you might as well go read the comic books ---- or the Herald Sun in Melbourne!

JOURNO

No, this is based on actual extracts from your diaries, on the Enough Rope interview you did.

LATHAM

Well, I know you are mates with Andrew Denton and all that, but you know, he is not much of a political interviewer, is he? He doesn't really sort of hit the ---- I had to do the Tony Jones one to get a political professional as opposed to an amateur. Now Denton's been good with The Chaser and 'funny ha! ha!' stuff, but he doesn't really cut the mustard as a political interviewer. So we had to go to the professional, Jones, and that's where you'll get your information.

JOURNO

Can I ask a question? I just wonder—who would you prefer to win the next election out of Howard and Beazley?

LATHAM

Julia Gillard!

JOURNO

Out of Howard and Beazley, who would you prefer?

LATHAM

No, I have only got one answer to these trick questions.

JOURNO

It is not a trick question, seriously...

LATHAM

.....trying to trip me up in my humble retirement.

JOURNO

Is that a case through, clearly I mean, you and Beazley literally, I can't imagine there being more hatred between two people, I can actually feel it across the country. Beazley is in Perth and you can just feel a simmering hatred between you two.

LATHAM

Oh, you've got the vibe!

JOURNO

Yeah, exactly. You can see it. But would you actually prefer, because you've actually probably done damage to Labor's chances of winning the next election, possibly not as much as Kim on his own, I don't know, but would you actually say in the end, I regret it if Labor didn't win because of these books?

LATHAM

As I used to say in the trade, I've answered that question.

JOURNO

Ah, you didn't answer that – you avoided that question in all the other media interviews, too!

LATHAM

No, No, I have got an answer. Kim Beazley, he was interviewed by Malcolm Farr in the Daily Telegraph, old Fatty Farr, and Kim said this book will be a two day wonder, nothing to worry

about. So if Kim's not worried, why should I have a care in the world? I'll give you one guarantee, chaps. I don't carry Kim Beazley's worries and burdens in life.

JOURNO

No!

LATHAM

But if he's not worried, Kim is carefree, if he's off having a stroll in the park and taking it easy, and a few Tooheys down the pub and kicking back and relaxing and chatting with the mob and free as a bird about everything and not a worry in the world, well, why should I have a concern?

JOURNO

Can I ask the question another way?

LATHAM

Do you reckon that's fair?

JOURNO

That's fair! Who will you vote for in the next election?

LATHAM

Julia Gillard.

JOURNO

Assuming she is not running, who will you vote for?

LATHAM

Well, I think she will, that is my tip.....there you go, you've got it!

JOURNO

Would you ever vote Labor again?

LATHAM

Well, Julia Gillard's Labor, and I am still a member of the Labor Party so yeah!

JOURNO

We are.....

LATHAM

If they move in the right direction there with Gillard, I am in there like a total supporter there - got my vote, I think she is good. Should be Australia's first female Prime Minister.

JOURNO

A spy of ours saw you having a bevvie with her at the Erskinville pub recently. Is this the plan? You kind of said, OK, this is how it is going to run. This is the response to my book, and you will get yourself into the prime position. Are you a campaign leader there, Mark?

LATHAM

Well, I remember that night, it was the first night of the second test and I made a bit of, I feel like I made a bit of a goose of myself because the Pommies were there batting on the big screen and some Pommy back packing refugee sitting over there said; "Oh, England is doing this, that and the other." I remember giving him a big spray – England's hopeless because we'd creamed them in the first test and gave him a hard time, saying; 'they couldn't possibly win the Ashes', so the rest is history.

But wasn't that a good way of avoiding the question? See these political techniques? I've still got them. I've been a bit rusty, but when I put my mind to it, I can still get back there, and the non-answer technique they teach you down at Sussex Street, the non-answer school, and I was.....an outstanding graduate of that. Did you see the clever way I got you off that, and you guys got mesmerised by the Ashes, you would have gone on and just forgotten the question as I have now!

JOURNO

Can I ask you though; you apparently admit the fact that you smoked dope in Parliament, right?

LATHAM

...and it was a Triple J identity.....

JOURNO

That you were with?

LATHAM

Who passed the joint?

JOURNO

And are you sure.....

LATHAM

But it was like Woodstock, if you remember it....you weren't actually there.

JOURNO

....you weren't actually thee. Naming names this afternoon in Triple J. We'll talk more dope in Parliament next with Mark Latham on Triple J.....MUSIC BREAK

JOURNO

And we are still talking with former Opposition Leader Mark Latham. Spilling the beans on just how much gunja is in the halls of power in Canberra. Were there a lot of people who smoked dope in Parliament? Does it happen a bit?

LATHAM

Oh, there's a fair bit.

JOURNO

Let's have some names, Mark Latham.

LATHAM

Well, ..... once told me, he was such a serious chuffer at Melbourne University that it spun his head right out, and he lost memory from that time.

JOURNO

It shows now, doesn't it?

LATHAM

Well, I suppose it does. But he was very heavy into it. ...., I think, he was in the shower and you know.....

JOURNO

Or the whole thing

LATHAM

Or the whole kit and caboodle, bong in one hand and a reefer in the other, you know... going ten to the dozen.

JOURNO

I'm certainly aware of another Parliamentarian who smoked while being in Parliament....it seems like an enormous hypocrisy. Did you see last night on Four Corners, this poor homeless man getting taken before the courts for it, and there we have our Parliamentarians chuffing away, I mean.....

LATHAM

Well, it was the media who bought it in, I think old ..... there from the ..... gets it into the Press Gallery and shares it around, and there is a few others. So I think you know their dealers are up in the Gallery, and the pollies are just, sort of, you know in the conga line of chuffers....as it passes down the line.

JOURNO

Why Oakes is so large?.....It's the munchies.....big.....

LATHAM

Amanda Vanstone wanted drug testing in Parliament House.

JOURNO

Really, is that why you left?

LATHAM

Well, you talk about the munchies. You know, if Amanda hasn't had the munchies at some stage, nobody has.

JOURNO

Are you saying she has got no other excuse?

LATHAM

She's got no other excuse. You couldn't be that big unless you'd been on the munchies. So she's obviously got off it, she knows that it's been going on and she wants drug testing. Now she's probably raised a serious issue. Because if they'd drug tested me and a couple of journalists that fateful night of the corridor party in 1994, well, we would've been.....

JOURNO

So we need to bust a few colleagues and journos to get the laws changes, is that what you are saying?

LATHAM

That's a job for The Chaser. Forget about the nerf bat out the front.

JOURNO

Sniffer dogs in Parliament?

LATHAM

Infiltration! Get in there with your sniffer dogs and your cannabis testing unit and your utility belt, you know.

JOURNO

As long as someone else gets the urine test from .... I'll be fine.

LATHAM

Oh Yeah! ..... swab...TAPE DEFECT...

JOURNO

Now Mark, can we talk a little about Gough Whitlam. You write in the diaries that the cruellest cut of all was finding out second hand that your mentor and hero, Gough, was suggesting you should quit politics. He's since come out and given his side of the story.

There was another drug reference in your book, ....

LATHAM

.....a chuffer, all the memories are coming back, you know, once you stabilise your recollection..... in there, he visited Nimbin and turned up at one of my events boasting that he'd been on the chuff chuff. And doesn't it show, he's the pride of the ..... media empire?

JOURNO

Which .....

LATHAM

.....! He's a serious chuff chuffer.

JOURNO

Chuffers at .....

LATHAM

Oh, Yeah! Big time!

JOURNO

Did Gough like a chuff?

LATHAM

Not that I know of.

JOURNO

Gough's given his version of events today.

LATHAM

He's said, maintain my chuff.

JOURNO

He also said he never said that you should never get out of politics. He said if you're going to give up the leadership you should also surrender the seat of Werriwa. Are you prepared to accept that sign, kiss and make up?

LATHAM

No, well the issue was he was putting out public statements to say that I should get rissoled.

JOURNO

It wasn't a public statement. He was talking to your mate on the backbench.

LATHAM

But he's rung him up to say Latham should go, and I'm going to put out a public statement. And Gough's offside, Stephen Chader, has confirmed to me that he was putting out a public statement that day. And both Chader and Fitzgibbon had to talk him out of it. So imagine my humiliation if Gough puts out the statement five days before I decided to go my own way, in my own time, and this bloke who's been so associated with me, was putting the knife in. In the end there I said this would have been public too.

JOURNO

TAPE FAULT.....should give up both, so Gough again was agreeing with you?

LATHAM

Yeah!, but you don't put out a public statement. Like if you wanted to knock Chris off your show here, you'd have a talk about it, and he's sort of voluntarily.....

JOURNO

I'd voluntarily walk out.

LATHAM

You wouldn't put out a public statement that he's got to go. The poor bugger would be humiliated.....

JOURNO

We've got Gough Whitlam here and he's .....no.....

LATHAM

The poor bugger would be humiliated and that's how I felt. I thought; 'What an unfair and wrong way of doing things'. And thankfully I thank Fitzgibbon and Chader for talking him out of the public statement.

JOURNO

Isn't you whole point about Beazley, the reason you got the shits with Beazley, right, is that he had said these things behind your back and he didn't have the guts to come and speak to your face about it? Are you being a hypocrite if you don't actually talk to Gough, to Gough's face about it?

LATHAM

Well, I had it from two sources, Fitzgibbon and Chader.

JOURNO

Oh, I know, but the whole point is.....why don't you talk to him about it?

LATHAM

Well, I have not heard from him and what I am going to do about it, you know its all history.

JOURNO

You lost his phone number? Gough give us a call....1300 0555 36, Gough.

LATHAM

He might have lost mine.

JOURNO

You agree to be ashamed, though. I mean, Gough's getting on in years and your own health might be, you know, questionable. It'd be a shame if one of you went to your grave without having made your peace, wouldn't it?

LATHAM

Well, let's just see what the future holds. I've just given you the detail there and I'm out of politics and happily so. I don't make that many phone calls to serving or former politicians, and especially those who wanted to humiliate me at the end.

JOURNO

We are chatting with Mark Latham on Triple J. MUSIC BREAK.....Mark Latham, who's in a very, very candid sort of mood. I wanted to ask you actually, cause Chris bought up the health there and this.....a lot of people have said this to me as their theory about the book, right! They reckon your motivations and the reason you are kind of doing that is that you are dying. This is what's been said to me. Are you dying? Obviously the shorter term than when, you know, you're in your 80s. Have you got a terminal illness? Is that the motivation?

LATHAM

Well, the big breaking news on Triple J is that I am dying. As a devotee of Catch 22, that great Joseph Heller novel, they point out that we are all dying, everyday you live longer you're closer to death.

JOURNO

What about, can you ... obviously though you don't have .....

LATHAM

That's one way of looking at it. I've always thought, you know, we're all fading away---even you young guys.

JOURNO

That we're dying too? Well, I'm going to put a book out of my diaries, then.

LATHAM

You should.

JOURNO

There's been no immediate prognosis?

LATHAM

Other than the pancreas problem I had from the radiotherapy treatment, my health has improved because I've dropped weight and less stress and people say I look 10 years younger, I probably feel 10 years younger. So there is a lot to be said for getting out of politics and feeling a lot better about things.

JOURNO

A lot of people said that you know, maybe there's no jobs for you in the future. Would you go dancing with the stars? Dancing with celebrities, what the hell is it called on Channel Seven?

LATHAM

How would I know?

JOURNO

Would you say yes to that?

LATHAM

The only dance I ever perfected was out there in Western Sydney nightclubs doing the chicken stomp. And that's many years ago. I can probably still do the chicken stomp, but that's about it. No, I couldn't dance to save myself. My wife's a good dancer, but I'm hopeless.

JOURNO

You won't do that? Well, there goes the only possible thing you could do.

LATHAM

No, I'm rat shit. All I've got are these interviews on Triple J, that's all that's left to me.

JOURNO

You talked about the benefits of getting out of politics. What about getting into it? What would your advice be to a young person who has a keen sense of social justice, wants to effect genuine social change. Would you tell them to get into politics, or stay well away?

LATHAM

I should do a Yul Brynner type ad, 'Whatever you do, don't do it'.

JOURNO

Don't join politics? You are not convinced it is an effective way of bringing about change?

LATHAM

No, I think if you want to bring about progressive social change, you should do it through community organisations, charities, social entrepreneurship, you know, things that build better relations between people instead of organised politics, which is pretty crook as you know.

JOURNO

I do find this kind.....its kind of ironic in a way that you.....'cause obviously you believe this, you've written for years about this whole community –based thing, and I'm noticing in the interviews you always talk about how, you know, you hate the way its becoming too individualistic and we're not being community based. But you must be the most individualistic man, like no one seems more suspicious of others and more go your own way, don't listen to others, do your own thing, like isn't it a bit kind of ...it's strange that you are the public's voice of community action.

LATHAM

Well, I'm not really, I'm out of politics.

JOURNO

.....you are such an individualistic man.

LATHAM

Have you read my book; you've got a book there, John Birmingham Weapons of Choice, that's not my book, Weapons of Choice, what's going on here? Another nerf bat?

JOURNO

We like them, we didn't get any books.

LATHAM

Well, you should read a few. What's your question? I say in the introduction to my book that I wasn't the best person to be presenting that sort of agenda and happy to be out of it. So I concede your point.

JOURNO

Yeah, you're pretty much the antithesis of what you speak for.

LATHAM

Oh, you fingered me, mate. Oakes has tried, O'Brien, Tony Jones, all these pretenders.

JOURNO

I did not finger you.

LATHAM

But it's Craig Roecassel who has cut through and got me on the ropes. I'm pleading mercy you know, tapping the mat, go easy.

JOURNO

Before we let you go, can we have maybe a bit of a rematch, you know, round two, the nerf bat. Can we get an arm wrestle going between you Mark Latham and Craig Roecassel? I'll be the judge of this. Get a good strong grip here; here we have the former Opposition Leader of the Labor Party and Roecassel. One, two, three! Its tight, it's tight!

LATHAM

Is this on radio?

JOURNO

Latham taking a slight ascendancy. Latham, Latham, Rosecassel coming back. Roecassel might just have him. Oh, no -- Latham has fought back. Oh, Roecassel's pulled through. Roecassel.....Latham in an historic re-match of the nerf bat incident of 2001.

LATHAM

I can't believe it.

JOURNO

Mark Latham, the diaries are out now.

LATHAM

No, I'll tell you one thing. It is time to retire.

##                      END OF INTERVIEW                      ##

LATHAM – 2UE SYDNEY 210905

MARK LATHAM ON BREAKFAST WITH MIKE CARLTON, 2UE  
WEDNESDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER, 2005-09-25

LATHAM

Good morning, Mike.

CARLTON

When is all this going to stop?

Well, it is interesting what Bernard Lagan has done, and he's been less than honest in his presentation of this in The Bulletin magazine because what he is not telling readers of that magazine is he sent me an email on the 6th June this year, and he wrote as follows; "about six weeks ago I emailed Gwyther asking for coffee, heard nothing, then late on a Saturday night about a month ago she called and demanded to know what I wanted, so I obliged, putting your email to her. Well, she went right off, dropped the phone and screamed it was untrue, told me she was on anti-depressants and finally hinted at self-harm if it made it into the book."

Now, Mike, you can understand my confusion about this. That Lagan was saying in June it had not gone into his book because Gabrielle Gwyther is on anti-depressants and was threatening self harm, but now they're publishing it in The Bulletin as part of an edition that is supposed to be having a go at me.

CARLTON

Well, let's start from square one....

LATHAM

All of that's very confusing.

CARLTON

It is, let's start at square one. Why did you have to tell, want to tell your biographer, why did you want it known that in your words you wife wanted a lesbian affair?

LATHAM

...you have to remember the politics of 2004, where my former wife volunteered herself 20 or 30 times to journalists. I've got Margaret Simons' book sitting in front of me where she chronicles the number of times from the Sally Loane program through to interviews with Lincoln Wright and others.....and the Sydney Morning Herald story which was supposed to be an expose about my sex life, claims that I'd asked for an open marriage. The marriage opened up for the reasons that I've outlined here to Lagan, so naturally.....

CARLTON

Because she wanted, you say, to have lesbian affairs, which she denies.

LATHAM

Well, Mike, she would say that. But, I mean the fact of the matter is that 30 or 40 times at least she has put interviews around and poison about me in the media through the course of 2004. As Leader of the Opposition, this was the last thing I wanted to talk about. You know, as if I wanted this on the front page of the Daily Telegraph when we were talking about health and education policies and other things important to the country. But her having her say so many times through the media and in particular that infamous ..... article in the Sydney Morning Herald, which Lagan writes up as a very damaging piece against me politically.

CARLTON

It was damaging.

LATHAM

Well, which, who would not want a brief right of reply to set the record straight? And Mike, I think anyone who's been through a marriage break-up would know that the only people who really know what happened in the marriage break-up is the two who were in it.

CARLTON

..... But how much of this dirt has got to come out? You know she says, you say she was a lesbian, you say now that she was talking of.....she was in deep depression, talking of suicide, I mean.....

LATHAM

Well, Bernard Lagan said that and he needs to take responsibility as a journalist and clear this up. Is she on anti-depressants and hinting at self-harm, or is she the person who once again is volunteering material in the media? I think she had an interview with the Sydney papers on Saturday, so what's the real story here, because I'm totally confused and I think Lagan owes it to his reading public to clear up the facts. Is this a woman on anti-depressants and hinting at self-harm, so matters can't be published? That is what he wrote to me on the 6th June. Or is this a woman who's volunteering more radio interviews and part of an effort by the Bulletin to be critical of me?

CARLTON

Are you worried where this is taking you? Everything I read in the past week or so from the columns written by Laurie Oakes today, all the editorials in the newspapers, other journalists, your former colleagues in the Party all say, in fact, that you have destroyed yourself...

LATHAM

Look Mike, people I've criticised in the past .....has criticised in the book, they're firing back, that is the payback culture of Canberra, that is obvious. I mean, there are a lot of people criticised in that book, and so they should be because I am presenting the facts about what goes on behind the scenes. So they fire back, that is how it works. But the reading public, of course, get to read the books themselves, and they make a judgement according to the material in my diaries, and other accounts of my time in politics. So I'm, um .....

CARLTON

A lot of ordinary Australians are going to be sitting out there and saying;"This is disgusting; this is sordid; this is hateful; spiteful, vitriolic." You know, where is it getting you?

LATHAM

Well, I am sure they were saying that when they read the ..... article last year and the other 20, 30, 40 pieces of media, of disinformation that Gabrielle Gwyther put in the media about me as Leader of the Opposition. She started on the day I got the job, or the next day, with an interview with Sally Loane, and she never let up. And it is chronicled by people who say 'she had her say umpteen times.' Well, Mike, there is another side to a marriage break-up. I got the list of questions from Lagan in February and said, well, look you know, Gwyther has had her say about the marriage break-up, would you like to hear my side of it? My factual account? And Lagan jumped at it, he jumped at the opportunity, firing back an email saying oh yes, please, I'd really like for this book about you to have, for the first time, your account of how the marriage broke up. And I did give him that account, the incident at the Campbelltown function on the 9th August, and I could have told him more. I could have told him about her showing me photos of the nurses with whom she had relations when she was a nurse, about her views about women like Lucy Lawless and the Corrs singers. I mean, these are all things that happened in my home, all things that she told me in my home, they're true. And if she wanted to have 30 or 40 accounts with journalists about things about me, everything from what TV shows I watched to what toothpaste I used, and her jaundiced account of how the marriage broke up, well of course, of course, in a democracy I'm entitled to a right of reply, and this is the factual right of reply. And I just wish that Bernard Lagan had told his readers about her state of mind, on anti-depressants and hinting at self harm, and been frank with the people, the very, the dwindling numbers of people who read The Bulletin magazine.

CARLTON

Do you think you really could have been Prime Minister with all this happening in your life?

LATHAM

Oh, it was pretty hard. It was a bit like a soap opera. I had journalists asking all sorts of questions, fed to them by Gwyther, and for a good period there it turned into a soap opera. And you know, and if you record that I cut it all off and said well, enough's enough, I am not going to.....

CARLTON

Well, there's a view.....

LATHAM

.....campaign against me, I had a so-called emotional Press Conference in Canberra where they could ask all their questions, and I gave them all the answers.

CARLTON

You would have been a disaster as Prime Minister, wouldn't you?

LATHAM

Well, people didn't vote for me, Mike, and that's the democratic judgement.....

CARLTON

That's the judgement now, that you would have been .....

LATHAM

Did you vote for me though, did you vote for me though?

CARLTON

I am not going to answer that!

LATHAM

Who did you vote for? You might... you might have .....given me a vote, you mightn't have thought I was too bad?

CARLTON

I'm a free and private citizen.....

LATHAM

.....well, so am I. Well, Mike, so am I.....

CARLTON

Yeah, but you want to lay your guts out in a long line for everyone to inspect them, don't you?

LATHAM

Well, I've written a frank account .....

CARLTON

Every wart, mole....

LATHAM

....of what happens.....

CARLTON

Yeah!

LATHAM

...of what happens in the poisonous political and media culture in Canberra, and there's some people who don't like it. I am busting open their club, busting open their club and of course,

Laurie Oakes does not like it, of course Mark Riley does not like me letting people know he goes through garbage bins to get his stories.

CARLTON

Is there any more we can learn now? Anything else you want to come out with, hang out, while we've got you on the line?

LATHAM

Oh no, I think we have pretty well covered it.

CARLTON

I think we got there. All right, thanks for your time.

Thank you kindly. The mind boggles. I've been in radio now for 42 years, on and off, man and boy. I don't think I've ever quite seen anything like that, and I can tell you that, G'day Lawsie, John Laws has been listening in the other studio and he is just as mystified, baffled, and jaw-dropped as I am. It is astonishing!

##                    ENDS                    ##