



# THE EVOLUTION OF A LIE

## Chapter 2

A timeline and outline of the evolution of the Lie:  
from the 1990's to November 2006.

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2016

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*A timeline and outline of the evolution of the Lie from the 1990's to November 2006**In the 1990's:*

When she was about 8 or 9 *Emma Nicholls* developed Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, along with physical problems including a stomach disorder that prevented her from being able to tolerate medication for OCD and many common foodstuffs. She could not attend school and was home schooled for a significant part of her education.

*At UOW in second semester 1999:*

*Corinne Cortese* was a student, among 15 or 16 others in a seminar run each week by Scott Dobbs over the 13-week semester in her final undergraduate year of a degree in Commerce at UOW. This was his only contact with this student and there was no contact at all outside the seminar room other than, on one occasion, briefly, when she collected her assignment from his office, and he told her his supervisor's invitation to her to do an Honours year, which she declined saying that she already had a job lined up after completing her degree.

*Her complaint to the UOW Equity Employment & Diversity Unit (EE&DU) director Robyn Weekes and supported by senior academic in the Faculty of Commerce Mary Kaidonis (made only in 2005) was that Scott looked at her during the seminars and that he had complimented her when she was in his office and made her feel uncomfortable.*

*Around 2000:*

When she was 14 *Emma Nicholls* met the Dobbs family through the home schooling movement and although she was about 2 years older than the eldest Dobbs daughter they became friends. Shortly after they met she was invited to dinner, which Scott was preparing. Because of her food intolerances, she was cooking something different for herself and she burnt her hand on the pot. Scott made a remark, intended to make her laugh, and she burst into tears. He gave her a hug to encourage her to stop crying. Christopher, the elder Dobbs' son walked in on this and walked out again. When Emma recovered her composure, each returned to preparing and serving the meal to the Dobbs family, friends and home stay students.

*Her mother Lee Nicholls made a complaint in 2007, when Emma was aged 20, which did not include this and it first appeared in a statutory declaration prepared for her by the PSU based on a statement she gave FAC Children's Minister Yvonne Gunning in a 3-hour interview. She never made a complaint of her own, and did not want to. Lee complained that she had seen Scott 'hugging and kissing Emma since she was aged 14'. By the time Lee Nicholls had been interviewed by the diocesan investigator and signed a statement, she had admitted that she had never seen Scott hugging or kissing Emma, ever.*

*This episode was rejected by the diocesan investigator as unsustainable as grounds for a complaint to the PSU.*

*Around 2002:*

*Emma Nicholls* says that when she was 16 she was at the Dobbs family home one day with one of the Dobbs daughters sitting beside her on a settee. She says that Scott Dobbs came into the room and gave her a 'sideways hug' (apparently from a sitting position on a single chair beside the settee, or possibly from a standing position, she cannot remember) during which she said that he breathed heavily onto her ear.

The whole scenario descended into farce because clearly Emma had no recollection of anything let alone anything improper and kept adding more and more absurd details, such as about how she had at that time felt that there was "something slightly sexual" about it and had told her mother about it saying "I would not be surprised if Scott does not sexually abuse me sometime." Mrs. Nicholls was clearly taken by surprise by this 'unscripted' addition to the complaint and tied herself into knots to explain why, despite what a mother would regard with alarm, she dismissed it as not sexual and nothing to worry about and did not stop her daughter from going to see the Dobbs family. It is one of the more amusing parts of the investigator's interview transcripts with this utterly unreliable person, particularly as Mrs. Nicholls kept ascribing the 'facts' of the age 14 incident to this age 16 incident.

*Lee Nicholl's complaint (made only in 2007) was that Scott hugged Emma and breathed heavily on her ear. This was clearly physically impossible without contortions that would be dangerous to the middle-aged spine, and in any event, as Emma said, there was one Dobbs daughter sitting beside her and another one just through an open doorway. It was rejected by the Professional Standards Committee as unsustainable as grounds for a complaint to the PSU.*

*When these two complaints were rejected by the investigator and the Professional Standards Committee respectively it meant that there was no evidence of child sex abuse and the virulent gossip generated particularly by FAC Executive Minister Bruce Clarke and the FAC Children's Minister Yvonne Gunning constituted a massive defamation of Scott and indeed his whole family.*

*2002 or 2003 on an undisclosed date:*

About 2 or 3 years after graduating, while employed by Macquarie University as a junior academic, *Corinne Cortese* ran into Scott Dobbs at a Doctoral Colloquium at UOW. He complimented her and said he was glad that she was doing academic work. At lunch, he was among about 50-80 people (she says) and he was sitting somewhere else. In the afternoon sessions (she says) he was also sitting somewhere else but he kept making eye contact with her from where he was sitting.

*Her complaint was that he told her she was beautiful and clever, and that he kept making eye contact with her in the afternoon session.*

*2002 or 2003 on an undisclosed date after the meeting at the UOW:*

*Corinne Cortese* says that about a week after the meeting at UOW she received on her Macquarie University computer an email from an anonymous Hotmail account called 'writetomeifyourlucky@hotmail.com' about which she said she did not remember the contents, except that these emails after the first were signed

Scotty and that the anonymous correspondent professed his love for her, complained that his wife did not understand him and asked her to go away with 'him'. After some exchanges, she stopped replying and there were no other emails. She did not keep the emails.

*Her complaint was that she had been 'pursued with' these anonymous emails from Scott.*

*The problem is the whole improbability of this event. No-one in their right mind could possibly make by email a declaration of love and a proposition to go away together with someone that they did not know, having had no contact with them in any sort of social manner during the second semester of 1999 nor since, nor rationally expect such a proposition to be accepted. Only a woman with a personality disorder could possibly think that she was so irresistible to a man that he would abandon wife and children and make such an absurd proposition in those circumstances and in that manner. And what person even opens an anonymous email with that title?*

*In fact, it proved to be a complete fabrication, and as noted before, even if it were not, the emails would not have breached any code of conduct, as she and he were not in any student / lecturer relationship.*

2003 or 2004

A young woman student, *Lee Tran* who called herself '*Anika Rose*', perhaps after the African American singer actor of that name, tried to initiate an intimate personal relationship with Scott. He rejected this. In 2005 this woman made allegations about Scott to *Helen Irvine* (and certainly to other women academics in the Faculty including a *Dr. Jane Edwards*) implying that he was the one who made a proposition to her. In an interview with Helen Irvine in 2007 she said she had to keep her complaint anonymous because she was frightened Scott would kill her if he found out she had complained. Even Helen thought this was over-the-top and even the diocesan investigator agreed.

*Similar facts of a face-to-face proposition, adapted to her circumstances, were not mentioned in the fabricated complaint by Corinne Cortese to the UOW EE&DU in 2005.*

*In 2004 on an undisclosed date:*

*Emma Nicholls* said in her statutory declaration that one day when she was aged 19, she was wearing a skirt borrowed from one of the Dobbs' daughters and Scott complimented her, saying: 'That looks good on you.' Further investigation established that the skirt in question was an ankle-length brown peasant-style full skirt. It also established that most, if not all four Dobbs' daughters were present at the time of the compliment.

*Lee Nicholl's complaint was the Scott complimented Emma. It was dismissed by the diocesan investigator as unsustainable as a complaint to the PSU.*

July 2004:

At another Doctoral Colloquium at UOW *Corinne Cortese* saw Scott Dobbs again amongst many other people. She does not say that he sought her out. All she says is that he said to her: 'You could please me any time.' No context or details of

other parts of the conversation are disclosed.

*She complained about these words to the UOW EE&DU.*

*She does not say either that she avoided him because of the emails several years ago, or referred to the emails when they met. If they had existed surely this would have been an awkward meeting and the most likely response would be avoidance. Later in her signed record of interview for Mary Kaidonis and Robyn Weekes she makes a big thing about how, in 2005, seeing Scott around the corridors of the faculty now she was back there as a PhD student made her feel uncomfortable. There seems to be a disconnect between what she said and what she did.*

*Early 2005:*

*Corinne Cortese says that Scott Dobbs offered her some tutoring in Summer Session in a subject that he ran, which she refused 'because of previous experience even though I could have used the money'.*

*This and the above constitutes the total of Corinne Cortese's complaints which she made in November 2005. There were no contemporaneous complaints and no witnesses. There is no formal or even informal record of any complaint by 'Anika Rose' to the UOW EE&DU.*

*Late 2005*

*'Anika Rose' was talking to Helen Irvine in the Faculty offices when Scott Dobbs' name was mentioned and, Helen Irvine says, she pulled a face. When asked about this, 'Anika Rose' told Helen Irvine that she had been sexually harassed by Scott 1 or 2 years ago. She said she had not made a complaint about it at the time and it was too late now. Helen Irvine asked her to promise to make a complaint if it happened again.*

*(It was not until 2007 that Helen Irvine, having spoken again to 'Anika Rose', contacted Scott to tell him about the allegations, saying that they had been made by a 'Girl Y'. She told the diocesan investigator that Scott had correctly identified 'Anika Rose' as Girl Y and he had told her that it was the student who had proposed a sexual relationship with him, which he had refused.)*

*The substance of her complaint was that Scott had asked her to have an affair with him; that he had tried to kiss her (or that she thought he might try to kiss her) and that he 'pursued her with emails', none of which had been retained and the content of which no details were given. The reader can note the similarity between this and part of Corinne Cortese's complaint, except that the emails were not said to have been anonymous.*

*3 November 2005:*

*Corinne Cortese attended an interview with Robyn Weekes, the Director of the UOW EE&DU, with Mary Kaidonis in attendance. She made a complaint of sexual harassment against Scott in the terms described earlier.*

*4 November 2005:*

*A report of that meeting was prepared and signed by all three women. The report stated that Corinne Cortese specifically authorised Robyn Weekes to forward it to the Chair of the Academic Probations Committee John Patterson.*

*5 November 2005:*

Scott Dobbs attended the Academic Probations Committee meeting which was considering his application for permanent employment. Both Robyn Weekes and Mary Kaidonis were present as members of the committee. The report was not discussed in his presence nor even referred to so that at the time he was unaware of the existence of the report or indeed of any complaint by Corinne Cortese. (He did not become aware of its' existence until it turned up in the bundle of materials included with the investigator's report and signed statements that were delivered to him in 2008 by Phillip Gerber).

*November 2005:*

Scott Dobbs was advised that his application was unsuccessful. He negotiated to be paid out the balance of his contract and left UOW.

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