

PO Box 1801

Auckland

1 February 2011

Mr T. Moller

Dear Tony

You will not be surprised to hear that I am writing to you, on my own behalf but also on behalf of my mother and sister, in relation to your persistent allegations against my father which culminated in excavation work last week at 3 Kirk Crescent in Kawerau. I wonder if you have any sense at all, of just how much distress and anger your unfounded accusations have caused our family? No doubt that distress is shared by the family of Mona Blades, and the unfortunate people who now own 3 Kirk Crescent.

The irony of all this is that, as an ex-policeman, you really should have had a much better understanding of how to run an investigation, than you have displayed. You did not verify any of your "facts" – something that I have been able to demonstrate very easily to the Police. You made things up – your allegation to the Police that my father was violent and used to beat my mother is an example of one of your outright lies. And, when you must have known that your theory was not supported by the facts, you simply ignored the facts rather than change the theory.

The result of your obsessive pursuit of what can only be described as a fantasy, is that my father's name has been dragged through the mud, in Kawerau and in the news media both nationally and internationally, for nothing except, possibly, your desire to be seen as the hero who cracked the case. No doubt it was your vision of this that led you to alert 3News to the excavation.

The widespread coverage given to allegations that were false from beginning to end, has left my family no option but to now do whatever it can to clear my father's name. The obvious way to do this is to issue defamation proceedings against you. While it is certainly true that my father, having passed away, can no longer complain of defamation, that is not the case with the rest of the family. The false allegation that my father used to beat my mother is most certainly defamatory of my mother, because it implies that she was a victim of domestic violence who was of such weak character that she neither spoke up nor left the situation. This defamatory accusation has been

published, at the very least, to the New Zealand Police and will be available to anyone who secures a copy of the Police file, and hence is effectively a publication to the world at large. Also, given the number of years that we have been hearing from third parties about your accusations against my father, I have absolutely no doubt that you will have shared your views about my father's supposed violence against my mother, and that we will have no difficulty at all in finding witnesses to that effect. I know, for example, that you said it to the 3News reporter.

There will undoubtedly be further examples of defamatory statements – I have made a request under the Official Information Act for a copy of the Police file in relation to my father, and when I receive it, I am sure it will make for interesting reading.

Given that my mother, at least, has a very clear case against you, it would give our family considerable satisfaction to see you in court, trying at great expense to defend the indefensible.

However, as the objective of the exercise would be to clear my father's name, I have decided to put a proposal to you. This is the only time I will make such an offer, and it is the only offer that I will ever make, so you should consider it very carefully before you decide on your response. I do, though, need to hear from you within seven days if you decide to accept. Silence beyond that time will be taken as a refusal, and we will simply press on with whatever alternative action we see fit.

The offer is this:

You must apologise to my family, on terms that have to be approved by me, for the many years and many occasions on which you have falsely accused my father of the murder of Mona Blades and the subsequent concealment of her body. You must further apologise for the distress caused by the Police excavation of 3 Kirk Crescent, with all its attendant publicity. The apology must fully retract all your allegations against my father and must state that you accept that you were wrong. The apology must then be published in the New Zealand Herald, either as a story or (if the Herald will not do that) as a half page advertisement in Section One, paid for by you. The same apology must also be printed on the same basis in the Whakatane Beacon. You must, in addition, accept that I will be using my best endeavours to have the story of the apology run on the television news and on radio.

The basis for the offer is that the retraction and apology should enjoy the same prominence as the original misinformation.

You may wonder what is in this for you. First, while the cost of advertising will not be small, it will most certainly be a lot less than the cost of defending legal proceedings, and the amount of damages / costs that will inevitably be awarded against you. Second, provided that the apology and retraction contains the elements I have set out above, I will agree to a wording that enables you to save some face and maintain some dignity.

If you agree to this proposal and the apology and retraction are duly printed / published in terms agreed by me as set out above, defamation proceedings will not be issued. All rights and remedies (whether through the legal system or otherwise) are, however, reserved in the event of a refusal.

This is an open letter. The right to put it before a court or any other forum at any time is fully reserved, including in support of a claim for aggravated damages. Such claim will also be supported by the fact that this is not the first time I have had to write to you on these matters .

Please advise your position.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Pauline Barratt', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Pauline Barratt