

**Ritual Defamation – Subtle Elimination Process**  
**Conspiracy, coincidence, or merely bureaucratic stuff-up?**  
**By Fredrick Töben, 24 September 2002**

Throughout my wanderings I met a number of individuals who have impressed me by their candid, fearless and refreshingly honest approach to life. They had constructed for themselves a worldview within which I could breathe easy. There was no envy, no excessive pursuit of any material possessions, but a determined will to see that justice and mercy prevailed. They were no angels either, but they had not lost their humanity, something I find so lacking in those individuals who now attempt to silence me because I seem to pose a threat to their held world-view.

Interestingly, the following Australians all topped that proverbial three score and ten years by another decade at least, and remained mentally alert until they passed on.

**Sir Walter Crocker**, public servant, diplomat and Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia: 25 March 1902-14 November 2002.

**Sir James Darling** was an educator who practised what he preached: 18 June 1899-1 November 1995.

**Sir Edward Hamilton Esler Barber** was a practising legal eagle whose sense of justice and compassion benefited many individuals: 1905-1991. It was Sir Edward who managed to get a small settlement for the then widow of former University of Tasmania philosophy lecturer, S S Orr;

**Sir Douglas Wright** was a scientist but whose moral and intellectual integrity remained in-tact: 7 August 1907-28 February 1990. When in September 1990, *The University of Melbourne Gazette*, celebrated its own Sir Douglas, I wrote the following:

"In 1961 Sir Douglas Wright wrote a Prologue to the disturbing W H C Eddy book, *Orr*. This Prologue has provided many victims of conspiracies with much-needed moral support because it offers a succinct analysis of this subtle elimination process. Sir Douglas identified its elements thus:

1. Defame the victim's professional competence, mental balance, truthfulness, etc.
2. Reward collaborators from the victim's group.
3. Weld together the pack of prosecutors.
4. Proclaim authority of the corporation.
5. Spread defamation through the victim's personal links and loyalties.
6. Isolate the victim by giving him the silent treatment.
7. Usually this leads to the victim's resignation which is taken as proof of guilt. Dismissal occurs if the victim refuses to resign.
8. A strong victim highlights the moral standards of society.
9. People in authority perpetuate their own types because no one wishes to be shamed by his successor.
10. Employees are as courageous as their security of livelihood and reputation permits.
11. A governing body of an institution devoted to truth and justice is corrupt if it obstructs enquiry into its stewardship. Sir Douglas concluded his analysis with a timeless warning: 'Such state of affairs is the antithesis of democratic processes and places the society in imminent danger.'"

It is in this sense that I personally ask: Where are our present-day Wrights?

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## **Laird Wilcox augments the Elements of a Ritual Defamation thus:**

- 1.** In a ritual defamation the victim must have violated a particular taboo in some way, usually by expressing or identifying with a forbidden attitude, opinion or belief. It is not necessary that he "do" anything about it or undertake any course of action, only that he engages in some form of communication or expression.
- 2.** The method of attack in a ritual defamation is to assail the character of the victim, and never to offer more than a perfunctory challenge to the particular attitudes, opinions or beliefs expressed or implied. Character assassination is its primary tool.
- 3.** An important rule is to avoid engaging in honest debate over the truthfulness or reasonableness of what has been expressed, only condemn it. To debate opens the issue up for examination and discussion on its merit, which is just what the ritual defamer is trying to avoid. The primary goal is Censorship and Repression.
- 4.** The victim is very often someone in the public eye, although perhaps only in a modest way. It could be a school teacher, a writer, a businessman, a minor official, or merely an outspoken citizen. Visibility enhances vulnerability to ritual defamation.
- 5.** An attempt, often successful, is made to involve others in the defamation. In the case of a public official, other public officials will be urged to denounce the offender. In the case of a student, other students will be called upon, and so on.
- 6.** In order for a ritual defamation to be effective, the victim must be dehumanized to the extent that he becomes identical with the offending attitude, opinion or belief, and in a manner which distorts it to the point where it appears at its most extreme. For example, a victim who is defamed as a "subversive" will be identified with the worst images of subversion, such as espionage or treason. A victim defamed as a "pervert" will be identified with the worst images of perversion, including child molestation. A victim defamed as a "racist" or "antisemitic" will be identified with the worst images of racism or anti-Semitism, such as lynching's or gas chambers, and so on.
- 7.** Also to be successful, a ritual defamation must bring pressure and humiliation from every quarter, including family and friends, who may begin to shun him. If the victim has school children, they may be taunted and ridiculed as a consequence of adverse publicity. If he is employed, he may be fired from his job.
- 8.** Anyone who defends a victim runs the risk of being associated with him and similarly defamed. Even if their own reputation is beyond question, their judgment or involvement with the victim may become an issue. Often, the victim of a ritual defamation becomes isolated and abandoned.
- 9.** Any explanation the victim may offer, including the claim of being misunderstood, is considered irrelevant. To claim truth as a defence is interpreted as unrepentance and only compounds the problem. Ritual defamation is not necessarily an offence of being wrong or incorrect, but rather "insensitivity" and failing to observe social taboos.

**10.** Many victims succumb early on and go through a “confessional” stage complete with apologies and remorse. They may even denounce friends associated with the forbidden values, opinions and beliefs, or claim that they were “duped”, as was the case with many suspected “subversives” during the McCarthy era. If the charges against them involved “morals”, they may claim stress or mental illness as a defence.

**11.** The viciousness of ritual defamation is inspired not merely by revenge, although that is an important factor, but also to create an example so others will know of the savaging they can expect for stepping out of line. Ritual defamation is an important means of social control.

**12.** An interesting aspect of ritual defamation is its universality. It is not specific to any particular value, opinion or belief or to any group or subculture. It may be used either for or against any political, ethnic or religious minority and also by any political, ethnic or religious minority.

**13.** Ritual defamation often appears in paradoxical forms, as in the case of organizations claiming to oppose defamation itself, even using the term “anti-defamation” in their name. Psychologically, this may represent a projective mechanism, in which the organization attempts to camouflage its own propensities in the form of an official myth, a kind of agreed-upon fiction that perfumes its actual activities, which are often transparently evident from its publications.

**14.** The power of ritual defamation lies entirely in its capacity to intimidate. It embraces some elements of primitive superstitious belief, as in a “curse” or “hex”. It also plays on the subconscious fear most people have of being rejected by the “tribe” and being cut off from social and psychological support systems. Only the truly courageous and independent person can withstand the full force of a ritual defamation, and occasionally they may even survive such an attempt relatively unscathed.

**15.** The weak points of ritual defamation lie in its tendency towards overkill and in its rather transparent maliciousness. Occasionally, a ritual defamation will fail because of inadequate planning and failure to correctly estimate the vulnerability of the victim. Ritual defamers often exhibit extensive projective mechanisms and delusions of persecution themselves. Although it may appear to be an offensive manoeuvre, it’s actually quite defensive in nature. As Eric Hoffer said: ‘You can discover what your enemy fears most by observing the means he uses to frighten you’.

**16.** Paradoxically, a ritual defamation often brings about the very values, opinions and beliefs that it condemns, as in a self-fulfilling prophecy. It enhances paranoia and hatred and generally serves to divide and alienate. It hardens positions and polarizes a situation as nothing else can. A person accused of supporting a particular belief may find themselves propelled into that position. Politically, for example, it’s quite effective in creating rebels and dissidents. It has been used in various forms by dictatorships and totalitarian systems all through history. In democratic societies it has become a favourite tool of special interest groups to vilify and neutralize their critics and opponents. It is important to recognize and identify the pattern of a ritual defamation and call attention to it whenever the opportunity presents itself. Ritual defamation is accomplished entirely through the manipulation of language and symbols, and when one understands that then it becomes recognized for the hypocritical, slanderous assault on human dignity that it really is.