

Dirty Politics turns three: where are Cam, Jason, Carrick and the rest now?

Politics

Three years ago today *Dirty Politics* was published, lighting the fuse on an extraordinary election campaign. Hayden Donnell looks into what the cast of Nicky Hager's book have been up to since.

It seems impossible, but there was a time when politics was even worse than it is now.

Today our most fractious political debate is around Metiria Turei confessing to mass murder historic benefit fraud. One of the NewsHub political team may soon set themselves alight in Cuba Street in protest at the government's refusal to execute the Green Party leader.

But if that seems intense, cast your mind back to this time last election cycle. The year was 2014. City-fringe Auckland houses still only cost \$1.5 million. Jesse Peach was preparing to change New Zealand forever with [this live cross](#). And Nicky Hager, a journalist then known primarily for [lifting the lid on Hollow Men and corn](#), had just [dragged 300 people to Unity Bookstore](#) in Wellington and given birth to our national nervous breakdown: the 166-page text titled *Dirty Politics*.

Drawing on emails illegally hacked by the mysterious "Rawshark", Hager's book meticulously detailed how National Party officials had set up a back channel to funnel attacks on their critics through one of the most blogs in the world, Whale Oil Beef Hooked. The scandal reached all the way to Prime Minister John Key, with the revelation one of his staffers, Jason Ede, was having regular Facebook Messenger chats with Whale Oil culprit Cameron Slater.

Everyone melted down. Media. Politicians. Twitter. Especially Twitter. Judith Collins resigned. Key even looked ruffled a few times. Glenn Greenwald was involved? For a while it seemed we'd never talk about anything else. Then the election happened, National won as usual, and it seemed like it was all for nothing. The consensus was that the book hadn't achieved that much.

But is that true? Was *Dirty Politics* as ineffectual as some have said? Maybe it didn't change the election, but it definitely changed a few people's operating procedures. It's time to do the unthinkable, dive right back into New Zealand's Cameron Slater-shaped cistern, and find out where the key characters from the book have ended up. Welcome to *Dirty Politics: Where Are They Now*.

Jason Ede

Poor Jason Ede. All he ever wanted was for messy [journalists to pick up their cigarette butts](#). Somehow he became one of the most recognisable and reviled figures in New Zealand politics for three turbulent months. He was the black ops man in the prime minister's office. The human-shaped link between John Key and Whale Oil. A notoriously bad judge of golf venues.



PHOTO: STOLEN FROM FAIRFAX WHO STOLE IT FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE

Ede quit his job working for Key the day before the 2014 General Election. He was [last reported](#) to have got a new role working for telecommunications company [TeamTalk](#). Is he still there? Honestly, who cares? Ede is like [Luigi Wewege](#) but without the virtue of an awesome name.

Cameron Slater

It's now clear that Hager infused *Dirty Politics* with a powerful curse on Cameron Slater. Nothing short of black magic explains the liquidation of Slater's life since the book was published. Here's an abridged list of the terrible things that have befallen him:

1. Got [knocked out in a Fight For Life by Jesse Ryder](#), causing him to suffer an extremely large number of abusive Stuff and YouTube comments and several bruises to any remaining pride.



Cameron Slater enters the ring before his fight against Jesse Ryder. Photo by Martin Hunter/Getty Images

2. Became such a toxic brand he got [sidelined from his own blog, which is entirely based on being as toxic a brand as possible](#).
3. Got [fined after being found to be in contempt of court](#).
4. Had a [booklet of insults about him sent to more than a million homes](#) by Colin Craig.

4. Became embroiled in a legal battle with Craig over the booklet of insults, prompting Steve Braunias to write a large number of

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Colin Craig trial: The key moments.

stories about him.

It's tempting to say no man deserves all this misfortune. But that's not true. One man does deserve it, and that man is Cameron Slater.

Carrick Graham

Carrick Graham is less a man than a piece of performance art aimed at showing what would happen if someone did the most evil thing in almost any given situation. His life is seemingly bent around making the Earth a worse place, most significantly through his work lobbying on behalf of tobacco, alcohol, and sugar companies. *Dirty Politics* revealed he was paying Slater more than \$6000 a month, presumably in exchange for the publication of attack pieces on his clients' enemies.

This [Peter Newport feature for North & South](#) showed him defiant in the wake of the book's publication, still bravely slugging it out with any scientists daring to call for people to be healthier and die less. However there have been some setbacks. A recent court case showed Graham up to his old tricks: [helping organise attack stories on Whale Oil on behalf of an aggrieved woman trying to damage the reputation of her ex-husband](#). That may sound quite unethical, but on the other hand it's also really gross.

The court case is under appeal.

Matthew Hooton

Matthew Hooton was more of a bit-part player in *Dirty Politics*, limiting his role to revealing Hager's street name to Hong Kong lawyer Cathy Odgers after she (probably jokingly) [implied there were Chinese men who might want to cut the author's penis or possibly balls off](#). He's continued to strike an interesting online/offline life balance since *Dirty Politics*. In the real world he moonlights as a respectable and very well-informed political commentator for Radio New Zealand's Nine To Noon. But on the Internet he dabbles in [retweeting terrible tweets](#) and calling people "[commo c](#)".

Jordan Williams

Jordan Williams, co-founder of the Taxpayers' Union, also played a smaller role in the book, but did provide some interesting passages – most memorably his bitter complaint to Slater after being sent on a fruitless late-night mission to find a drunk Winston Peters on Courtenay Place.

Williams' unbreakable bond with Slater were further confirmed this year when he also got into a defamation case with Colin Craig. He was awarded \$1.27 million in damages, which was quickly judged to be a [miscarriage of justice](#). Hopefully the matter can be sorted soon so Williams can go back to doing what he's passionate about: [haranguing public servants alongside a frightening anthropomorphic pig-man](#).

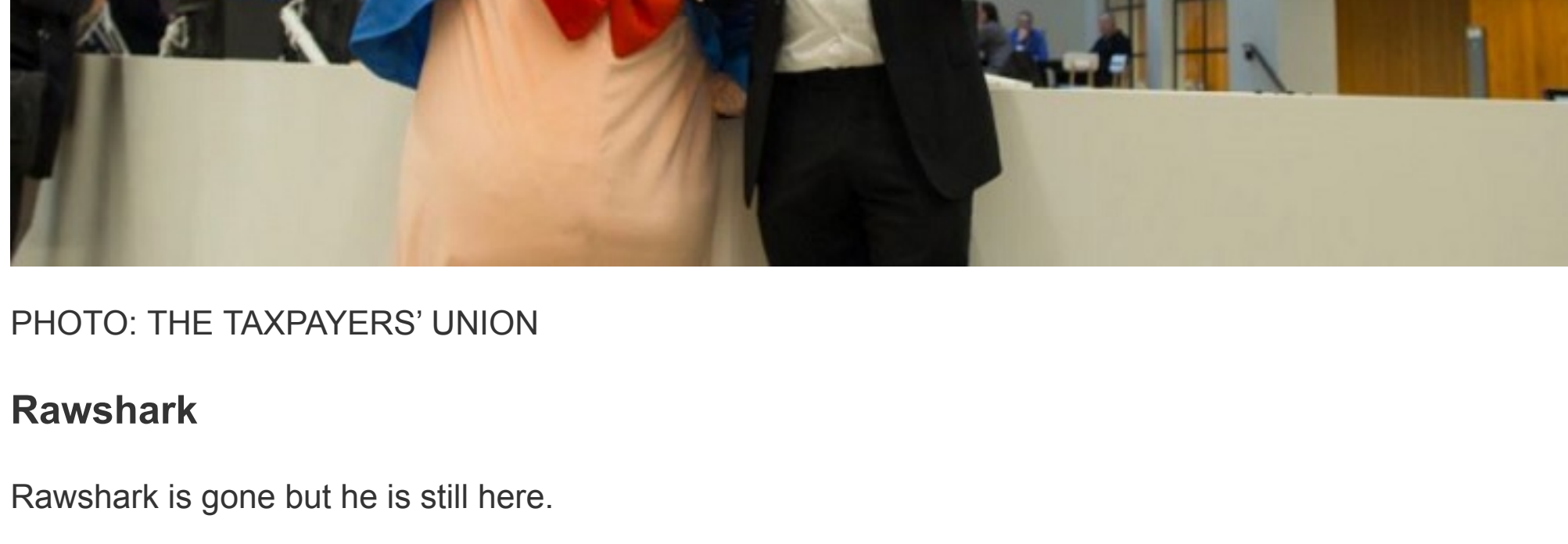


PHOTO: THE TAXPAYERS' UNION

Rawshark

Rawshark is gone but he is still here.

He does not speak but his voice echoes within us.

Rawshark is not a human.

He is a concept, and a concept can never die.

Rawshark remains free until the day our freedom is won.

David Farrier

David Farrier fronted the documentary *Tickled*, which did not receive an Oscar nomination.

Rachel Glucina

Rachel Glucina has spent the years since *Dirty Politics* was published slowly disappearing off the face of the Earth. First she left her job at the *Herald* to start the [vacuum cleaning investigation blog Scout](#). When that venture folded, she evaporated into a pillar of steam, which reportedly melded back into Judith Collins' life force. No-one has seen her in more than a year.

Judith Collins

Judith Collins resigned as a minister following allegations she was involved in a smear campaign against former Serious Fraud Office boss Adam Feeley, but reinstated after an inquiry found no evidence to support that. There were other allegations in *Dirty Politics* that she had passed on private details about the public servant Simon Pleasants to Slater. She apparently suspected Pleasants had told media that Bill English was using a private servant to help him claim an accommodation supplement for the house where he lived in Wellington. English's sins are now being brought up by in defence of Metiria Turei over her benefit fraud. It's a current politics scandal crossover! Time is a flat circle!

Collins now spends most of her time [getting angry about petrol prices](#) and [making guest appearances on Tom Sainsbury's Snapchat](#).

Nicky Hager

Nicky Hager has spent every waking moment since *Dirty Politics* was published being raided or [snooped on](#) by the police, [taking legal action against the police](#), or preparing legal action against the police.

Nicky Hager files another case against police

5 Apr, 2016 4:55pm

5 minutes to read



Rawshark

Behind you.

The readers

All of us are in hell, again. Bring on election 2017.

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