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Peter Lalor, Cricket journalist, Cricket Et Al

The journalists on the cricket round are some of the best and hardest working journalists I have ever worked with across my 40 years as a reporter and later a cricket journalist.

In 2018 the competition between the papers was fierce. The chief writers like Chris Barrett, Ben Horne and Daniel Brettig worked tirelessly to scoop each other. We pedalled like fuck to get to the bottom of this story. I worked my sources and I made direct contact with players, staff, lawyers, managers and player's families, but the code of secrecy was too hard to break. My competitors were doing the same. I was still making calls on this story in 2021. I thought I had someone over the line, but the shutters came down again. CA's investigation was legally protected and even the players involved were not given full access to the transcripts. They worked hard to thwart our attempts to find out more.

That it took eight and a half years for anyone to go on the record is not for want of the cricket media's efforts to publish the truth. Getting a voice from that dressing room on the record would have been one of the biggest scoops from one of the biggest stories we'd ever covered. We all tried our best, but we came up short. Is there any shame in that? Perhaps, but I know the quality of reporters on the cricket round, and they're very, very good and very, very determined to break stories. The difficulty was always getting someone on the record, and you can see in the reactions this week to Usman's book why it took so long for somebody to go on the record.

And can anyone tell me with confidence right now that they know the facts of what happened in those dressing rooms? I still don't think we've gotten to the bottom of it, but it is not for want of trying or the quality of journalists on the round. Watch this space.