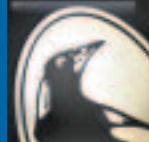




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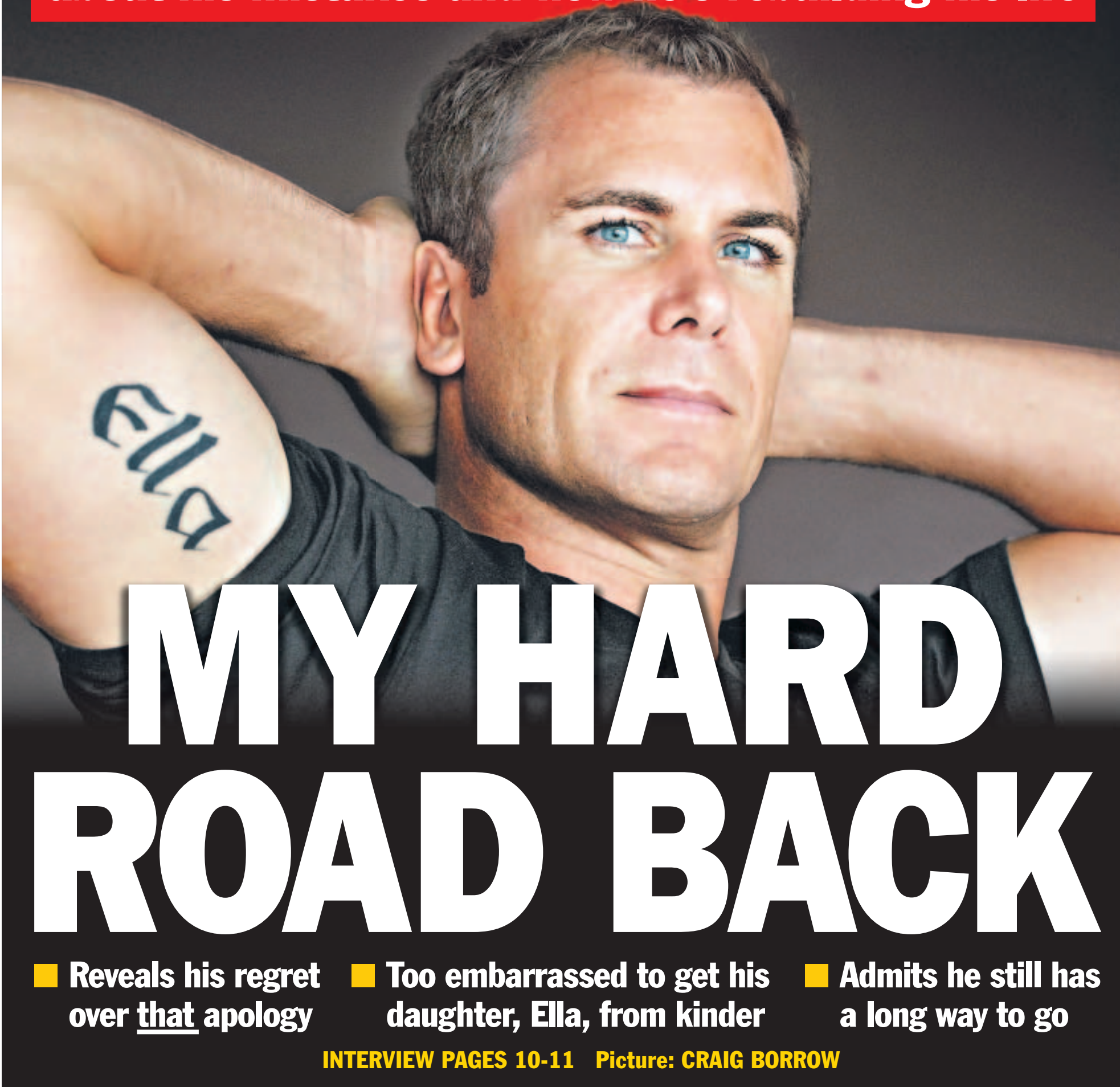
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**NEWSPAPER  
OF THE YEAR**

**MIKE SHEAHAN EXCLUSIVE: Wayne Carey opens his heart about his mistakes and how he's rebuilding his life**



# MY HARD ROAD BACK

■ Reveals his regret over that apology    ■ Too embarrassed to get his daughter, Ella, from kinder    ■ Admits he still has a long way to go

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## CAREY'S HARD ROAD BACK



Scripted: Wayne Carey outside court in 1996.

### My vile apology

IT was the moment Wayne Carey alienated so many Australian women. Many of them forever.

The North Melbourne star bumbled his way through an apology outside the Melbourne Magistrates' Court after being convicted on a charge of indecently assaulting a woman outside a nightclub.

"If I have offended anybody, I'm sincerely sorry," he said.

He neither looked nor sounded contrite.

Thirteen years on, Carey has described the conditional apology as "one of the bigger mistakes I've made".

"I was told to say those words, specifically those words.

"That was on legal advice. I was a grown man, (but) not a grown man emotionally."

Carey said the mistake was nearly "bigger than the actual initial indiscretion".

"I should have taken ownership of that at the time and said 'sorry' and gone forward from there.

"I understand that and I've had to live with that."

Carey recently discussed the issue with one of his most vocal critics, Phil Cleary.

"I just wanted to sit him down and explain a few things, about where I'm at and things that have occurred — a little bit of my background."

Carey said he understood why many women feel negative towards him.

"I think, obviously with mistakes that I've made, I would understand women with a negative view.

"Is that me? No. Have I made some mistakes? Certainly."



Must stay: Maxwell's bump.

### Hit ... or miss me

WAYNE Carey says he would have turned away from football had Collingwood captain Nick Maxwell failed in his appeal against a rough conduct charge last month.

"After he lost the first appeal and got an extra week, I thought: 'I don't think I can watch football any more'.

"I honestly thought, if you're not allowed to do that, fully understanding that a kid (Patrick McGinnity) was going to miss some footy as a result, 'God help our game'.

"I remember saying a while ago the game was going very soccer-ish, then I thought it was back as good as ever.

"The game has been as exciting as ever in the last year or so, but if they take that out (the Maxwell bump), God help us."

Last year, the man they call King Carey was too embarrassed to even collect his daughter from kinder. Now the AFL legend admits ...

# I'm not perfect but at last I'm happy



WAYNE Carey has embarked on a challenging, confronting journey of discovery.

It is a trip to previously unexplored territory — his inner self.

The Gold Coast-based AFL great is seeing emotional fitness specialists as he tries to build a new life and win respect.

"I'm in a happy place right now," he told the *Herald Sun* in Brisbane this week.

"In saying that, I'm still a work in progress and I've got a long way to go — I'm certainly not sitting here thinking I'm now a perfect human being.

"Just happy with the direction I'm going in ... I don't think I've had a direction for quite some time.

"I've found out a lot more about myself. More emotionally fit now than what I've been for quite some time.

"Probably never really been emotionally fit, to be honest.

"Just finding out all these different things about yourself and what makes you tick, talking about your feelings, all of those different things. They're all new to me.

"They've taken me to the start, the very start, of what will hopefully be a brighter future."

It is a process that has touched his heart and reached deep into his soul.

I ask the footy legend if he has been reduced to tears, and he flippantly replies: "I cry all the time." Rebuked, he says: "I cry. I cried the other day. You're allowed to cry.

"What a lot of people don't know about me, up until I ran away from home at 13, I used to cry all the time. I was a very emotional, quiet, shy child. Probably getting back to that a little bit."

Carey says his on-field perso-

### MIKE SHEAHAN

Exclusive

na of the proud, arrogant warrior was a facade.

"It was all a front. The football field was my way of hiding the true me."

It was a remarkably candid Carey — contrite, content, often bubbly, generally optimistic.

He is emerging from a period of scandal and shame that saw him face courts in Miami and Melbourne.

Carey, 37, is readying himself for an official return to North Melbourne, which he described as his "family" for half his life.

He will be inducted into the club's Hall of Fame next week and has promised a heartfelt speech to mark his return.

"I left home when I was 13 years of age then lived with my mum for about a year before I went to Melbourne," Carey explains. "From 16, North Melbourne were my family."

He left in disgrace seven years ago today after an affair with Kellie Stevens, then wife of friend and teammate Anthony Stevens. Manager Anthony McConville and counsellors agreed it was important to reconcile with the club and as many old friends as practical.

"We thought it was important to make contact with people at the Kangaroos again — players I'd lost contact with, the club in general," Carey said.

"I'd pushed them away, kept them at arm's length. For reasons that people on the outside would see as selfish, but ... reasons I thought were right."

Despite the phone calls and text messages, Carey refused



### The love of his life:

Wayne Carey is totally smitten with his three-year-old daughter Ella.

the olive branch from everyone other than a few intimates.

Those shunned included his premiership coach Denis Pagan and teammates and friends Craig Sholl and David King.

"It's easy to explain in my own mind, probably not easy for people to understand.

"It's a slap in the face to some degree to the people you did push away. They're there to be your mates.

"I would say 'I can handle this, you guys get on with your life. I don't want to be a burden to you'.

"Some of the phone calls I've made in the past few months were hard phone calls. Close to tears picking up the phone.

"It wasn't until you made the call and then there was this massive release and then thinking 'Why couldn't I have done that two or three years ago?'"

"For my growth and my development going forward, I thought it was important to go back to a place that is perhaps the most important in my life.

"Me addressing things that happened. Some during my time with the Kangaroos, some after the Kangaroos."

that I talk to you about where I am at, but I think it's important that there are things I have to keep to myself when there's other people affected."

I ask Carey if he likes himself better these days.

He repeats the question, reflects, then says: "I definitely know myself better.

"I would say I don't like aspects of things that have occurred, but I'm learning to deal with those mistakes that I've made, those indiscretions that have happened.

"By dealing with those, you can grow and go forward in a way that is more productive rather than bottling it up."

Despite a spasmodic history of visits to psychologists and doctors, it wasn't until he met emotional fitness specialist Cynthia Morton that Carey was ready to confront his demons.

"Until you're actually ready, it's never going to work for you. Now I know it's about finding out who you are, what makes you angry, what makes you frustrated, all these different things.

"I don't consider myself an angry person, but I've done an anger management course now and I got a lot out of that.

"I'm not sitting here saying I'm a changed man, I'm still a work in progress, still got a long way to go, but I can see the changes in myself. I can."

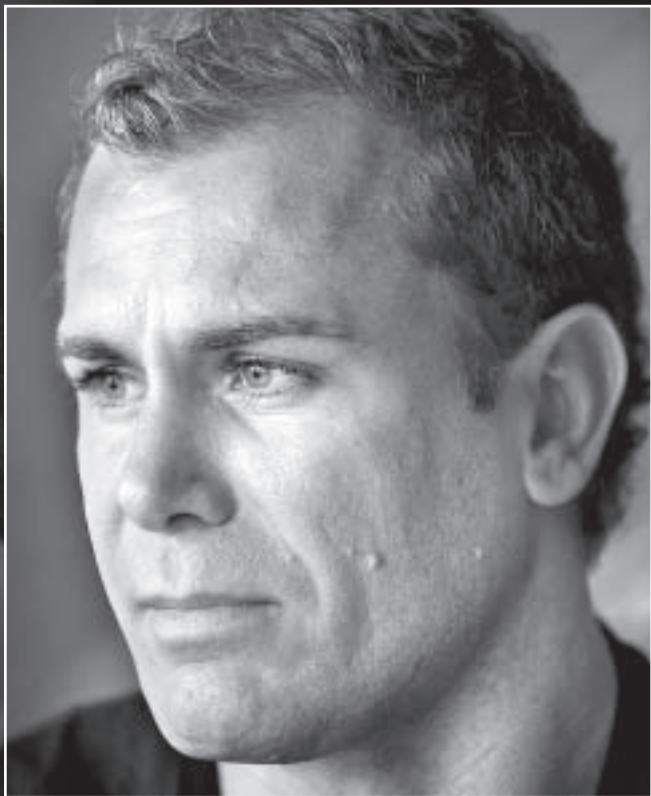
Carey's emotional rehab has been helped by a major reduction in his alcohol intake.

"If I've got something going on in my mind, I won't have a drink. It's just about being in touch with yourself, knowing what makes you tick.

"It's all new to me. At this early stage, I've been able to keep things in check."

**Voteline: Does Carey deserve a second chance? Page 37**

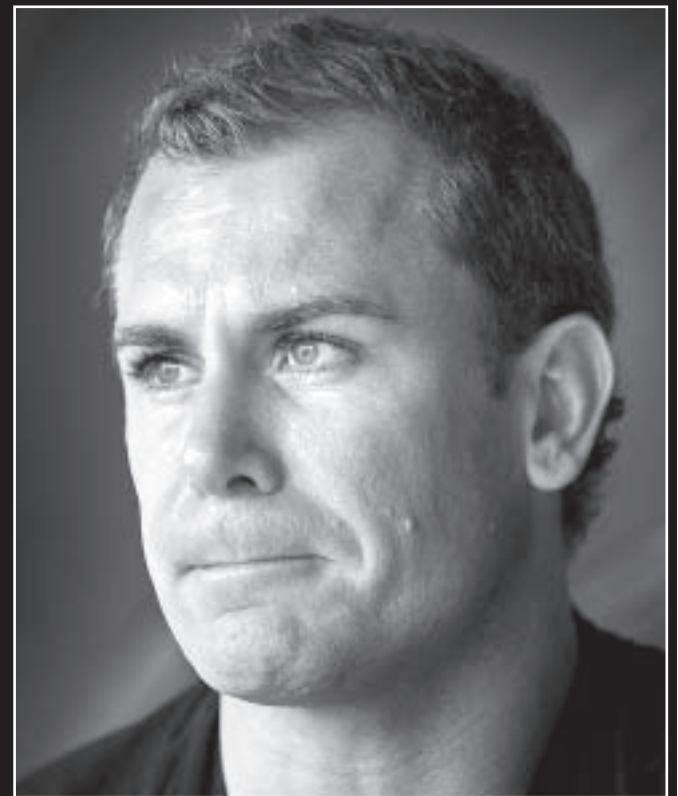
# CAREY'S HARD ROAD BACK



**'I cry all the time. I cried the other day. You're allowed to cry.'**

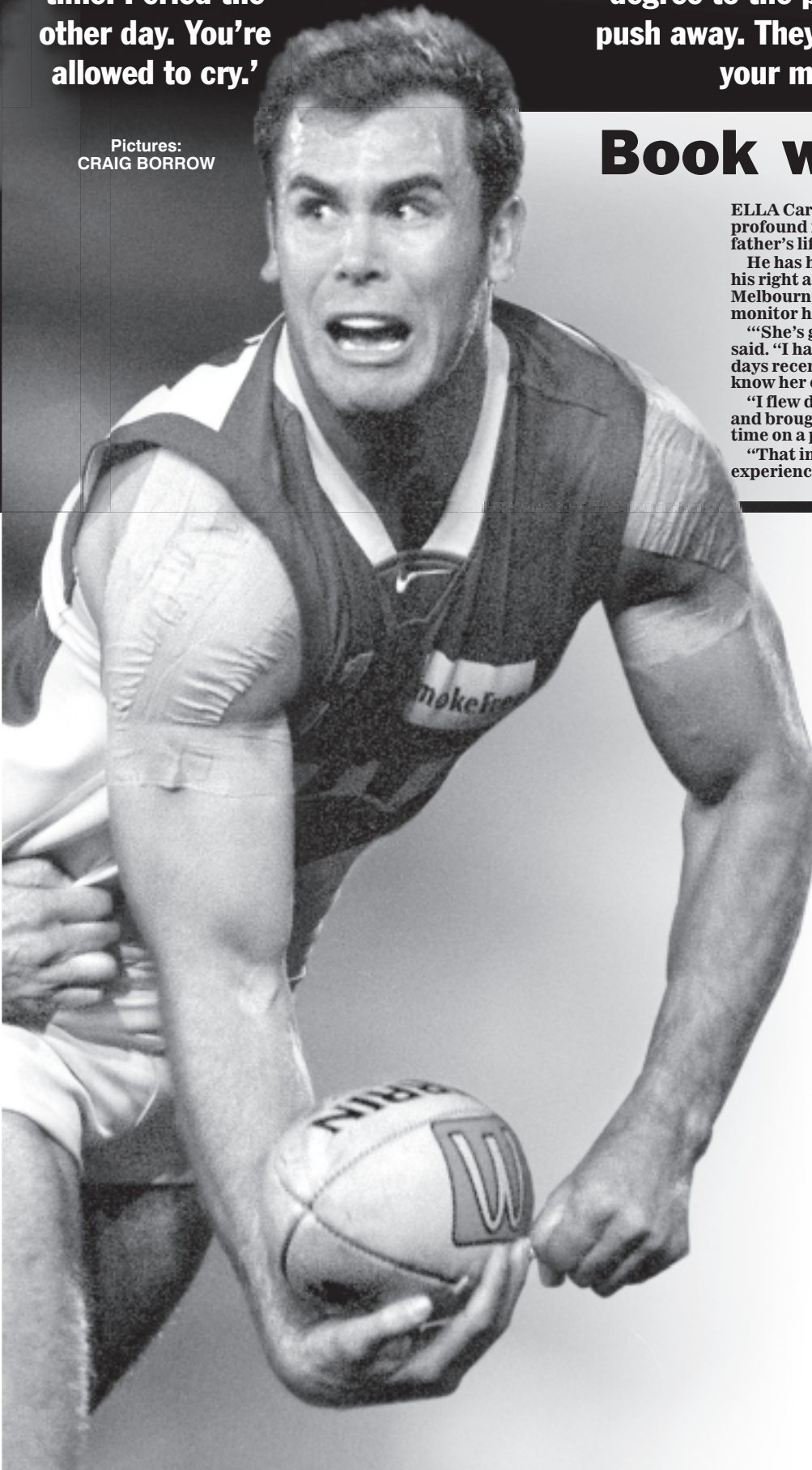


**'It's a slap in the face to some degree to the people you did push away. They're there to be your mates.'**



**'Finding out all these different things about yourself and what makes you tick, talking about your feelings ... they're all new to me.'**

Pictures: CRAIG BORROW



## Book will tell my girl the truth

ELLA Carey is having a profound impact on her famous father's life.

He has her name tattooed on his right arm and travels to Melbourne as often as he can to monitor her development.

"She's gorgeous," Carey said. "I had her up here for five days recently and she got to know her cousins.

"I flew down (to Melbourne) and brought her back. First time on a plane with her.

"That in itself was a great experience — walking through

the airport with her, getting her through the security properly.

"I always used to bag mates who thought their kids were perfect. Now I find myself saying how perfect she is.

"She's a smart kid, and Sally's (his former wife) done a fantastic job."

Carey says he is unfussed Ella will grow up hearing disparaging stories about her father.

"Ella's three, hopefully by the time she's 10 or 11, she will see for herself her dad's living a much more constructive life."

"She's going to be old enough one day to Google her father's name ... can you put a bar on Google? I'd like her to be able to go to school and say she's proud of her dad."

One of his motivations for an authorised biography now under way is a rounded story of his life for his little girl.

"Ella will get a press perspective on who her father was on Google," he said.

"The book will give her a true evaluation of things that have happened."

## He won't be a saint overnight

WAYNE Carey was so embarrassed, so self-conscious, in Melbourne last year, he wouldn't collect his daughter Ella from kindergarten.

Cynthia Morton, one of his Brisbane-based mentors, has told the *Herald Sun*: "He had no self-respect, so much shame, and no tools to detox those feelings.

"He was too embarrassed to go and get Ella from kindy.

"Now he proudly walks through the airport and gets on the plane with his daughter. He's taking his place back in the community again.

"Look, he's no role model of perfection yet, but I'm just really impressed by the hard work he's putting in.

"It takes a lot of courage and strength to admit you're vulnerable.

"He's been really brave to allow himself to admit he gets afraid, he gets overwhelmed. He needs to cry, he needs to feel, and he's doing the work."

Ms Morton, who described herself as a personal trainer in emotional fitness, said Carey had been through an emotional bushfire.

"He was a guy that was what I would call so obese with shame, he had no self-respect. When we talk about emotional literacy, it's about actually finding a dialogue to talk about vulnerability and sensitivity. He didn't have one.



**Listening:** Carey with "emotional trainer" Cynthia Morton.

"Each time he'd get overwhelmed, either with good stuff happening or with stuff he got disappointed about or fearful of, he would detach — and he'd drink or he'd drug or get himself into trouble with females to try to escape the situation."

Ms Morton and Carey speak several times a week, and on a needs basis.

"It's a bit like an emotional massage. We help get people comfortable, identify the tender spots, the potential problems," she said.

"He's got a really promising career at being a very useful voice for elite athletes.

"He's not going to turn into

a saint overnight, but we certainly want to address this area in the AFL and hopefully do some good."

Carey and Ms Morton, via her charity organisation — the Brisbane-based Emotional Fitness Foundation (Taking off the Mask) — will produce a series of workshops for North Melbourne players.

"We think we can create a template for every AFL player coming into the game to have an emotional fitness program that runs with the physical fitness program, so they learn how to cope off the field," Ms Morton said.

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