

# Matt Lodge's victims staggered by footballer's lack of remorse

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THE New York family terrorised by Brisbane Broncos forward Matthew Lodge say it is heartbreaking he is continuing with his life and will be held as a role model for young Australian rugby league fans while failing to show any remorse or pay the \$1.6 million in damages ordered by a US civil court.

They were also upset by remarks made by NRL chief executive Todd Greenberg this week alleging discussions were taking place to conclude the matter.

The family and their New York lawyer say that is not true.

"He (Lodge) has never contacted us at all," Joseph Cartright, who was put in a head lock and punched in the face by the powerfully built, 1.93m tall Lodge, told AAP.

"He has never apologised.

"There has never been a sense of sorrow for his actions.

"It is bewildering to us."

Mr Cartright, his wife Ruth Fowler and nine-year-old son were asleep in their Upper West Side Manhattan apartment at about 4am on October 16, 2015, when their doorbell rang.

Joseph Cartright and his wife Ruth Fowler. Source: News Corp Australia

A German tourist, Carolin Dekeyser, randomly rang the intercom while being physically harassed and threatened on the street by Lodge who told her: "Do you think you're going to die? This is the night you're going to die."

Mr Cartright got out of bed to let Ms Dekeyser into the lobby, but Lodge followed her inside, physically assaulted Mr Cartright and went into his apartment, locked Mr Cartright out and began destroying furniture and smashing plates.

Lodge then tried to punch his way through a bathroom door where a terrified Ms Fowler was hiding with her son.

NYPD officers arrived, drew their guns and Mr Cartright feared Lodge would be shot in their apartment in front of their son.

The now 11-year-old remains "heavily traumatised".

“He is still afraid when the doorbell rings,” Ms Fowler said.

At the time, according to the Daily Telegraph, the boy told her: “Mum, I’m too young to die.” He still suffers from night terrors.

The former Wests Tigers star will play for the Broncos in 2018. Source: AAP

The family supports Lodge playing rugby league again, but they want him, the Broncos and the NRL to take responsibility.

“We don’t want to ruin his life,” Mr Cartright said. “If rugby is his life then we would be ruining that.

“We have no interest in that.

“What we have interest in is taking responsibility for his actions.”

The couple and their New York lawyer, Renan Varghese, disagreed with Mr Greenberg’s comments that Lodge has paid a price for his New York actions. They also rejected Mr Greenberg’s remarks in an interview on Triple M this week there were ongoing discussions “behind the scenes” concerning Lodge’s situation.

“I can tell you there are no discussions going on,” Mr Varghese, a senior associate at Wigdor LLP, said.

“We haven’t heard from Mr Lodge at any point recently and we don’t anticipate to hear from him.”

Broncos’ Matt Lodge during a pre-season trial. Source: News Corp Australia

Mr Varghese said he will continue to pursue Lodge in Australia for the \$1.6 million.

“We are looking into how to enforce this judgment in Australia whether through the courts or outside the court,” Mr Varghese said.

“We believe we do have options and we are confident that at the end of the day Mr Lodge will be held accountable.

“It is in his best interest.”

In an early blow to the family and without their knowledge, New York prosecutors agreed to a plea deal with Lodge in his criminal case in 2015. Lodge originally faced a hefty jail sentence.

However, he pleaded guilty to a reduced misdemeanour reckless assault charge and avoided a US prison stint.

He was sentenced to work in a Sydney soup kitchen, undergo anger management treatment and other court ordered demands.

The victims hoped the civil suit would deliver some justice. The horrific memories forced Mr

Cartright, Ms Fowler and their son to move out of the apartment that had been home for 20 years and relocate to another neighbourhood.