



**HD** Australia's most notorious conman has another spectacular fall from grace

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**WC** 1,079 words

**PD** 29 October 2014

**SN** Australian Broadcasting Corporation Transcripts

**SC** ABCTRS

**LA** English

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One of Australia's most notorious conmen, Peter Foster, was arrested in northern New South Wales after a **commercial** television program tipped off police to his whereabouts after he spent more than a year on the run.

LEIGH SALES, PRESENTER: It's been yet another spectacular fall from grace for one of Australia's most notorious conmen.

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Peter Foster was arrested in northern New South Wales yesterday after police received a tipoff from a **commercial** TV program.

Foster has been on the run for more than year on contempt of court charges relating to a controversial diet spray business.

It's the latest in a remarkable series of arrests, convictions and scandals spanning three decades, as Peter McCutcheon reports.

PETER MCCUTCHEON, REPORTER: After a year on the run, one of the world's most infamous conmen, a 1980s playboy and entrepreneur, is caught with all the humiliating brutality of tabloid TV.

SEAN COUSINS, FORMER BUSINESS ASSOCIATE: It's one thing to be a narcissist and a psychopath, but he is an evil narcissist and an evil psychopath.

PETER MCCUTCHEON: The grey and dishevelled man arrested in the Byron Bay hinterland yesterday once courted and dated the rich and famous.

PETER FOSTER (archive footage, 1988): Basically it's just enjoying yourself, it all comes back to enjoying yourself. If they have a good time, I have a good time, nobody gets hurt and it's just fun. Fun. What's wrong with having fun nowadays? Why should anybody have to apologise with just having a great time?

PETER MCCUTCHEON: Foster was perfect British tabloid material. Dating 1980s British sex symbol Samantha Fox while trying to make a fortune pedalling a **Chinese** weight loss tea with supposedly miracle health properties.

Despite numerous run-ins with authorities in Australia and Britain over the deceptive practices and bankruptcy, Foster would always put on a show of breathtaking confidence.

SEAN COUSINS: Oh, he's certainly arrogant. I mean, he uses the media when it suits him, planting false stories. He's been doing it for years and years.

PETER MCCUTCHEON: Sean Cousins was Foster's legal advisor and business associate in the 1990s, in an enterprise selling another miracle product, this time a diet spray from the Gold Coast. The experience left Sean Cousins deeply bitter and even resulted in him being struck off as a barrister.

SEAN COUSINS: Yes, he did ruin my career. That's partly my fault, but it's partly his fault. I agreed to work for a **company** that he was associated with, and to begin with, everything looked OK. But then after a while, I started getting a bit suspicious and getting a bit nervous about some of the decisions that were being made. I should have pulled out and resigned there and then.

PETER MCCUTCHEON: After three stints in jail and an international reputation as a conman, Peter Foster made a remarkable and in hindsight seriously misguided attempt to salvage his reputation by appearing on the interview program Enough Rope in 2004.

PETER FOSTER (2004): When you have a reputation like mine, I suppose there's only one way and that's up. I mean, the realism is that - is I've put myself in this position. You can either run and hide, which is probably unAustralian, or you can basically, you know, face your accusers and face the truth. And, you know, even God can't change the past, you know. I made mistakes, I faced them and I'm here to face you tonight.

ANITA JACOBY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ENOUGH ROPE: He's a very complicated character and I think he lives a number of lives and he'd like to believe that he's not a conman and that he's done nothing wrong.

PETER MCCUTCHEON: At the time of this interview, Foster had dragged former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his wife Cherie into his murky world of notoriety. He helped Cherie Blair **buy** some real **estate**. And the interview took a turn for the worst for Foster when he was caught out lying about his criminal past.

PETER FOSTER (2004): ... that in the last decade I have not committed a criminal offence. If I was, I'd be charged, I'd be in court. But for 10 years, I've been clean.

ANDREW DENTON, ENOUGH ROPE PRESENTER: You were arrested in '95 and '96. You went to jail. The point I wanted to make is ...

PETER FOSTER: No, no, what you're trying to do is get away from the truth.

ANDREW DENTON: No, I read your charge sheet out before. You didn't disagree with any of it.

PETER FOSTER: When was the offence committed? It was committed in '93. I'm saying to you since '94 I have not committed an offence.

ANDREW DENTON: I don't believe that is so.

ANITA JACOBY: After Andrew went through all the allegations and all the criminal charges against him post-1994, he rang me the weekend before it was going to air and he actually threatened that our "exclusive" interview, he would take that to all journalists and all media and all I could say to him was, "Please do," and of course he didn't.

PETER MCCUTCHEON: Over the past decade, Foster's career has, if anything, become even more bizarre. His arrest in Fiji for spreading false rumours about a **commercial** rival was one of his biggest humiliations. Foster injured himself trying to escape police by jumping into a river.

WITNESS: At first I thought it was local chasing some locals, but I was surprised to see a European man swimming in the middle of the river.

PETER MCCUTCHEON: Foster seemed to crave public attention, even while on the run for contempt of court charges relating to his Gold Coast weight loss business. He sent The Courier-Mail newspaper in Brisbane these photographs of himself last year, claiming to have fled to Fiji, although many suspected he was holed up somewhere in Australia. We now know that he spent part of his time in this house in northern NSW. He's been sentenced in absentia to three years' jail.

SEAN COUSINS: I think the vast majority of people, particularly those who've been burnt by him, hurt by him, ripped off by him, would think that 10 years would not be enough.

LEIGH SALES: Peter McCutcheon reporting.

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