

**INQUIRY INTO UNSOLVED MURDERS AND LONG-TERM
MISSING PERSONS CASES IN NEW SOUTH WALES
BETWEEN 1965 AND 2010**

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Submission to the Parliamentary Enquiry into long term missing person cases and unsolved murders in NSW between 1965 and 2010.

To the Committee.

My name is I'm a retired Superintendent from the NSW Police Force, having retired in 2019 after approximately 39 years' service.

During my service I worked in a variety of roles as a Detective before being promoted to a Superintendent in the Education and Training Command in 2008.

I was well acquainted with Mr Peter Rolfe, who played some part in the creation of this enquiry, and I make it in part on his urging, prior to his death last year. I hope the following - more an histology than anything - might be of some use to your enquiry. Needless to say some Police foresaw the problems that has led to this enquiry, long before it was called.

Between 1990 and 1995 I worked as a Detective Senior Constable in the Homicide Squad, at the then Major Crime Squad North at Chatswood.

In around 1992, whilst working on a homicide enquiry at Hornsby, I received information pertaining to the disappearance of Trudie Jeanette Adams, who had disappeared whilst returning home from a party at the Collaroy Surf Club in 1978.

In short, I had been told that up to five young men, who were named, had picked up Miss Adams from the corner of Neptune and Barrenjoey Road whilst she was hitchhiking. They then had attempted to sexually assault her in the green Kombi van they were driving, she had resisted and during the struggle had been able to open the side door of the van, jump out and struck her head on a power pole. The men had then recovered her body and disposed of it.

Later, and as a result of that information I went to the Mona Vale Police Station and obtained a copy of, what was referred to then as the "running sheet" concerning the Adam's investigation. An examination of that document corroborated a number of the things the informant had stated and in 1995, after working on the brief, between other jobs a major operation was run on that

line of enquiry, which strengthened all the information I'd received but did not obtain sufficient evidence to ever lay a charge. The matter ultimately went to inquest in around 2012 and 2013.

It was at the time I read that brief and made associated enquires, I became aware about the extremely disorganised and lack lustre approach the NSW Police had towards missing person enquiries. I found in short the initial enquiry had been very poorly managed and run.

During my time at the Crime Squad, and as a result of some computer studies I had done and was doing at the time, I became involved in a project concerning the computerisation of investigations and running sheets, as the manual running sheet and indexed card system was inefficient and burdensome. That program, which was a very basic, stand-alone indexing system with a search capacity, was first successfully employed in the investigation of the murder of Dr Victor Chang.

Skipping forward to 1997, I was a Detective Sergeant at the Major Crime Squad South, when I was appointed as the Commissioner's operational advisor for then Commissioner Peter Ryan, in his advisory board concerning the future structure of criminal investigation in NSW following on from the Police Royal Commission. This led to the creation of Crime Agencies, which later evolved into the current Crime Agencies.

As a subset of that work, I participated in the writing of a report entitled something like "The Future of Homicide Investigations in the NSW Police Force." A considerable part of that report was dedicated to the issue of long term missing persons and the organisation's very ad hoc approach to those report and subsequent investigations. In that report I recall the subject of unsolved murders was also addressed, through the formation of a special sub-unit to investigate those crimes.

As a result of that report a Homicide and Serious Violent Crime Squad was created as part of the new Crime Agencies Structure. The missing persons and unsolved homicide recommendations made were not incorporated into the new structure. Missing persons remained a separate unit, with no criminal investigators attached to it, about half a dozen uniform Police under an Inspector with one motor vehicle assigned to it.

I found the structure of the new Homicide and Serial Violent Crimes Unit very disjointed. About 60 staff were allocated, of which half, divided in groups of 2 worked on older ongoing matters, and the other half responded to new matters in groups of three, when they were available, although these enquires were under the leadership of Local Area Command Detectives, many of those being tied up with other concerns and few had any experience working in homicide. This

structure was not conducive to the obtaining of good results. I'd suggest that this approach may well have contributed to the number of unsolved homicides during this time. Further exacerbating the issue was the number of poorly investigated matters that had occurred during the upheaval caused by the Police Royal Commission.

I transferred to other duties in 1999.

I'm confident that in the interim these issues have been rectified.

During my time at Crime Agencies I was a member of another committee that ultimately led to the creation of the E@glei investigation management system, which to my knowledge is still in use in the Police Force. The advantages of having all major investigations - current and solved on the one data base, while now being such an obvious thing, was then, an incredible leap forward offering unheard efficiency.

There is no reason why Missing Person Cases could not be recorded on this system as a matter of course. Time and time again I found that two to three days of extensive enquiry, immediately preceding a suspicious death or missing person, was the thing that made or break a successful investigation. If all enquiries concerning crime scene, victimology, canvass, next of kin, persons of interest, access and egress from a scene by the victim and or suspect were covered at the time, an historical investigation at a later date could be far better targeted and compiled. (Now I'd suggest also persons digital footprint also be gathered during this part of an investigation.) This I found was so often not the case.

In around 2004-5 I made a submission to then Assistant Commissioner John Laycock concerning the formation of an Unsolved Homicide Squad. I believe that submission formed the basis for a model he put forward.

In 2008 I was appointed Commander of the Field Support Command. That command was responsible for Detective, specialist Crime Management and Intelligence Officers and the support of Local Area Command Probationary Constables during their probationary period.

A requirement for police involved in Detective and Intelligence training was that they have currency regarding Police Operations.

As a result I then investigated the idea of a combined approach by Detectives in the Detectives Training Unit and Intelligence Officer Trainers looking at the subject of investigating long term missing persons. I advanced an idea of the writing of a data base that geographically and anatomically mapped the incidence of missing persons with the discovery of unidentified remains, and then matched them via sex, physical description, clothing, time and ultimately DNA. In the end an organisational requirement for the training of extra detectives and budgetary issues made the idea unviable, but not before Sergeant Anthony Wells from the Intelligence Training Unit created a XL data base that very successfully matched the criteria previously described.

We then went to the Missing Persons Unit, that was run then by a Chief Inspector whose name I do not recall and told him of our idea and gave him a copy of the program.

Sometime later I spoke to him by phone and he had informed me that the program Sergeant Wells had written was found to have replicated that of a commercial Swedish computer program used disaster victim identification. They had moved forward with a purchase of that software and were involved in the inputting of missing person data onto it. I recall bumping into him some time later and he told me they were still inputting data. I never heard anything further about the project.

Also, during my term at Field Support, we ran a course called the Senior Detectives Course. This was a residential two week affair centred on bring operation Detectives, who generally had not undergone any full time training for some time, up to date with various legislative, procedural and technological advances and specialist services in the Police Force that they might not otherwise be aware. During that period the class was divided into groups of five or six and required to review an unsolved homicide enquiry. They were then required to present the findings of their review to a board chaired by myself, a Detective Inspector from the Unsolved Homicide Unit and another Detective inspector.

The results of those reviews were then fed back to the Unsolved Homicide Squad. Some of those reviews were very good that advanced viable ideas and new insights into those investigations.

One that comes to mind concerned the death of a woman from the Coledale area. She and her son went for a bush walk and only the son returned. A few days later her body was found crammed in a rock crevice where it had been washed into by the ocean. She was found to have extensive injuries to her middle torso in the form of a large open wound. It seemed inconsistent with a knife and inconsistent with a cliff fall. The son denied any knowledge of the death. He claimed to have left the walk early at that his mother chose to continue on. A military

investigator, who was a guest in the course advanced the hypothesis that the wound was consistent with a Rusa Deer attack. At the time of the death, the deer which apparently frequent the area were rutting and the bucks were known to be particularly aggressive during that time. To further support his hypothesis the investigator provided a newspaper report of a male person being attacked in the same area the previous year and sustaining injuries remarkably similar to those sustained by the deceased.

These findings were forwarded back to the Unsolved Homicide Unit, as were all the reviews. Whatever happened to them via follow up - again - I do not know. They seemed credible and normal practice would be to report them to the Coroner.

I hope this information may help of some assistance to your enquiry.