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NEW SOUTH WALES NEWS

SENIOR DETECTIVE REMOVED FROM SUSPECTED GAY HATE KILLING CASE OF SCOTT JOHNSON

STAFF WRITERS — APRIL 22, 2015

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📷 Detective Chief Inspector Pamela Young has been removed from the investigation into the 1988 death of American gay man Scott Johnson. (Image: ABC Lateline)

A SENIOR detective has been reportedly removed from the investigation into the 1988 death of American gay man Scott Johnson in light of her interview on ABC's *Lateline* last week.

The removal of Detective Chief Inspector Pamela Young from Johnson's case came after NSW Coroner Michael Barnes' office expressed concerns that Young had undermined public confidence in the investigation into Johnson's 1988 death.

As reported by Fairfax Media, a letter to the NSW Police Force from senior crown solicitor Naomi Malhotra claimed Young did not follow standards of conduct by telling *Lateline* she thought Johnson had most likely committed suicide.

Also in her interview, the Unsolved Homicides Unit investigator accused former police minister Mike Gallacher of "kowtowing" to the demands of the victim's brother Steve Johnson, and said her relationship with the Johnson family had deteriorated.

In the letter, the Coroner acknowledged Young had devoted a lot of time to the investigation and therefore had an intimate knowledge of it, but he considered the "continued involvement of DCI Young will make it very difficult to regain the confidence of the key stakeholders in the inquest and may have a tendency to detract from the real issues, namely the determination of the manner and cause of Scott Johnson's death."

The coroner said a new investigator should be appointed to the case to restore public confidence in the investigation.



Earlier this week, Sydney state independent MP Alex Greenwich also wrote a letter to Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione urging him to remove Young from the Johnson investigation after her “extraordinary statements” in the *Lateline* interview led to some community members contacting him with their concerns.

“There is serious community concern about this officer being biased and dismissive of historic homophobic treatment,” writes Greenwich, who is openly gay.

“The decision by the NSW Coroner to carry out a third inquest into Scott Johnson’s death should be supported and have full police cooperation.”



Scott Johnson.

When Johnson’s naked body was found at the bottom of a cliff at North Head, near Manly on Sydney’s northern beaches in December 1988, his death was deemed to be a suicide but his family believe he was thrown from the cliff and have since lobbied for the case to be re-investigated.

At the NSW Coroner’s Court last week, Barnes said he would hold an extraordinary third inquest into the death of Johnson, who was a US citizen studying in Australia for his PhD.

While the first inquest in 1989 found Johnson committed suicide with no foul play involved, this was overturned by a second inquest in 2012 which saw the case given back to NSW Police for re-investigation and with a \$100,000 reward for information offered.

In 2013, the NSW Crime Commission was asked to independently examine the integrity of the investigation. It determined it was thorough, comprehensive and did not leave out an any obvious line of inquiry.

ABC News has reported that Detective Sergeant Penelope Brown will replace Young on the case.

NSW Police has been contacted for comment.

H/T ABC News

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