

[2695]

# **The Case of Scott Russell Johnson**

## **Timeline and Evidence**

**Died on December 9, 1988  
Manly Beach, NSW**

**Prepared by:  
Steve Johnson  
Becca Johnson  
Dan Glick**

**January 14, 2013**

Updated: Jan. 14, 2013

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**Gay Hate Murders 1977-1999**

(incl identified and likely and the 7 potentially misclassified ones to Steve Johnson)

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## Statistics

**91 gay hate murders (incl 7 poss misclassified) 1977-1999 (Sue T, Steve T, Steve J)**

**57 of 91 solved 1977 - 1999 = 63%**

**Very different solved rate before 1990 and after**

- **41 deaths before 1990; 19 solved = 46%**
- **50 deaths after 1990; 38 solved = 76%**

**34 remain unsolved (incl 7 possibly misclassified in Northern Beaches).**

## Comment

- **If there was a pattern in Northern Beaches prior to 1990 of police ignoring deaths at beats (especially cliff top beats), because they were unaware of the M.O. or chose to not properly investigate, then this is a terrible tragedy.**
  - **The cases brought to Steve's attention indicate this is true & that these cases urgently need to be re-examined**
  - **If there continued to be a pattern after 1990 I would be shocked as I think it unlikely given the huge media coverage of gay hate crimes that began in 1990. However I'm open to being wrong.**
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January 12, 2013

Dear Minister Gallacher,

I am the brother of Scott Russell Johnson, an American citizen whose body was found at the bottom of a cliff in Manly Beach in December 1988. Treasurer Mike Baird kindly shared your letter to him dated 19 December 2012 (Tab 3), in which you wrote that you were informed about the Unsolved Homicide Team's review of Scott's case. On behalf of Scott's surviving family, I would like to express my dismay and deep concern that the briefing you received before writing that letter was misleading and incomplete.

With this letter, I would like to share the reasons for that conclusion. We would be very grateful if you would read the attached letter and report (Tab 4) that the family has sent to Detective Senior Inspector Lehmann, detailing very specific new information about individuals who routinely assaulted gay men in Northern Beaches communities in the late 1980s. In compiling the report, based on private investigations conducted since the June 2012 Coroner's ruling, the family has consulted with many Australian experts in anti-gay violence, including former NSW police and police consultants, and they have completely supported our findings and requests for further police investigation.

My family is extremely upset about the Unsolved Homicide Team's representation to your office that their "review" of Scott's case adequately responded to the June 2012 Coronial Inquest ruling that remanded the case to them for "further investigation" (see attachment from Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes – Tab 6).

I met with Detective Senior Inspector John Lehmann at Parramatta the day after the June 2012 Inquest reversed the original "suicide" verdict in favor of "open finding." Lehmann stated that Unsolved Homicide normally would not review cases for three to five years, because he assumed that all cases he received had already been thoroughly investigated. We informed him that in this case no police investigation had taken place since 1988, which was itself extremely limited, especially in light of information not available to police at the time.

My wife and I explained to Lehmann that the Coroner's 2012 "open finding" was based solely on material that our family had submitted to the Coronial Homicide Unit. Prior to the Inquest, the Manly LAC reviewed the materials we had provided, but emphatically did not (I was told directly by Manly Detective Inspector Luke Arthurs) further investigate the case. Scott's death has still not been investigated.

In preparation for the June 2012 Inquest, we presented the Coroner with sworn statements from two of Australia's leading experts on anti-gay violence and homosexual "beats," former NSW Detective Sergeant Stephen Page and former NSW police gay/lesbian coordinator Sue Thompson. (We also include their reports here – Tabs 7 and 8.) Both Page and Thompson

concluded that the evidence amassed by the family strongly suggested that Scott may well have been murdered in the same manner as the cases investigated in Operation Taradale.

In December 2012, Scott's sister Rebecca and our family representative Daniel Glick personally shared findings from our attached report with Inspector Lehmann. Unfortunately, he was dismissive of the information and discouraging about the prospects of his team looking any further into Scott's case. He said the case, which his team had just finished evaluating, had received a "zero" solvability rating, ensuring it would not be looked at further until new information arrived 'on their doorstep.'

Our new report which you find included here represents an abundance of new information upon which to begin a proper investigation into Scott Johnson's death.

We believe that there are significant opportunities to investigate, as this attached report makes abundantly clear. As we related to Inspector Lehmann, ABC's *Australian Story* is scheduled to broadcast a segment on Scott's case in February. It has been our hope that the broadcast might generate more new leads and motivate police to pay close attention to the Persons of Interest we identify in the report.

The way things stand, as reflected in Inspector Lehmann's comments to date, we are deeply concerned that this opportunity will be squandered.

In your letter to Mr. Baird, you wrote that you had been informed that police have already conducted a "review" of Scott's case, with one aim being to identify "links" between Scott's death and the Bondi deaths from the late 1980s. If their conclusion has been that no links exist, we respectfully submit to you that their analysis is deeply flawed.

The family has never maintained that the same individuals who assaulted and murdered gay men in the eastern suburbs are the same perpetrators who committed similar crimes in the Northern Beaches. But the same culture of fear and hostility regarding homosexuality existed Australia-wide at the time (the "Grim Reaper" ads of the era were not limited to the eastern suburbs) and the relationship between the gay community and the police was at a low point. It is well-documented that the combination of this widespread homophobia and police apathy meant that young, disaffected gangs of youth would routinely victimize gay men at "beats" around Sydney, elsewhere in NSW, and around the country. These beats, including those in the Northern Beaches, flourished as meeting places for gay men and married men seeking gay sex.

~~These beats operated clandestinely, out of fear of harassment by police, or worse, fear of beatings, robberies and even murder by gay-bashing young men.~~

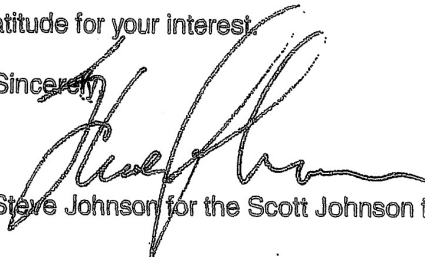
There is unequivocal evidence that violent crimes against gay men were occurring in Northern Beaches communities, as our report details. Operation Taradale, which spanned just the Bondi area, also indicated that there were many other unsolved murders of gay men throughout the Sydney area. We believe Scott's murder is one of them. Furthermore, we

believe any investigation into Scott's death will almost certainly uncover other unsolved homicides that may yet be solved.

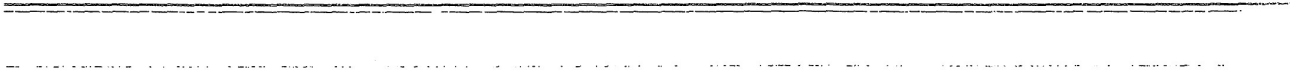
If you can advise us how to ensure that our report is given a fair reading by the appropriate authorities, we would be most grateful. We are convinced that the material is quite compelling, but that Inspector Lehmann's position is hardening. Your kind attention is deeply appreciated.

With gratitude for your interest.

Sincerely,



Steve Johnson for the Scott Johnson family



# The Case of Scott Russell Johnson

## Timeline and Evidence

Died on December 9, 1988

Manly Beach, NSW

Prepared by:

Steve Johnson

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Becca Johnson

Dan Glick

January 14, 2013

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<b>1</b>	<b>Scott Johnson – Case Timeline</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Selected Press</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Baird-Gallacher Letters</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>January 2013 Report to Unsolved Homicides New Information</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Letter from Mayor Clover Moore November 22, 2011</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>June 2012 NSW Coroner Inquest Finding June 27, 2012</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Report by Sue Thompson January 2, 2011</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Report by Stephen Page May 12, 2011</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Report by Johnson Family to Unsolved Homicides August 29, 2007</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Initial Request by Johnson Family to Coroner to Re-Open Scott Johnson's Case</b>



**Timeline of Scott Johnson's Case**

**Dec. 9, 1988** – Scott Johnson last seen

**Dec. 11, 1988** – Scott's body found by fisherman at the bottom of North Head cliff (see following map).

**Dec. 11, 1988** – Scott's death deemed a suicide by police; investigation closed.

**January 1989** – Scott's brother Steve requests Inquest to re-examine death.

**March 1989** – State Coroner's Court of New South Wales Inquest officially rules suicide; lacking evidence and contrary to friends and family testimony that indicated Scott was happy, the Court explained its ruling by saying that Scott was 'highly intelligent, introverted, and gay.'

**[16 years later]**

**March 2005** – Senior Deputy State Coroner Jacqueline Milledge convenes Inquest as a result of Operation Taradale led by Det. Steve Page, and rules several cliff-side deaths of gay men near Bondi in 1988-89 were likely murders by gay hate gangs; reprimands police for negligent investigations.

**April 2005** – Steve Johnson writes to (and phones) the Coroner's office to point out that Scott Johnson, a gay man, was killed in the same manner as the Bondi deaths. Asks for an inquiry into beat activity and violence in the Manly North Head area in the late-1980s. Request is ignored. (See Tab 10)

**April 2006** – Steve and daughter Emma Johnson fly to Sydney to make the request to police in person. Request is acknowledged, but ultimately ignored.

**May-October 2007** – Investigative journalist, Daniel Glick and Steve Johnson compile information confirming the Manly cliff-top was a well-known gay beat and that gay hate violence was rampant in the northern suburbs of Sydney at the time Scott died. They make a formal request to re-open Scott's case, which was (quietly) denied; no reason provided. (See Tab 9)

**January-November 2011** – Daniel Glick and Steve Johnson, along with former NSW Gay and Lesbian coordinator Sue Thompson and retired Det. Sgt. Stephen Page, work assiduously to urge the Coroner to re-open the case; Coroner asks Manly police to review the materials Glick and Johnson provided. No further

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police investigation was done, but the Coronial review of the Johnson family materials prompts a new Inquest. (See Tabs 5, 7 and 8)

**June 2012** – A new Inquest is held and Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes rules most likely reasons for Scott Johnson's death were violence or misadventure; orders a new investigation and remands the case to the NSW Unsolved Homicide Unit. (See Tab 6)

**July-January 2012** – Johnson Family continues to investigate Scott's case to find specific Persons of Interest and other victims and evidence of violence in the Northern Beaches. Australian media begins following the case closely. (See Tab 2)

**December 9, 2012** – Detective Senior Inspector John Lehmann of Unsolved Homicides Unit reviews the information in the Coroner's brief to determine investigation priority; notifies the Johnson Family that without further information, Scott's case will not be investigated. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, he expresses skepticism that the area where Scott died was a gay beat or that gay hate violence occurred in the Northern Beaches.

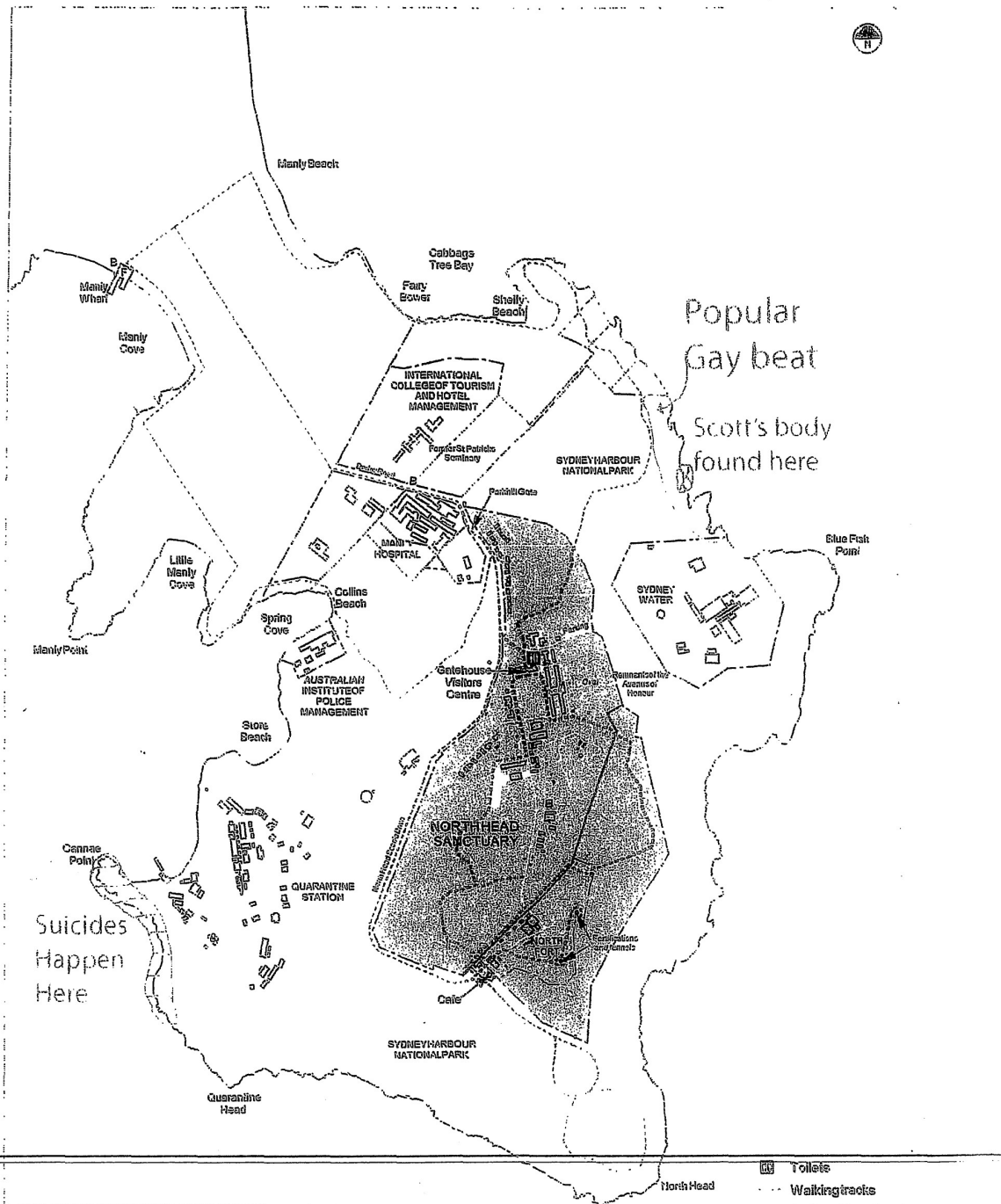
**January 12, 2013** – Johnson Family, in disbelief, submits a new report to Unsolved Homicides with numerous citations of gay hate violence in the Northern Beaches in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as many leads and persons of interest who might be pursued in an active investigation. (See Tab 4)

Johnson Family awaits a response to its report from Unsolved Homicides.

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**Note:** Following are maps and pictures of the area in Manly where Scott Johnson died.

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Popular Gay beat

Scott's body found here

Suicides Happen Here

# North Head, Manly

- Toilets
- Walking tracks
- Harbour Trust Land
- Bus Stop
- Ferry wharf

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Scott Johnson Case

TAB 2

2011-12  
Selected Australian Press

- "Death in Manly" by Andrew Potts, *DNA Magazine*, August 2012
- "Case Reopened: Suicide or Anti-Gay Attack" by Dan Box, *The Australian*, June 28, 2012
- "Man on a Mission: Standing up for Scott" by Brendon Cherry, *The Manly Daily*, June 30, 2012
- "Close to the Edge" by Daniel Glick, *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, September 25, 2011

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# death in



Shelley Beach at Manly is a popular family spot. Fishermen found the body of Scott Johnson (inset) nearby at Blue Fish Point.

When Scott Johnson's body was found at the bottom of a cliff near Manly Beach in Sydney, police quickly closed the case with a finding of suicide. But Scott's brother Steve knew it was unlikely he would've taken his own life. He's spent the last 24 years seeking justice, and with the Coroner's Court directing police to re-open the case, he may be one step closer. What he's uncovered along the way is a terrifying history of homophobic violence around Sydney's beaches, of horrific, brutal slayings and an pathetic police response that allowed it to flourish. Andrew M Potts reports.

In the summer of 1988, Scott Johnson, aged 24, was a gifted American mathematics student, ~~staying with his boyfriend Michael's~~ family in the Sydney suburb of Lane Cove. ~~He was completing a PhD at the Australian National University.~~ Michael's family saw him ~~and well on the morning of 8 December.~~ He had a telephone conversation with a friend that day that suggested nothing was out of the ordinary. He also spoke to his supervising professor at Macquarie University to tell him he had finished the final maths problem of his dissertation and made plans to meet up in a few days to go through his calculations face-to-face. Scott was a handsome young man with a bright future ahead of him. He'd already worked at MIT in the USA and studied at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and Cambridge University.

Unlike many young gay men in the late '80s, Scott was loved unconditionally by his immediate family and was looking forward to seeing his older brother Steve's new baby.

Yet, two days later, when fishermen found his body on the rocks below Manly's Blue Fish Point, police immediately ruled his death a suicide. This, despite finding no note and his clothes neatly folded at the top of the cliff.

To Scott's brother Steve back in the USA, the police finding made no sense. Not only was Scott in a happy relationship, loved by his family, about to finish his PhD and with great career prospects, he was also a good climber. The previous summer, Steve and Scott had backpacked their way through Europe, climbing the Matterhorn, one of the Swiss Alps' highest peaks.

Steve knew what he had to do. After waiting 24 hours for an Australian visa, he was on a plane to Sydney, determined to find out more about his brother's death.

"We were inseparable as brothers," Steve tells Steve, "particularly after we were teenagers. I went to school at the University Of Southern California, he went to school just 10 miles away at Caltech so I'd spend all my spare time up at Caltech with him doing computer related stuff and working on maths problems.

"When he graduated from Caltech in 1983, he got into Cambridge University to study maths and I got into Harvard. We spent the summer beforehand computer programming. I'd found a consulting gig that paid, what for us, was a lot of money and we were working 100-hour weeks together; just the two of us,

writing all this software," says Steve.

"The next summer, when he came back from Cambridge, he told me he was gay and about Michael, his first partner. He didn't really tell our mother and sister until a year later but our family is very liberal so there wasn't even a blink really from either one of them, my dad even more so."

When he reached Sydney, Steve went straight to Manly Police Station, but found that they had already made up their minds.

"The police walked me up to the spot and told me, 'This is where people jump off and that's what your brother did, and the fact that he's gay pretty much clinches it,'" says Steve. "There wasn't anything I could say to get them to ask questions. You'd think the natural thing to do would be to take his picture around Manly to see if anyone had seen him that day or the day before."

Steve had been uncomfortable with the circumstances around Scott's death from the start, but when he spoke to Scott's professor and discovered that he'd made plans on the day he died to meet with him, it only deepened his suspicions.

What he couldn't know was that that same year, and for years before and after, on Sydney's southern shore, gangs of youths had been terrorising gay men in coastal spots where they were known to meet for sex, subjecting them to horrendous beatings before hurling them off the cliff tops. Some of the bodies were never found and many of the deaths were dismissed by police as suicides without thorough investigation. But it was the disappearance of Wollongong newsreader Ross Warren that eventually sparked what would become known as Operation Taradale, and see six men's deaths declared murders by the New South Wales Coroners Court, with police singled out for serious criticism.

At just 25, Ross Warren was the good-looking news anchor for Wollongong's WIN TV, and was being groomed for a move to the big time at the station's Sydney affiliate, Channel 9. Unknown to the TV executives who were vetting him, Warren was already spending a lot of time in Sydney. Although not out at work or to the public, he was gay and most weekends would drive to inner-Sydney to stay with friends and party in the gay bars on Sydney's Oxford Street where he felt safe and relatively anonymous.

Around 2am on 22 July 1989, Warren said goodbye to a friend, left Oxford Street and got into his car. But instead of driving to the friend's place where he was staying in Redfern, he drove to Bondi. He was never seen again. His car was later found at Bondi's Marks Park, a well-known location where gay men met for sex, known in Australia as a "bear".

When concerned friends called the police, Warren's keys were found near the top of the cliffs. When he didn't show up for work it

became public knowledge that he was missing and a media storm erupted.

When Ross Warren's mother, Kay, realised her son would never be found alive, she began a letter writing campaign to have him declared dead. In 2000, her letters came to the attention of Paddington Police DS Stephen Page who began to dig deeper. He uncovered a string of savage murders and bashings across Sydney's Eastern and inner-suburbs in the late '80s and early '90s that, he suspected, might shed light on the disappearance of Ross Warren and other missing gay men.

DS Page pushed for a dedicated taskforce to investigate what was going on and sought the assistance of the NSW Crime Commission, which has the power to coerce people into assisting police investigations.

In the late '80s homosexuality had only just been decriminalised in New South Wales. The controversial Grim Reaper HIV education campaign was appearing on TV screens across the country. Homophobia in Sydney was at a peak.

For homophobic young thugs, some of whom directed a misplaced rage over being molested as children, gays were considered fair

The name of one such gang left no doubt about their mode of operation. Their intentions, they called themselves: the Park Side Killers.

The police found that Scott Johnson's death was suicide, ignoring the vast amounts of evidence that pointed towards a gay hate crime.

game and gangs prowled the parks of Sydney looking for easy money, knowing that their victims would be unlikely to report them to police. The name of one such gang left no doubt about their mode of operation or their intentions – they called themselves the Park Side Killers.

Between 1989 and 1999, 22 per cent of gay hate homicides in New South Wales occurred at beats. Usually the perpetrators were young, white, single, unemployed males. Most victims were beaten until they were dead.

The murders in Bondi's Marks Park, where Ross Warren's car was found, were among the most savage, but it was not Warren's death that the cops on Operation Taradale thought would give them the best chance of success in the Coroner's Court. In November 1989, John Allen Russell, who worked in bars on Oxford Street as well as around Bondi, was found dead at the bottom of cliffs below Marks Park. He'd recently inherited \$100,000 and was planning to build a home on a block of land his father owned outside Sydney. He had also planned a holiday to Queensland.

He packed up his home in preparation for the move and held farewell drinks for friends on 22 November at the Bondi Hotel. When Russell left the hotel, instead of walking the few hundred metres to his brother's flat where he was staying, he walked up to the headland where Ross Warren would disappear just three months later. The next morning his body was found on the rocks below by a jogger.

With money in the bank and big plans, the chance of Russell's death being ruled a suicide seemed slim. There was also strong supporting forensic evidence against a suicide finding. Russell was found lying with his head towards the cliff, suggesting he had been pushed rather than jumped. His sweater was pulled >>



## NEWS FEATURE

> up around his armpits, suggesting a ruggle. His skull, ribs and clavicle were fractured and his arms and legs were broken. He also had a split lip and a gash above his eye. His body was also bruised on the side that was affected by the fall. Remarkably, however, the forensic pathologist who examined the body did not find evidence that Russell may have been assaulted.

Crime scene photos also show a clump of hair stuck to John Russell's hand. However, at the time Stephen Page rediscovered the body over a decade later, the hairs were lost. Most unbelievably, Bondi Police also washed Russell's clothes and put them on a dummy outside the police station in case members of the public recognised them – in the process removing potential forensic evidence. The final coronial inquest into Russell's death lasted just 35 minutes and ruled that Russell died through misadventure as he had been walking that night.

When Page decided to push for a new inquest into Russell's death, he bundled the appearance of Ross Warren and another gay man, Gilles Mattiaini, together.

Mattiaini went missing in 1985. The 27-year-old Frenchman was, like Warren, known to go for walks along the cliffs at Bondi. His sudden disappearance was reported to Operation Taradale when the friends and families of gay men who had gone missing or been attacked in similar ways started coming out of the woodwork. In all, Stephen Page interviewed more than 30 different persons of interest, including members of the gang who killed gay man Richard Johnson in Alexandria in 1990 after a horrific bashing that resulted in eight

assailants being jailed.

That same year, there was another deadly attack in Marks Park. On the night of Friday 20 July 1990, three youths got drunk and stoned above the cliffs in preparation to go gay bashing. Around the same time, 31-year-old Thai student Kritchikorn Rattanajurathaporn left the restaurant where he worked and decided to go to the park before heading home. There he met another gay man, Jeffery Sullivan, and the two struck up a conversation, but they were soon confronted by the youths, who demanded money. An altercation followed. Sullivan was bashed with a claw hammer and fell to the ground where one of his attackers jumped on his head and kicked him in the stomach, spleen and kidneys.

Rattanajurathaporn was bashed, too, but staggered free. He made it some way down a path before the youths caught up with him

Sullivan was bashed with a claw hammer and I fell to the ground where one of his attackers jumped on his head and kicked him in the stomach, spleen and kidneys.

and started hitting him with the hammer. He staggered towards the cliff and fell when one of them threatened him with a tree branch.

Sullivan, meanwhile, lay unconscious on the path until morning when he was found by tourists. Police divers recovered Rattanajurathaporn's body from the sea. His injuries were horrific.

The teens were arrested a month later after they were overheard boasting about the attack by a friend's mother. Two were sentenced to a minimum of 12 years in jail, while the other received a minimum of 11 years.

A local waiter also came forward to say that he too had been attacked in Marks Park by youths who dragged him towards the cliff edge after beating him for 20 minutes. His earring was torn out and his ring stolen but when he heard one of his attackers say, "Lets throw him off where we threw the other one off," he ran for his life.

"They grabbed me and they started to call me names, 'poofier' and all the rest of it, and they just started bashing me and they kept saying, 'Don't look at our faces,'" the man told police. "Two main people... were the ones doing a lot of talking and everyone else in the group was like standing around watching... I remember seeing the girls. Watching and laughing and still to this day it runs through my mind that they could sit there and do that."

When the man fled the park he screamed for help at a nearby apartment block. From a balcony he heard someone shout back, "We don't help poofiers."

Steve Johnson stayed on in Sydney for two weeks, spending nearly a day at Manly Police Station trying to persuade them to look for new leads. He would later discover that the area above where Scott's body was found was a well known beat where gay men would go to sunbathe – was that why Scott's clothes had been found neatly folded?

"None of that was known to me at the time," Steve says. "There is every reason to suspect that the police knew to ask the question 'Is this a gay beat?' as it's just up the hill from the police station and they were certainly attuned to the violence. There was a gay man killed in the stalls down on the beach about eight days after my brother died – he was knifed in the toilets. So the violence was well known."

Steve didn't stop fighting when he got back to the States either, using contacts he had at Harvard to help push for an inquest. There was an inquest held in March of 1989, but it merely confirmed what the police had decided – that it was suicide – because only police testimony was presented. Steve spent the next year searching through Scott's computer to see if any information could be gleaned, but drew a blank. Then, 15 years later, he heard about Operation Taradale and everything about



Steve (left) and Scott were experienced rock and mountain climbers, having tackled the Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps in 1987.

Scott's death now seemed to fall into place.

"When that news reached me in 2005 it was like my world was turned upside down. It was instantly clear what had happened to my brother because the circumstances of his death matched exactly with these other men who died at beats," Steve said. Steve flew back to Sydney to meet Stephen Page. "Even though he's not with the police force anymore he is just my idea of a super cop," Steve says of Page. "He had pieced together all these deaths that had happened within the same one or two-year period that had either been ignored or called suicides. Jacqueline Milledge, the coroner presiding over that inquest, not only ruled many of them murders but she also publicly reprimanded the police for effectively aiding and abetting through turning their backs on these deaths with no investigation, which encouraged the perpetrators," says Steve.

Milledge also recommended Stephen Page for a commendation.

In the decade since, Steve Johnson has done well in the internet boom. He founded ChoiceStream, a Boston-based company that develops software to help businesses engage with consumers, putting him in a position where he could afford to fund his own investigation.

A mutual friend introduced him to Daniel Glick, a former *Newsweek* journalist who had investigated the death of American child beauty pageant queen JonBenet Ramsey and the Columbine High School Massacre in Colorado in 1999.

"He's got an impeccable record as an investigative journalist," Steve said. "The JonBenet Ramsey case was death under mysterious circumstances. Police had a theory initially, it turned out to be wrong - that went on for years and Dan stuck with it. He's also covered gay issues and so a lot of things fell into place between the two of us. We've become great friends so I hired Dan in 2006 and he started making trips to Australia to see what he could find out."

Daniel Glick told DNA, "Our mutual friend had done a lot of climbing with Steve and they had talked a lot about Scott's death, so he suggested that if he hadn't gotten any response from anybody in the New South Wales authorities then maybe I could dig into it.

After looking at everything Steve had already discovered, Glick decided it was worth taking a trip to Sydney to see what else he could find.

"I told Steve I'd take a look," says Glick, who told DNA it was important that he began his investigation without any preconceptions. "I also told Steve from the beginning that if it looked like suicide I'd tell him that. If there was anything to be laid on the police at the beginning, it's that they were very, very quick to ascertain that it was a suicide and not really entertain any other possibilities seriously. I think any good investigator has to start with a really wide net. I



Scott (right) and his brother Steve (centre) with a friend on a climbing trip.

started out thinking that it was at least as likely that he committed suicide as anything else," says Glick.

Before Daniel Glick headed to Sydney in 2007, he and Steve spoke to Stephen Page. "He told me that what we needed to do was figure out a couple of things," Glick says. "One of those was to determine if the place where Scott died was a beat. The other was, were there any other

objective for me to find out, I'd found out in the first 15 minutes in Manly."

Glick put a call out for information through Sydney's gay press and the *Manly Daily* newspaper. This unleashed a flood of responses. "Every piece of evidence that I turned up just kept corroborating those two main things," Glick says. "By the time I'd been there for a week I had close to a dozen people from different walks of life - including a man who had been stabbed in the exact same spot where Scott had died. There was all this evidence that this was a beat and a pretty well known beat at the time.

"Secondly, by going through all of the old newspaper clippings and talking to some of the old timers around there, including some ex-cops, it was pretty clear that the violence against gay men that was so prevalent and documented in Taradale certainly didn't stop at the Harbour Bridge."

By 2007, Daniel and Steve felt confident they had enough to push for a new verdict. "We submitted a report to the Coroner's Court that had much, if not all, of the evidence that the coroner had this time and we were pretty confident that we had raised enough questions about the original investigation," Glick says. "But apparently that wasn't enough."

In 2008 Scott's case was reviewed and declined by the Coroner's Court. Then in 2011, someone claiming to be Scott's killer posted an online confession on Facebook and Steve sent Dan out to Sydney again. The confession turned out to be a hoax by an internet troll, but it may have been the straw that broke the camel's back in getting the New South Wales Coroner's Court to hear the matter again.

"This time, the Manly Police detective that was reviewing the investigation told us he was able to confirm independently almost all of what we had put forward, so we had some >>

Unbelievably, I don't  
 know what he  
 Russell's clothes  
 and put them  
 during outside the  
 police station  
 process removing  
 potential forensic  
 evidence

incidents of violence that were happening on the northern beaches, because everything that Operation Taradale looked into pretty much focussed on the Eastern Suburbs.

"The first moment I thought I was onto something was the day I landed in Sydney and set up shop in Manly. I went for a run up Darley Road trying to figure out where Scott had died. I had some maps and ended up talking to a guy who'd been working up at the sewerage plant for 25 years. I asked him if the area was a place where gay men used to come and he said, 'Oh yeah, all the time.' So Stephen Page's first

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>> reason to believe that we had a good chance," Glick says.

Steve said Manly Police's Detective Senior Constable Timothy Wilson was now his hero. "All we'd given him was a bunch of pages of our analysis but the more he got into it, the more he saw the truth. My brother died under highly suspicious circumstances that were very similar to those on the southern beaches that had happened in 1988 and 1989," Steve said. "He put our information together with some information of his and that's when we really began to feel like we had an advocate on the police force - that's when we felt we had a shot."

When Deputy Coroner Carmel Forbes read out the open verdict finding and referred the case to the Unsolved Homicides Unit, Steve was emotionally overwhelmed. "You could sense that the court was completely for us," says Steve. "You could feel the karma in the room, but when the coroner finally issued her ruling and said she wanted to re-open the case and turn it over to Cold Cases I almost broke down and cried."

"The possibilities that Mr Johnson was the victim of a gay hate crime similar to those that occurred in Bondi or that he fell are also available explanations to the circumstances that surrounded his death," Forbes told the court. "I find that the evidence adduced in Mr Johnson's death does not enable me to make a finding as to how he fell off the cliff and I make an open finding."

Steve and Daniel are both hopeful that if Scott's case is re-investigated it could help shine a light on whether it was part of a wider pattern of homophobic violence on Sydney's Northern Beaches at the same time as the murders that were investigated and ultimately prosecuted by Operation Taradale.

"I think Stephen Page, who has been working with us, and Tim Wilson for that matter, are pretty convinced that there were similar kinds of attacks happening there on a regular basis around the same time," Steve says. "I'm quite hopeful that the cold cases unit will broaden the investigation to start looking for other incidents and other young men who were killed at the same time up in the northern beaches"

A spokeswoman for the New South Wales State Crime Command confirmed Scott's death had been added to the list of unsolved homicide cases. "It will undergo extensive review to determine the feasibility of conducting a new investigation, which is a three to five year process," the spokeswoman said. "However, if any person has new information on the matter, we would urge them to contact Crime Stoppers and that information would be assessed and acted upon."

DNA asked Steve what it would mean to him if, following a new police investigation, the coroner rules that his brother Scott was murdered. He replied, "I believe Scott

was murdered, so I'll feel relieved if and when the police and coroner come to the same conclusion. Gay men don't go to gay beats to commit suicide. It would be beyond coincidence that my brother died at the bottom of this cliff, at a well-known gay beat, where no suicide victims have ever been found, at the same time other gay men were dying at the hands of violent gangs in a similar manner on the southern beaches, within months of Scott's death. Scott was, in all likelihood, killed because he was a gay man at a gay beat."

About the possibility that Scott's murderer may still be at large, he says, "Finding whoever killed my brother is my main goal. The passage of time does not give amnesty to murderers. It sickens me that whoever killed Scott was free to continue marauding, and possibly killing others without so much as a suspicion that a murder occurred. These

"Finding whoever killed my brother is my main goal. The passage of time does not give amnesty to murderers. It sickens me that whoever killed Scott is free to continue killing others."

gangs operated with impunity, with the kind of arrogance that comes from knowing that police are unlikely to act. Going after these criminals now - especially after 24 years - sends a clear message that the police are ready to protect everyone. Another death - an execution-style shooting - happened last week in another gay beat in southwest Sydney. Police need to show that gay hate violence won't be tolerated."

Even if the Coroner concludes that Scott Johnson was murdered, there's no guarantee that his killer will be brought justice. It's also worth noting that the Bondi Marks Park killers will have now served their original 11- and 12-year jail terms and could already be free again. \*



Among the victims of the vicious gay hate crimes were TV weather man Greg Warren (top), Gilles Mattaini (middle) and Scott Johnson (below.)



If you have any information that might help solve the murder of Scott Johnson you can contact Daniel Glick by email at [Uanglick@earthlink.net](mailto:Uanglick@earthlink.net)

Andrew McRolls is a freelance journalist for DNA. He can be reached at [andrew@dnanews.com](mailto:andrew@dnanews.com)

# Case reopened: suicide or anti-gay attack

# Death of teen 'not affected by delay'



Johnson's brother's body was found at the base of these cliffs at Manly. After 29 years, the coroner found he may have died as a result of a gay hate crime

## Death of a gay man in 1988 is being investigated

JCE will reinvestigate the death of a gay man in Sydney in 1988, amid fears he didn't commit suicide but was victim of a hate crime. The NSW coroner yesterday turned a 23-year-old verdict on its head and referred the matter to NSW Police. Speaking outside the court, he said the deaths of at least other gay men, one of whom had been found to have drowned, could be potential murders and he'd be reinvestigating as well. The body of 27-year-old Johnson was found at the bottom of a near Manly, on Sydney's inner beaches, in December. His neatly folded clothes found at the cliff-top, leading after yesterday's in-



Scott Johnson climbs Mount Montserrat in US in 1988

quest, his brother Steve was a police officer who had failed to properly investigate Scott's death and he believed many other results of gay men in Sydney at about the same time had also gone unprosecuted. "For 22 years I've had a question mark hanging over why (Scott) died," Steve Johnson said. "The reason I wrestled with this

for so long is not just because of my brother's death, but to shine a light on the crimes that don't get reported and the police don't act." In investigating the findings of a 1989 inquest that Johnson killed himself, Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes said new evidence had uncovered "a culture of violence against the gay community

in Sydney in the late 1980s". As many as 10 gay men died violently in Sydney during the time, with three, including popular WIN newsreader Ross Warren, thought to have been thrown from cliffs near Bondi by a gang targeting homosexuals. "The possibility is that Mr Johnson was the victim of a 'gay hate' crime similar to those that occurred in Bondi, or that he fell, and also available explanations," Ms Forbes said, returning an open verdict. The case will now pass back to NSW Police for further investigation. One year before Johnson's death, the inquest heard three people — two men and one unidentified juvenile — were charged with the offences relating to alleged assaults on gay men in Sydney, including some near the cliff where Johnson died. The court was not told if they were convicted of these alleged crimes. Under cross-examination, NSW Police Detective Senior Constable Tim Wilton said one of the men, Nick Jans, had since

committed suicide, but he had spoken to the other man. "He recalls the man and he recalls the time," Senior Constable Wilton said. "His police file said that, however, he declined to provide me with any help in relation to Scott Johnson." Counsel representing the Johnson family, Neville Parsons, said there was no tangible link between the three and Scott's death. "(But) unfortunately it can be said that these people may know more than what they're saying," Mr Parsons said. "Is there someone?" Detective Wilton replied: "That's correct." Giving evidence to the inquest, Steve Johnson said police had not treated his brother's death with the respect it deserved. "We're hopeful this opens a door to investigating, and explaining, what was likely to have been a terrifying final few moments in the gay man's life," he said. "If you are depressed or contemplating suicide, help is available at Lifeline on 131 147"

## PHOTOGRAPH

"REGRETTABLE" factors that hindered emergency workers from reaching a 17-year-old boy who jumped from Manly's West Gate Bridge made no difference to his eventual death, a coroner has found.

Allan Skellic died after plummeting 18m from the bridge on to the ground in February 2008, a week after Arthur Freeman killed his four-year-old daughter, Darcy, by dropping her off the same busy highway into the Yarn.

Allan's family wept in court yesterday as Coroner Audrey Jamieson described his last moments as paramedics were delayed in reaching him by a locked gate restricting access to the area under the bridge.

The inquest into Allan's death heard police and ambulance officers searched for him for at least 10 minutes before finding him still alive and groaning.

Delivering her findings, Ms Jamieson said the problems faced by emergency workers were "regrettable", but she could not find that Allan's death was preventable.

"The nature and extent of his injuries were not survivable," she said. "The factors that hampered emergency personnel locating Allan, including the knowledge of availability of keys to the locked gate, are regrettable, but I find that they made no difference to the outcome."

Allan made the decision to end his life after being bullied on MySpace and through text messages. His tormentor later pleaded guilty to stalking charges and was sentenced to an 18-month community-based order.

Arriving on the bridge shortly before 9am, Allan used an emergency telephone to call "VicRoads staff." "You better get someone out here quick before I jump."

He stayed waiting on the bridge and peering over the side for seven minutes after the call, in full view of VicRoads cameras that were being monitored.

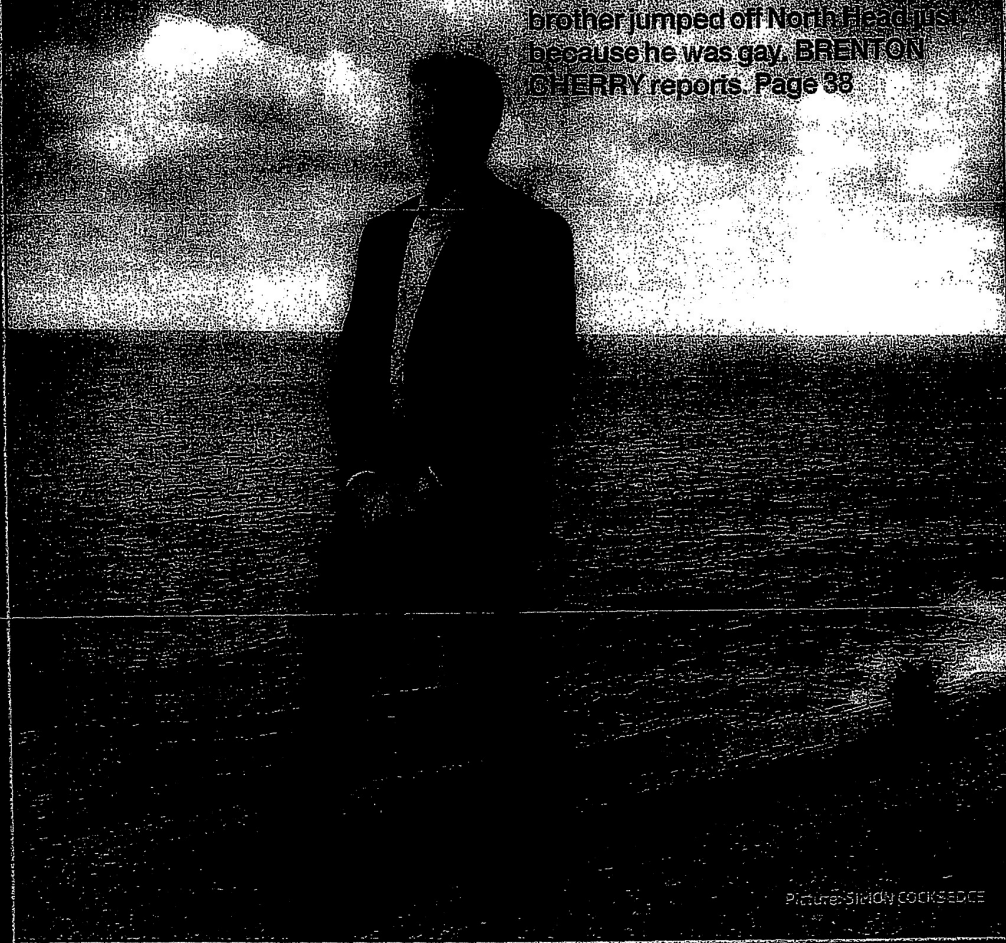
Outside the court, Allan's father, Allan, said the seven minutes could have made the difference to his son's life. "Seven minutes is a long, long time," he said. "That's the difference between saving a life and losing a life."

"If you are depressed or contemplating suicide, help is available at Lifeline on 131 147"

# Weekend

## MAN ON A MISSION

Steve Johnson never believed his brother jumped off North Head just because he was gay. BRENTON CHERRY reports. Page 38

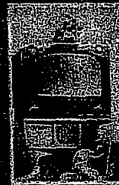


Picture: Sheldon COCKS EDGE



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TO IRON OR NOT TO IRON?



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WHAT'S HOT ON THE BOX



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LOOK UP YOUR STARS

# STANDING UP FOR SCOTT

## BROTHER'S MISSION TO FIND THE TRUTH ABOUT CLIFF DEATH

Grantley Cherry

SCOTT Johnson was a brilliant young US mathematician in the prime of his life.

The 27-year-old had just received news he would be finalising his doctorate and was overjoyed at the recent birth of his niece.

Add to that his loving relationship with his partner Michael Noone and close ties with his family back home in the US, and Mr Johnson had much to live for.

So when his body was found at the bottom of the cliff at North Head in December 1993, and police and a coronial inquest subsequently ruled it suicide, those who knew him well were in disbelief.

Why, they asked, would a man with such a bright future take his own life?

His family, and in particular his brother Steve, were adamant he never did.

"When I arrived in December, two days after Scott's body was found, I was told he had jumped solely because, and I quote, 'That's what people do at those cliffs, especially gay men,'" he told a coronial inquest into Scott's death this week.

"I was in utter disbelief. I spent 10 days here asking for an investigation to look at other possibilities for his death."

"It (his death) was treated with neither the respect nor justice all of us deserve."

"Too many elements did not add up for the Johnsons family."

There was the life-changing news he had just received about his PhD, as well as his eagerness to travel home to see his baby niece and family - a fact he spelled out in a letter home to his mother.

That there was the manner of his death. Mr Johnson was washed when a fisherman found his body near Blue Fish Point. His clothes, watch, cash card, student travel pass, money, pen, comb and key were all neatly placed together some 10 metres back from the top of the cliff.

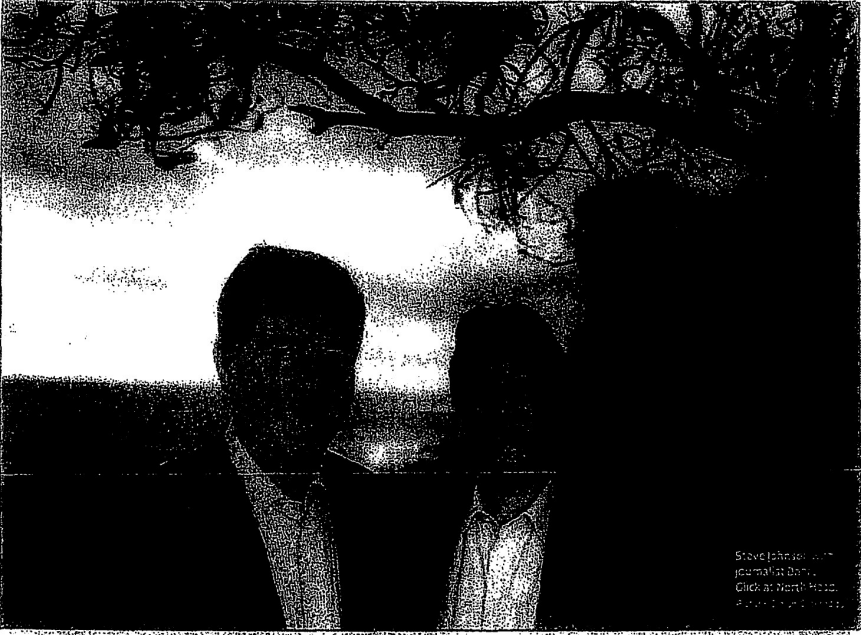
There was also no suicide note.

The family suspected foul play, a belief that intensified in 2005 when police Operation Taradale uncovered a culture of violence against gay men in Sydney in the late 1990s.

Believing Scott might have suffered the same fate, the family, led by Steve, launched a private campaign to reopen the case.

In 2007 they hired investigative journalist Daniel Clark to search for the truth.

He discovered that North Head was a gay beat. He also spoke to a Fairlight man who



Steve Johnson with journalist Daniel Clark at North Head. Photo: Grantley Cherry

### SCOTT JOHNSON: TIMELINE



**December 10, 1993:** Scott Johnson's naked body is found at the foot of North Head.

**March 25, 1994:** A coronial inquest finds Mr Johnson committed suicide.

**2005:** Police operation Taradale uncovers that the deaths of three homosexual men in Bondi in 1992 were as a result of being forced off cliffs at a known gay beat.

**2007:** The Johnson family hires investigative journalist Daniel Clark to investigate Scott's death. He speaks to a gay man who was snubbed at North Head after a sexual encounter.

**June 27, 2012:** Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes hands down an open finding and says Mr Johnson may have died as a result of a gay-beat crime.

the circumstances surrounding his death.

Speaking after the findings were handed down, Mr Johnson, who has ploughed massive resources into the private campaign, said he was overjoyed.

"It's been incredibly important to us that his death be investigated, and it never was," he said. "For 22 years we have had a question mark over why he died. Hopefully now we will get some answers."

Mr Johnson, who flew to Australia with his wife Rosemarie for the inquest and visited North Head this week, is confident of one day finding his brother's killer.

"We've generated 40 pages of notes about people that should be spoken to, incidents that might never have been reported."

"We're hopeful this opens a door to investigating, and explaining, what was likely to have been a terrifying final few moments in this gentle man's life."

"Perhaps some day we will look into the eyes, as Scott did, of the person who administered his death."

The death of Scott Johnson has now been referred to cold case detectives.

had been stabbed in the back after a sexual encounter with another man.

Then last year, an anonymous confession to Mr Johnson's killing was posted on Facebook. It was found to be a hoax, but in May the NSW coroner reopened the investigation into his death.

On Wednesday the Johnsons' unshakable resolve was vindicated when Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes handed down an open finding into the death of Mr Johnson.

Ms Forbes said suicide could not be presumed.

"Mr Johnson did not leave a suicide note," she said. "There is evidence that he was in a happy relationship and certainly he had just received positive news about finalising his doctorate in mathematics."

"In this case the possibilities that Mr Johnson was the victim of a 'gay-beat' crime similar to those that occurred in Bondi, or that he fell, are also possible explanations to

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New South Wales

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# CLOSE TO THE EDGE

WHEN AN AMERICAN MAN WAS FOUND DEAD AT SYDNEY'S MANLY, IT WAS RULED A SUICIDE - BUT HIS BROTHER BELIEVED IT WAS MURDER. MORE THAN 20 YEARS LATER, POLICE ARE FINALLY BACK ON THE CASE

By Daniel Glick

**T**he subject line from the email jumped off my screen: "Scott Johnson Murder CONFESSOR!" I was on holiday with my son, and the last thing I expected was a confession to a murder I had investigated in Sydney four years previously. The email tip in January pointed me to an Australian Facebook page where somebody had written: "As this is a fake profile and I have an IP address blocker I will publicly admit to killing Mr Johnson." "Mr Johnson" was a 27-year-old gay American whose naked body was found at the base of a cliff at Manly Beach in December 1988. Scott Johnson's death had been ruled a suicide the following year after a perfunctory investigation and his brother, Steve, has been haunted by that ruling ever since.

Steve, now a wealthy internet entrepreneur based in Boston, contacted me in early 2007 to see if I'd be willing to fly to Sydney and use my investigative journalism skills to poke around. I had covered the high-profile murder of six-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey and the Columbine High School massacre for *Newsweek*. Steve had learnt that a number of gay men had been murdered at a gay beat in Bondi in the late 1980s and believed that his brother Scott may have fallen victim to a similar gay hate killing in Manly around the same time.

In May 2007 I visited Sydney briefly to try to spark interest in the case. Now, out of the blue five years later, a shy, intelligent man (opposite); Scott Johnson mountain-climbing in the US state of New Hampshire in 1983, four months before his death

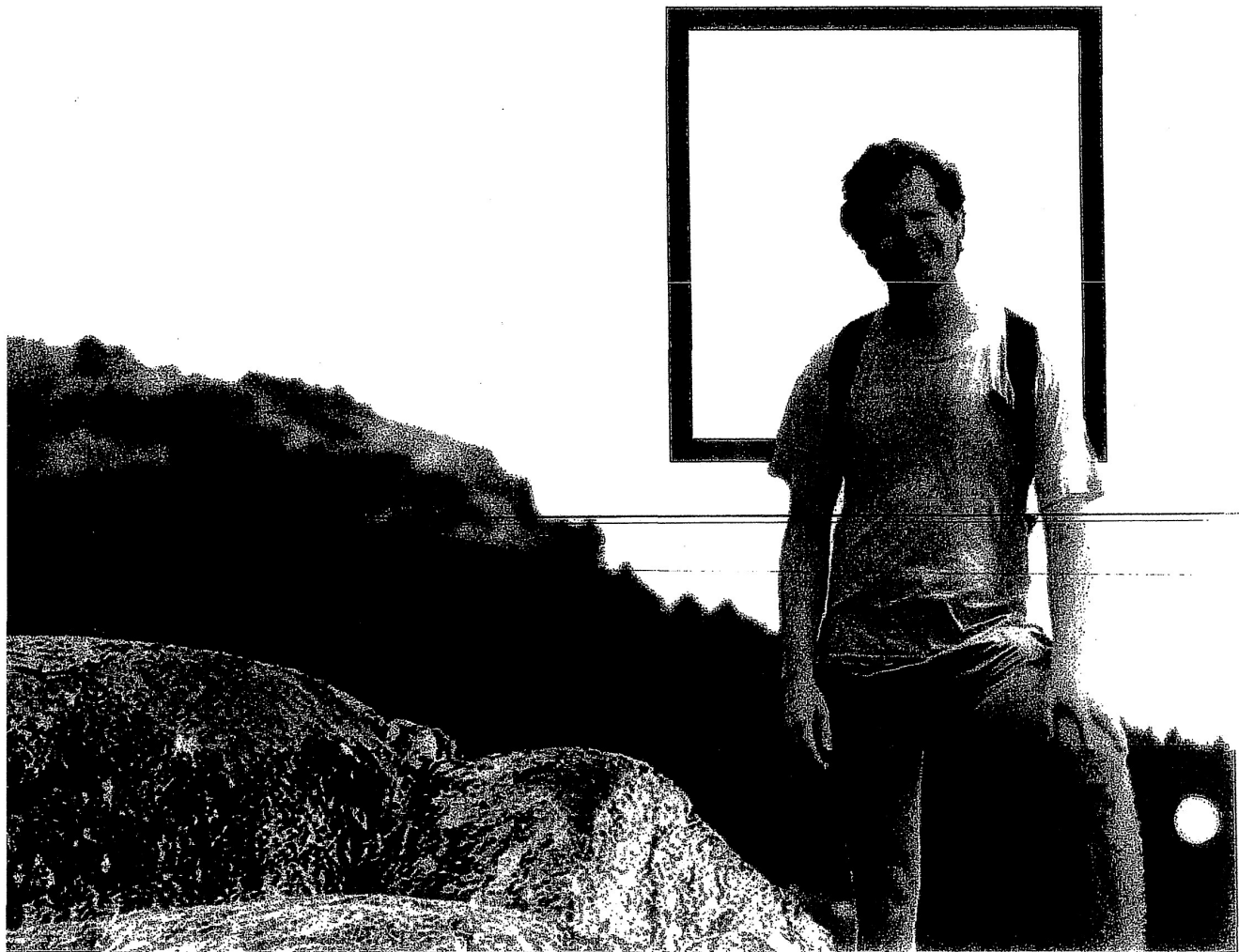
I seemed to have the emailed "confession" Steve had been waiting 23 years to receive. When I forwarded him the email, relief, sadness and outrage poured back in equal measures. "I never, never believed Scott killed himself," Steve wrote. "I've spent more than 20 years at a complete loss to understand what happened to my brother. In all that time, no more than a handful of days ever go by without my longing for Scott and wondering what happened to him."

The last time Scott Johnson, 27, was seen alive was on the morning of Thursday, December 8, 1988. His boyfriend's sister, Marguerite O'Connell, saw his feet protruding from a blanket on the spare room bed of her family home in the Sydney suburb of Lane Cove. Sometime after noon, a friend phoned and spoke with Scott, later reporting that he sounded "normal". A ticket found in Scott's shirt pocket suggested he took public transport to Manly Beach. Scott probably followed a trail above the Shelly Beach parking lot to a large, flat rock at the edge of a cliff face with a stunning vista of the Northern Beaches from Dee Why to Curl Curl, Narrabeen and beyond.

Two days later, two local men and one of their sons on a spearfishing expedition found Scott's body at the bottom of the 50m cliff. Manly police noted Scott's neatly folded clothes, but moved them before their photographer documented the otherwise prosaic pile of personal effects: a bone-coloured shirt, jeans, blue briefs, socks, running shoes, a pen, a comb, a cheap watch, a student ID, a bank card, \$10 folded in a plastic sheath in his shirt pocket, and the bus ticket. No wallet. No notes.

Police contacted William Byrd, Scott's boyfriend, at the Canberra address on Scott's photo ID, and told him to come to Sydney. Steve, in America, caught a flight to Australia straight away. William told police that Scott was shy, intelligent, may have belonged to "a group at high risk for the AIDS infection" and once mentioned he had thought about jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. Police concluded that Scott was almost certainly "a jumper".

Neither William nor Steve believed that assessment; nor did anybody who knew Scott. The slight young man with sandy hair and a wry grin was about to earn his PhD in mathematics from the Australian National University. Scott possessed an excellent academic pedigree: California Institute of Technology, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Cambridge in England. He had worked at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and collaborated with professors at

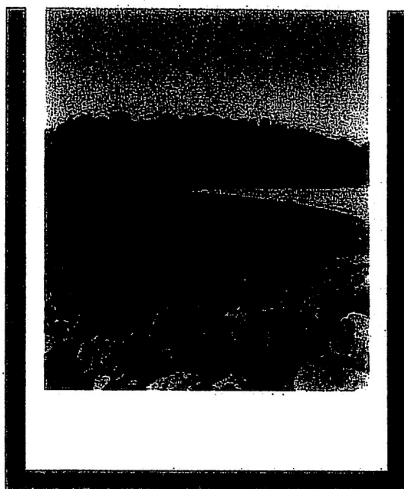


ward's John F. Kennedy School of Government. relationship with William was solid; there were no social problems besides routine student poverty; he related that he'd solved his dissertation's key problem and had essentially earned his PhD.

Scott would regularly visit Sydney from Canberra to attend a seminar at Macquarie University, staying at William's parent's home, where he'd been treated like a doted son. He had recently celebrated his 27th birthday with parties William had thrown for him in Canberra and Sydney, and was looking forward to seeing Steve and his wife Rosemarie's new baby, Emma. Scott didn't drink or smoke, and was a long-distance runner and mountain climber. He had no history of mental illness or depression, and the autopsy revealed he was not HIV positive.

Stella Besch, a psychiatric nurse, repeated to police that Scott seemed just fine. In May this year I spoke to her by phone. She told me that while a policeman was collecting her statement, his questions took a strange turn. "Did you know your brother was gay?" he asked her about William, and then he asked, "Do you still love him?" She glared at him and said, "Like a brother." Twenty-three years later, she still incensed by the policeman's attitude.

At the inquest at City Coroner's Court, Glebe, on March 16, 1989, Manly police presented their case for suicide. No sign of a struggle. Clothes folded neatly, indicating premeditation. Scott was an avowed homosexual. His boyfriend had mentioned a previous



suicide attempt in California, and had definitely mentioned AIDS. The autopsy noted no "defence wounds". Finally, police stated that the area was not a known gay "beat" where homosexuals routinely arranged sexual encounters. NSW Coroner Derrick Hand ruled the death a suicide.

We now know that the ruling was made using information that was incomplete, inadequate or just plain wrong. It was never brought to the court's attention that the area where Scott died was indeed a gay beat where men would disrobe and sunbake until a sex partner appeared for a quick, anonymous tryst. The magistrate never learnt that another gay man survived a stabbing after having sex with a stranger at the exact spot where Scott died. The court didn't hear that three

Stella Besch, Manly, near where the tragedy occurred; "Scott was my closest friend," says Steve Johnson (opposite) of his brother

men had been arrested a few miles from Manly, in Reef Beach, for a series of assaults against gay men around the same time. The court was never informed of a witness who heard one of those same men bragging about driving around the Northern Beaches with his mates to "bash poofers". Former Manly constable Troy Hardie, who recovered Scott's body, was never asked whether the location and manner of Scott's "suicide" was unusual. Wayne Plant, a former police rescue squad and air wing member who had retrieved many suicides from the area, later told me: "It does not fit with the type of suicide we normally found around North Head. You would have to have known that place or have been led there by someone with local knowledge."

NSW authorities now know that touring gay-hate gangs in the eastern suburbs near Bondi routinely terrorised gay men in the late 1980s and early '90s, chasing some off cliffs and brutally bashing others. Less than a year after Scott's death, the body of 31-year-old John Allen Russell was found at the bottom of a cliff, crumpled and bloodied. At first, Russell's death was ruled a suicide and, like Scott, nobody could figure out why he would do such a thing. Among other things, Russell had just inherited \$100,000.

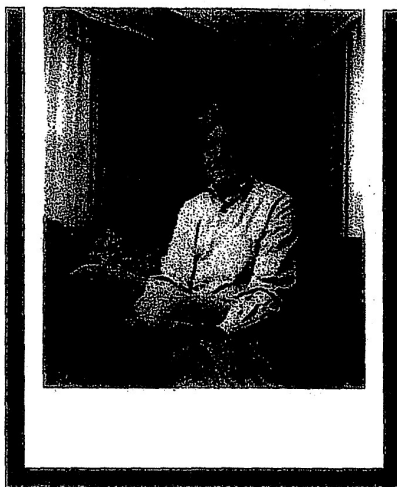
Almost exactly a year after Scott died, a 24-year-old gay man was bashed at Bondi and his attackers threatened to throw him off a cliff. "You're going over the

de, you poofier," one of them screamed. The victim never said the attackers "tried to remove my clothing".

Another gay man, television newsreader Ross Warren, had gone missing in the same cliff area around the same time and his body has never been found. In 1999, 10 years after Warren's disappearance, his mother, Kay Warren, began a letter-writing campaign begging for an official closure to her son's death. In May 2000 her letters landed on the desk of Stephen Page, a detective sergeant in the homicide division. His dogged four-year investigation, code-named Operation Taradale, turned a 2638-page report detailing attacks on youngdney gay men. A coroner's inquest ruled that John an Russell's "suicide" was due to "multiple injuries sustained when he was thrown from the cliff on to rocks, by a person or persons unknown." Ross Bradley Warren, Gilles Jacques Martaini, Richard Norman Ineson, Krutchikorn Ratanajurathaporn, William Len, Wayne Rick Tonks and Raymond Kean were all listed as victims of similar, deadly violence.

On March 9, 2005, Jacqueline Milledge, then a senior deputy coroner at the Glebe Coroner's Court, stated that the police conduct in the original investigations had been "grossly inadequate and shameful". She noted: "It is fair to say that only a percentage of the brutality could have been reported to the police at that time." Even with the report's broad conclusions, it apparently wasn't considered that this kind of anti-gay violence might have been repeated on the other side of the harbour Bridge.

In 2005, news of Operation Taradale's findings circulated across the Pacific to Boston where, coincidentally, William Byrd and Steve Johnson had both settled. Wiln wrote to Steve, noting that the Bondi cliff deaths seemed chillingly familiar. Like Kay Warren before him, Steve wrote to NSW authorities and received no response. Like Kay Warren, Steve persevered. In 1993, he had sold a mathematical algorithm to America line that allowed digitally compressed images to travel over phone lines, and his lucrative place in the internet revolution was assured. By 2005, Steve was CEO of ChoiceStream, a successful IT company. When I met Steve I started to get an inkling about how much his brother had meant to him. Scott and Steve were close, as befitted brothers two and a half years apart who had sought solace from familial dysfunction in each other's company. After their parents' death, life for the family took a series of turns for the worse as they moved around the more down-trodden Los Angeles suburbs. Steve held three paper routes, and Steve helped with folding and rubber banding. Their sister Terry moved out before her 15th birthday, and the two brothers became even closer. As college kids, Scott and Steve had climbed the mountains in Switzerland and routinely took 50km treks around Los Angeles while discussing computer-programming languages. They drummed up a couple consulting jobs together and had big future plans. But it wasn't until he was 22 that Scott came out to his older brother. Scott had just returned from his bridge studies and Steve had just finished his first year of graduate school at Harvard. They met in Los



Angeles and Scott tried to tell Steve about a new relationship. "What happened?" Steve said. "Did you get her pregnant?" "It's not a he," Scott replied.

When I agreed to go to Sydney in early 2007, Steve shared a letter he had sent to Bondi investigator Stephen Page a year before. In it, Steve explained why it was so important to find his brother's killer. "Scott's death, for the longest time, stopped my life," he wrote. "Scott was my closest friend; it's easy to say that Scott helped define me, and was one of my primary sources of joy and purpose. He and I shared and worked together on our most important dreams. When Scott died, I was shattered."

Page had just started a new civilian job so he recommended hiring John Macnamara, a fellow retired detective sergeant from the homicide division. Page still took an active interest in Scott's case and counselled us to focus on two questions: did Manly have active gay beats at the time of Scott's death; and had any anti-gay violence been reported on the Northern Beaches.

In May 2007 I took a room in Manly and literally hit the ground running, jogging up Darby Road towards the North Head cliffs and sewerage plant. I talked to a plant worker, Les Wicks, who had been there since the mid-'80s. He didn't recall Scott's death, but I asked if he knew whether homosexual men came up there in the late 1980s. His answer sent me reeling. "Oh, all the time," he said. "They'd clear off little areas and make love nests," he said, pointing to the shrubs and trees by the side of the road. If this place was a gay beat known to a straight sewerage plant worker, surely police should have uncovered that fact during their investigation?

The next days were a blur of revelation. Ulo Klemmer, an outreach worker for the AIDS Council of NSW, told me he patrolled the same area in the late 1980s. It was "definitely" a beat, one of about 500 or more that operated at the time around Sydney. Some of the Manly beats were merely meeting places, and men would then head for the hills to have sex.

I contacted longtime *Manly Daily* reporter John Morcombe to see if he could recommend any sources. He was intrigued enough to write a front-page story two days later with the headline: "Was it Murder?" The article included my contact information. My mobile phone rang before nine. An American woman married to an Aussie said her brother-in-law was "at the heart"

of the gay scene in Manly in the '80s but now lived in Queensland. When I called Christian\* he launched into a 90-minute description of gay life in Manly in the late 1970s and early '80s. He had heard many stories about the "notorious" bear near the cliff, where men would strip, fold their clothes neatly and wait for others to come and "have a roo". He described people "flinging themselves into the bushes" above the Shelly Beach parking lot, a 12-minute walk from where Scott died.

My investigative colleague Macnamara also got wind of a well-known local queen who went by the name of "Sadie", worked as a window dresser and may have been stabbed at a Manly beat. We found him. "Sadie" was then 63 and recovering from a quadruple bypass, with thinning strawberry blond hair and an ample belly. He recounted his 1986 visit to the same cliff where Scott had died. Sadie described how he took off his clothes, waited, and accepted the advance of another man - exactly as Klemmer and Christian had described. After sex, the stranger stabbed Sadie in the back with a Bowie knife. He walked to the hospital with the knife lodged millimeters from his spinal cord. The attacker was arrested. As we sat, stunned by the import of his story, Sadie turned around, pulled up his shirt and showed us his scar.

At the Coroner's Court in Glebe, Dr Johan Duffou, who had performed Scott's autopsy, said the fall was so disfiguring that the police statement at the inquest that there were no "defence wounds" made no forensic sense. Duffou said there was "nothing to suggest one way or the other - suicide, accident or homicide." Newspaper weather reports from the time of Scott's disappearance until his body was found showed that it had rained often. What did "no signs of a struggle" mean in the police report if the crime scene had been washed by rain?

The *Sun-Herald* ran a story that raised questions about the suicide verdict and included my email address. Within hours I received an onslaught of messages: from gay men who had been bashed but never reported it; from emergency room doctors who had treated apparent gay bashings; from a woman whose gay brother's death had been ruled a suicide but she didn't believe it. One person told me how a young thug had regularly bragged about beating up gays with his mates all over the Northern Beaches. I went to Manly Library and saw a 1987 article detailing the arrest of two men and a juvenile for "alleged bashing attacks on homosexuals on the North Shore". The same thug was one of those arrested. On December 15, 1988, just a week after Scott's death, the dead body of 29-year-old Ronald Currie was found in a toilet block in North Manly. At least a dozen other *Manly Daily* articles from the time described assaults in places such as parking lots and toilet blocks from Reef Beach to Narrabeen.

Before leaving Sydney in 2007, Macnamara and I sent a detailed report to the Coroner's office and the NSW unsolved homicide squad. I met with Magistrate Milledge, who agreed the new evidence sounded familiar to the Bondi revelations. She said it might be possible to reclassify the case from "suicide" to "open finding." Somebody would be in touch with us. Despite repeated emails and telephone calls, nothing happened.



Four years later, on January 29 this year, we caught our fresh Facebook lead. The email claimed to be from a 13-year-old boy, who alerted me to a posting on the Gay Marriage Rights in Australia Facebook page with the "confession" after finding my email address on the web. I contacted Steve, and sent the information to NSW State Coroner Mary Jerram. She responded almost immediately that she would pull Scott's file. I also sent the Facebook "confession" to the NSW police, and was told somebody would look into it.

Finally, in early May, Steve sent me to Sydney again. This time, Stephen Page took a more active role. We met Manly police Detective Inspector Luke Arthurs, who said they weren't having much luck tracking the young man who sent the email, much less the alleged "confessor". We explained that even if the "confession" was a prank, the other information we had developed was solid. Arthurs dismissed this by saying police had reviewed the case in 2007 and declined to act. Page and I left the meeting with a sinking feeling. Using an internet expert Steve had hired, we found the young man who wrote me with the Facebook details. I spoke to him and his mother, but we were no closer to finding the alleged "confessor". Police have since told Steve that they believe it was a hoax.

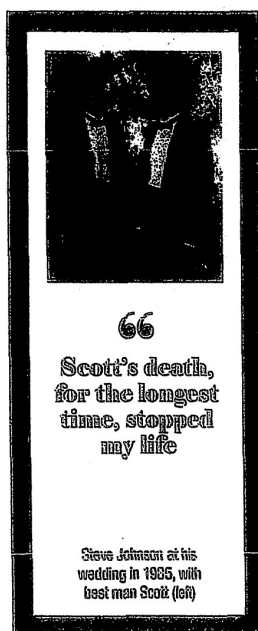
Sue Thompson, the former NSW police gay and lesbian liaison officer from 1990 to 2003, wrote a report in support of a new investigation, stating that there is a "likelihood or strong possibility of Scott's death being another gay hate cliff-top homicide/murder". Stephen Page did the same. At a meeting at the Coroner's office in Glebe with police, I laid out the new information that indicated a high probability that Scott's death was not a suicide. I was told our new evidence would be considered.

I received this update at the end of May:

"The State Coroner has, based on the information provided by you, reopened the inquest for the purpose of directing police to investigate those issues. Once the Coroner is in receipt of that investigation she will make a determination whether to reopen the formal inquest into the death or leave the finding as it stands. No decision can be made until the coroner has received the police material. It is not anticipated that will occur till later this year." Manly police recently told Steve that they anticipate completing an investigation for the Coroner in the coming months.

"I do not imagine it will be a relief to learn that my brother was the victim of a murder rather than a suicide," Steve wrote to me recently. "But understanding the true circumstances surrounding his death would be very important to me and Scott's family." The one shred of comfort he'll cling to is that the investigation should highlight awareness about how gay hate can destroy lives and leave everlasting scars on loved ones. O

Not their real names. If you have any information on this case, contact Manly Police 9976 8099 or Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000. Daniel Glick can be reached at [djayglick@earthlink.net](mailto:djayglick@earthlink.net)



“  
Scott's death,  
for the longest  
time, stopped  
my life

Steve Johnson at his  
wedding in 1985, with  
best man Scott (left)



**MIKE BAIRD**  
STATE MEMBER FOR MANLY

Mr Daniel Glick



Dear Mr Glick <sup>Daniel</sup>

I write further to our earlier correspondence concerning the death of Mr Scott Johnson.

As I indicated previously, I have made representations to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on your behalf.

I have now received a response from the Minister and a copy of his letter is attached for your information.

I note the Unsolved Homicide Team reviewed all available evidence during a second inquest into Mr Johnson's death with the aim of establishing a link to the homophobic violence that took place in the Eastern Suburbs during the 1980's.

I also note the case continues to receive attention and that fresh inquiries are presently in their infancy.

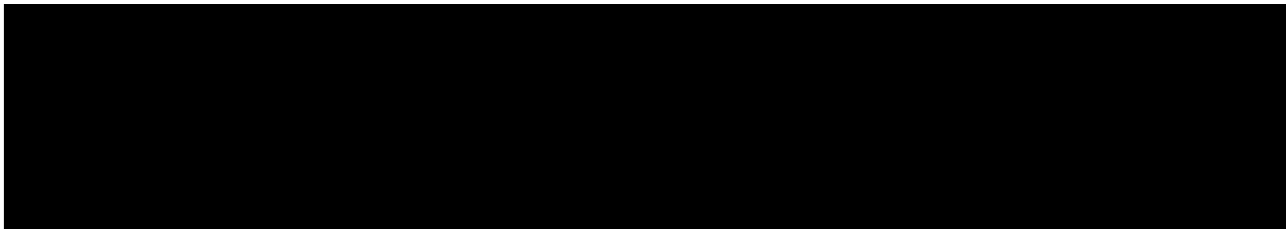
Thank you again for contacting me about Mr Johnson's death. I remain confident that investigators will continue to pursue this matter should any fresh leads or evidence come to light.

If there is anything further I can do to assist, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mike Baird MP

Date: 8 JAN 2013



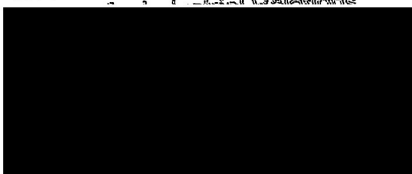


The Hon Michael Gallacher MLC  
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for the Hunter

MIN12/003224-02

The Hon Mike Baird MP  
Treasurer

19 DEC 2012



Dear Treasurer *Mike*

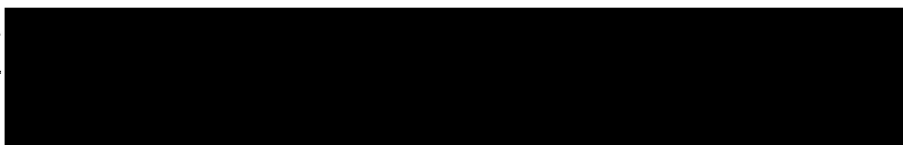
Thank you for your representations on behalf of Mr Daniel Glick regarding the investigation into the death of Mr Scott Johnson in 1988.

Assistant Commissioner Mal Lanyon, State Crime Commander, advises me, following the second inquest into Scott's death, the Unsolved Homicide Team undertook a review of all evidence with one aim being to identify any links between Scott's death and those of men in the Eastern Suburbs in the 1980's.

Although fresh inquiries are in their infancy, Assistant Commissioner Lanyon informs me investigators are not hopeful of being able to link incidents around the same time of homophobic violence in the Manly area and Eastern Suburbs to Scott's death.

Yours sincerely

*[Handwritten signature]*  
Hon Michael Gallacher MLC  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Scott Johnson Case

TAB 4

Updated Report on Evidence and Context of Violence in Manly at the time of Scott  
Johnson's death

Submitted to John Lehmann, Chief of Unsolved Homicides, NSW  
By Johnson Family  
Jan. 9, 2013

- 16-page report documents innumerable incidents of gay hate bashings/killings in the Northern Beaches throughout the 1980s and 1990s.
- Compiled from research and fresh interviews conducted by the Johnson Family in Dec 2012.
- This report was submitted to Inspector Lehmann after he informed family that Scott's case would not be investigated due to lack of leads or evidence of violence towards gays in the Northern Beaches.
- The report well establishes the pattern of gay hate violence was rampant in the Northern Beaches at the time of Scott Johnson's death. No link to the violence in the Eastern Suburbs around Bondi (Operation Taradale documented that several gay men were murdered by being thrown from cliffs by gay hate gangs) need be established beyond noting the pattern of violence was pervasive throughout the Sydney area and suburbs. The evidence in this report may indicate that the violence in the Northern Beaches was pervasive.

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Updated: Jan. 14, 2013

January 9, 2013

To: Detective Senior Inspector Lehmann  
 From: Steve and Rebecca Johnson for the Scott Johnson family  
 Re: The family's concerns that a Coroner recommendation for "further investigation" of Scott Russell Johnson's death has been dismissed and ignored

Dear Inspector Lehmann:

On behalf of Scott Johnson's surviving family, thank you for meeting with my and Scott's sister Rebecca and our family representative Daniel Glick during their recent Sydney trip. We appreciate that you reviewed Scott's case in advance of your usual timelines and that you have applied for a reward to generate community engagement in solving this crime.

We are sure you will not be surprised to hear how disappointing it was to learn that Scott's case received a "zero" solvability rating after your recent review. Our impression is that your review was based on an evaluation of the original case file, and that the "zero" rating was based primarily on the dearth of forensic and other evidence in that file, rather than as a result of any new or "further investigation" as recommended by the Coroner on 27 June 2012. We understood your definition of a zero rating to mean that Unsolved Homicide will make no effort to investigate Scott's death unless new material arrives on your doorstep.

Perhaps it is your view that your unit was not the correct place for the Coroner to refer Scott's death for further investigation. We doubt very much that the Coroner intended that the original case file be merely re-read and reviewed and that this would constitute further investigation. If you believe that there is a Police unit or government body that would be more suitable for such further investigation, then we would appreciate your advising us of this so that we may advise the Coroner.

We, however, believe the attached report contains sufficient new evidence that requires "further investigation in accordance with police procedures and protocols" (Coroner C Forbes). We hope this report provides enough new material for you to reconsider.

We recognize and share your frustration with the lack of evidence in the original case file. However, we respectfully do not share the opinion that the police's cursory initial investigation precludes a meaningful investigation today. As is reflected in the attached report, which adds substantially to information the family has shared with NSW authorities and led to Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes' June 27, 2012 decision to overturn the 1989 suicide verdict, we believe there are a number of credible new leads that require police resources and attention.

We continue to hope that the publicity surrounding the reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Scott's killer(s) and the February broadcast of the *Australian Story* episode on the ABC will shake loose even more new information and provoke a real investigation into Scott's violent death and shed light on other unsolved homicides from that era.

As you requested during the December 6, 2012 meeting, we are formally sharing new information obtained since the Coroner's "open finding" ruling in June, which remanded Scott's case to your office for "further investigation." In this report, we detail new, specific, credible and viable investigative leads about individuals who were potentially aware of or directly involved in Scott's and/or other gay men's violent deaths in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

We strongly believe the information we present here contains important new investigative leads that no member of the NSW police has considered or pursued, both with regard to Scott's death and other unsolved homicides. We believe emphatically that it is within police's purview to pursue these leads - and not the family's role or responsibility.

Thank you again for your attention to Scott's case. Please let either of us know if you have any questions, comments or need clarification. We would appreciate it if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter and report before January 25th.

Sincerely,  
Steve and Rebecca Johnson

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January 9, 2013

To: Detective Senior Inspector John Lehmann, NSW Police

From: Scott Johnson's surviving family: Steve, Rebecca, Terry and Sloan Johnson (siblings of the deceased), Grant Johnson (father of the deceased), Rosemarie Johnson (sister-in-law of the deceased), and Emma, Ruben and Tessa Johnson (adult nieces and nephew of the deceased)

Re: New information pertaining to the death of Scott Russell Johnson

As you requested during your meeting with Rebecca Johnson and Daniel Glick on December 6, 2012 at NSW Police Headquarters in Parramatta, we would like to formally present new investigative material the Scott Johnson family has developed since the NSW Coroner's office June 2012 ruling of an "open finding" that remanded Scott's case to your office. We believe this report details tangible, credible and important leads regarding several unsolved homicides of gay men in the Sydney area in the late 1980's and early 1990's, including that of our brother, Scott Johnson.

In preparing this report, the family has consulted with national experts in Australian gay hate crimes, NSW District Court documents, current and former NSW policemen, members of the gay community, Scott's friends who had heretofore not been interviewed, and lifelong Northern Beaches residents. We have followed these multiple streams of independent evidence to construct this report.

Frankly, Rebecca and Daniel formed the impression that you thought their verbal presentation summarizing the highlights of our new findings was not as compelling as we believe they are. Perhaps we did not present the new material as well as we might have, and we hope this detailed report will be more convincing.

We know your office is aware that during the era surrounding Scott's death, as Operation Taradale painstakingly exposed, loosely-linked groups of young, violent men routinely prowled gay "beats" in the eastern suburbs in order to assault, rob, and sometimes murder gay men. In 1992 the NSW Police Commissioner himself was so concerned about the level of unreported targeted violence at beats *across NSW* that he established a senior level working party to work with the AIDS Council beats experts and report to the Deputy Commissioner (from "Report of Sue Thompson re: Death of Scott Johnson," 1/6/2011 presented to Police and to Coroner at para 1.14. Ms. Thompson was the coordinator and police expert on gay/lesbian issues from 1990 to 2002). The Commissioner's intervention was in response to a long-term, widespread problem, which had been well documented by Thompson and presented to the Commissioner.

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Stephen Page, former NSW Detective Sergeant and the lead investigator for Operation Taradale, filed a report to the Coroner in which he stated; "I believe the culture of violence unearthed in the Taradale investigation would have been typical of many beats in this era. I do not believe the Manly area was immune to the violence being experienced against gay men elsewhere in Sydney." (from

Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

"Consultant Report -- Death of Scott Johnson," 12/5/2011 presented to Police and to Coroner at para 4.3.)

Our new investigation further details that a virtually identical pattern of targeted, anti-gay violence was unfolding in the Northern Beaches communities around the time of Scott's death, with serial gay bashers who routinely operated from Narrabeen to Manly to Reef Beach to North Sydney's St. Leonard's Park.

The fact of this widespread nature of gay hate violence has apparently been difficult for some NSW police to accept, despite a wide range of available evidence and expertise available to them. In an unsigned NSW police report in 2007 responding to the Johnson family's report alleging that similar gangs operated along the Northern Beaches at the same time as the now-notorious Bondi murders, the official wrote that the area on the northern side of the Harbour Bridge was "geographically distant" from the eastern suburbs, and as such would not have been subject to the same kinds of anti-gay violence.

That analysis was flawed beyond comprehension, which the reports of ex-Police Detective Stephen Page (Officer in Charge of Operation Taradale) and ex-civilian Sue Thompson (NSW Police Gay/Lesbian Coordinator) make evident. These reports were apparently quite influential in the Coroner's June 2012 decision to overturn the original suicide finding, and their opinion and expertise remains germane as you consider Scott's case today.

The attached new report makes their testimony even more abundantly clear, and provides compelling new evidence to further substantiate this fact.

On behalf of the entire Scott Johnson family, we thank you for taking the time to review our findings in more detail now.

We classify this report into the following categories, and will expand on these main points below:

1. New, detailed information from District Court records about two specific Persons of Interest we identified in the June 2012 Coroner's brief; both had been arrested and convicted of multiple assaults and robberies of gay men in multiple Northern Beaches communities around the time of Scott's death.
2. Names of two additional Persons of Interest not included in our original report, who were also identified in District Court records as convicted gay bashers in Northern Beaches communities.
3. Notably, the name of a key potential witness and source, who was apparently a reluctant participant in several assaults against gay men in the company of the aforementioned Persons of Interest. This man ~~was a material witness to several gay bashings and could provide testimony regarding other acts of violence - and possibly murder.~~
4. ~~Names of other witnesses who would likely be able to identify other men who participated in similar assaults as occasional members of the aforementioned group but were not named in the court documents.~~
5. Names of witnesses who may have overheard these and other perpetrators bragging about other bashings and murders.



## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

6. Names of witnesses who may help identify women who were associates of these men and who may have witnessed and/or participated in some of these assaults.
7. Allegations of other possible gay-hate murders committed by these and other men, both in the Northern Beaches and in The City.
8. Information about other suspicious deaths in the Manly area around the time of Scott's death.
9. Interviews with additional witnesses who identified the area around and above the Shelley Beach parking lot as an active gay beat at the time of Scott's death.
10. Additional interviews with friends and acquaintances of Scott Johnson who further attest to the unlikeliness of his committing suicide. Police have not interviewed any of these people, either at the time of Scott's death, at the time of the 1989 Inquest, during the 2012 review by Manly LAC at the request of the Coroner's office, or during the 2012 Inquest.

1. New information about NP 98 and NP 107 in our previous brief, we detailed newspaper reports of an arrest for dozens of counts of assault and robbery on homosexual men that occurred in 1986. NP 98 and NP 107 were both named, as was an unidentified juvenile, in both a *Manly Daily* and a *Sydney Morning Herald* account of an arrest at Reef Beach, a few kilometers from where Scott died. We recently obtained records through the District Court Registrar that detail these assaults and robberies committed by NP 98 and NP 107 and show that both men were convicted for multiple counts of assaults on homosexuals in multiple locations. In police interviews and court testimony, NP 98 and NP 107 admitted to roving the Northern Beaches communities from Narrabeen to North Sydney, committing assaults and robberies against gay men during the same time period as Scott's death. These recently obtained court records contain testimony from the assailants, eyewitness testimony, the names of arresting officers, and the names of at least ten victims of these brutal assaults and robberies in at least three Northern Beaches locations.

Herewith a few annotated excerpts from the NP 98 court files:

NP 98 barrister suggested that NP 98 may very well know several other perpetrators of similar crimes. Note especially the last sentence below, which indicates that NP 98 could still be a primary source of important additional information.

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*"At the time of his arrest the prisoner freely admitted his and his co-offenders involvement in these matters. He assisted Police to investigate and apprehend other persons who were subsequently charged with similar matters. He has made contact with arresting Police since these matters and has assisted with information that has led to the successful arrest and prosecution of persons for serious criminal offences. I have spoken personally to members of his family*

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

*who have supported him through this matter and they are of the opinion that he has rehabilitated himself. He would be in grave danger if sentenced to a term of imprisonment because of information he has supplied."*

*In one interview, NP 98 said, "We heard on the TV and radio about them [gay men] assaulting children. We wanted to do something about it."*

*Police question: Why did you go to the park (St. Leonards) at night?*

*NP 98 "To bash the men who have sex with other men. We take their money and whatever they have on them."*

*NP 98 NP 107 and I went down to get a drink. NP 107 said lets go pookter bashing." They went on to assault a man with some drill bits hidden in a bag, which by their description would have to be considered a lethal weapon.*

*Police question: "Can you tell me why you committed this offence?"*

*NP 98 "Just the way he looked at us, he raised his eyebrows."*

*NP 98 NP 107 and NP 10 (see #2 below) were arrested at Reef Beach for more than 40 counts involving assaults on homosexual men. In the original report the Johnson family filed with the Magistrate's office in 2007, we provided testimony from NP 172 at the time, who recounted hearing about these bashings and the arrest, although he was not a direct witness. We detailed his recollections in the 2007 report, and the court documents we recently obtained completely corroborate Mr. Reed's testimony.*

*Our information is that NP 98 currently resides in or near Narrabeen, and frequents bars in Manly Beach. He is divorced, and his ex-wife might also prove to be an excellent source of information about NP 98 past actions. We also note that NP 98 brother, NP 98.1 NP 98 has been implicated in organized crime and drug running.*

*Our information is that NP 107 died at home in Warriewood, sometime between 22-23/11/98. The coroner dispensed with the need for a full inquest because the death was clearly self-inflicted.*

**IMPORTANT NOTE: WE BELIEVE NP 107 FAMILY AND FRIENDS SHOULD BE INTERVIEWED TO LEARN WHETHER NP 107 MENTIONED ANY DETAILS OF HIS MOST VIOLENT ACTS, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MURDERED SCOTT JOHNSON.**

2. Names of two additional assailants not included in our original report. Court records we recently obtained through the District Court Registrar identified two other assailants not known to us at the time of the June 2012 Inquest: NP 10 and NP 104. These men lived in the

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

Narrabeen area, and were arrested for committing multiple assaults against homosexual men in the late 1980s and early 1990s in several Northern Beaches communities. Through additional interviews we have conducted with men who associated with these convicted gay bashers, we have additional testimony about these individuals' activities and associates.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** at least 20 NSW police officers, including Constables, Senior Constables, Detectives, Detective Sergeants, and Inspectors from at least three LAC's were named in the arrest, interrogation and/or court records regarding these arrests, which occurred in 1986 and whose court cases lasted through 1990. To suggest, as has been relayed to us, that Manly Police were not well aware of this rash of gay bashings at the time of Scott's death in 1988 is simply not plausible.

3. One of the above NP 104 was arrested for assault and robberies with the aforementioned assailants but was convicted of lesser charges. We have reason to believe NP 104 was a reluctant participant who acted as a "driver" but who was nonetheless a material witness to multiple acts of violence against gay men. We are certain that NP 104 has detailed, first-person knowledge of the assailants' activities. Our unconfirmed understanding from sources who know NP 104 is that he himself is now divorced and may be openly gay. He is or was Funeral Director for Charles Kinsela at Narrabeen, 1485 Pittwater Road.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: WE BELIEVE IT IS INCUMBANT UPON POLICE TO INTERVIEW NP 104 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND WE RESPECTFULLY ASK POLICE TO CONSIDER**

**SCHEDULED TO AIR IN EARLY FEBRUARY 2013. TELEPHONE SURVEILLANCE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR NP 98 AS WELL. WE HAVE NOT CONTACTED HIM.**

4. Names of other potential witnesses that may help identify other men who participated in similar assaults as occasional members of the aforementioned group. We have begun to generate a list of people who were associates of NP 98 NP 107 NP 10 and others from the Narrabeen High School classes of the early 1990s, which multiple sources have confirmed was a core location for "skinhead" activity and anti-gay violence. We have been told that some of these young men may have participated in occasional acts of "poofter bashing" along with NP 107, NP 98 and NP 10

We have not asked all our witnesses if they are willing to speak directly with police, but we believe that they may cooperate. Herewith a synopsis of one man's detailed recollections: Source "A" is an approximately 36-year-old male, a self-described "former skinhead" from Narrabeen.

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

“A” was approximately 13-years old when Scott died, but had an older brother who dealt drugs and hung out with some of the aforementioned Persons of Interest, and whose father owned a restaurant in Narrabeen where many of them congregated. “A” is a self-described former juvenile delinquent who says he never participated in any gay-bashings but did participate in criminal activity as a teenager. We spent time over several days with him, and found his descriptions credible and detailed. “A” said that these men <sup>NP 107</sup> and <sup>NP 10</sup> and <sup>NP 98</sup> bragged about driving all over the Northern Beaches to search for gay men at beats. A self-described because he is “A” said it was not unusual for this group to begin a night in Narrabeen (often at the bus terminus, a well-known beat), and work their way up the coast towards Manly, looking for gay men to bash and rob. could travel. They had cars,” “A” said.

“A” offered recollections of other members of the “crew,” some of whom he identified as “random lunatics” who would commit mayhem, including gay bashings. Some of the names he offered as potential or occasional gay bashers, all uncorroborated and with uncertain spellings, include <sup>NP 131</sup> <sup>NP 131</sup> brothers <sup>NP 132</sup> and <sup>NP 133</sup> <sup>NP 134</sup> <sup>NP 135</sup> and <sup>NP 105.1</sup> “A” recalled <sup>NP 105.1</sup> in particular as bragging about going to “the wall” near Oxford Street in the city (a known place where male prostitutes would work) and lure young men over before bashing them with a baseball bat. “A” also recalled hearing stories about these men going to gay beats where there were “glory holes” – holes cut in between toilet stalls where men would insert their penises for random, anonymous sexual acts – and bash these men’s penises with bricks. “A” also said he had heard that two men and his friend both associates of the other Narrabeen “crews,” would routinely “go to gay night clubs, pretend they were gay lure them and bash and rob them.”

“A” introduced us to Adam “B” (#6, below), who independently (without “A” present during the conversation) corroborated many of “A’s” recollections -- and added additional information.

5. Names of potential witnesses who may have overheard known perpetrators bragging about other bashings and murders. From recent interviews with people familiar with the assailants and their associates, we have compiled a list of additional men who likely possess first-hand knowledge of the assailants’ confessions and/or discussions of additional gay bashings. We would be happy to share these names with police investigators with the understanding that we cannot yet independently corroborate their possible involvement.

Herewith a synopsis of one man’s detailed recollections: “B” is an approximately 46-year-old male from Narrabeen who associated with

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

NP 98 NP 107 NP 10 and others from that era. "B" is by no means an unimpeachable source - he is what could be charitably called a "shady character" with self-avowed interests in brothels and pornography, among other illegal activities. We have not been able to independently corroborate his allegations, and but have asked if he would be willing to share this information with police and are awaiting his response. He did indicate that he has been a police informant in the past on other matters.

"B" said that he regularly socialized with NP 98 NP 107 NP 10 and a group of young Narrabeen troublemakers, playing cards, drinking, and doing drugs. "B" said he never participated in any assaults on gay men, but regularly heard the others brag about "poofter bashing." "B" said that the three in particular would show up with watches and jewelry they had obtained from gay bashings, and said that for them, "it was an absolute sport." Names he offered as potential occasional participants included NP 119 NP 120 (deceased), and NP 115 r NP 115 also deceased).

"B" recounted that NP 10 had reportedly been "raped" by three men in the Narrabeen bus station, which "B" says "was the start of everything" when it came to NP 10 gay bashing spree. "B" said that NP 10 and his mates would start at Narrabeen, then go to Freshwater, Mossman, Taronga Zoo, and eventually to Manly, because "Manly was the place to find the gays - especially Shelley Beach." He said that NP 10 acted as the "lure" because he was the youngest of the four (including NP 107 NP 98 and Ashton). NP 10 would pretend to be gay and interested, then bring a willing partner into the bush, where NP 98 and NP 107 were waiting. Ashton "was the driver." Note: This M.O. is identified repeatedly in Operation Taradale and in court documents regarding the Reef Beach arrests of NP 107 NP 98 and NP 10 in 1986.

6. Names of potential witnesses who may help identify women who were associates of these men and who may have witnessed or participated in some of these assaults.

Simon Donohoe of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations, in a December 2012 in-person interview with Daniel Glick, recounted being assaulted in Collaroy Beach in the early 1980s by at least four or five men in a toilet block. He was bashed by a baseball bat, which broke his nose, and kicked viciously in the ribs and about his body. The men left, and Donohoe crawled out of the toilet block, only to be set upon again by the men. Donohoe recounts that it was only the protestations of a group of women who accompanied these men that persuaded them to leave Donohoe alone. Donohoe never reported the attack to police, for two stated reasons: he was living at home and was not openly gay; and he believed that police would not have taken his claims seriously.

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

As Operation Taradale revealed, many women were active associates of the known gay bashers, sometimes participating and sometimes merely witnessing these assaults. Through "A" and Adam "B" we have names of several women known to associate with NP 107, NP 98, and NP 10 including NP 136, NP 137, NP 138, and NP 139. We cannot independently confirm if the spelling of these names is accurate, or if these women were direct or indirect witnesses to any gay bashings. According to both "A" and "B", it is likely that some of these women are former or current prostitutes and/or drug addicts. We would be happy to provide possible current phone numbers for several of these women. Note: As with all potential witnesses besides the aforementioned "A" and "B", we have not contacted any of these people.

7. Allegations of other possible gay-hate murders committed by these and other men in Shelley Beach and in the City. In this specific allegation, "B" sent "A" the following text message, which "A" shared with Daniel.

*U c NP 10 n 4 of his cousins use to go into the cross n bondi to bash gays I no of a few incidents that happened one the steps that go from the cross to woolamaloo they thro a bloke from the top step n he hit the bottom he died*

We wonder if this may be a reference to one of the murders referenced in Prof. Stephen Tomsen's report, "Gay Killings in New South Wales: Victimization and the Police Response," which catalogued ten identified unsolved gay hate crimes between 1987-1995, including MR Q, MR Q, MR R, and MR P. <http://www.criminologyresearchcouncil.gov.au/reports/19-94-5.pdf>. The report states that:

*"A general pattern of official disinterest has also meant that these killings have only been of minor interest to homicide researchers in Australia. In part this seems to be due to the difficulties experienced with official records. Although violent crime has become topical and politicised in the last decade, many aspects of recording and analysis are still very antiquated or in a situation of flux. Among incidents that are officially recorded by police agencies, there is mostly no indication that these are hate crimes. This may sometimes be apparent from the laborious study of records, but these cases are only found by chance and many records describe ambiguous crime scenarios. Much of the historical underreporting and under-recording and the unknown level of violence against gays and lesbians is a combined consequence of a lack of social power, and substantial levels of complacent or hostile police attitudes."*

It is also noteworthy that Philip Keen from ACON and his colleague Ralph Moore, another AIDS outreach worker, added information (included in our

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

previous brief) about how the Manly beats operated in a particularly underground manner in order to avoid confrontations with the police. In 1990 and 1991, when Keen worked with the Manly police doing outreach, he recalled, many gay men reported that the police would drag men out of the toilet blocks that served as beats and then publicly berate the men.

Sue Thompson, who was then the NSW Police Gay/Lesbian Client Consultant, has recently confirmed that this was definitely a common police practice at Manly at that time and was one of the long-term police practices documented to the Police Commissioner that led to him establishing the 1992 Working Party into Violence at Beats and the new Police Instruction about Police operations at beats (see Report of Sue Thompson re Death of Scott Johnson para 1.14 “because one of the major obstacles to getting beat users to report violence to police was gaining trust, which meant police attitudes to and operations at beats needed to become professional and appropriate so that they were no longer part of the problem but of the solution.”)

Keen said the atmosphere of distrust and fear of the police had reached a point of great conflict at the time surrounding Scott’s death. Because of this, he theorizes, men might have met up in the known beats in town but have gone to a more secluded spot around the cliffs above the Shelley Beach parking lot to have sex.

Sue Thompson also confirms this was a strategy known to her at the time and confirmed in her report at Para 3.4 that “beat locations were not confined to the toilet area at Manly as police thought.”

NOTE: In this context, we observe that Scott Johnson’s death was not listed among these unsolved murders because his death was originally ruled a suicide with “no suspicious circumstances,” according to the only press report on his death at the time. This strongly suggests there were other potential homicides that could yet be investigated (see #8).

Sue Thompson further in her Report states at Para 1.4 “If Scott’s death had come to our attention in 1990, given its particular circumstances, and what these told us given the expertise we had gained into the pattern of these murders, we would definitely have added his death to our list of solved and unsolved gay hate murders. It is my opinion that Scott’s death is another death in the epidemic of gay hate cliff-top murders but that it took place before the pattern was recognized.”

In an in-person meeting Daniel had with “B”, he also recounted an incident where NP 10 and some accomplices bragged about having bashed and drowned a man near the beach area in Shelley Beach and left his body on the rocks on the far side of the cove. “B” did not recall details of the exact year, but thought it was in 1989, and recounted that some of the participants in

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

this murder bragged about it at a poker game. "B" guessed that this crew may have bragged about "90 - 100" bashings" and an undetermined number of murders. Again, we acknowledge that we have no way of independently verifying these claims, ascertaining "B"'s credibility, or linking his recollections specifically to Scott's death.

8. Information about other suspicious deaths or unsolved murders around the time of Scott's death. One in particular is of keen interest to our investigation. NP 3 was notorious as "A" put it, as "the hardest guy in Narrabeen" -- a violent skinhead who defined himself as a disciple of Hitler and who decorated his room with Nazi flags. NP 3 was apparently implicated in a number of gay bashings, including an incident that involved multiple stabbings of a gay man near Kings Cross.

NP 3 operated independently from the aforementioned crew of Spadina and NP 10 who were of Eastern European (Yugoslav) descent, and "A," who was of Italian descent. NP 3 and his skinhead crew also allegedly targeted gay men and Asian men for violence. In 1992, NP 3 was found murdered in his home, and his brother NP 3.2 was tried and acquitted of his brother's murder after NP 3 body was exhumed from a shallow grave in front of their house. NP 3.2 was found not guilty in the Supreme Court on 12/8/93. The investigating officer was Det Sgt Ellicot, from Mosman police. The court file number is 92/91/0042, but we have not yet been unable to obtain the record - but are told it contains details of NP 3 gay bashing incidents.

Both "A" and "B" believe that NP 3 was murdered by three men, possibly because of a drug deal gone bad. Two of the three men are deceased, but a third is still alive. These sources allege that NP 140 (both deceased) and NP 96 murdered NP 3. We cannot independently verify these allegations.

Additionally, a newspaper report from the *Manly Daily* from Dec 15, 1988 said that MR J was found dead in a toilet block in Nolan Reserve in North Manly - within a week of Scott's death. Our information is that this was a gay beat. We have no information about Currie.

We have also been unable to obtain any information about the whereabouts of NP 29 at the time of Scott's death. NP 29 was convicted for stabbing I 12 on the cliffs above Shelley Beach in 1986 at or very near the exact spot where Scott's clothes were found. We do not know if it is possible that he was a repeat offender, or if he was incarcerated at the time of Scott's death.

In 2007, the Johnson family's submitted a report to the NSW Coroner's office that was co-authored by Daniel Glick and former NSW Detective Sergeant



## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

John MacNamara (acting as a private investigator for the Scott Johnson family). In compiling the report, MacNamara interviewed [§ 87(2)(b)] a spearfisherman who found Scott Johnson's body on the rocks near Blue Fish Point. [§ 87(2)(b)] was a former military man with precise recollections of how Scott's body and clothes were found. In his testimony to MacNamara, [§ 87(2)(b)] recalled that another body had been found nearby in the weeks prior to or after Scott's death. We have not been able to access the P-79A reports from that era that may shed more light on this recollection, nor have we been able to access the police "occurrence pads" that would certainly contain more information relevant to Scott's and other possible investigations.

As for #9 and #10, below, Rebecca and Daniel discussed these points with you at your December 6 meeting: the possibility that Scott may have taken his own life, and whether the area where Scott died was a gay "beat." Rebecca and Daniel understood from their conversation with you that you still appear to give considerable credence to the possibility that Scott committed suicide, and that you remain unconvinced that the place where Scott died was a gay "beat." It is with great regret and sadness that we feel compelled to continue to speak to these two issues, which we thought had been definitively addressed in the June 2012 Coroner's Inquest and ruling by Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes.

9. The area where Scott died was a known and "notorious" gay beat. Deputy Coroner Carmel Forbes' ruling in June stated unequivocally that "it is now known that the North Head of Manly near Blue Fish Point where Scott Johnson's body was found was a known gay beat." Yet during Rebecca and Daniel's discussion with you on December 6, 2012, you stated that you had consulted with former Manly LAC Det. Sgt. and now Superintendent Doreen Cruickshank, and our understanding was that she informed you that the area was not known to police at the time as a beat. She testified at the time of the 1989 Inquest that although police were aware of other beats in Manly, the area in, around and above the Shelley Beach parking lot was not one of them. With respect to what you consider to be her considered opinion, it runs counter to a wealth of information that was available to her at the time, as well as additional information that has emerged since 1988. That opinion also runs directly contrary to first-person testimony from multiple users of that beat that we already supplied to police – and we add to with this report.

The area where Scott died was unequivocally a "beat" – one of hundreds of places in the greater Sydney area where gay men met during this period.

(See our previous brief that includes testimony from [§ 87(2)(b)], a former ACON outreach worker, as well as [§ 87(2)(b)] and Professor Steven Tomsen, among others.)

We have already presented testimony from men who said they personally used that beat, in a manner similar to what Scott may have done: by taking off one's clothes, sunbaking, and awaiting an advance from a willing partner.

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

The place where Scott died was absolutely known to police prior to his death. It is of indisputable public record that the aforementioned [redacted] was stabbed at or around the exact spot where Scott died, after disrobing and having sex with [redacted] NP 29 who was ultimately arrested.

In addition to the testimony of four gay men we provided to police, who all said they personally visited this beat, either as participants and/or as professional outreach workers, we now add the testimony of another man who contacted us recently. If you are interested in speaking with him, we can ask if he would be willing to share his story with police. This man, who was living at Manly at the time of Scott's death, met with Rebecca in person and says he remembers the day they found Scott's body. He said he remembered reading right after that there were "no suspicious circumstances" and that he and everyone he knew thought that was "absolute b.s." He later wrote:

*"Everyone knew it was a beat - it was really big. They called it the church because the hole in the wall was kind of cross shaped and the story was that there used to be a monastery up there. The roof of the old surf club used to be a big hook up spot, there were even pornos filmed up there. When that shut down, he thinks guys went up the hill. There was a famous (publicly straight) Aussie actor \*\*\* phelps who was up there all the time."*

*This man says he only went up there once, with his friend, who was a flight attendant for Qantas. He said there were naked men everywhere on their towels and wandering thru the bush playing with themselves.*

*This man told Rebecca, "The police definitely knew it was a beat." They stopped this man's friend in the parking lot around 1987 and told him if they caught him going up there again, they'd arrest him. This man went there every time he had a day off - he lived about 30 min drive away (Mona vale, I think). He died of aids about 3 years ago. Sometimes this man and his partner would go to "the church" together, but mostly they'd go alone.*

The fact that [redacted] NP 29 was stabbed after disrobing voluntarily, having sex with a stranger, and then being knifed, just two years before Scott's death, should be pretty definitive evidence that this was a beat that had historically attracted violence. Testimony we have presented from several other gay men who have called this particular beat "notorious" should, we think, further confirm this fact.

The fact that Superintendent Doreen Cruickshank apparently continues to maintain that this beat was not known to the police at the time -- and therefore could not have been a beat -- defies credulity. From what you told us, we can only come to the conclusion that her evidence for this assertion is the fact that she and her officers did not know about it at the time. If police

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

did not know about the incident involving the stabbing of NP 29 NP 29 they should have. If they knew about that incident and did not make the possible connection to Scott's death, we suggest that would qualify as a substantial oversight.

Our question for you is this: How many more individuals' testimony would you need to hear to be convinced that Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes' ruling holds more weight than Superintendent Cruickshank's ongoing assertion that she and her officers had no knowledge of the beat at the time of Scott's death - and therefore it was not a beat? We would like to formally express our dismay at your office's defiance of the Coroner's explicit finding, corroborated by the review conducted by Manly LAC Detective Senior Constable Tim Wilson, that this was indeed a beat.

10. The overwhelming preponderance of the evidence suggests that suicide is highly unlikely. Your assertion to Rebecca and Daniel that suicide remained a reasonable if not likely explanation for Scott's death defies the breadth of available evidence suggesting otherwise. While we agree that suicide cannot be ruled out 100%, in her June 2012 ruling, Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes stated that "suicide cannot be presumed and there must 'clear, cogent and exact' evidence to support such a finding."

There was never and remains none of the above in Scott's case. In making the original suicide verdict in 1989, the Coroner relied heavily on one single piece of "evidence" in making the verdict: the testimony of Scott's partner 176 who recalled that Scott mentioned *thinking about* jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge several years previously. In no testimony that 176 presented did he ever assert that Scott Johnson ever *attempted* suicide. It is widely accepted by the psychiatric community that many people may at some point in their lives give a thought to suicide or make some comment to that effect but that is very far from an actual suicide attempt or indeed actual suicide.

With regard to suicide, we would like to re-emphasize four points:

- Scott died at a place in North Head where there had previously never been a known suicide, although several other places in North Head were indeed well known suicide spots. (See testimony from former Manly Constable Troy Hardie and former Air Rescue Squad member Wayne Plant.)

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- Scott died after taking off his clothing and neatly folding them. There is no other record in the suicide literature that we have been able to find of a similar case. It would be an "unprecedented precedent," in the words of one expert.
- Gay men do not go to gay beats to commit suicide. Scott died at a place where gay men met, sunbaked, and sometimes had sex. We are aware of

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

no other documented case where a gay man committed suicide at a gay beat. In Stephen Page's report to the Coroner (see above reference, Page 3, para 4), he stated unequivocally, "I know of no cases of gay men going to beats to commit suicide."

- In the past few months, have conducted additional interviews with many of Scott's closest friends and acquaintances, all of whom spent time with Scott during the final weeks and months of his life. *Not a single person* expressed any reason whatsoever to think that Scott would have taken his own life. Police never interviewed any of these friends, either at the time of Scott's death, at the time of the 1989 Inquest, during the review by Manly LAC at the request of the Coroner's office, or during the 2012 Inquest.

The current presumption of NSW courts is that suicide must be proven, not assumed. In this case, the original police investigation and corresponding 1989 inquest contains one vague and uncorroborated piece of evidence suggesting suicide: a recollection of a telephone conversation three years prior to Scott's death he may have mentioned that he had *thought* about jumping off a bridge. Even if this story (which has multiple inconsistencies in the original testimony) were taken at face value, it is the *only* piece of evidence suggesting suicide.

On the other hand, a review of the original court documents, including testimony from a psychiatric nurse who was the last person we are aware of who saw Scott alive, [178] who testified to Scott's academic success, and Scott's partner, all confirm the deceased's stable and happy state of mind. We have submitted letters that Scott wrote, attesting to his state of mind, his good relationship with his family (who all knew he was openly gay), and his loving relationship with [176]. If you would like the names of an additional six or more people who knew and socialized with Scott during the final month of his life, and who all were unaware of any reason why he would have taken his life, we would be happy to supply their contact information.

In any modern Inquest into suicide, it must be proven with evidence that suicide was the cause of death. There is no such evidence here. It is true that the Coroner did not rule out the possibility of suicide, but since there is a substantial and growing body of evidence to suggest homicide, it was our understanding that the suicide scenario would be the *least* likely of three possibilities for your consideration among homicide, misadventure, or suicide.

Scott's sister Rebecca and Johnson family representative Daniel Glick left their meeting with you concerned that no amount of evidence we present to the NSW Unsolved Homicide unit will convince you to follow the substantial and credible leads we provide here. These leads may yet help solve the mystery of Scott's death, but also to any number of other unsolved homicides.

We understand that you have limited resources and must make choices regarding the "solvability" of crimes. We also understand that this case does not involve forensic evidence or witnesses who have come forward with direct knowledge of the crime. Nonetheless, our understanding of the Coroner's "open

## Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson – January 9, 2013

finding” was that Scott’s case would be remanded to your office “for further investigation.”

After our meeting of 12/6, all evidence available to the Johnson family suggests that you have again “reviewed” the case without any further investigation, which unsurprisingly means you appear to have reached the same conclusions that the police had originally made: that Scott most likely committed suicide at a place where gay men were not known to meet – a combination that would not warrant any further investigation from your team.

We respectfully disagree on all fronts, and hope this letter and new report will hold some sway. I would appreciate your timely response to this report and your advice if necessary as to a more appropriate unit in the Police where this new information might be further investigated in accordance with police procedures and protocols, as the Coroner presumably intended.

We conclude with an email message we recently received from [ 73 ] who had provided confirmation of the existence of the beat where Scott died in our 2007 report, but who was never contacted by police during any subsequent “review.” We asked [ 73 ] to provide written testimony for the purposes of this report, which we include here. It is quite compelling, in our opinion.

[ 73 ]

*To Whom it May Concern!*

*Since the mid 1970's I had heard about the cliff area above Shelly Beach, Manly being an active beat for Homosexual men. A Beat being a meeting place and sometimes actual locale for having Sex between consenting males. And have known many men of many sexualities who attended this Beat some on a regular basis. I have worked as an HIV/AIDS educator in what was called The Beats Project for ACON (The AIDS Council of N.S.W.), so my observations and conversations with others is that during the time that Scott died this was very much still a beat and it operated as described here.*

*There was a Sandstone Wall in the bushy area, all the way to the cliff, some stones had in the passing of time been removed allowing access to what seemed like a very private area of bushland. Homosexual men would enter through these spaces and generally would find a nice area where they would disrobe, sometimes totally nude, place their garments next to them and towel if they had one. They would then either sunbathe and other men clothed or nude would approach them and form a bond, and perhaps have sex there, or they would be the ones to leave their belongings and cruise the area for other men. This was a well-known area and had well worn paths and even coveted private Spots to be in.*

*In the 1990's the local Manly paper ran a story about a Beat @ the end of the Corso, which council, police and others were concerned about. I personally met with a high Ranking Police Officer @ Manly Police station to discuss this beat, as it was in our opinion a great place for AIDS education to be done in a time when information was scarce and often wrong and frightening. So it was then and to some extent now vital that men who have sex with men, but do not necessarily identify as Gay or Homosexual could be approached to have a conversation about safe sex, Beats are often the only*

Report by Johnson Family on Case of Scott Russell Johnson - January 9, 2013

*place many of these men go to for sex, or even meet others that do also, and therefore they are/were unaware of the GAY communities excellent life saving work done in N.S.W. sorry i digress a little, but that was the thrust of the meeting with the Manly Police Officer, and i note that during this discussion he also mentioned the beat on the Cliff area acknowledging it's existence, but noted that he and the Police force had no real concerns with it, and only went there if there was a complaint from the public or not so nearby residents. Violence has been sadly a part of this beat and I have heard also stories of youths from the Catholic School, which is in the general area, also harassing men there. It beggars belief that the Police now are claiming that they had no knowledge of this beat.*

*As in the Bondi Murders I hope that the police, courts and all interested parties are able to work hand in hand and draw to a conclusion exactly what happened to Scott at this Beat, it to my mind is NOT a case of suicide so misadventure of some kind must be thoroughly and truthfully investigated, to end the agony for Scott's Family.*

*Thank You.*

173

Note 173 included the following photograph of the area near where Scott died in his January 3, 2013 email to Daniel Glick:



Sincerely,

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Steve Johnson  
Rebecca Johnson  
January 9, 2013

Scott Johnson Case

TAB 5

Letter from Sydney Mayor and MP Clover Moore to Hon Michael Gallacher, Minister  
for Police & Emergency Services  
Nov. 22, 2011

Letter from Johnson Family to Magistrate Mary Jerram outlining concerns over  
police inattention and jurisdictional conflict in the review of Scott Johnson's case  
Oct. 6, 2011

- Letter from the Mayor of Sydney to the Minister supporting a re-examination of Scott's case.
- Letter from Johnson Family to the Coroner ensued after conversations with Det. Inspector Luke Arthurs in the Manly LAC, whose comments regarding the review raised several concerns regarding the seriousness of the review.

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Updated: Jan. 14, 2013

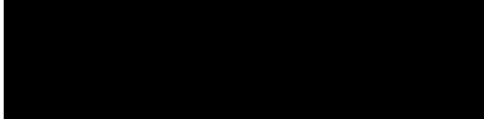
# Clover

MEMBER FOR SYDNEY



22 November 2011

The Hon Michael Gallacher MLC



Dear Minister

Scott Johnson

I write on behalf of constituents who have contacted me about the Police investigation of the presumed death of Scott Johnson around Manly in 1986.

Constituents have contacted me about Scott's possible murder following an article by Daniel Glick. I enclose a copy of the article, which suggests that Scott was the victim of gay hate crime. The article refers to a confession to Scott's murder on a Facebook page, and raises concerns that the original Police investigation was flawed.

My constituents support re-examination of this case based on current police knowledge about gay hate crime patterns, and similar cases where men were murdered in Sydney.

I share community concern that NSW Police should ensure that gay hate crimes are properly investigated.

*Could you please ensure proper investigation of this case and inform me what action you will take?*

Yours sincerely

Clover Moore  
Member for Sydney





*Stephen G. Johnson*

October 6, 2011

Dear Magistrate Jerram,

I want to thank you again for instructing the Manly police to review evidence pertaining to the death of my brother, Scott Russell Johnson, whose body was found at the bottom of a cliff near Manly Beach in 1988 and whose death was ruled a suicide. On behalf of Scott's family and myself, we appreciate your willingness to review new information that was not available to the authorities at the time, especially in light of what we now know about the epidemic of anti-gay violence that was occurring in the greater Sydney area.

I recently spoke to Detective Inspector Luke Arthurs at Manly LAC, and he said his investigators are preparing a report that they will give to you soon. With all due respect, I would like to share several concerns that have been building over the past few months, and came into sharper focus after my recent conversation with Det. Insp. Arthurs. I feel it is important that the family's concerns be placed on the record as you prepare to review the Manly LAC's report.

- My first concern is that the investigating authority remains with the original police command that investigated Scott's death in the first place. We would have preferred (and still hope) that an independent investigative team review the available evidence and, ultimately, the Cold Case Homicide Unit be given an opportunity to investigate.
- As far as I know, during the current review nobody from Manly LAC ever contacted [REDACTED] at the time of his death, to see if there were any new details he might be able to provide. I know for certain that there is evidence about Scott's sexual activities in the weeks and months before his death that was not available during the Inquest.
- I have not been contacted or interviewed either, nor to my knowledge has any other person who knew Scott and can testify to his stable and upbeat state of mind around the time of his death.
- In my recent conversation with Det. Insp. Arthurs, he told me that the place where Scott died was a well-known suicide spot. That runs directly contrary to the statements of former Air Rescue squad member Wayne Plant, whom my investigator Daniel Glick interviewed and who said explicitly that he had never heard of a suicide from that part of North Head before.
- I am deeply concerned that the Facebook "confession" that Mr. Glick received in January of this year has not been taken seriously. We do not contend that the "confession" is real; only that it is a potentially important lead that needs to be run to the ground. By mid May, when Mr. Glick went to Sydney, police had still not contacted the [REDACTED] who had alerted Mr. Glick to the confession. I hired an Internet expert to track down the young man, whose name is [REDACTED] and Mr. Glick spoke to both him and his mother - and shared the information with the police. The young man recounted many details about how the Facebook encounter unfolded, including allegations of child pornography, names of aliases that had posted comments, and the "confession" itself. As recently as last week, [REDACTED] wrote Mr. Glick to say that he had only been contacted once, by email, by the police, and had not been asked to relate the details of his discovery.
- Subsequently, The Manly Daily published an article, citing a police source, that indicated the Facebook "confession" was posted by a [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] who obviously was not alive at the time of Scott's death. The implication of the article was clear: the Facebook confession was a hoax, the source of the

information was a disturbed [REDACTED] boy, and the whole "re-investigation" of Scott's death was likely a waste of time. It is not clear to me whether the police or the reporter carried this message, but the fact that police leaked the information about the [REDACTED] is disturbing and prejudicial.

- These details, and my conversation with Arthurs, leave me with the impression that nobody at Manly LAC figured out who posted the actual "confession," which was done under the name of [REDACTED]. A copy of the confession is in the hands of the police. Again, it is not our position that [REDACTED] is truly Scott's killer. But many questions remain about who this person is and why he posted this claim, four years after an article appeared in the Sydney newspapers and 23 years after Scott's death.
- Even more disturbing is that young [REDACTED] 11 who was 13 at the time he contacted Mr. Glick and is now 14, wrote to say that he also had Aspergers, and he asked Mr. Glick how the police found that out (Mr. Glick did not know this fact). Now it is unclear to me whether there are [REDACTED] who are involved in this case, or if there is a mix-up in the investigation. Arthurs could not clarify this for me.
- We learned in May of this year that there had been a 2007 review of evidence submitted to the Coroner's office regarding Scott's death. That review, apparently, concluded there was not enough new evidence to warrant a reconsideration of Scott's death from "suicide" to "open causes" or "homicide." I have repeatedly requested a copy of this report from Det. Inspector Arthurs, and he has so far declined to release it. I cannot fathom why this would not be made available to the victim's family, and formally request a copy from you now. I will also file a formal freedom of information request through my Australian lawyer, R.J. Thomas of Manly Beach.

At this point, I am concerned enough to respectfully request an opportunity to review and address the report that Manly LAC is preparing before Your Honour makes a final decision about Scott's case. It is obvious that I feel there is ample evidence to conclude, at the very least, that there are alternative explanations to Scott's death besides suicide; in fact, that seems one of the least likely scenarios of all.

As you can see, I am also copying the Honourable Mike Baird, MP from Manly, who has been apprised of Scott's case, as well as solicitor R.J. Thomas.

We still hold out hope that the report, and Your Honour, will find the evidence as compelling as we do.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Steve Johnson for the Scott Johnson family

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Scott Johnson Case

TAB 6

NSW Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes Finding re: June 2012 Inquest  
June 27, 2012

- Coroner Forbes re-opens Scott Johnson's case, writing "I recommend that the death of Scott Russell Johnson be referred to "Cold Cases" for further investigation in accordance with police procedures and protocols."

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Updated: Jan. 14, 2013



LOCAL COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
CORONIAL JURISDICTION

Inquest: Inquest into the death of SCOTT RUSSELL JOHNSON

File number: 1131/11

Hearing dates: 27 June 2012

Date of findings: 27 June 2012

Place of findings: State Coroners Court, Glebe

Findings of: Deputy State Coroner C. Forbes

Findings: I find that Scott Russell Johnson died between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 1988 at North Head Manly, north of Blue Fish Point, from the effects of multiple injuries he sustained as a result of falling from a cliff. The evidence does not allow me to make a finding as to how he fell.

Recommendation: To the Commissioner for Police

I recommend that the death of Scott Russell Johnson be referred to "Cold Cases" for further investigation in accordance with police procedures and protocols.

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Representation: Counsel Assisting: Mr G Lolas  
Counsel for the family: Mr Parsons, Barrister at Law

## REASONS FOR FINDINGS

This is an Inquest into the death of Scott Russell Johnson.

The role of a Coroner is to establish, if possible, the identity of the deceased, the date of death, the place of death, and the manner and cause of death.

On 16 March 1989 an earlier Inquest was held into the death of Mr Johnson. That inquest found that Mr Johnson had died between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 1988 at North Head Manly, north of Blue Fish Point, from the effects of multiple injuries he sustained as a result of falling from a cliff. None of those findings are in dispute. At the Inquest in 1989 a finding was also made that Mr Johnson jumped from the cliff at North Head with the intention of taking his own life. This finding of suicide was made because there was no evidence of a struggle at the top of the cliff, no evidence of anyone else being present, no injuries found at autopsy other than those that could be explained by the fall, Mr Johnson's clothes, watch, cash card, student travel pass, money, pen, comb and key were neatly placed together some 10 meters back from the edge of the cliff, Mr Johnson was found at the bottom of the cliff undressed and there was evidence that Mr Johnson had previously attempted suicide.

Since that inquest further information has come to light about a culture of violence against the gay community in Sydney in the late 1980's. In 2005 a police operation named "Taradale" uncovered that the deaths of three homosexual men in Bondi in 1989 were as a result of them being forced to their deaths from cliffs at a "gay beat".

Mr Johnson was homosexual. It is now known that the North Head of Manly near Blue Fish Point where Mr Johnson's body was found was a "gay beat".

As a result of the further information it was considered appropriate to re open the Coroner's file and further investigate Mr Johnson's death. That investigation has not taken the case any further. The information about the deaths at Bondi has however, sown a seed of doubt as to the positive finding of suicide. Suicide cannot be presumed and there must be "clear cogent and exact" evidence to support such a finding. [Briganshaw v Briganshaw (1938) 60 CLR 336] Mr Johnson did not leave a suicide note, the evidence that he had previously attempted suicide is uncorroborated, there is evidence that he was in a happy relationship and certainly he had just received positive news about finalising his doctorate in mathematics. In this case the possibilities that Mr Johnson was the victim of a "gay hate" crime similar to those that occurred in Bondi or that he fell are also available explanations to the circumstances that surrounded his death.

Accordingly, I find that the evidence adduced in Mr Johnson's death does not enable me to make a finding as to how he fell off the cliff and I make an open finding and refer his file to "Cold Cases" for further investigation in accordance with police procedures and protocols.

**FINDING**

Mr Scott Russell Johnson died between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 1988 at North Head Manly, north of Blue Fish Point, from the effects of multiple injuries he sustained as a result of falling from a cliff. The evidence does not enable me to make a finding as to how he fell.

**RECOMMENDATION**

To the Commissioner for Police:

I recommend that the death of Scott Russell Johnson be referred to "Cold Cases" for further investigation in accordance with the police procedures and protocols.

*C Forbes*  
C Forbes  
Deputy State Coroner,  
27 June 2012

Scott Johnson Case

TAB 7

Report by Sue Thompson Re: Death of Scott Johnson  
Jan. 2, 2011

- Sue Thompson worked for thirteen years (1990-2003) for the NSW Police Service in Police Headquarters as the NSW Police Gay/Lesbian Client Consultant. Ms. Thompson is a lawyer by training and expert on gay hate crimes, gay hate homicides/murders and strategies to reduce gay and lesbian hate crimes.

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Updated: Jan. 14, 2013

Sue Thompson

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REPORT OF SUE THOMPSON RE DEATH OF SCOTT JOHNSON

Report to: NSW Police

Re: Death of Scott Johnson on 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> December 1988

Background

This report is provided as my formal opinion regarding the circumstances of Scott Johnson's death on approximately 10<sup>th</sup> December 1988. This report is based upon my detailed discussions with Daniel Glick from June to December 2007 during his research into Scott's death, my reading of and comments on his draft and final reports to Det Insp Ashwood of the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Team in 2007 and my expertise on gay hate crimes and gay hate homicides gained during my 20 year career in the NSW Public Service with 13 years of that in the NSW Police Service in Police Headquarters as the NSW Police Gay/Lesbian Client Consultant (1990 – 2003).

I am a lawyer by background and was admitted to the NSW Bar in December 1979. I worked in a range of government agencies where I developed investigation, policy, victimology, criminal profiling and research skills. I worked as an Investigation Officer for the NSW Ombudsman; Manager of the Community Welfare Act Implementation Unit for the Department of Youth and Community Services, Coordinator Juvenile Offender Mediation and Reparation Scheme for the Attorney General's Dept, Mediator for the Community Justice Centres of the Attorney General's Department, Case Assessor for the NSW Victims of Crime Compensation Tribunal and as the NSW Police Gay/Lesbian Client Consultant. I am now medically retired after an injury.

I was for many years a world recognised expert on gay hate crimes, gay hate homicides/murders and strategies to reduce gay and lesbian hate crimes. My reputation was a result of my highly respected work and achievements in the NSW Police Service.

In this field I have conducted extensive research, received State and National awards, published research papers and articles, worked closely with victims of violent crimes, written policies, been a police media spokesperson, assisted in criminal investigations and police operations, coordinated High School interventions to target homophobia and hate crimes including murder committed by attending students, given evidence before the NSW Coroners Court, represented the NSW government at a senior level on hate crime committees and been a keynote conference speaker field both in Australia and overseas. My knowledge in this specialist area is extensive and was well respected by the gay/lesbian community, police services in Australia and overseas, government ministers and the international media until my medical retirement in 2003.

Sue Thompson BA/LLB

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1. Overview of gay bashings and murders in late 1980s and early 1990s and relevance to death of Scott Johnson

1.1 When I began work in the NSW Police Service in January 1990 it was immediately apparent that there was an extremely high level of targeted anti gay/lesbian violence across the state, most of which was not reported to police due to the prevailing climate of prejudice and misunderstanding in the community and reflected in widespread attitudes in the NSW Police. While some senior commanders, middle management and front line police were strongly committed to building trust, encouraging reporting of violence and reducing violence there was a prevailing attitude of ignorance, misconception, disinterest or hostility which needed to be addressed and overcome and which to a large degree was over many years of strategic change management. In 1990 there was a co-ordinated state-wide education and change campaign to reduce gay/lesbian hate crimes which was aimed at the whole community, the gay and lesbian community, youth and police.

1.2 At the time of Scott Johnson's death in 1989 there was no-one performing the role of Police Gay/ Lesbian Liaison as my predecessor had retired due to ill health and not been replaced for some time, leaving the position vacant until there was community lobbying of the government. I believe this had a significant impact on the investigation of Scott Johnson's death. If he had died a year later I would have been actively involved in liaising with his partner and family, listening to their views, seeking information from ACON Beats Outreach Workers who knew the Manly area well, looking into other unsolved cliff top murders in different police districts across the Sydney area and seeing a bigger picture emerge, talking to [REDACTED] of Sydney District Homicide and together making connections and thus assisting local police by providing them with a fuller picture of all the details relevant to Scott's death and addressing any misconceptions. I believe this may have led police to pursue the likelihood or strong possibility of Scott's death being another gay hate clifftop Homicide/murder like the preceding unsolved ones of [REDACTED] rather than a suicide. We would also have soon had in our picture the solved murder of [REDACTED] at the Bondi cliffs and the links between several young suspects/accused persons from different murders.

1.3 I consider it important to draw attention to the death of Scott Johnson as I believe he may have unfortunately just been sadly missed while we in the NSW Police were in the process of formulating a clear understanding of the widespread practice of "poofster bashing" amongst a youth culture that was at that time immersed in homophobia and felt justified in acting out their hatred / prejudice to the extent of pushing, throwing, chasing gay men off cliff tops, kicking them to death in a park, beating them to death in their own home. I do not believe that blame should be laid at the feet of the local investigating police of December 1988 who would have genuinely done their best to investigate Scott's death. This was an unfortunate case of timing, location and lack of information which might now be rectified by re-examining the assumptions and findings of that time. This would bring some

necessary peace to Scott's family, ex-partner and friends who have never felt in their hearts that he committed suicide. In time people come to terms with suicide if it is what really happened but if it is not then they are always left unresolved and without the chance of closure.

- 1.4 The Anti Discrimination Board was very aware of the problem of anti-gay lesbian violence and lack of reporting and coordinated the first Police & Gay Community committee from 1985 – 1990 which worked with the first Police Gay Community Relations civilian who was appointed by the Police Minister in 1985. [REDACTED] (deceased). That committee organised Phone In Hotlines to try to encourage reporting of violence to police in 1985 and 1989.
- 1.5 Most of this violence was perpetrated by young male offenders who were often teenagers working together as loose groups and/or gangs. As homosexuality was only decriminalised in 1984 prejudice and intolerance was intense and was the cause of the violence and the barrier to the victims of crime reporting assaults to police. This meant that prejudice related violence occurred in a climate where it went unchecked for many years without police intervention and easily escalated to systematic strategic planned attacks and murders which perpetrators often assumed would not be pursued by police.
- 1.6 Any area where gay people were known to frequent, able to be identified or believed to be able to be identified was a target location for prejudice related violence. In particular 'beats' were a major trouble spot as gay men could be easily identified, isolated, ambushed and beaten or murdered by young offenders who shared and exchanged a vast amount of knowledge and information on beat locations, how beats operated and how to ambush. There were thousands of beats across Sydney operating regularly or casually in most parks, public toilets and in surrounds of most beachside locations.
- 1.7 Operation Taradale headed by Detective Sgt Steve Page (retired) provides a detailed insight into the climate and culture of gay hate murders of that time. I worked closely with Taradale for a couple of years from its beginning in 2000 and gave evidence at the Coroner's Hearing. Previously Detective Sgt [REDACTED] (retired) of Sydney police district homicide squad had been instrumental in solving murders of 1990 such as [REDACTED] January 1990, [REDACTED] May 1990, [REDACTED] July 1990 and was actively trying to solve earlier unsolved murders such as [REDACTED] January 1987. The television program, aired on Channel 9 on 28/10/09, titled *Crime Investigation Australia: Blood Sport - The Bondi Murders* was an excellent program which portrayed some of the targeted violence and murders at Sydney beats from the mid-1980s to early 1990s.
- ~~1.8 It is important in understanding this phenomena to realise that the murder of [REDACTED] (January 1990 solved in 1990) in Alexandria Park which involved students and ex-students from Cleveland Street High School and the next murder of one of the teachers of Cleveland Street High School, [REDACTED] (May 1990, solved in 2000) were not the first gay hate murders but perhaps the first to be thoroughly investigated. Operation Taradale sought to~~

right the wrongs of the past and properly investigate the murders of [REDACTED] and to bring closure and peace to their families.

- 1.9 I worked very closely with the then Sydney District Police Commander [REDACTED] detectives, youth workers, the school counsellor and principal at Cleveland High throughout this period from January 1990 as we knew there was a systemic problem amongst the youth culture of going "poofter bashing" as a form of entertainment, sport, initiation and proving one's prowess. This problem was by no means restricted to the students of Cleveland Street High School but merely surfaced and was exposed and addressed at that location.
- 1.10 I ran a 3 day Police Homophobia Workshop at Cleveland St High School in early 1990 using Police YLOs, Police Victims of Crime Co-ordinators, Youth Workers and 20 gay and lesbian volunteers. This was a drastic emergency measure to deal with the youth homophobia & violence that had escalated to murder at the school. One of the [REDACTED] murderers was still attending Cleveland St High on bail for murder, ex students were also on bail & the level of school homophobia & boasting about "going to the cliffs" every weekend to go "poofter bashing" was worrying and worsening.
- 1.11 During my week at the school I observed the work done with small groups of young people and learnt that they were very planned & organised in their attacks and ambushes. The students had extensive knowledge of where beats were & how they operated – it was clearly an area of interest & expertise to them & seemed to give them a misguided sense of purpose to locate beats & trick those there for casual consensual sex into being attacked or killed as they believed these men deserved it for being 'fags' or 'gafs'. They understood what most local police at the time did not understand and that was that beats operated in most park and beachside locations, not just in the ones that police knew about because of local complaints about indiscreet/visible sexual activity, hence the tagline of one of the gangs being PSK which stood for park side killers (or sometimes PKS in youth speak). I formed the opinion that "going to the cliffs" was certainly not restricted to the Bondi cliffs; their knowledge was much more widespread geographically.
- 1.12 There were "loose connections" known by Detective Sgt [REDACTED] sometimes not proven because of informants losing the courage to come forward, between several of the gay hate murder offenders – they exchanged phone numbers with each other (found in their possession), boasted details & tactics, shared stolen goods. There were loose connections / connections / knowledge shared between offenders for the murders of [REDACTED] (Redfern 1988 after beat bashing), [REDACTED] (1989 – Bondi cliffs beat), [REDACTED] 1990 at a beat near Clevo High), [REDACTED] 1990 - teacher at Clevo High in his North Shore home) & [REDACTED] 1990 – Bondi Cliffs beat). There was also a murder of [REDACTED] in 1988, with the offender charged in 2000.

- 1.13 The problem of unreported targeted violence at beats across NSW was so systemic and serious that the Police Commissioner established a high level working party in 1992 to report to the Deputy Commissioner on how to address the problem and reduce the violence. I was on that committee as were several commanders, the Commander of Internal Affairs, beats outreach workers and the President of ACON (AIDS Council of New South Wales) because one of the major obstacles to getting beat users to report violence to police was gaining trust which meant that police attitudes to and operations at beats needed to become professional and appropriate so that they were no longer part of the problem but of the solution.
- 1.14 Any potential beat users who may have witnessed what happened to Scott in 1988 would have been highly unlikely to come forward to police at that time. One of the main reasons why I set up Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (police officers performing an additional duty with a high level of people skills, care and specialist training) in local stations/commands in 1990 was that most gay men or lesbians who wanted to report something to police across NSW would only speak to me in Police Headquarters and I was completely inundated.
- 1.15 It would be easy to have the misconception that someone would then have come forward after 1990 when the Police Service was publicly announcing and demonstrating change. There are 2 essential things to consider here. The first is that breaking through gay barriers of fear and mistrust of police in conservative beachside locations where the Australian outdoor Aussie male macho stereotype is entrenched is very difficult as gay people in these areas were very reluctant to be identified as they have found safety in their invisibility. I always found this to be true of the Sutherland Shire and the Northern Beaches. It is similar in many country towns or rural areas. The second is that the AIDS epidemic was at its peak in the gay community around this time and into the early 1990s and that thousands of Sydney gay men became very ill and died during this period before more effective drug combination therapies were discovered.

2. Some key findings of my research into gay/lesbian violence and gay hate murders/Homicides relevant to Scott's death are as follows:

- 22% of the 44 gay hate murders which I studied from 1988 – 2000 (including solved & unsolved) occurred at beats which was highly disproportionate and showed targeted violence at these locations.
- gay men were 6 times more likely to be assaulted than other men (Out of the Blue report published by NSW Police)

3. Scott Johnson's death was at a beat location (I refer to part 1 of Daniel Glick's report 2007) and fits with an MO of a gay murder at a beat
- 3.1 My job role was to improve police gay/ lesbian relations. I soon discovered however that the primary focus of my job for some years was going to be beats and violence. In order to reduce violence, crime and fear in the gay and lesbian communities I had to quickly become an expert on beats and the beat culture.
- 3.2 Using my expertise in this area I make the following comments relevant to the death of Scott Johnson:
- 3.2.1 It is and was extremely common for a shy gay man, such as Scott, NOT to go to Oxford St or similar, not to want to be visible in a 'gay ghetto' where certain "attitude" & fitting certain 'butch' or 'queenly' or 'out' stereotypes was fairly essential especially in that era. Scott appears to fit neither of the then current visible stereotypes. A very small percentage of men in gay relationships, same as women in lesbian relationships, would identify with the visible overt gay community or want to be seen as part of it. For these men using beats was & is very common whether in or not in a long term relationship. Scott's long term relationship does not indicate an unlikelihood that Scott was using the cliff beat as a beat but was instead using the location as a place for a planned suicide. In my opinion his attendance there for the purpose of doing the beat is highly likely given all the circumstances.
- 3.2.2 It took extensive co-ordinated police work many years later through Operation Taradale to formally counter earlier police assumptions about some gay hate murders, perceived to be suicides, and to reach proper Coroner's findings that finally allowed those families some peace. It would be very beneficial if the lessons learnt from that work might be applied to Scott Johnson's death which in my opinion is most likely and highly likely to be a gay hate murder.
- 3.2.3 Beat locations were not confined to the toilet area at Manly as police thought at the time. The toilets were just the visible beats because of public complaints & as far as Police knew they were the only beats. No one could have then provided them with alternate accurate information that this was far from true. Any area in Sydney with a beautiful outlook attracts lovers' lane activity & beat use much more covertly but very actively. This was very well known to any gay men, closeted, straight acting, or open, and to those who would want to prey on gay men.
- 3.2.4 Beat users would not contemplate coming forward to Police about violence in the 1980s especially in Northern Beaches and Southern Beaches areas, conservative white middle class areas where privacy & invisibility were prized as survival tools & being gay was not safe or acceptable in any way but rather life-threatening.
- 3.2.5 The "Indicators of gay hate homicides" from various papers that I have written and that we used in the Police Service during my time as co-ordinator of police gay/lesbian liaison included:
- formal or informal admissions by perpetrators
  - anti gay/lesbian abuse
  - proximity to a known gay social club/venue

- proximity to a beat (A beat is a meeting place for men who have sex with men, usually a park, bushland or beachside area. A sexual encounter may occur in the location or be arranged)
- information on motive from persons known to offender/victim
- nature of injuries (for example sexual overtones to injuries, genital mutilation, stabbing in mouth)
- frenzied nature of attack
- time-related to major gay community event
- absence of other motive for the murder
- absence of motive or rationale for an alleged cliff suicide (ie a death where foul play can go undetected due to nature of death and location) or indicators contrary to suicide ideation eg recent good news
- alleged sexual proposition / suggestion / advance by victim to perpetrator – common tactic employed by defence lawyers to raise Homosexual Advance Defence and jury homophobia (see Attorney General's HAD Working Party)

- 3.2.6 There was Northern Beaches violence & reports to me during the 1990s & there was work to try to get Northern Beaches gay men to come forward to Police – see also info from then Manly [REDACTED]
- 3.2.7 Emergency Hospital protocols were attempted through the Police G/L Liaison program with Social Workers and Drs throughout the early 90s because they had much more access to injured patients who were gay bashed at a range of suburban locations and would at times inform me but there was great difficulty with getting a formal protocol through the Hospital despite efforts.
- 3.2.8 Typically many gay men would go to a beat to celebrate some good news they had just received, a kind of euphoria reaction & desire to express it sexually or with some intimate contact – [REDACTED] going on day of his \$100,000 windfall to Bondi cliffs & being murdered. Scott Johnson was in such celebratory circumstances given his academic triumph.
- 3.2.9 A dull poor weather day is very likely to attract beat users to the beach or cliffs and similar natural locations as they are then even less likely to be disturbed by other users to the area put off by the lack of sunshine. A dull day does not indicate to me in any way that Scott did not go to sunbake but went to commit suicide.
- 3.2.10 It was standard MO with young gay bashers during those times, of luring men by decoy - promising sex or even performing sex if they had to or if their other comrades in arms thought it was amusing to not intervene in time so that they had to do the deed – often a way of punishing a less “masculine” member of the group & mocking him or humiliating him through the one thing that he was already teased for & terrified about being.
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- 3.2.11 I note Scott's wallet was missing. In my extensive experience from talking to police and detectives and victims and offenders in gay hate crimes, robbery was commonly an after thought in gay bashings or murders, a side benefit to the real intention of homophobic violence or a keeping of a 'trophy'. Their actions being mostly to either a) find someone further down the social ladder, in their mind, which elevated, in their mind, their social status & made them feel 'powerful' through their violence against a 'common social

enemy'; b) act out their homophobia and enjoy the feeling of being united with any over-masculinised peers & thus made them feel like heroes in certain circles; c) act out in vigilante spirit the common confusion of many young men and also older men in those times that homosexuality and pedophilia were the same thing; d) externalize, disguise or hide from themselves and / or others any of their own gay feelings by killing or bashing it in someone outside of them & thus 'eradicating' it in themselves

- 3.2.12 Anti- gay violence was not restricted to the inner city or eastern suburbs but was widespread across Sydney, New South Wales and Australia
- 3.2.13 It was a standard MO for young gay bashers at that time to lie in wait and ambush potential victims at beat locations, especially isolated parks or cliffs, or to lure them to the location for the intent of murder. In a crime scene video that Det Sgt [REDACTED] gave to me in the 1990s, and was later missing from the Police Academy Library, one of the teenage offenders in the [REDACTED] killing gave detailed description of how they would lay in wait for a potential victim.

I am willing to provide any assistance I can to police in reconsidering or reopening enquiries into the death of Scott Johnson. I suggest that his brother Steve Johnson would be understandably very appreciative and relieved if Police were to reconsider Scott's death in light of all the circumstances now available including, Daniel Glick's Report, this Report, Operation Taradale and the Coroner's findings in relation thereto and recent information from Daniel Glick to me of 1/2/2011 regarding discussions on Facebook about Scott's murder (which I have attached in my email) & which I repeat here.

Hi, if this is the guy to contact about Scott Johnson I have a Extraodanary Break-through in the case. Today on the Gay Marriage rights for Australia Facebook Page. A Guy by the name of [REDACTED] or his other Fake account: [REDACTED] He fully confessing to Pushing a gay man on a Manly Cliff and then he told me it was Scott Johnson i went to go look at it and found the Sydney Morning Herald link from 2007. Im [REDACTED] i dont know how to Report this stuff to Police. Can you do it for me? There was one problem the Post he replied on when saying it was Deleted i tryed getting him to confess but then ill Blocked from posting comments!  
There some stuff on the Gay Marriage Rights for Australia page where he confess's to the murder i think. But i bet he has murdered more gays he did say "I have a Gun. I hate gays", Please tell the Police to look into this Mans Facebook page and stuff and do what they Can i want him bringed to justice!

Sue Thompson BA/LLB  
1/2/2011

# MAJOR RESEARCH & PAPERS BY SUE THOMPSON NSW Police Service 1990 – 2003

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*Out of The Blue: a Police Survey of Violence and Harassment Against Gay Men & Lesbians*, Sandroussi J (Price Waterhouse) & Thompson S (NSW Police Service) Feb 1995, ISBN 0 7310 4913 6, pp 1-60.

*Comparison between Gay Hate-Related Homicides of Men & Other Male Homicides in NSW*, Mouzos J (AIC) & Thompson S (NSW Police Service), Mar 2001, in *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* Volume 12 Number 3, edited by Rick Sarre, University of South Australia. [[www.law.usyd.edu.au/~criminology/journal.htm](http://www.law.usyd.edu.au/~criminology/journal.htm)].

*Gay-Hate Related Homicides; An Overview of Major Findings in NSW*, [<http://www.aic.gov.au>] Mouzos J & Thompson S, Australian Institute of Criminology, Trends & Issues in Criminal Justice No. 155 June 2000.

*Homophobic Violence A NSW Police Response 17/6/93*, Thompson S, New South Wales Police Service, a Paper presented at Second National Conference on Violence, convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology and held in Canberra, 15-18 June 1993, Download from: <http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/ncv2/>

*Improving Police Gay/Lesbian Relations and Targeting Hate Crimes Against Gay Men & Lesbians [1985 to 1997]*, Thompson S, New South Wales Police, ISBN currently missing, pp 1-20, initially published as joint winning submission for Australian Violence Prevention Award 1995.

GAY HATE RELATED HOMICIDES IN NSW 1988 – 2000, list of victim name & details, dates, locations, offender details, injury details, gay hate indicator details, trial outcomes. Thompson S. [List available through NSW Attorney General's Department H.A.D. Working Party].

*Hate Crimes Against Gays and Lesbians: The NSW Police Response*, Thompson S, in *Homophobic Violence*, ed Gail Mason & Stephen Tomsen, Australian Institute of Criminology, The Hawkins Press 1997.

*NSW Police Lesbian & Gay Policy Statement & Action Plan 2001-2005*, Thompson S, NSW Police Service, 2001.

*NSW Police Gay & Lesbian Liaison Program, History & Annual Achievements 1990 – 2002*, Thompson S, NSW Police Service, 2002. [Also available in summary form as GLL Team Executive Document, 2000-2001].

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## Related Research

*Hatred, Murder and Male Honour Anti-homosexual Homicides in New South Wales, 1980-2000*, Tomsen Stephen, in Australian Institute of Criminology Research and Public Policy Series No. 43.



Scott Johnson Case

TAB 8

Report by retired NSW Detective Sergeant. Stephen Page RE: Death of Scott Johnson  
May 12, 2011

- Det. Sgt. Stephen Page retired in 2005 from the NSW Police, and orchestrated and ran Operation Taradale before leaving the police force, which linked several deaths and attacks in the 1980s near Marks Park in the Bondi area of Sydney to gay hate gang violence.

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Updated: Jan. 14, 2013

Consultant Report – Death of Scott Johnson  
Submitted May 12, 2011

As a result of a request from the family, I have had the opportunity to review circumstances surrounding the death of Scott Johnson on or about the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1988 near Manly, NSW.

I base my opinions on the following qualifications and experience.

I am a former Detective Sergeant with the NSW Police Service and my policing career included several senior investigative positions. These included Chief of Detectives at Frenchs Forest Police Station, Det Sgt with Task Force Lancer (targeting [REDACTED] and others) and Investigations Manager at the Rose Bay LAC. I am able to say that I had tenure at the North Region Major Crime Squad, State Investigative Group, Task Force Group and Crime Agencies. My qualifications (internally) included the Potential Crime Investigators Course (1989), the Detectives Training Course (1991) and the Homicide Investigators Course (2000). Qualifications (externally) include Diploma of Policing and Bachelor of Policing (Investigations) from Charles Sturt University and a Diploma of Security/Risk Management through the Vast Academy.

On leaving the police service, I have worked as a security manager with TT Lines Pty Ltd (Spirit of Tasmania), the last 5 years working as a Regional Security Manager in the Retail Sector. Other security related duty includes achieving the rank of Captain, Infantry Corps, with the Australian Army (Reserves).

As a criminal investigator I had leadership of "Operation Taradale" and the terms of reference of this investigation included the deaths of [REDACTED] together with the attempted murder of [REDACTED]. The investigation was later expanded to include the suspicious death of French National [REDACTED] at Bondi in 1985.

A brief of evidence was prepared and an inquest held. Findings included that [REDACTED] was killed by person's unknown in July 1989, and similarly [REDACTED] was killed by person's unknown in November 1989. Both deaths occurred in the vicinity of Mark's Park, Tamarama. The death of [REDACTED] was proven, however, there was a finding of open causes after his disappearance at Bondi in September 1985. [REDACTED] was known to frequent Marks Park. All three men were gay, Mark's Park was a gay beat. The investigation also established that [REDACTED] narrowly escaped death as a result of a gay hate beating at the same park in December, 1989.

I rely on my experience from investigating these cases, and reviewing other similar cases to offer an opinion in the death of Scott Johnson. I will address these under the headings of "Initial Investigation", "Fresh Information" and "Culture".

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### BASIS FOR THIS REPORT

To assist with the preparation of this report, I have examined the following

- (1) Statement of [176]
- (2) Statement of [179]
- (3) Statement of Constable Troy Hardie
- (4) Statement of Detective Sergeant Doreen Cruickshank
- (5) Report prepared by Sue Thompson
- (6) Report prepared by Dan Glick and John Macnamara
- (7) Brief of Evidence for the Coroners Court Glebe, 16 March 1989
- (8) Transcript of "Inquest Touching the Death of Scott Russell Johnson 16 March 1989"
- (9) Visit to site of the cliff site and surrounding area where Scott Johnson died.

### INITIAL INVESTIGATION

Scott Russell Johnson met his death as a result from a fall from a cliff near Bluefish Point, Manly. His body was discovered on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1988, and an article on the death in the Manly Daily (dated 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1988) finishes off with the words 'no suspicious circumstances'. It would be reasonable to assume that the investigation was effectively closed. A subsequent statement by the officer-in-charge of the original investigation for the coronial brief contained little detail, and was some two pages in length.

Whilst it was put before the Coroners Court that Scott Johnson was gay, there appears to be no evidence tendered that there was in existence in the Sydney metropolitan area an extremely high rate of hate crime existing against gays. Whilst some of the incidents in this report will post-date the death of Scott Johnson, there was still evidence available at the time that (a) the area was a gay beat, and, (b) there was violence known against gay men both in this vicinity and in the broader Sydney metropolitan area. Examples published in the media are:

- (a) "Man survives knife in back", a Manly Daily newspaper article on the stabbing of [112]. The stabbing of [112] occurred at the beat in the vicinity of Bluefish Point [112] s a member of the gay community.
- (b) "Assault Charges" (dated 07/02/1987, The Manly Daily) a reports two adult males who appeared in Manly Local Court for "bashing attacks on homosexuals on the North Shore." Each man faced multiple charges of assault occasioning actual bodily harm and robbery offences. The fact that there were serial offenders known for violence upon gay men on the northern beaches appears to have not been put before the court.

The initial investigation seemed to place some weight on the fact the clothes of the deceased were neatly folded. There are no photographs that I have been shown. It may be the case that the clothes were neatly folded by the deceased, but he was not under duress at this stage this was done. It could be, based on the learnings of Operation Taradale, that he willingly participated up to a point, but met with foul play. I am aware of gay men being lured to clandestine meetings under the promise of sex, only to meet with violence.

The initial investigation seemed to place some weight on the fact there were no obvious defensive injuries on the body of Scott Johnson. I am a registered trainer and corner man with the Combat Sports Authority and a registered judge with the World Kickboxing Federation. I am familiar with common injuries inflicted by hand and feet, and am able to say from my knowledge and experience that it is likely any injuries from physical assault would be masked by injuries received as a result of a cliff top fall.

The initial investigation revealed no incidents prior to Scott Johnson's demise that resulted in him having a negative outlook, nor was any suicide note found. In fact the opposite was true – he was a Mathematics student who had just been informed he was being awarded a PhD and was looking forward to again seeing his brother Steve and his newborn niece. From all accounts this was a close family, and testimony from those who saw him in the days and weeks before his death indicated no signs of depression or suicidal behaviour.

#### FRESH INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE

As a result of published media articles (Manly Daily article "Was it murder?" dated May 29, 2007 and SMH article "Math's genius thrown off cliff top by gay hate gang" dated 3 June 2007 ) several persons have come forward and further confirmed that the vicinity of Bluefish Point was a gay beat.

The newspaper articles regarding the stabbing of [172] and the two males mentioned in the 1987 article "Assault Charges" surrounding anti-gay violence must be regarded as fresh evidence. Although a prudent investigation would have located this information originally, it should, as a matter of procedural fairness, be considered. The aim of an inquest, after all, is a search for the truth.

The learnings from Operation Taradale are that gay men go to gay beats for quick, casual and free sex. I know of no cases of gay men going to beats to commit suicide. Adversely, there is ample evidence of murder of gay men at beats in Sydney in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

The learnings from Operation Taradale are that gay men were, on many occasions, the victim of violence - at gay beats. These include:

- Murder of [redacted] : Randwick
- Murder of [redacted] t Alexandria.
- Murder of [redacted] zy 1990 at Alexandria.
- Murder of [redacted] July 1990 at Tamarama.
- Death (and suspected murder of) [redacted] August 1992, at Rushcutters Bay.
- These are in addition to the murders of [redacted] (previously mentioned)

The deaths of [redacted] were as a result of falls from oceanfront cliffs.

#### CULTURE

Based on my observations and investigations, I am able to say that there are many different reasons why gay men were assaulted at beats. These include an inability to differentiate between gay man and a male-on-male paedophiles, sex crimes and robbery. In this era, there was at least one gang of 3 operating in Sydney who would lure a gay man to a clandestine meeting where he would be then brutalised, tortured and raped. This fits with the new testimony of [172] in an interview describing assaults at that location.

As a result of debriefed offenders with a robbery motive, I am able to say that gay men were targeted as there was a perception they often had reasonable sums of money and were unlikely to report the crime as it would expose them as a beat frequenter. My observation of the typical offender was that they varied – it could be a single offender or a group of like minded persons in a gang. Gangs often included male and female victims.

Further evidence on the culture of gay hate crime, surrounding Operation Taradale, was published in the following

Published book "The Beat" by I.J. Meen

Published book "Bondi Badlands" by Greg Callaghan

Telemovie "Bloodsport - the Bondi murders" - Crime Investigation Australia network.

I am able to produce these publications, if required.

I believe the culture of violence unearthed in the Taradale investigation would have been typical of many beats in Sydney in this era. I do not believe the Manly area was immune to the violence being experienced against gay men elsewhere in Sydney.

Although I am unaware of the full circumstances, there are other crimes of violence against gay men on Sydney's northern beaches. These include the murder of [72] in 1988, for which [72] is later prosecuted. The suburb of Narrabeen features in the following three incidents:

- [NP 3] is murdered at Narrabeen, and at a later trial for the accused (his brother), it is raised in evidence that [NP 3] was well known for gay hate violence.
- [redacted] a gay man - is shot with a compound bow at the Deep Creek Reserve (a beat) at Narrabeen in August 1994
- [154] - also a gay man - is stabbed to death at the Tramshed, a known gay beat at Narrabeen, in June 2007.

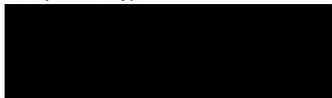
#### SUMMING UP

For the reasons I have outlined in this report, I believe the original coronial finding of suicide - with the assistance of hindsight - to be unsafe. I believe proceedings should commence to amend the finding of suicide to that of open causes. I agree that with the absence of forensic evidence and witnesses, murder cannot be proven to a high standard. I am hopeful that this submission will show that it cannot be ruled out.

For similar reasons, I believe an event on the NSW Police system (COPS/iCOPS) should be created and outline the circumstances of the death. I believe the death should be regarded as suspicious. These two actions will provide reasonable foundation should further evidence arise.

I would like to point out that my role as a consultant in this investigation is that of a concerned citizen, and not in a paid capacity.

Stephen Page



Scott Johnson Case

TAB 9

Report by Johnson Family to former Unsolved Homicide Unit head Det. Inspector Mick Ashwood re: evidence to support re-opening Scott Johnson's Case  
August 29, 2007

- On behalf of the Johnson Family, Daniel Glick and former NSW Det. Sgt. John Macnamara investigated and confirmed:
    - the area where Scott died was a gay beat
    - gay hate violence was rampant in the Northern Beaches suburbs at the time Scott died (specifically, a knifing occurred on the very spot where Scott was attacked).
    - the area where Scott died was in fact not a popular area for suicides as the police had alleged (see maps in Tab 1)
    - victims of gay hate violence in the gay beat where Scott died – violence was an epidemic in the 1980s, 90s, and continues to this day
    - persons of interest who may be knowledgeable of the specific gangs or perpetrators who frequented the gay beat in Manly where Scott died around the time when Scott died
  
  - The police reviewed this report then (quietly) failed to recommend to the Coroner that a new hearing be held to review the original 1989 suicide ruling and decide whether to re-open the case.
- 

Updated: Jan. 14, 2013

To: Detective Inspector Michael Ashwood, Coordinator, Unsolved Homicide Team  
From: Daniel Glick and John Macnamara on behalf of Scott Johnson's family  
Date: 8/29/07  
Re: Scott Johnson death investigation

Dear Inspector Ashwood:

Scott Johnson's family and I thank you for your assistance in our pursuit of more information about his death. With this letter, we wish to share previously undisclosed evidence that might warrant reclassifying Scott's case from a ruling of suicide to that of "open causes," and possibly reinvestigating his death.

#### Summary

The naked body of Scott Russell Johnson, an American residing in Australia, was found at the bottom of a cliff about 200 meters north of Bluefish Point near Manly on December 10, 1988. He was 27 and homosexual. His death was ruled a suicide at the time by the local police. A Coroners' inquest corroborated that ruling in March 1989.

We have reason to believe that the determination of suicide was made in error, and that homicide was more likely. We are grateful for your time to review our findings supporting our view.

The New South Wales Coroners office and Operation Taradale, led by Det. Sgt. Stephen Page, established beyond any doubt the prevalence of anti-gay violence in the years surrounding Scott's death, especially in the Bondi area. Various academic and governmental reports have documented a pervasive culture of homophobia at the time. The gay community existed mostly underground, fearful of the authorities and furtively operating at the fringes of society. Many homosexuals relied on gay "beats" as meeting places. We now know there were hundreds of these beats operating around the greater Sydney area at the time.

The place where Scott Johnson died was one of them.

Most of Operation Taradale's work has focused on the area in and around Bondi, but it seems likely that similar acts of violence occurred elsewhere. Sue Thompson, the Gay/Lesbian consultant with the NSW police from 1990 to 2002, told me that homophobia and violence surely "did not stop at the Harbour Bridge."

We believe Scott Johnson's death was a case in point. In reviewing the "Brief of Evidence for the Coroners Court Glebe, 16 March 1989" concerning Scott's death, police presented what they believed was an open and shut case for suicide: Scott was homosexual, shy and intelligent; his clothes were folded neatly; his partner made a statement about hearing Scott talk about suicide three years previously; he was susceptible to AIDS because of his sexual orientation; and the cliffs were remote and not known as a gay "beat."

We understand why the police may have arrived at the conclusion of suicide, absent any additional information. As we shall prove, however, all of these "facts" have alternative explanations that, on balance, appear to us to be much more likely indicative of murder.

In the police report and inquest transcripts, it is clear that police did not actively explore the possibility of linking Scott's death to the spate of anti-gay violence we now know was occurring in the greater Sydney area. During the inquest, police first denied any knowledge of any sexual activity at the place in question. Then, upon further questioning, one officer acknowledged that some sexual activity did take place around the cliffs and headlands above Manly, both gay and straight.

As we shall document, the place where Scott went that day was in fact a "notorious" gay beat, according to several men who used it at or around the time of Scott's death. The Blue Fish Point beat is also one that could or should have been known to the police at the time, since a gay man had been stabbed at the very same place less than two years previously – while nude sunbaking on the rocks above where Scott's body was found. That assailant was arrested. In addition, Manly was home to four or five other active "beats," and the northern beaches communities included dozens of other places where homosexuals would meet. Along the northern beaches from Manly to Narrabeen and further north, we have evidence to suggest that a number of incidents of violence against homosexuals occurred, following much the same pattern that was identified in the Bondi area.

We hope that this report may be of use to you, and we look forward to providing any additional assistance and information that we can to help the Johnson family find some closure to this horrific incident. Thank you for your kind attention.

This report has three parts:

1. Establishing that the site above where Scott's body was found was a well known "beat" frequented by gay men during that era.
2. Establishing that prior incidents of anti-gay violence occurred at that site and at areas along the northern beaches near Manly. Reviewing the social climate of violence against homosexuals at the time in the context of Scott's death, a fact not considered at the time of the inquest.
3. Reviewing the initial evidence used to rule the cause of death as suicide and presenting new evidence to dispute that determination.



**Part One:** The cliffs and headlands above Manly near Blue Fish Point were an active gay "beat." At least four other beats were also active in Manly at the time of Scott's death

*Summary: At the "Inquest touching the death of Scott Russell Johnson" at City Coroner's Court, Glebe, on 16 March, 1989, police claimed that the area where Scott's body was found was not a known gay "beat," places where homosexuals routinely met for the purpose of arranging brief, anonymous sexual encounters. Upon questioning by Sergeant Redfern, assisting the coroner, Detective Sergeant Doreen Cruickshank of the Manly Police Station said, "I'm not aware that [the area near Blue Fish Point] is a particular area where they (homosexual persons) do frequent."*

*In fact, the area above where Scott's body was found had been an established gay beat since at least the late 1970s. It was one of at least five active beats operating in and around Manly during the mid- to late 1980s. People in both the gay and the straight community knew this at the time, but it apparently did not draw the attention of police. This is not unusual, according to Sue Thompson, the Gay/Lesbian consultant with the NSW police from 1990 to 2002; these meeting places tried to stay below the radar screen of authorities. Det. Sgt. Cruickshank testified that the police were aware of two other gay meeting places: the Tourist Centre near the intersection of the Corso and the Beachfront Road, and the other at the Balgowlah Shopping Centre, also known as the Totem Shopping Center.*

New testimony from various witnesses, with all interviews conducted separately and independently, establishes conclusively that the area was a "beat":

1. [ 100 ] works for the Water Board, and has since at least the late 1980s. I met him near the sewage treatment plant at the top of Darley Road above Manly and less than a kilometer from where Scott's body was found. I asked if he knew whether homosexual men would come up there during the 80s, and he said, "all the time." He said that during that period, he and his co-workers would routinely see pairs of (presumably) gay men mill around a parking area nearby and go off into the bushes where they had established "little love nests." He recalls seeing men naked and hearing "lovers' spats" and once surprised men having sex in the bushes. He said he would be willing to repeat his statements to authorities. He almost certainly would know other colleagues who would corroborate his recollections.
2. It should be noted that it is difficult to find surviving gay men who frequented gay beats during the 1980s; the AIDS epidemic claimed many of them. That said, I spoke with [ 94 ]), a gay man currently living in Cairns who was very active in the Manly gay scene in the late 1970s and early 1980s. (After an article about our investigation appeared in the *Manly Daily*, his sister-in-law contacted me. Her husband, [ 94 ] brother, gave me [ 94 ]'s phone number.) When I reached him by phone in Cairns, [ 94 ] said there were at least five active beats at the time in and around Manly, including the toilet block at the

end of the Corso, at the beachfront public toilets on either end of the Esplanade that were part of the lifesaving clubs, and at the toilets at the Wharf. He said that the beat at the top of the cliffs, about a 10-minute walk up from the Shelly Beach parking area near Cabbage Tree Bay Park, was the most "notorious" and "legendary." To get there, he and others would walk through a "hole in the wall," and proceed to the end of the wall. From there, they would walk along social trails to a series of rock ledges like the one at the top of where Scott's body was found. [194] said the cliff beat operated a little differently than some of the beats in town in that men would regularly strip down naked and "lewdly parade around" while waiting for somebody to approach and have sex. "That hill was the last stop of a sex tour of Manly," he said, popular because of its seclusion and great beauty. He added that he is the lone survivor of all the gay men he knew that frequented the Manly beats at the time.

3. [112] is a 63-year-old gay man who still lives in Manly [112]. He also says that the cliff area above Shelly Beach was a regular beat that he personally visited. [112] told me that when he would go there, he would strip naked and "sunbake" while waiting for a sex partner. He was also the victim of a stabbing at that very place in 1986 (see Part Two).
4. [173] a gay outreach worker affiliated with the AIDS Council of New South Wales, says he was a regular beat user during the time in question, as well as an outreach worker at many gay beats in and around Sydney. He concurred that the area in and around Manly had several "very active" gay beats at the time, including the area along the cliffs. "There is absolutely no doubt that it was a beat," he said. He said that the MO of that particular cliff beat would include men taking off their clothes and "folding them" while waiting for somebody to approach. [173] also worked on projects as an outreach worker with various AIDS education projects that have helped to identify beats, and said that there were several other active beats in Manly at the time: In all the surf club restrooms and showers (at least three along the beach), as well as in the toilets near the Wharf. He recalled that there may have been another in some toilet stalls along the Corso. He said that some of these beats were merely meeting places, and people would go to the hills above Manly to have sex. [173] says that he personally spoke with some police officers about the beats, but could not recall with whom or exactly when.
5. [ ] from the AIDS Council of New South Wales, or ACON [ ], has worked on various beat outreach and gay anti-violence projects since the early 1990s. He has no first-hand knowledge of the Manly area in 1988, but says that in the early 1990s there was a "busy beat at the Corso at Manly," and recalled it was in a toilet block. He recalled people talking about going "up the hill" after meetings at the downtown beats.
6. Constable Troy Andrew Hardie, who investigated Scott's death at the time, testified at the inquest that while he and other officers did not consider the area by Blue Fish Point to be a particular homosexual meeting place, it was a known area where lovers went to find seclusion. "It's a bit of a lover's lane for males and females," he said.

Part Two: Homophobia and assaults like those near Bondi did not stop at the Harbour Bridge. There is widespread evidence of anti-gay violence along the northern beaches.

*Summary: "Seven miles from Sydney, a thousand miles from care." So reads the unofficial motto of Manly, apparently dreamed up in the era before World War II. In fact, Manly in the mid- and late 1980s was a place where hooliganism, teenage gangs, public drunkenness and assaults were commonplace, as evidenced by the newspaper headlines of the day. ("Manly a slum with violence and drink problem," reads the headline for the "Letters" section on December 20, 1988, about two weeks after Scott's death.) Det. Sgt Cruickshank testified that the police were aware of two beats in Manly "because of serious assaults which are committed on homosexual persons in those areas." She went on to say that "if a particular area is frequented by homosexuals, we have those in the community who take a dislike to those type of persons and will frequent there either to assault them or rob them or cause them some harm in some way and eventually the police become notified of certain types of incidents happening in that area."*

*In the early 2000s, the State Coroner's office investigated a rash of murdered homosexuals that had occurred in the Sydney area during the late 1980s and early 1990s, which resulted in several convictions and a scathing indictment of law enforcement's lax attitude with regard to investigating homosexuals' murders at the time. The socio-economic factors that helped foster the disaffected, violent youth implicated in the Bondi gay-bashing cases were very similar along the northern beaches, stretching from Manly to Narrabeen, and up to Mona Vale and Palm Beach. There is no reason to believe that the documented cases of gay-bashing that emerged from the Bondi-Tamarama-Mark's Park investigation would have been limited to the area south of the Harbour Bridge. Although it is not likely that the same gangs that terrorized gays in Bondi would routinely travel to the northern beaches, the widespread homophobia of the era would likely have spawned similar gangs and similar attacks along the northern beaches as well, notably at known gay beats.*

*According to Stephen Tomisen's report in the Australian Institute of Criminology entitled "Hated, Murder and Male Honour: Anti-homosexual Homicides in New South Wales, 1980-2000," nearly one quarter of gay hate murders occurred at beats. The report documents 74 homicides during that time frame that the author classifies as "hate" crimes against homosexual men. There is every reason to believe there are dozens, if not hundreds, of unreported and/or undocumented cases of robbery, assault, intimidation, male rape and murders dating from that era in the northern beaches communities. We document a few cases not known or represented to the court during Scott's inquest:*

- 
1. [redacted] (see above) was attacked with a Bowie knife after having sex with a male stranger up on the cliffs above Manly on February 4, 1986, at virtually the exact spot where Scott fell to his death [redacted] says he used to go to the rocks "above the stone wall," where he met the man who stuck a knife in his back after having sex. [redacted] walked down to the hospital with

the knife sticking out of his back.) [172] prepares window displays at various shops in Manly, and I spoke with him at Ludie's, a clothing shop. Newspaper reports from the *Manly Daily* (15 March 1986) confirm the account he related to me took place at Bluefish Point and that his attacker had been living in an ex-army bunker at North Head.

2. [172] is the former [172] a well-known nudist beach near Manly that was frequented by gays and straights alike. [172] contacted me after seeing the article in the *Manly Daily* and said that he had repeatedly spoken with an elderly gentleman who would watch the beach area with a telescope from his apartment across the bay. The man told [172] that he regularly witnessed gay bashings in the bushes above Reef Beach. The witness, who is now deceased, also told [172] that he also witnessed a man being tossed off a low cliff (the man survived). When [172] asked why the Peeping Tom didn't report the incidents, he was told that the old man "didn't want to get involved." [172] also recalled that at some point in early 1987, some young men were arrested for a gay bashing near Reef Beach.
3. [172] memory was apparently quite good. An article that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* dated January 3, 1987 with the headline: "Three arrested on assault charges" reads: *Three young men have been arrested in Manly for an alleged series of assaults on homosexuals in public lavatories. Police said yesterday that the youths, aged 17, 18, and 21, faced a total of 40 charges, including assault and robbery. A spokesman said that in the past 12 months there had been a series of assaults and robberies of homosexuals in public lavatories in Narrabeen, Reef Beach, and other parts of northern Sydney. The three have been released on bail until Monday.* (Question: What are these men's names? See final section: A Note on Further Investigation.)
4. [172] was a gay man who was attacked with a bow and arrow, killed and dismembered at the Deep Creek gay beat in 1992. This is just a few miles from Manly.
5. It should be noted that Scott's death was reported in the December 15, 1988 *Manly Daily* in a short story headlined: "Body on Rocks," which concluded, "There were no suspicious circumstances, according to police." There are at least a half dozen *Manly Daily* newspaper reports I uncovered from 1987, 1988 and 1989 that speak cryptically of attacks on men in the northern beaches area that may have been gay-bashing incidents:
  - a. On January 12, 1988, a 39-year old man had been sitting in his car at the lookout at Dobroyd Point when three men approached. The report says he was brutally beaten, robbed, and his car was stolen. Dobroyd Point was a well-known beat.
  - b. On May 31, 1989, the *Manly Daily* published a story about a 30-year-old man who was raped by two men in the public toilets near the Narrabeen bus terminus. Also a beat.
  - c. On November 30, 1989, an 18-year old man was charged with sexually assaulting another man, also in Narrabeen.

- d. On December 15, 1988, just a week after Scott's death, the dead body of [REDACTED] was found in a toilet block in North Manly. Probably a beat.
  - e. On February 7, 1987, two men were charged "over alleged bashing attacks on homosexuals on the North Shore." The men's names were NP 98 [REDACTED] NP 98 who was 18 at the time, and NP 107 [REDACTED]
  - f. On May 5, 1988, a 42-year-old man was attacked by three or four youths in Manly. The report says, "There was no attempt to rob" the man. No other details.
  - g. On February 3, 1987, a 25-year old man was admitted to the hospital after being assaulted at Dee Why "after he met another man on the first floor of a car park."
  - h. On March 4, 1987, a 28-year-old man was attacked in the Narrabeen bus terminus toilets and was told, "You will bleed tonight." Again, a known beat.
6. A confidential source approached me in Manly after reading the newspaper and told me that when he was around 13 (about 20 years ago), he recounted that a rather "shady" character would hang out at his father's business. He recalls overhearing the man brag about "more than 50" gays he had bashed. The man apparently had a brother who may have been connected to organized crime, who was "very scary." This confidential source must be treated very carefully; although he gave me the name of the man in question (and his brother), he asked for the time being at least that I not share this with law enforcement unless the name came up independently. *Later, the man's name did appear upon review of the newspaper accounts of gay bashing.* We will need to discuss how to move forward with this obvious Person of Interest.
  7. NP 29 [REDACTED] the man who attacked [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had no fixed address and apparently was living in an abandoned army building. We cannot discount the possibility that a homeless person or persons may have attacked Scott. I was walking around the cliffs above where Scott's body was found and discovered two separate rock alcoves where people had obviously stored pillows, blankets and plastic bags. One of the alcoves was big enough for somebody to sleep in to avoid inclement weather; it raises the possibility that homeless people do or did utilize this area.
  8. [REDACTED] from ACON and his colleague [REDACTED] another AIDS outreach worker, added more information about how the Manly beats operated relatively underground in order to avoid confrontations with the police. In 1990 and 1991, when [REDACTED] worked with the Manly police doing outreach, he recalled, many gay men reported that the police would drag men out of the toilet blocks that served as beats and then publicly berate the men. [REDACTED] said the atmosphere of distrust and fear of the police had reached a point of great conflict at the time. Because of this, he theorizes, men might have met up in the known beats but have gone to a more secluded spot around the cliffs to have sex.
  9. The MO of certain known hate crimes that may be similar to Scott's case cannot be ignored. Retired Detective Sergeant Stephen Page recalled the case of one man who survived a vicious attack after being lured up near the Bondi cliffs by

one man, only to be assaulted by several of the man's friends. Sue Thompson noted the same past scenarios that present a hypothesis that Scott may have been brought up to the cliffs by one man and then attacked by several.

10. The case of ██████████ (no relation), described in the Brief of Evidence presented to the Coroner by Operation Taradale, seems to echo Scott's in many ways: he was found dead at the bottom of a cliff and presumed to be a suicide; his friends testified that he was in fine spirits because of a recent inheritance; and other incidents of violence occurred at the same spot. One piece of forensic evidence may be of interest here as well: ██████████; body was found facing toward the cliff, which meant that if he jumped or fell he would have had to turn 180 degrees in the air – an unlikely possibility for a “jumper.” Crime scene photographs from Scott's fall seem to indicate that his body was found at a 90-degree angle to the cliff face. We are not certain that this is relevant, but we note it as potentially instructive.
11. Local police were aware of a group known as “Da Manly Boys” with a distinctive “tag,” dMB, which operated in Manly in this era. Like the “Bondi Boys,” “Alexandria Eight,” and “Parkside Killer” gangs implicated in the assaults and murders near Mark's Park, their former members would be worth trying to track down for information, leads and possible suspects.
12. The historical context of gay violence during the period in question is important to reconsider. New South Wales had only decriminalized homosexuality in 1984, four years prior to Scott's death. It is clear from interviews with gay men that, at that time, many still worried that their homosexuality was considered criminal in the eyes of the state; it is a very safe hypothesis to state that more men would be willing to come forth in today's climate than they would have at the time. It was not until 1992 that an anti-discrimination (homosexual vilification) amendment bill came before the Australian House, prompted by a spate of gay bashings. At that time, the lesbian and gay anti-violence project had received reports of 230 assaults against gays and lesbians over the previous 14 months.

### Part Three: Was the suicide determination premature?

*Summary: Family and friends of Scott Johnson have always considered suicide unlikely. Scott had no history of depression or mental illness, had a bright future as a mathematics prodigy, and had no obvious reason to end his young and promising life. All accounts and depositions from his closest friends, academic advisors and family concurred on this point. We understand that suicide is complicated, that sometimes close friends and family are oblivious to the signs, and that it is difficult to pinpoint causality. That said, it seems unlikely that Scott fits any of the main profiles that experts tell us can predict suicidal behavior. In this section we recap some of the testimony given at the Coroners inquest in 1989, and offer new information with which to reconsider the suicide conclusion:*

Information available at the inquest (and, where noted, updated with current interviews):

1. Testimony from friends, family members and professional colleagues:

- a. [ 76 ] Scott's partner at the time of his death, said that their long-term relationship was stable and that Scott appeared to be his "normal self" in the days prior to his death. In an eight-page letter submitted to the court in conjunction with Scott's inquest, [ 76 ] wrote, "To my knowledge, Scott felt nothing but satisfaction with our relationship and there was certainly no argument or disagreement between us...I cannot think of any reason or event which would have led him to take his own life." [ 76 ] is estranged from Scott's family and has not been cooperative with our investigation; see below for more details.)
- b. [ 77 ] one of Scott and [ 76 ]'s friends in Sydney, was the last known person to speak with Scott by telephone, sometime around noon on 8 Dec 1988 (his body was found less than 48 hours later). [ 77 ] said that Scott "appeared to be his normal self...There was no hint of anything untoward and Scott sounded the same as he always did." In an email interview in June 2007, [ 77 ] wrote to me, "I am not aware of any reason whv Scott would have committed suicide."
- c. [ 78 ] of Macquarie University, Scott's PhD advisor, testified at the time that he and Scott had spoken on 7 Dec 1988 to discuss Scott's impressive academic progress. Scott had, for all intents and purposes, completed the last major hurdle before being eligible to receive his doctorate, and "was very happy about this," according to [ 78 ]'s testimony. They spoke again on 8 Dec at 10:30 a.m., and Scott and [ 78 ] had made an appointment to meet on Wednesday 14 December. In a May 2007 interview, [ 78 ] reiterated his belief that Scott was a terribly promising and brilliant student; that he was shy but not pathologically so; and that when he and a fellow [ ] heard about the Bondi investigations, they both wondered if the situation with Scott might have been analogous because [ 78 ] did not believe that Scott committed suicide. "There certainly was a doubt in my mind at the time," [ 78 ] told me recently. "There still is."
- d. [ 79 ] [ 76 ]'s sister and a psychiatric nurse, was the last known person to have seen Scott, while he slept at her [ ] home on the morning of 8 December 1988. She testified that there was nothing in Scott's behavior that would have indicated suicidal behavior, depression, or any psychological problems. She said that Scott was a frequent visitor to their [ ] home and was most welcome there; she said that "Scott was very close to my mother and she treated him like a son." In her last interactions with Scott, she testified, "he seemed to be in happy spirits and he did not seem to be depressed." In the two years that she knew Scott, she found him to be "introverted and a warm a friendly person." In a subsequent statement on 14 December 1988 she added that "He seemed to be happy leading up to his death, he was going well in his studies at Macquarie University, and he was particularly happy about becoming an uncle, after the birth of his brother's baby in the United States."

- e. Steve Johnson, Scott's brother whose wife gave birth to the baby referred to in the previous testimony, carried on a regular correspondence with his brother, including a letter announcing the birth of Scott's niece a month before his death. Steve knows of no reason why his brother might have committed suicide, and reported this to the court in various documents and testimony.
2. In 1988, a diagnosis of AIDS was virtually a death sentence, and gay men were known to commit suicide upon learning they had AIDS. The initial police statement by [ 76 ] included the sentence, "I believe that Scott belonged to a group at high risk of A.I.D.S. infection." We surmise that this may have been [ 76 ]'s way of telling police that Scott was gay rather than as a way of suggesting that Scott had AIDS. During the autopsy, Scott was tested for AIDS and the results were negative. Dr. Johan Duflou testified at the inquest that "there were no anti-bodies to either Hepatitis or the Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus in the deceased's blood."
3. There is some evidence that Scott may have been familiar with beats, or at least that it would not be completely out of character for him to have a "one-off" sexual encounter even though he was in a committed relationship with [ 76 ] [ 76 ] as stated above, has not been cooperative with our investigation, but did offer some clues during his testimony at Scott's inquest and in conversations with Steve Johnson.)
- a. Under questioning at the inquest, [ 76 ] said that he was aware that Scott had at least one sexual encounter in Sydney with a man that [ 76 ] did not know; this took place in June 1988.
- b. Also at the inquest [ 76 ] was questioned about his and Scott's sexual relationship and whether or not it had been "exclusive." [ 76 ] stated that when he and Scott moved to Australia in 1986, the two of them went together to be tested for AIDS in a Canberra clinic. [ 76 ] acitly acknowledged that the test did mean that the two had not been monogamous prior to moving to Australia. "That would indicate to me that there was concern on both of our parts to ascertain the state of our antibody status," [ 76 ] told the court.

Information not brought before the inquest:

1. Despite the fact that Scott had tested negative for AIDS, police apparently believed and stated that Scott might have had AIDS. [ ] who signed the "Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad" in his role as American consul in Svdnev at the time. is now a retired Foreign Service officer living in [ ]. He told me by telephone in May 2007 that he recalled Scott's case well because it was unusual. He said that a police officer told him at the time that Scott's death was certainly a suicide, partly because Scott may have had AIDS and partly because the body was found a certain distance from the cliff, which somehow indicated suicide. [ ] also recalled that the "family" – probably Steve – was quite insistent and that angered the police, who felt their honor was being impugned.



8. The forensic pathologist who was assigned the case, Dr. Johan Dufflou, told me in 2007 that the police presented the case to him as a clear-cut suicide. There were no "defense wounds," and the cause of death was consistent with a fall from that height. He did not conduct a fuller autopsy that might have occurred with a suspicion of homicide. That might have included, for example, an anal swab, which could have indicated sexual activity prior to death. Upon reviewing the autopsy records and contemporaneous notes he took while conducting the autopsy in December 1988, Dr. Dufflou told me that there is "nothing to suggest one way or the other – suicide, accident or homicide." He did not criticize his autopsy as incomplete or inappropriate given the circumstances, but said that he had just moved to the Sydney area at the time and "wasn't aware" of any gay hate crimes nor any possible link between Scott's death and the other gay-hate crimes. "It took quite a few years before they were linked," Dufflou said.
9. Steve Johnson recalls that [ 76 ] said that he had repeatedly encouraged Scott to be more outgoing sexually.
10. Steve Johnson also recalls one occasion prior to Scott meeting [ 76 ], when Scott was probably 22 or 23, when Scott had a two-day affair with a man that Scott had "picked up" while visiting Steve in Los Angeles.

#### A Note about further investigation

Although Scott Johnson's death took place nearly 20 year ago, we find some reason for optimism that if indeed he was murdered, his killer might yet be found. We understand that the northern beaches townships are sometimes referred to as "The Shire," a reference to J.R.R. Tolkien's imaginary homeland of the Hobbits, who do not travel far and who live their lives close to home. We have reason to believe that quite a few people currently living in the Manly may have been there for 20 years or more. They may know of people who have bragged about bashing gays, or may have actually participated in anti-gay violence themselves. We are already aware of several individuals that fit this profile, and believe that with further investigation, others will be possible to find. In some of the newspaper reports of assaults that we mention above, we suspect that police reports of the incidents still exist and may provide leads. [REDACTED] has made repeated requests for permission to peruse old police records, to no avail. We have identified one particular person of interest whose name turned up repeatedly in our investigation to date because of two publicized arrests of gay-bashing and one first-person testimony that states that this individual bragged about assaulting several dozen homosexual men. We of course do not contend that he was responsible for Scott's murder, but we believe strongly based on available evidence and testimony that he might have detailed information that may be germane to any investigation into Scott's death.

Lastly, as we have mentioned, Scott's partner at the time of his death, [ 76 ], has not been responsive to our questions about Scott's habits, sexual and otherwise, nor about his familiarity with beats and Manly in particular. We can imagine perfectly good reasons why [ 76 ] would not want to be involved; his relationship with Scott's brother Steve was never good and deteriorated at the time of Scott's inquest. Nevertheless, we feel it would be helpful to find a way to ask him some questions, and

Steve A. Johnson

177 North View Road, Cambridge, MA 02142

March 29, 2005

Mr. John Abernethy  
State Coroner's Court, Glebe  
44-46 Parramatta Road  
Glebe, NSW 2037

RE: Request to reopen Scott Johnson's case (died Dec. 9, 1988, Manly/Sydney NSW)

Dear Mr. Abernethy,

I live in Cambridge, Massachusetts, US and recently learned about Coroner Milledge's findings that several deaths near Marks Park, Sydney, in 1988-89 were likely caused by gay-hate gangs. I recently spoke to Mr. McLennan (sp?) in your office about having my brother's case reopened. Scott Johnson died at the same time and under similar circumstances as those cited by Coroner Milledge. Mr. McLennan recommended that I write to you.

My brother Scott Johnson, a US citizen, died in December 1988 in Sydney at the age of 27, under shockingly similar circumstances as those recently re-opened and reviewed by the NSW Coroner's Court. My brother's case also met, in the weeks and months following his death, with the same apathy and neglect by the local police as cited by the Coroner. Scott's family and I have never felt an adequate investigation was done into Scott's death. From the new information brought to light by (ret) Detective Page and the Coroner's office - of a pattern of deaths of gay men during the same two-year period on gay beats in Sydney - it appears all too likely my brother was killed in a similar manner by gay-hate gangs, a prospect that was never considered after Scott died.

Scott's body was found on Dec. 9, 1988, nude, in early morning by fishermen at the bottom of a cliff near North Head just a short distance from Manly Beach, a well-known hang out for gay men. Scott was gay, with no apparent reason for ending his own life. However, when I reached Sydney less than 36 hours after Scott died, the case had already effectively been closed by Manly police.

The site where Scott's body went over the cliff was never inspected (the Manly police "were not sure" where that site was when I asked to be taken there). The police refused to conduct even a basic investigation (site inspection, witnesses, clothes, pocket contents, ATM records, phone calls, etc. to establish his whereabouts and possible contact with others before he died). I spent two weeks in Sydney trying to find out what I could; but the police never saw the importance of investigating the circumstances of a gay man's death on their beaches. They encouraged me to accept that my brother had either killed himself or "slipped while doing some shenanigans at the side of a slippery cliff."

After I returned to the States, I pushed for an investigation prior to the Coroner's inquest, but never managed to get the police to seriously undertake an investigation. Scott's death was finally ruled a suicide by the NSW Coroner (in March 1989), to my bitter disagreement. Neither I nor any of his family or friends could imagine any reason why Scott would want to end his life. Scott, indeed, had reason for celebration on that particular day - he was studying mathematics in Australia and had, hours earlier, spoken to his [redacted] at Macquarie University the day he died, who confirmed that Scott had solved a difficult problem in

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mathematics which would constitute the culmination of Scott's PhD work. Scott had made an appointment to see [redacted] a few days hence.

[redacted] was the last person known to have spoken to Scott, and has, as he reaffirmed in correspondence with me a few days ago, never believed Scott could have taken his own life. (As further sidelight on this tragedy, Scott's loss went beyond his loss to family and friends, as Scott was widely regarded as one of the most profoundly gifted and productive young minds of his generation, having graduated at the top of his class at Cal Tech (foremost technical university in the US) then attended Cambridge University on special scholarship. We are indebted to Scott's [redacted] at Macquarie in Sydney for working, as a labor of his great admiration for Scott, to complete Scott's dissertation on the basis of that conversation, and for pursuing the granting of a posthumous PhD for Scott, which was finally awarded by ANU in 1995, seven years after Scott's death.)

In March 1989, the Coroner stated during the inquest, which my wife and I attended that inough Scott did not leave a suicide note, he "...fits the profile of those most likely to commit suicide, he is highly intelligent, shy, and *homosexual*." However, Scott, who was my closest and most beloved friend, had plenty to live for and was quite engaged with life. Besides his imminent academic degree, he was also anxious to see his new, and first, niece, my daughter Emma, born in the US a few weeks before Scott died. His friends and family have struggled with the mystery of why he died for the past sixteen years.

Scott's family and I would very much like have Scott's case re-opened and investigated. We are of course bewildered to learn of the spate of possible gay hate killings in the area during the same period that my brother died. The circumstances surrounding Scott's death are chillingly similar to those recounted in the Coroner's ruling. We would be very happy to provide further information to assist an investigation.

I do not imagine it will be a relief to learn that my brother was the victim of a murder rather than a suicide; but better understanding the true circumstances surrounding his death would be very important to me and Scott's family. We would particularly want anyone responsible for Scott's death to be brought to justice. And of course, if the revelation that Scott was among the other gay men who died because of gay hatred can do anything to raise awareness of, and help prevent, this type of crime - and of the apathy and neglect with which it is policed - then I would be very pleased to help however I can.

Please let me know what additional information I can provide to aid in a decision whether to reopen Scott Johnson's case. I can be reached at the following telephone numbers (time zone US ET):

\* [redacted]  
\* [redacted]  
\* [redacted]

Thank you very much for your help. Scott's family and I will look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Steve Johnson  
[redacted]