

## Det/Ch/Insp John Lehmann Review of 30 unsolved homicides

**File Number:** 66  
**Product Type:** TEXT DOCUMENTS:Investigators Note  
**Date of Note:** 5 Aug 2015  
**Brief Description:** Report completed by Det/Ch/Insp Lehmann in 2013 outlining his review of 30 unsolved homicides. Concluded that possibly 8 may contain elements of 'gay hate'. All 8 are currently at Unsolved Homicide Team awaiting further investigation.

**ISSUE:**

Assessment of 30 potential 'gay hate' unsolved homicides by the Unsolved Homicide Team (UHT) to determine if any bias motivation existed.

**BACKGROUND:**

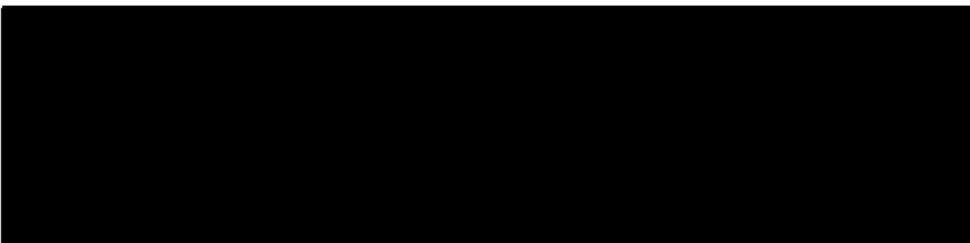
On 26 and 27 July 2013 a series of articles written by journalist Rick Feneley appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald/Sunday Herald concerning alleged 'gay hate' homicides that were allegedly committed in Sydney in the 1980's and 1990's some of which were investigated under Strike Force *Taradale* and the subject of a coronial inquest before former Deputy State Coroner Jacqueline Milledge in 2005. The articles quoted a number of persons including former NSW Police Force Gay and Lesbian liaison officer Sue Thompson who claims that up to 30 matters could be unsolved homicides.

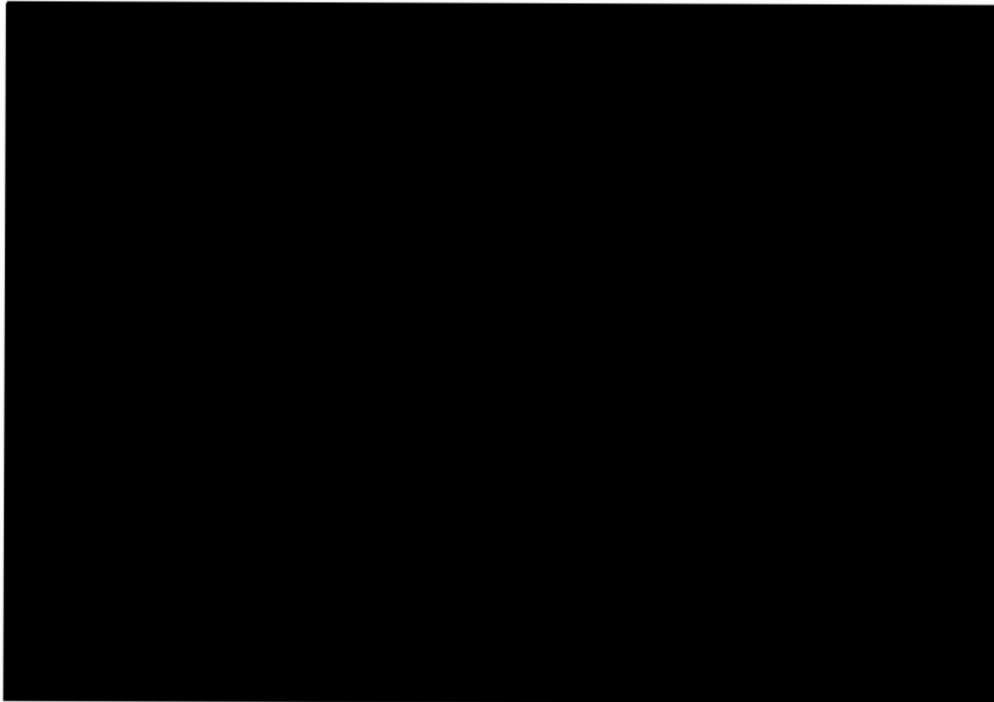
On 26 July 2013 I contacted Sue Thompson and requested that she provide the UHT with any information she had relating to the alleged 'gay-hate' homicides mentioned in the articles. As a result, Ms Thompson forwarded me a list of 80 cases titled; '*Likely NSW Gay Hate Murders from Late 70's To Late 90's*', 30 of which she claims remain unsolved.

Since that time I have conducted an assessment of the 30 'unsolved' cases listed by Ms Thompson to determine the veracity of her information. In doing so, I have researched the records of this command, wider archived records of the NSWPF and the Coroner's Office. This research was done in conjunction with a project being conducted by the Bias Crimes Coordinator (Sergeant Geoff Steer) and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (GLIBTI) project officer (Senior Sergeant Jo Kenworthy), to assess the prevalence of 'gay hate' bias murders. Of particular note, part of their project involves an assessment of deaths at the Manly and North Head locations to ascertain any correlation or links between these deaths and the death of Scott Johnson, currently being investigated by the UHT under the reference of Strike Force *Macnamir*.

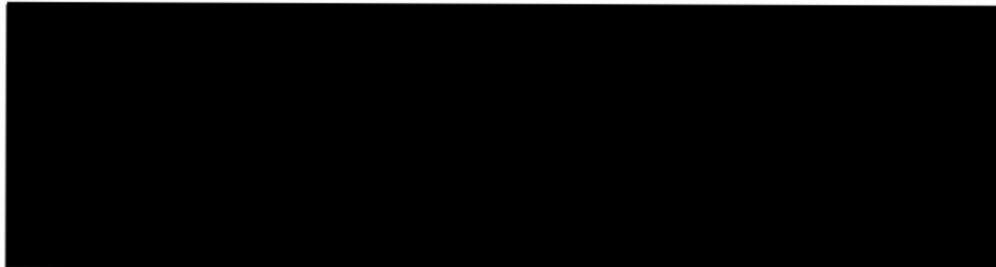
**COMMENT:**

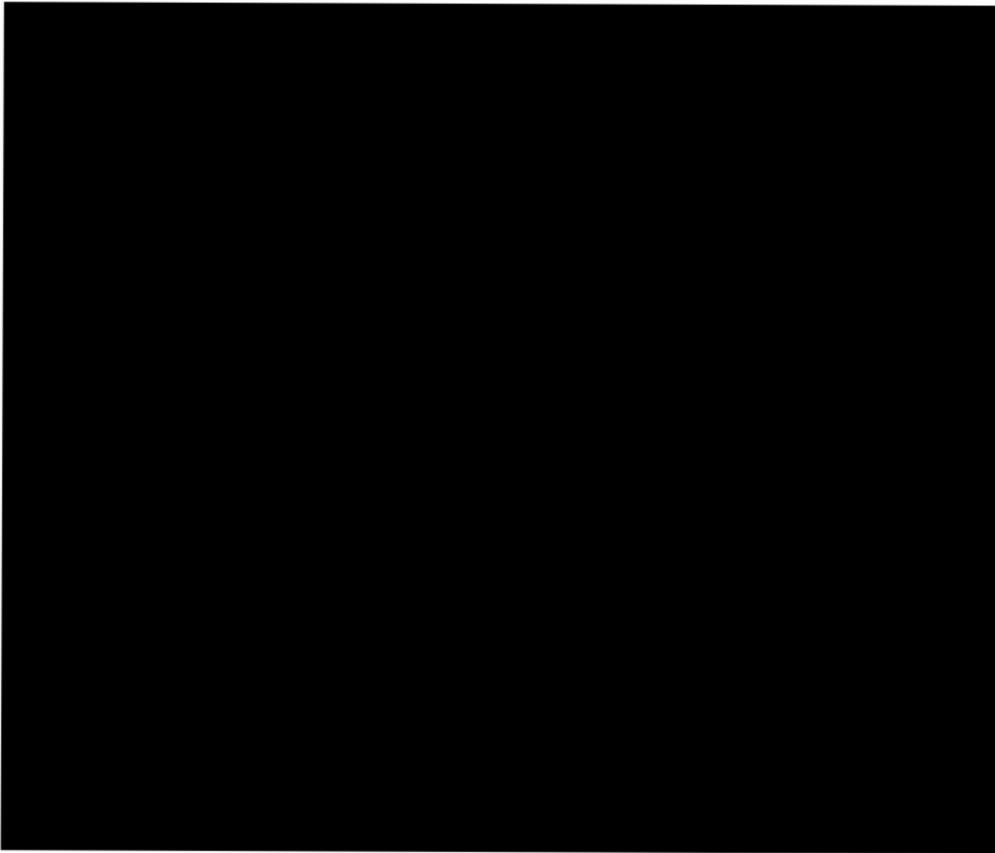
The following is a summary of the assessment done on each of the 30 'gay-hate' related unsolved homicide cases from Ms Thompson's list: Some of the dates of death on this list are incorrect.





**18. Death of Graham Paynter on 14.10.1989.** The actual date of death is 13.10.1989. The deceased was a 36 year old male living in Tathra on the NSW South Coast. The deceased's body was found on rocks at the southern end of Tathra beach below a 50 metre high cliff. Lacerations were observed on the deceased back and head. His pants and underpants were down around his knees and his jumper was pulled over his head with arms still in the sleeves. The deceased had been drinking heavily with a friend, Russell Longmore on the day and evening before his body was discovered and in fact had been arrested at 7.45pm on 12.10.1989 for stealing a bottle of rum from a Bega liquor store. At that stage he was reported to be well under the influence of alcohol. Later, the deceased and Longmore were drinking at the Tathra Hotel. Longmore left about 10.30pm however the deceased continued until the early hours of 13.10.1989. Hotel staff reported that he was 'totally affected' by alcohol when he left the hotel. The details of this death are brief, recovered from police occurrence records. No other details appear available from the Coroner's office. The occurrence entry does not mention suspicious circumstances or any indication of foul play. There is no indication that the deceased was assaulted, murdered or the victim of 'gay hate' related violence.





Summary:

From the list of 30 'Likely NSW Gay Hate Murders' as provided by Ms Thompson the following can be gleaned:

- 27 cases from the list were reviewed.
- 2 cases were in fact found to be solved
- 1 case was reviewed in addition after being identified as 'unsolved' (Swaczak) despite not appearing on the original list of 30 unsolved cases.
- 4 cases ( [REDACTED] ) could not be found after searches of police archived records and the records from the Coroner's Court Registry. This would suggest that those cases were probably not homicides or suspicious deaths. Consultation will be made with Ms Thompson to ascertain the origin of her information about these cases.
- 7 cases were found not to be homicides but rather, the probable cause of death was suicide or misadventure or unknown.
- 12 cases were homicides without evidence of 'gay hate' bias but rather, other motives existed for example, robbery or domestic type murders.

- Only 8 cases from 30 were probable or possible 'gay hate' motivated murders and these are on file at the Unsolved Homicide Team with consideration for future investigation.

There is no doubt that anti gay hostility, particularly in the 1980's and 1990's resulted in a number of murders and serious crime of violence in NSW. In my opinion, the suggestion of 30 'gay hate' related unsolved murders is a gross exaggeration. Certainly there was no consultation with this command prior to the Sydney Morning / Sunday Herald articles which I suggest is poor, irresponsible journalism bordering on sensationalism.

As I have indicated, this command continues to work with the GLIBTI Project Team in their project to identify instances and trends in 'gay hate' motivated crime.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Forwarded for information.

John Lehmann  
Detective Chief Inspector  
Unsolved Homicide Team  
25 September 2013

1. Commander, Homicide Squad
2. Director, Serious Crimes Directorate
3. Commander, State Crime Command
4. Deputy Commissioner, Field