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Grandfather killed for \$30

By JACK FARRELL,
Staff Reporter

RICHARD SLATER, the 'good man' who died on Monday after being brutally bashed and robbed, might still be alive but for breaking his customary habit of buying lottery tickets at a mid-city store.

Shortly before he left home to go shopping last Friday he told his wife Gwen that he intended to buy his lottery tickets at the Newcastle Store, instead of the Lottery office in Hustlers Centre where he customarily went.

'It may change my luck,' he said.

Soon after he had bought the tickets he was savagely attacked and left lying badly injured in a men's lavatory in Birdwood Park.

One of the bloodstained tickets found later in his shirt pocket bore the syndicate name, 'My Turn'.

Family and friends of 69-year-old Mr Slater were in mourning yesterday at his home in [redacted] Cooks Hill.

His wife was too distressed to attend the funeral which had been held earlier at Beresfield crematorium.

The Slaters' only child, Mrs Julie Williams, said she made no apologies for feeling hatred towards the unknown assailant who took her father's life and about \$30 he had been carrying in a small black purse.

'What chills me is knowing that the monster who did it is still walking around in the community,' she said. 'I felt at first he must be an animal, but animals wouldn't do what he did to dad.'

'He was terribly beaten. Apparently he had been kicked, too. When I saw him in the hospital he was unrecognisable and suffering terribly.'

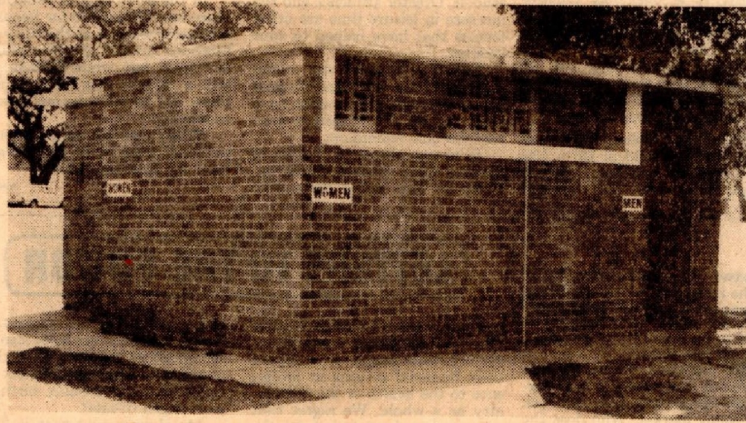
'My father was a good man, a quiet man, who never harmed anyone.'

'Since his retirement he and mum just lived for each other. He didn't drink or smoke and wasn't interested in sport.

'A good man who never harmed anyone'



Mr Slater . . . terribly beaten, kicked.



The Birdwood Park lavatory block where Mr Slater was attacked and robbed.

They were a couple of homebodies who rarely went out except to visit friends.

'Dad was protective towards mum. He used to do the shopping for her and was content to spend the rest of his time with her or pottering in his garden. He loved growing flowers.'

Mrs Williams, who lives in Sydney with her four children aged between 11 and 17, said she had always been close to her father.

They had had a special relationship. He was always ready to sit down and talk with her whenever she needed advice or had a problem.

'Without fail he would ring

me in Sydney every Wednesday and Sunday night and visited us only eight days before he was attacked,' she said.

'He was devoted to his grandchildren and it pains me to recall that about the time he was being bashed and robbed we were sitting around wrapping his Christmas presents.'

Mrs Williams told of another grim irony associated with the attack on her father.

'He constantly warned the children against going into public toilets; he felt they were dangerous places, especially for children.'

'He had a medical problem and was taking fluid tablets so

we can only assume he had to make a quick visit to the toilet.'

Detective Ross Clark of Newcastle CIB who is investigating Mr Slater's death has appealed to anyone finding a woman's small black purse to hand it to police.

He said he was also anxious to interview any person who was in the vicinity of the robbery between 12.30 and 1pm last Friday and who might be able to provide a useful lead in the search for the basher.

Det Clark said he wanted to contact an 'elderly man' who had been in the vicinity with a woman, possibly his wife.