



Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes

Statement of I216

1 May 2023

1. My name is I216 My address is known to the Special Commission of Inquiry.
2. I was contacted by the Inquiry by letter dated 3 April 2023 requesting that I provide information regarding my recollections of the events of 19 December 1980 and the subsequent investigation and prosecution of Jeffrey Miller for the murder of Richard Slater. This statement sets out my memory of those events.
3. In December 1980 I was living in Cooks Hill in Newcastle. I had moved to Newcastle in about mid-1979, and had been working regularly in various hospitality roles, including as a barman. I recall that I had gotten a job at a new nouveau restaurant and was working about four days a week, with my days free. Most of my friends at that time worked during the day.
4. Soon after I arrived in Newcastle I met Jeff and considered him a platonic friend. In the gay community in Newcastle at that time, everybody knew everybody. If you went out even once a week, you would meet everybody.
5. On the day the attack happened I recall that I visited Jeff at his home. At that time he was flatting with I217 and another woman whose name I cannot remember. We (myself, Jeff and his flatmates) decided to visit the Pink Elephant Markets. We had a couple of cups of tea at Jeff's place before we left. On the way to the markets we cut through a park with toilet blocks, and I told the others I needed to use the toilet. The girls kept walking and Jeff waited for me outside.
6. When I walked into the toilet block I saw an old bloke at the urinal, on the right hand side. He was holding his penis and had a partial erection, and was staring at me as I used the urinal next to him. In my mind he was clearly trying to solicit sex. I knew the toilet block was a beat but I did not use beats and was not interested in older men, so I walked out.

7. Jeff was waiting for me outside, and I told him there was a man in the toilet block with his penis in his hand. To my recollection, Jeff said "I might go in" and then entered the toilet block. I have been told that I previously gave evidence saying that Jeff had said he was going to "crack it" with the man inside the toilet. I do not remember exactly what he said, but that is the kind of thing Jeff would say. It was certainly my impression that he was going in to check the guy out and see if anything would occur.
8. Jeff came out shortly after, and we caught up to the girls and went shopping. I recall that I described us as having "scurried" after the girls in my evidence at the time and was questioned about that in court. I meant that it was just a bit of a jog. After that, I remember we wandered around the markets for a bit and bought a couple of items, but none of us had much money. I don't recall whether we spent any more time together that day.
9. Three days later, I saw on the news that a man had been bashed in the toilet block, and I remember thinking that I was there that day and that that was the man I saw in the toilet block. I had not seen a photo at that time. I remember that I was shown a photo later, after Jeff was charged, and that I could not say for certain it was the man I saw at the toilet block. I have since seen a photo of the man online, but cannot recall if that was the man I saw.
10. I recall that Jeff was later charged with the man's murder, and that I gave evidence in court in relation to his prosecution. I believe [I217] did as well, but I am not absolutely certain. I do remember that she was present at the court with Jeff's other flatmate, and that they were upset at me because they thought I was trying to send Jeff to gaol. I also fell out with Jeff after he was charged, as he thought the world was against him. At one point someone put a rock through my window. Eventually I left Newcastle sometime in 1983 because I no longer wanted to live there after those incidents.
11. To this day I do not believe that Jeff Miller was responsible for bashing the man I saw in the toilets, for several reasons.
12. First, I do not think he was in the toilet for long enough to bash someone.
13. Secondly, when he came out of the toilet he was totally normal. He didn't show any signs that he had exerted himself. He was not sweaty or fussed.
14. Thirdly, I was very close to the toilet and did not hear anything unusual.
15. Fourthly, I remember Jeff as a generous person. If he had five dollars on him he would take you for a drink. He would always spend money at the markets if he had any, and he didn't spend any money that day after we left the toilet block. I think that if he had robbed someone he would have been spending the money at the market that afternoon.

16. Finally, I never saw any violence on Jeff's part in the period that I knew him. After I met him, I did become aware that Jeff was involved in criminal activity, although for the most part I did not see that side of him. Once, I was charged as an accessory to a break, enter and steal because Jeff had left me a bag of stolen property to look after. I have since read online that it was claimed Jeff had bashed other men in toilet blocks. However, I never saw him involved in any violence myself.
17. Although I do not believe that Jeff was responsible, I would not be surprised if the man I saw was the victim of "poofter bashing". In that time, Newcastle was a very rough place, and had a reputation for toxic masculinity. In the Newcastle gay community, you would hear stories about men getting bashed. I never travelled anywhere without one or two other people. Any gay person in Newcastle knew the dangers and where not to go. I never used a beat in my life because I considered it a roulette whether you would get bashed or not, and I thought it was a stupid and dangerous thing to do. In my mind, the man that I saw in the toilet was very obviously looking to solicit sex, and another person entering the toilet could have taken offence at what they saw.
18. In my experience as a member of the gay community in Newcastle at that time, there was always a higher percentage of older men who used beats, as opposed to younger men. Younger men would go to clubs, hook up and go home. Older men, especially those who had hidden their sexuality and had gotten married and had kids, did not have outlets other than going to beats during the day. I remember there was a large park near the Criterion Hotel where a lot of married guys who wanted to have sex on the side would go, and we would hear a lot of stories of men being bashed there.

This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give to the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature:

Name: I216
Date: 15 MAY 23

