

Murder of Walter John BEDSER

Investigation Precis

The Offence

Between 1.55pm and 2.00pm on Tuesday the 2nd of December 1980, Mr Walter John BEDSER (Born 3rd of September 1933) was at his place of work, being an antique shop situated at 4 Darcy Street, Parramatta.

An unknown male has entered the antique shop where an argument ensued. A witness who was looking in the shop window describes the two males as physically fighting. The witness observed a suspect run from the shop calling out, "Get an ambulance". He was last seen heading in the direction of St Johns Park which surrounds the grounds of the Church.

BEDSER staggered from his shop bleeding profusely and collapsed on the footpath about 20 feet away from his shop at a nearby fruit shop. Police and Ambulance officers were called and arrived a short time later. Paramedics conveyed BEDSER to Parramatta District Hospital, where he died as a result of his injuries. Life was pronounced extinct by Doctor Paul OLDER at 2.15pm the same day.

According to the Report On The Death Of A Patient To The Coroner submitted by M. MANNING, the deceased suffered; 10cm oblique cut to the right hypochondrium (upper abdomen), a lacerated liver and right lung. A 5cm deep ragged cut to the left chest which lacerated the left lung and 4 long slashes down to the muscle on the left arm.

The Investigation

This investigation was conducted by Parramatta Detectives. The assistance of the Homicide Squad appears to have commenced on 3/12/1989.

A crime scene was established, a knife was seized and fingerprints obtained from the scene. The clothing of BEDSER was subsequently seized from the post-mortem.

Initial enquiries involved an extensive canvas for witnesses to the offence. A number of witnesses observed a suspect leaving BEDSER's shop and telling them to call an ambulance. These witnesses subsequently created a penri likeness of the offender. A further witness detailed selling a hunting knife to a male similar to the suspect approximately 10am on the day of the offence at a nearby sports store. It appears that the knife sold was identical to the murder weapon subsequently located at the scene, however there is no evidence of this in the case file.

A media appeal for information generated numerous claims of persons resembling the penri, however each of these suspects was eventually eliminated.

It was established that the deceased was a very active (predatory) paedophile. Five young males were identified as sexual partners (victims) of the deceased and statements obtained. This line of enquiry was highly regarded as a motive for BEDSER's murder.

STATE CRIME COMMAND **INVESTIGATION PLAN**

SITUATION

Walter John BEDSER died as a result of knife wounds inflicted on 2 December 1980 at his antique shop in Darcy St, Parramatta. The subsequent investigation failed to identify any suspects, as did the Coronial Inquest in 1983. In 2007 a forensic review of the investigation yielded a number of suspects as a result of fingerprints located at the scene of the murder.

MISSION

Investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Walter John BEDSER in Parramatta on 2 December 1980.

STRATEGIES/EXECUTION

Phase 1 – Consolidation of Existing Evidence (Duration 2 months)

During phase 1, investigators will consolidate the existing evidence.

In Phase 1 investigative priorities are as follows:

- Converting existing running sheet records to e@glei
- The existing fingerprint matches will be examined, and suspects eliminated or identified.
- Locating all existing exhibits, re-examining items where appropriate, and addressing admissibility and continuity issues. The 2007 forensic review to be consolidated.
- Witnesses will be identified and re-interviewed, where this can be done without alerting any known suspects. This will include the original investigating police.

Phase 1 will conclude with a review of the evidence available, and consideration given to continuing to Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Targeting of Suspects

In Phase 2, pro-active investigation of identified suspects will be conducted.

Investigative priorities during this phase are as follows:

- Covert strategies targeting the suspect, with consideration given to unsolved serious crime techniques, electronic evidence gathering, telephone intercepts and other covert techniques.
- Re-interview of witnesses associated with the suspect, for both strategic and practical purposes.
- Interview of the suspect.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The existing investigation material will be converted to the e@glei system during phase 1. The investigation will be conducted at the office of the Unsolved Homicide Team, PHQ.

INVESTIGATIVE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Investigative roles and responsibilities are TBA.

REVIEW OF AN UNSOLVED HOMICIDE CASE SCREENING FORM

You have been selected to undertake a review of an unsolved homicide. The review should be conducted in accordance with this 'Case Screening Form'. Once completed, the Case Screening Form will be forwarded to the Coordinator, Unsolved Homicide Review Team, Homicide Squad, State Crime Command. Your assessment of the available evidence and recommendation is necessary to assist in determining opportunities for re-investigation

1. Location of Brief of Evidence.

The original investigation documents must be located. The current location of these documents may depend upon the date of the murder you are reviewing and who conducted the inquiry. If the investigation is relatively recent, it may still be stored at the Local Area Command, which had carriage of the matter. Inquiries which were conducted by the former Major Crime Squads and investigations that are considerably more historical, will most likely be located at the Corporate Archives Records Repository, Bridge St, Stanmore, Ph: 95198189.

A manual inspection of the investigation records must be conducted as experience has shown that in older cases, exhibits are sometimes stored in the boxes along with the documents.

Many investigations will be voluminous and the transport of the entire investigation to an LAC office may not be viable. Facilities exist at the Archives for the documents to be inspected and an inventory conducted. Depending on the type of investigation management used during the inquiry, the investigation may be reviewed electronically. All former TIMS inquiries located by the Investigative Systems Support Unit have been converted into E@gle.i investigations. Secondary investigations into the same murder may also be recorded on E@gle.i. To obtain 'read only' access to the investigation contact should be made with the SSU on E/N 53909.

Victim:

Name:	Walter John BEDSER @ 'Johnny'		
Gender	Male	D.OB	03/09/1933
Relative contact (if known)	Mother – Edna BEDSER (believed to be deceased) Sister – Shirley DRISCOLL (DOB: [REDACTED])		

Homicide Details:

Time & Date	Between 1.55pm & 2pm 02/12/1980.		
Location:	Darcy Street Arcade Parramatta.		
COPS Event/P40 No.	1662029 (CIR)	Attached	Y
Previous Investigation Name: (Strike Force/Task Force/Operation)	Murder file 1980/75		
Command in charge:	Parramatta Detectives Office		

2. Cause of death

If the Post Mortem results are not contained within the investigation documents, contact may be made with the relevant Coroner's Court. A request in writing with NSW Police letterhead must be forwarded to the Registrar of the court, outlining the information required.

Post Mortem Results:	Y		
Exhibits Retained:	Y	Location:	Not known
Further Examination:	Not known		
<p>Comment: Clothing was taken from the deceased at the morgue and retained by D/Sgt CARTER as an exhibit. It is unknown where the clothing is now located as there were no exhibit books at Crime Scene in 1980. Clothing could only be tested for blood grouping and at this stage it does not appear to have been taken to DAL. The clothing would have been kept for physical assessment, ie. damage, tears, holes etc to be compared to the weapon. Its whereabouts is unknown. There was a sample of blood taken from the body of BEDSER, a sample of liver from body of BEDSER and a sample of stomach contents from body of BEDSER, according to P377 these items were taken to DAL on 10.12.1980. There current location is unknown</p>			

3. Investigation Records

Investigation Records relate not only to the statements taken from witnesses etc; but to all documents generated during the investigation. For investigations conducted prior to 1990 the investigation will be recorded by way of running sheets typed on occurrence pad forms. From about 1990 onwards, the TIMS system of investigation management was used. In 1999 the conversion to E@gle.i began.

Investigation Records Located:	Y
<p>Comment: Running sheets 1-105 located. Witness statements in archive box along with running sheets. Some witness statements referred to in running sheets not locatable in brief. A Coroners brief was not received in relation to this matter according to Coroners Court archives. They have on hand in the archives file the running sheets, PM report and a one page statement from D/Sgt McGREGOR from Homicide. The Crime Scene brief of D/Sgt CARTER has not been located. Stanmore archives contacted and could not locate file in their electronic database, further enquiries will need to be made with Kingswood and Stanmore archives.</p>	

During the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's, 'Investigation Resumes' were formerly completed by the Officer in charge of a homicide investigation that was not solved. It was a summary of the investigation, highlighting suspects, significant inquiries and evidence and was forwarded to the Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Branch.

Investigation Resume:	N
<p>Comment: Request made to Detective Hamilton in July 1981 by MO Section for the resume. Response from D/Sgt Hamilton 06/08/1981 stated that the investigation had not been completed. No person has been arrested, nor had a date for the Coronial Inquiry been set.</p>	

Progress Reports have been used by the former Crime Agencies since 1997 and the State Crime Command since 2002. They are a monthly report submitted by the officer in charge of an investigation, detailing the progress of the inquiry and significant events. Copies are maintained by Operations Co-ordination, State Crime Command.

Progress Reports:	N
<p>Comment: Not Applicable.</p>	

Post Operational Assessments are the current replacement for an Investigation Resume. They are submitted by the Officer in Charge of the investigation to Operations Co-ordination, State Crime Command, at the completion of an investigation.

Post Operational Assessment:	N
<p>Comment: Not Applicable.</p>	

4. Coroner's Inquest

Details of Coroner's Inquests, including Coroner's Findings, may be obtained from the Registrar of the relevant Coroner's Court by submitting a request in writing with NSW Police letterhead.

Coroner's Inquest Held:	Y	Date: June 1983
Court: Westmead	Coroner: N.F.WALSH	
Inquest Brief Located	No. File located but no brief	
<p>Findings: <i>Open finding.</i> On 2 December 1980 at Parramatta centre, died of blood loss due to lacerated liver and left lung inflicted earlier that day at 4 Darcy Street Parramatta by a person unknown.</p>		

5. Original Case Officer

Attempts should be made to locate and interview the original Case Officer even if they are no longer employed by the NSW Police Department. In the event that they are not located, another senior investigator from the inquiry should be approached. A list of investigators significantly involved in the investigation should be compiled.

OIC Name:	Det Sgt I. Hamilton.	Interviewed:	N:
Serving Member:	N:	Location:	[REDACTED]
<p>Comment: D/Sgt HAMILTON, date of birth [REDACTED] retired from the NSWPF in January 1994. His current address is listed as above according to COPS.</p> <p>Supt FESZCZUK located and spoken to as a member of the homicide squad investigating the homicide at the time.</p>			

Other Investigators:

Name:	Current Location:
D/Sgt John McGregor (Homicide)	Terminated May 1990
D/S/C Graeme John Trebley (Homicide)	Terminated December 2001
D/Sgt Barry Smith (Homicide)	
D/S/C Brian Clive McHugh (Homicide)	Terminated October 2007
D/Sgt John Patrick Toohey (Parramatta CI)	Terminated November 1989
D/Sgt Bryant (Parramatta CI)	
Det Bob Broad (Parramatta CI)	Terminated November 2003 Deceased
Sgt Keith Steele Kerr (Parramatta GD)	Terminated July 1989
D/Sgt Graham Richard Carter (Parramatta Scientific)	Terminated June 1992 Deceased
Cst Williams (Fingerprints)	Fingerprints Section
Sgt Robert (Fingerprints)	Fingerprints Section
Sgt Barry Fay (Fingerprints)	Terminated September 1993
P.Cst James McArthur (Parramatta CI) – Rego [REDACTED]	Inspector @ Newcastle LAC
D/Sgt Kenneth Wakefield (Homicide)	Terminated July 2000
D/S/C Zenio Feszczuk (Homicide) – Rego [REDACTED]	Superintendent @ Penrith LAC

6. Weapons

The Ballistics Unit, Sydney Police Centre has a large store of firearms, ballistic material and exhibits with ballistic damage held in their office from historical murders. For other weapons see point 7.

Type:	N/A	
Recovered:	Y/N:	Location:
Further Examination	Y/N:	
Action:		
Comment: Not Applicable.		

7. Exhibits

The original Exhibit Book is obviously the best place to begin to track the movement and location of exhibits. Many homicide exhibits however were never entered into Station exhibit books as they were recovered from crime scenes by Crime Scene Officers and entered into Registers at the particular office at which the Officer was attached. From there, many were forwarded to DAL and other experts. Inquiries have revealed that there is still a large store of exhibits held at the CSU Satellite Offices. DAL are in possession of thousands of samples taken from exhibits for the period 1986 –1997. These samples were not analysed and a DNA sample placed on the data-base. From 1997, all DNA profiles obtained from samples were placed on the database.

Attempts should be made to locate all exhibits and determine what examinations have already taken place. The table below should be completed.

Exhibits located

Exhibit	Location (exhibit No.)	Previous Examinations	Status
Knife found at scene.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80 Removed from DAL 24.12.1980	Unknown
Clothing of deceased removed at mortuary.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Sample of Liver taken from body of deceased.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80	Unknown
Sample of stomach and contents taken from deceased.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80	Unknown
Sample of blood taken from deceased.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80	Unknown
Sample of blood taken from body of deceased.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80	Unknown
Swab of blood taken from showcase glass at Parramatta.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80 Removed from DAL 24.12.1980	Unknown
Swab of blood taken from floor from behind counter at Darcy St, Parramatta.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80 Removed from DAL 24.12.1980	Unknown
Swab of blood taken from wall behind counter at Parramatta.	Unknown	Taken to DAL 10.12.80 Removed from DAL 24.12.1980	Unknown

8. Fingerprints

There was no electronic fingerprint database in existence prior to 1986 when N.A.F.I.S. (National Automated Fingerprint Identification System) was established. All fingerprints were categorised and searched manually. When N.A.F.I.S. was established this enabled the capability of searching fingerprints electronically rather than by manual means. Palm prints for serious crime were back-captured on N.A.F.I.S. Fingerprints retrieved from homicide crime scenes were collected and filed in unsolved homicide files at the Fingerprint Latent Unit – Major Crime. All historical Fingerprint Major Crime Files are held with the Records Unit on Level 1, Tower B of Police Headquarters. (A list of these case files are in possession of the Commander, Latent Print Section, Fingerprint Operations, Criminal Identification Specialist

Branch (C.I.S.B.)). Contact can be made with staff at the Major Crime Response Section on 27388 For cases occurring after 1986 results can be viewed through FCSR. In May 2001 N.A.F.I.S. was upgraded (N.A.F.I.S. 2) which allowed the capability of searching palm print impressions. It would appear that there are no archived records dating back to prior to 1971.

Fingerprints Available:	Y
Fingerprint Case Number:	80/9116
Major Crime Reference Number:	Not Applicable
Person Identified:	Geoffery SMITH ([REDACTED] - 41 years) CNI: [REDACTED] I206 [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] - 9 years) CNI: [REDACTED] I205 ([REDACTED] - 15 years) CNI: [REDACTED] Mavis TURNER ([REDACTED] - 61 years) No find
<p>Comment: Four new suspects had been identified when the fingerprint case was reviewed in 2007, as listed above. These hits were cold link hits. It does not appear that these names have come up during the investigation. According to the ages at the time of offence, SMITH is the only suspect who fits the age of the suspect; however is deceased as of 2002. Further enquiries to be conducted in relation to SMITH, given his extensive criminal history, pre and post this investigation. The location of the print is unknown however the file is available upon consultation with S/Sgt Fiona West at Major Crime Fingerprints (EN: 27388).</p>	

9. Witnesses

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE WITNESSES TO BE CONTACTED AS PART OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

Witnesses are not to be contacted during this process, as the relationship between witnesses and suspects is not always known. The relationship between them may have changed over time and there is the possibility that the suspect may be alerted to a renewed investigation.

Also, it will not be desirable to raise the hopes of relatives, secondary victim's etc; that their matter will be re-investigated when it may be the case that nothing further can be done.

Witness lists must be extensive however inquiries will only need to relate to witnesses who provide significant evidence. Inquiries regarding witnesses should be confined to COPS, Intelligence Reports, RTA, Electoral Roll, Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages etc.

Witness:	Location:	How Located:	Relevance
I35 [REDACTED] - 15	[REDACTED]	COPS/RTA	Inappropriate homosexual activity with deceased
NP58 [REDACTED] - 17	[REDACTED]	COPS/RTA	Inappropriate homosexual activity with deceased

147 [REDACTED] - 18	[REDACTED]	COPS/RTA	Inappropriate homosexual activity with deceased
139 [REDACTED] - 19	[REDACTED]	COPS/RTA	Inappropriate homosexual activity with deceased
Debbie Faye SMITH	[REDACTED]	COPS/RTA	Eye Witness
Rofiena Mary DAVIS 17yrs in 80	Unknown		Eye Witness
Athole Janice AL DWINCKLE [REDACTED] - 44	[REDACTED]	COPS/RTA	Eye Witness

10. Suspect/s

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE SUSPECTS TO BE CONTACTED AS PART OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

Inquiries regarding the location and status of suspects should be confined to those listed above. Of particular importance to the Review is the fact whether suspects have been charged with other offences since the original investigation (particularly sexually related offences). If suspects are identified, a current profile is to be completed listing address, phone number, intelligence reports, marital status, associates, employment and any other relevant information. Checks should be confined to COPS, Intelligence Reports, RTA, Electoral Roll, Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages etc.

Suspect Identified:	Y	Profile attached:	Y
Name: Geoffery Lawrence SMITH	DOB: [REDACTED]	CNI: [REDACTED]	Status: Deceased
Comment: Identified through prints, unknown location of prints. Further information in fingerprint file on hand at Major Crime Fingerprints.			

11. Synopsis:

A synopsis of your review should be completed detailing the circumstances of the murder, lines of inquiry and any known suspects.

<p>Synopsis:</p> <p>Between 1.55pm and 2.00pm on Tuesday the 2nd of December 1980, Mr Walter John BEDSER (Born 3rd of September 1933) was at his place of work, being an antique shop situated at 4 Darcy Street, Parramatta.</p> <p>An unknown male has entered the antique shop where an argument has ensued. A witness</p>
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who was looking in the shop window describes the two males as physically fighting. The witness has seen the POI run from the shop calling out, "Get an ambulance". He was last seen heading in the direction of St Johns Park which surrounds the grounds of the Church. It is believed that the POI has stabbed Mr BEDSER a number of times.

Mr BEDSER staggers from his shop bleeding profusely and collapses on the footpath about 20 feet away from his shop. Police and Ambulance officers were called and arrived a short time later. Paramedics conveyed Mr BEDSER to Parramatta District Hospital, where he died as a result of his injuries. Life was pronounced extinct by Doctor Paul OLDER at 2.15pm the same day.

According to the Report On The Death Of A Patient To The Coroner submitted by M. MANNING, the deceased suffered; 10cm oblique cut to the right hypochondrium (upper abdomen), a lacerated liver and right lung. A 5cm deep ragged cut to the left chest which lacerated the left lung and 4 long slashes down to the muscle on the left arm.

A crime scene was established and Sergeant CARTER from the Crime Scene Section attended and seized a knife as an exhibit. It has been established that this knife could be the murder weapon. Sergeant CARTER also seized the deceased clothing from the mortuary. Sergeant CARTER obtained a number of fingerprints from the crime scene.

During the course of the initial investigation, it was ascertained that a male matching the description of the POI entered the Toy Shop situated in the Parramatta arcade and purchased a similar knife. Of note, the Toy Shop is only about 50 metres from the deceased antique shop.

It would appear that investigators established early on in the investigation that the deceased was a homosexual who was apparently promiscuous in his sexual activities with both sexes.

LINES OF ENQUIRY:

In relation to this investigation, three lines of enquiries were identified;

1. Canvass and appeal for witnesses.
2. Sexual deviancies of deceased regarding sexual relations with underage males.
3. Business dealing and associates of the deceased who was involved in the antique/pawn business. This would include his buying and selling of motor vehicles.

12. Recommendation:

You must submit a recommendation on the potential for any further investigation, including the scope of any subsequent investigation eg; opportunity for DNA link, potential for Undercover Operative to be employed, witnesses to be reinterviewed due to change of circumstances. If you recommend that further investigation should take place, list the most appropriate contact person should be listed.

Recommendation:

After careful consideration within the syndicate, we recommend that the death of Walter John BEDSER be reinvestigated.

The most appropriate syndicate member to be contacted is D/S/Cst Garren HAMILTON given his homicide background and knowledge of investigation.

Further enquiries will need to be made with Major Crime Fingerprints regarding the four identified suspects, with particular interest given to Geoffery SMITH. Enquiries also to be made in relation to Geoffery SMITH's charge photos for comparison to Penri and possible identification by witnesses as listed above.

Enquiries to be made with State Archives at Stanmore and Kingswood in attempt to locate Crime Scene brief. This may lead to the location of the outstanding exhibits as enquiries thus far with SPC, Parramatta LAC and S/Sgt HORN from Cold Case Justice Project have been unable to locate them thus far. Location of the exhibits may lead for further forensic analysis.

REVIEWER'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that the review has been conducted thoroughly and I have accessed all available documents and exhibits.

Signature:

Name:

Rank:

Date:

CO-ORDINATOR'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that sufficient time and opportunity has been provided to the case reviewer to conduct the attached review. I am satisfied that the reviewer has accessed available documentation and agree with their recommendations.

Signature:

Name:

Rank:

Position:

Date:

Parramatta		N.S.W. POLICE DEPARTMENT		REPUH I	P40
2. Location Code H1801	4. POLICE PATROL IN WHICH COMMITTED Parramatta		6.	7.	
3. Station Index No. 807 6998	5. Grid Code		1662029		(office use)

8. VICTIM—Name (Firm Name if Business) BEDSER Walter John		Res. Phone	9. TYPE OF CRIME MURDER	
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10. Res. Address		11. Bus. Address 4 Darcy St Parramatta		Phone
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12. Victim's Occupation, Sex, Age/D.O.B. Antique Dealer		13. Nature of any Injury & Condition Stab Wounds.		
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14. When Committed At or betw 1.40pm 2.12.80 & 1.50pm 2.12.80		15.			16. Where Committed Shop as in 11	
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17. REPORTED BY Philli STEPHENS		Phone	18. Address		
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19. Time & Date Reported 2pm 2.12.80		20. Police in Charge of Case Det Sgt Hamilton & Det Sgt Toohay			
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21. WITNESS Elizabeth BECK		Phone	22. Address		
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23. SUSPECT/OFFENDER 1:						Arrested	A	Reported Dec'd etc.	O	Wanted	W	Suspect only	S	Warrant issued	Identifiable	Photo Ref.	Good Likeness
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24. Name		25. Address						26. Place of Birth	
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27. <input type="checkbox"/>	28. Age 35-40	29. Sex N	30. Racial App. European	31. Height 180	32. Build solid	33. Hair drk brwn olive	34. Comp.	35. Eyes brwn	36. Occupation
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37. Alias/Nickname		38. Scars, Tattoos, Identifying Characteristics Clothing etc. wearing light coloured safaric coat and darker coloured trousers.							
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39. Associates (Incl. Ref.)		40. Places Frequented							
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41. SUSPECT/OFFENDER 2:						Arrested	A	Reported Dec'd etc.	O	Wanted	W	Suspect only	S	Warrant issued	Identifiable	Photo Ref.	Good Likeness
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Name		Address						Place of Birth	
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D.O.B.	Age	Sex	Racial App.	Height	Build	Hair	Comp.	Eyes	Occupation
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42. Arrested By		43. Station						44. Date of Arrest	
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45. MODUS OPERANDI — Describe Type of Premises or Vehicle and Area Where Committed retail antique shop									
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46. Describe Briefly How Offence Committed (Point & Method of Entry—Manner of Search—Character Assumed etc.) fatal stabbing of victim									
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47. Describe Weapon, Instrument, Trick, Device, or Force Used knife									
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48. Trademark, Actions or Conversation of Suspect/Offender(s)					49. Type of Property Taken or Reason for Offence					50. Vehicle Used (year, make, colour, etc.)				
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51. NARRATIVE. (Additional information concerning offence, witnesses, etc. If property, list identifiable items first)														
(Prop. Class'n.)												(Model No.)		(Serial No.)
Between 1.40pm and 1.50pm the suspect entered the shop of the deceased and for reasons unknown at the time, he stabbed the victim in the left shoulder penetrating the chest cavity and lacerating the left lung. A second stab wound was thrust between the 8th and 9th rib on the right side piercing the liver. As the deceased staggered out of his shop he fell through the plate glass display counter, severly cutting his left arm.														
DESCRIPTION CIRCULATED VIDE N.M. 35 ON THE 2.12.80														



NSW Police College
Continuing Education Directorate
Senior Detectives Course
Unsolved Homicide Assessment

Instructions for the Unsolved Homicide Assessment Panel

1. This assessment is prepared in conjunction with the Unsolved Homicide Unit who rely upon the recommendations of syndicates
2. Each syndicate has been provided with this document
3. You are assessing (a) a verbal briefing as to content and communication (b) the quality of the briefing document
4. Ask the five questions in the order they appear in this document
5. Give each syndicate member an opportunity to answer **one** question
6. Nominate syndicate members in a random order
7. Each panel member is asked to record the answer provided
8. The panel will be asked to provide feedback at a group debrief

Assessor's Name/rank

Assessor's Name/rank

Assessor's Name/rank

SYNDICATE GROUP NUMBER: 2 – Walter Bedser Murder

Question 1 Participant:

What are the circumstances of the offence?

How did your syndicate manage the task of reviewing the unsolved homicide?

Answer Provided/Comment -

What are the circumstances of the offence?

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An unknown male has entered the antique shop where an argument has ensued. A witness who was looking in the shop window describes the two males as physically fighting. The witness has seen the POI run from the shop calling out, "Get an ambulance". He was last seen heading in the direction of St Johns Park which surrounds the grounds of the Church. It is believed that the POI has stabbed Mr BEDSER a number of times.

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sexual activities with both sexes.

How did your syndicate manage the task of reviewing the unsolved homicide?

Our syndicate approached the task of reviewing the unsolved homicide using a three pronged strategy; *research, tactical and administrative*. Each team member was tasked in a way, so that all members had to give input into all components and still have carriage of their task. This approach was adopted so as to break up the responsibilities of the team members to make the tasks more manageable.

The initial investigation in 1980 was conducted in a thorough and methodical manner, and as such there was a great deal of correspondence to read.

The goal of the *research* team member was to read the entire brief of evidence and make notes of the lines of enquires that were identified by the initial investigators. These lines of enquires would generate possible tasks for other current team members.

Because there were so many aspects to the case review, a team member was assigned an *administrative* function. Their responsibility was to ensure the team's correspondence was up to date. This included, recording all handwritten notes and thoughts into a logical matrix or running sheet for the team to access at any time. This matrix would form a template to assist the team in reviewing the case.

Finally the *tactical* team member was tasked with making the physical enquiries. For example, calling and speaking with the Sergeant assisting the Coroner, Parramatta Exhibits Officer, conducting COPS checks, etc. Another task for this team member was to try and locate any physical items that might still be in existence.

Circle one of the following relative to the **content** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Circle one of the following relative to the **communication** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Comment -

Question 2 Participant:

What lines of inquiry were identified in the original investigation and did your review identify new lines of inquiry?

If yes, specify the new lines of inquiry and why they were not investigated during the original investigation including how you would prioritise each?

If no, how did the original team investigate each line of inquiry and why do you consider it to be adequate?

Answer Provided / Comment -

The team identified three lines of inquiries from the original investigation.

1. **Canvass.** Tracking down old witnesses. Taking supplementary statements from witnesses.
2. **Sexual habits of the deceased**, whom is homosexual and or bi sexual. It was apparent that the original investigators believed the deceased ran the antique shop and employed young boys to do odd jobs for him. Whilst at the shop, the deceased would perform sexual acts on the boys. **NP58** (19), **I35** (15) and **I47** were identified as young males who were involved in sexual activity with the deceased.
3. **Associates of the deceased.** An unknown male goes into Raymond Hadley's auctioneer shop and makes enquires re selling a lounge. The male states that the antique dealer down the road will give him \$850 for the lounge (Antique dealer believed to be the deceased), Hadley states take it. Hadley knows the deceased as a local antique dealer. Police show Hadley the Penri, who in turn ID's the male as the male with the couch.

The original investigators believed that the deceased had a number of associates that were of questionable character.

A line of enquiry that was investigated and eliminated from the investigation; **NP58** buys a Ford Escort for \$2900 (Money is loaned to **NP58** by deceased). Insurance claims officer from NRMA investigates possible false insurance claim against **NP58**. **NP58** was charged by then Detective Senior Constable Feszczuk for conspiracy to & defraud.

Circle one of the following relative to the **content** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Circle one of the following relative to the **communication** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Comment -

Question 3 Participant:

What information management system was used during the investigation and did this differ from how the information would be managed if the offence occurred today?

If the investigation occurred within the last ten years (eagle-i), comment on the thoroughness of the information management?

Answer Provided / Comment -

The information management system used during the original investigation was done via way of Running Sheets. This was a process where the investigators would establish lines of enquiries, which would be recorded chronologically. The OIC would assign a task for an investigator, which was completed. This would be reviewed by the OIC who might create a sub task to be completed. If another completed task referred to, or crossed over with another task, it was the OIC's job to make reference in the appropriate running sheet number.

If this investigation was to be managed currently, it would be managed using the e@gle.i system. E@gle.i has a capacity to categorise and sub categorise investigations more thoroughly, which may have been more beneficial to the original investigators. Notwithstanding the original investigation was conducted in a methodical manner, the OIC may have been able to prioritise his task allocation more efficiently.

*Circle one of the following relative to the **content** of the answer –*

Above average Average Below average

*Circle one of the following relative to the **communication** of the answer –*

Above average Average Below average

Comment -

Question 4 Participant:

Did you identify any deficiencies with regard to the crime scene management, exhibit management, witness management or any other investigative processes undertaken? What would you have done different to improve or progress the investigation?

Answer Provided / Comment -

Identified Deficiencies:

Crime Scene Management –

Unfortunately there was little mention of Crime Scene Management in the running sheets. The running sheet did state that a canvas was completed, however, no canvas sheets were located, if they were indeed ever done. The Parramatta Crime Scene Officer attended and made notes, drawings, and seized exhibits. This was not recorded accurately in the running sheets. It is unknown if any photographs were taken of the crime scene as there was no reference to them in the running sheets.

If this investigation was run today, it would be feasible that the brief of evidence would contain the canvas sheets, persons spoken to and their contact details, photographs from Crime Scene Officers/Fingerprint Officers and documented lines of enquiries for follow up.

Exhibit Management -

The running sheets stated that there were exhibits seized from the scene and the post mortem of the deceased, however, the running sheets do not record what the forensic outcome of the exhibit was. This was evident in relation to the knife which was believed to be the murder weapon, fingerprints located at the crime scene and the clothing seized from the deceased.

It would be reasonable to say, that along the way the original investigators would have seized a number of exhibits. There is no mention of exhibits seized as a direct result of investigators enquiries.

The syndicate has made enquiries in relation to the location of the murder weapon, as it would appear that this exhibit has been lost over time. This being the case there is no chance that present day methods of DNA extraction can be applied to the exhibit.

Current day investigations place enormous importance on Forensic Reviews. Given the fact that this investigation is a murder, a Forensic review would be mandatory. This gives the investigation some direction as all the parties with a vested interest can guide the OIC in a path that would be most beneficial for a

successful outcome. It is the syndicate's opinion that if this method was employed by the original investigation team, there may not have been a disjointed recording of exhibits.

An exhibit matrix would be employed to track every exhibit for continuity and operational reasons. This matrix assists investigators at a glance to ascertain where and at what stage an exhibit may be.

Witness Management –

It is quite clear that the original investigators spoke to a great number of people who in turn became a witness for the brief of evidence. These witnesses were managed in a methodical manner which made sense and were pertinent to the investigation. However, there was limited contact details for the witnesses and it would appear that there is a witness statement missing from the brief of evidence. Overall, the identification and management of the witnesses was done well.

If this was to be investigated currently, a detailed contact list would be created for all identified witnesses.

Identified Deficiencies -

The most significant deficiency identified with the case is the fragmented style in which the information was recorded and stored. The syndicate has established that there appears to be a *police brief of evidence*, a *Coronial brief of evidence* and a *Crime Scene brief of evidence*. This being the case, there is no complete brief of evidence in existence for current day investigators to peruse.

In 1983 a Coronial inquest was held, which returned a finding that the deceased died as a result of being stabbed by person/s unknown. There is no mention of this inquest in the police brief of evidence. In fact there are no police statements contained in the police brief. One would have to assume that the OIC would have had to complete an OIC statement which could have been read as evidence in chief for the Coroner. If there is such a statement, then this at the very least should have been recorded in the police brief.

In 2007, a forensic review was completed where a number of fingerprints were identified. There is no mention or notation in the police brief. This information should be contained within the police brief.

Circle one of the following relative to the **content** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Circle one of the following relative to the **communication** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Comment -

Question 5 Participant:

If you recommend that the death be reinvestigated, what do you propose to tell the victim's family about why a re-investigation is necessary and the quality of the original investigation?

If you did not recommend reinvestigation specify what and how you are going to tell the next of kin that the case is not going to be reinvestigated?

Answer Provided / Comment -

After careful consideration within the syndicate, we recommend that the death of Walter John BEDSER be reinvestigated.

The attached investigation plan charts out possible new lines of enquiries that could be probed. The most significant factor identified by the syndicate is that in 2008 a Fingerprint Officer has located fingerprint hits and named these hits as Persons Of Interest. These names are not recorded as POI's within the brief of evidence.

It is our opinion, that the family at this stage should **NOT** be informed of the reopening of the case. If told, this could bring false hope to loved ones if the fingerprints were ultimately eliminated from the investigation.

However, if the identified fingerprints did highlight a legitimate suspect, then investigators should give consideration to informing family members. The family members could be told something along the lines of; 'There are new technologies which have opened up a number of new opportunities for Police to pursue in relation to identifying the person who was responsible for the death of your loved one. It may be the case that nothing comes of these opportunities and I don't want you to get your hopes up, but I think you have a right to know'.

Circle one of the following relative to the **content** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Circle one of the following relative to the **communication** of the answer –

Above average Average Below average

Comment -
