

# Gay Murder Unsolved Two Years Later

Just a little over two years ago, to be exact, on Sunday night, April 25, 1985, popular drag entertainer Wendy Wayne (Wayne) met an untimely death in her Darlinghurst flat.

The original story from Issue No 1, of Sydney's Village Voice (dated May 9th, 1985) ran thus...

On Sunday night, 28 April, 1985, Wendy Wayne, 35, also known as Wayne Kerry Brennan, enjoyed dinner at a Kings Cross restaurant with two good friends. Leaving her friends after dinner around 9pm, Wendy arranged to meet them later that night at her place of employment, Pete's Beat Nightspot where she worked as a female impersonation entertainer. She failed to keep that appointment, and the following Tuesday, friend and co-worker at Pete's Beat, Tiny Tina, called Wendy's flat but got no reply. Becoming worried, Tina arranged for another colleague, Kenneth Beckham (Kenny) to call round to Wendy's flat to see if all was well. On arrival, Kenny found the door to the flat unlocked, and upon entering, found the television set and a heater both on. Thinking Wendy may have only gone out for a short time, Kenny rang Tina and informed her of this. Looking through the flat further, Kenny found that the bed had been disturbed and discovered Wendy's body, naked, on the floor. Thinking her only unconscious, Kenny again rang Tina who left work and hurried round to the flat, discovering Wendy Wayne dead.

According to Detective Sergeant Keith Smith of Darlinghurst Detectives, Wendy had received a sharp blow, capable of, but not necessarily rendering her unconscious. She was then shot twice at close range, once through the back and once through the back of the head. No bullets were found and the cartridges had been removed. The murder weapon was not recovered.

Reports in the afternoon papers throughout the week were, as usual, full of innuendos and gross inaccuracies. A

report in the *Daily Mirror* on Friday May 3 (1985) stated:

"A post mortem examination revealed that he had been sexually assaulted twice - the second time as he lay dead in a pool of blood".

I asked Detective Sergeant Keith Smith if he could substantiate this report - his reply, "This information cannot be substantiated until we receive the forensic examination results early next week. I don't know how this reporter (*Daily Mirror*) got that information. It's not possible."

Conflicting information has been reported of neighbours hearing shots, witnesses saying they saw Wendy in Premier Lane, a well known spot for drag, and other information have not helped police with their investigations. Police say that death occurred sometime Sunday night or early Monday (29th April) and could not commit themselves to a more accurate time of death at this stage.

Two years later, the mystery has not been solved. I spoke with police sources last week to ascertain if there had been any developments in the case. The case is now being handled by Detective Sergeant Steve McCann, Darlinghurst Detectives, the same person who initially handled the case of Perth dancer Michael Stevens, who was assaulted in Palmer Street and died later of his injuries.

If any member of the gay community has any information that may assist police to find the killer of Wendy Wayne, please contact Darlinghurst Detectives with that information. Alternatively, if you do know something and are unwilling to go direct to the police, we will gladly pass on the information for you, keeping your identity confidential. Act now if you know anything; let's prevent this from happening to somebody else!

Glenn Wells.

## WENDY WAYNE....

You were what you were,  
You were your own special creation.  
So we took a look,  
gave her the hook or an ovation.  
It was her world, that she wanted to have a little pride in.  
Her world, and it's not a place she had to hide in.  
Life's not worth a damn,  
till you can say, Hey world, I am what I am!

She was what she was,  
She didn't want praise, she didn't want pity,  
She beat her own drum,  
Some thought it noise, we thought it pretty,  
and so what, if she loved each feather and each spangle.  
Why not try to see things from a different angle.  
Life's just a sham,  
till you can shout out, I am what I am.

She was what she was,  
and what she was needed no excuses.  
She dealt her own deck,  
sometimes the ace, sometimes the deuces.  
It was one life and there's no return and no deposit.  
One life. Now it's time to open up your closet.  
Life's not worth a damn,  
till you can say,  
Hey world,  
I am what I am.

Tina and friends of "BIG RED".

Wayne Brennan alias Wendy Wayne.



**Wendy Wayne - definitely a person who's seen a lot of hard times and packed a lot of living into her thirty five years. Described by some as a "real rough diamond, with a heart of pure gold." Every Christmas, or round Easter, she opened her Darlinghurst home to those in the area who were down and out or had nowhere else to go for Christmas or Easter.**

From an early age, she became well known around the traps of Kings Cross and other suburban venues, working also as a receptionist for a world famous all male revue at a Kings Cross night spot.

In the early days, she drew large crowds to the Kings Cross Tavern, working there mainly with Rachael, Crystal and other local identities. Gilligans, in Bondi, was another venue where she became an identity all of her own.

Two years ago, along with Tiny Tina, Wendy returned to the Kings Cross Tavern where they staged some of the most colourful drag shows the Cross has ever seen. Around this time also, she worked at the Mansions, another of the night spots the 10 D.A.R.E.

**Cross had to offer. As time passed, Wendy realised that the management of the Kings Cross Tavern were simply using her for what they could get out of her, and consequently parted company.**

One night shortly afterwards, Wendy arrived down at Pete's Beat and offered to do a show for Tiny Tina, and primarily because of her many talents and dazzling personality, has been there ever since.

During her time at Pete's Beat, she not only managed to produce some four hundred costumes for the casts of the many shows staged at the Beat, she and Tiny Tina also made everyone that frequents the Beat feel very welcome, and indeed involved everyone in the shows as far as audience participation is concerned.

The shows were both highly professional and definitely extremely colourful, "Hallelujah Hollywood" being the most recent and lavish example that comes to mind. Because of Wendy's untimely and tragic death, an era has closed in gay entertainment that will be sadly missed, and often very fondly remembered.



Wells, Glenn. "Gay Murder Unsolved Two Years Later." *Darlinghurst Area Reporter Examiner*, [May 14th 1987], p. 10. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/ISPWCC716462683/AHSI?u=slnsw\\_public&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=3346c568](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/ISPWCC716462683/AHSI?u=slnsw_public&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=3346c568). Accessed 26 Sept. 2022.