
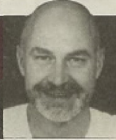


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**STILL WILDE ABOUT
OSCAR 28**

**THE ART OF BEING
CRIMP 35**

**The SILENT
SERVICE 9**


GAY HATE MURDER?

BASHED TO DEATH



STARRING HIMSELF

Sydney diva and mistress of soul and song Paul Capsis contemplates the future after a brilliant Mardi Gras season. See: *The Shimmering Voices Within* in Pink. ▶

PHOTO: JAMIE DUNBAR

KIRSTY MACHON

A mystery person seen with a Surry Hills gay man two nights before the man was brutally bashed to death may be the key to police investigations into the murder.

Surry Hills Police are keen to speak with the person, (pictured below right) believed to be in his late teens, who was seen in the victim's flat.

The body of James Meek, 51, was found in the hallway of his 12th floor Housing Commission flat on the morning of March 8. It was first thought Meek, who was HIV positive, may have died from a heart attack, as there were no signs of forced entry or a struggle.

But an autopsy revealed he had died from a series of severe blows to the head and chest, probably after being punched and kicked. A tiger's eye style ring and a watch, which he habitually wore, were missing from his body.

Police, who believe they could have a gay hate killing on their hands, would like to interview a young man understood to have been in Meek's flat late on the Monday evening before he died. They have provided an identikit sketch. The man was wearing baggy dark grey shorts and a dark sloppy joe, and was of medium height. Meek's friends have been unable to confirm his identity.

It is understood Meek was last seen entering the Northcott flats in Belvoir Street at Surry Hills, at about 8.30pm on Tuesday March 9. He had been walking his dog.

Police are anxious to determine his movements

later that evening.

Carol Anne King, a close friend, said she had spoken to Meek for an hour on the phone on the Monday night before he died. He had been expected at King's house the following day — but didn't show.

"That was vitally important," King said. "He was so reliable, you could set your watch to it. I started calling at about 2.30 in the afternoon — no answer."

King, and the manager of the apartment block, who was friendly with Meek, raised the alarm on the Wednesday morning.

Police gained entry into the unit, where they found Meek's body.



Detectives say they remain particularly puzzled by the apparent absence of a struggle. They are working on two possible theories — that Meek was bashed in the flat and died there, or that he was beaten elsewhere, and managed to return home before collapsing from his injuries.

Sergeant Tanos, from Surry

(continued page 5 ▶)

In the good times
In the bad times
That's what friends are for

Authorized by Kimberly O'Sullivan, 257 Oxford St, Darlinghurst, 2010.



VOTE

1

**Clover
MOORE**

AIDS groups win on eye saving drug

KIRSTY MACHON

People at risk of HIV-related blindness will have access to an experimental oral version of the drug ganciclovir, after months of frustrated lobbying.

Pharmaceutical heavyweights Roche will supply the drug, used to treat and prevent cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection, through a Clinical Trials Notification (CTN) protocol. Under this scheme, hospital-based ethics committees must approve the Roche protocol, so it could still be some weeks before the first patients actually benefit.

It will be available to patients who have infections or complications from the licensed, intravenous, version of the drug. It will also be available as a prophylaxis (prevention) for those at risk of the devastating infection: patients

with less than 100 CD4 cells, who have had a previous AIDS defining illness, and all HIV positive people with CD4 counts under 50.

Treatment activists warn, however, that people should carefully assess their risk of CMV before taking the drug which is highly toxic and can have serious side effects.

AIDS X editor, Lyle Chan, who has pursued this issue for months, is "happy" with the decision, which he said may have been hastened by pressure from activists.

Roche took a public relations pounding last year when the Director of Scientific Affairs at Syntex, a company bought out by Roche and which manufactures ganciclovir, told the *Star Observer* CMV was not life-threatening.

Chan said Roche's decision may have been speeded by

promising data on another drug, valaciclovir, shown in preliminary studies to have a possible anti-CMV benefit.

The decision to make the drug available through the CTN protocol, rather than the Special Access Scheme (SAS) should see the drug more widely available.

Dr Kate Clzzy, of the National Centre for HIV/AIDS Epidemiology and Clinical Research, confirmed St Vincent's Hospital had received the protocol. But ethics committee approval could take seven weeks.

"A lot of these committees meet every two months or every three months," said Chan, foreshadowing possible delays. Roche's Medical Director, David Kingston, said CTN had been chosen, "because once an ethics committee has approved the protocol, it's approved for everybody."

"Under SAS, it has to be approved for patient after patient," he said.

Asked about the role activism had played in the approval, he replied: "Of course activism has some effect [on the approval]. But one shouldn't overvalue it. To a certain extent, we would try and do it on compassionate grounds anyway. These things are never purely an Australian decision."



Lesbian artist Maree Azzopardi has chosen well known local politico, Susan Harben, as her subject for a portrait the 1995 Archibald Prize. PHOTO JAMIE DUNBAR

Dempsey murder: archer sought

KIRSTY MACHON

Detectives are pursuing "positive lines of inquiry" into the murder of gay man Stephen Dempsey following the macabre revelation that he died from a single arrow wound to the chest.

But they have criticised alarmist news reports which appeared last week claiming a hate killer could be stalking gay men.

Detectives made the unexpected announcement about the cause of Dempsey's death last week. They remain tight lipped about the kind of bow or arrow used, but it is understood to have been shot from a long bow at reasonably close range.

In November 1993, two men bushwalking in the area where Dempsey was last seen, were confronted by a man armed with a long bow and a quiver of arrows. They fled in terror and reported the incident to nearby Collaroy police. Police would not comment on the archer's description.

They believe a man similarly armed with a bow and quiver was seen in the area when Dempsey went missing on August 2 last year.

Dempsey, 34, disappeared from Deep Creek, a heat surrounded by isolated bushland, in Sydney's leafy northern suburb of Narrabeen. A hat, a boot and sunglasses had been the only clues recovered until his torso,

bound in chicken wire, was washed ashore at a secluded Pittwater Bay in December.

Detectives remain equivocal on whether the Dempsey murder was motivated by gay hate. Detective Senior Sergeant Ian Lynch has accused several gay callers of hampering investigations by insisting police treat the case as an anti-gay murder. One caller is understood to be complaining to the police internal affairs unit.

"They're thinking that the police aren't doing the right thing for the gay community by looking at this thing from the broadest possible range," Lynch said. "We get quite frustrated. We're trying to work together on this."

► **from page one** Hills Police, told the *Star Observer* police were keeping their options open on whether they were investigating a gay hate killing: "probably more so than not at this stage," he said. They also say it is possible he was the victim of a random assault and robbery.

"He was apparently very active sexually," Tanos said, "so perhaps it was someone he knew."

King described Meek, a volunteer for the People Living with and Affected by HIV and AIDS Luncheon Club, as "a beautiful man". She was devastated by the news of his murder.

"He had such a wonderful attitude to [his HIV infection]: don't give up," she said. "He was one of those elders of the community, so dearly loved by the young ones."

"He was a treasure — and now, the world has one less good person."

This is the choice



Clover Moore's Pledge

As an Independent, I pledge that:

- My first and only loyalty is to the community. No party machine tells me what to do!
- I will continue to work with you to build on the gains we have made together over the past seven years: combatting homophobia, discrimination, violence and harassment. In improving services for people living with HIV/AIDS. In fighting to protect your rights.
- I will continue to be a third force, forcing the major parties to act on the gay, lesbian, transgender and HIV/AIDS issues that both Liberal and Labor would rather ignore.

The Labor Candidate's Pledge

"I hereby pledge myself to comply with the rules of the Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch)."

"I also pledge myself on all occasions to do my utmost to ensure the carrying out of the principles embodied in the Labor Platform, and on all such questions to vote as a majority of the Labor Party may decide at a caucus meeting."

Labor Party rules require all endorsed candidates to sign the above pledge. On several occasions this pledge has required Labor MP's and councillors to betray the interests of gay men and lesbians, and people living with HIV and AIDS.

...and remember, the Liberal candidate's pledges are only as good as the National Party will allow

This Saturday, let's choose Clover

Vote 1 Clover Moore

Authorised by Kimberly O'Sullivan, 257 Oxford St, Darlinghurst