

DEATH OF KENNETH RICHARD BRENNAN.**Number 1096 of 1995.**

Sadly, we face each year a number of what we call unsolved murders. Mr. Brennan was living in a homosexual relationship with a [NP215]. There has been a comprehensive investigation into his homicide. Detective Senior Constable Laura Thurtell has followed all reasonable leads and generally investigated the matter in her usual competent way. No real suspect has emerged, and in fact, it must be said that those closest to the deceased just before he died must be seen to have been unlikely to have been involved. Several pieces of physical evidence, a print on a champagne glass, and some underwear found, point to a person who has not yet been identified.

I am not going to retrace in details the movements of the deceased on the June long week-end, 1995 in detail. Some weeks before, in the 12 May edition of the homosexual newspaper, "Q Weekly" he placed an advertisement in the following terms:-

"ELIZABETH BAY two hung guys looking for third hung guy for safe, fun times. Active or passive, any age or nationality [REDACTED]"

Whilst a dozen inquiries were made, a person named [NP214] was introduced to Brennan and [NP215] by one [NP199]. The deceased and [NP215] met [NP214] the weekend before for sex, [NP214] and [NP215] met again mid week. On the long weekend [NP215] and the Deceased again went to [NP214]'s residence at Woollahra, arriving at 6 pm on Saturday night 10 June, 1995. The deceased left, claiming tiredness, on the same day at about 10 pm. [NP215] stayed on overnight, rang the deceased at about 2 pm Sunday 11 June, 1996, leaving a message on the answering machine. He stayed that night again and on the Monday morning again tried to ring the deceased. This time he indicated to [NP214] that the answering machine was not on and no-one answered the telephone. He left at about 5 pm Monday. He returned to his residence and noted a window open and lights on and a blind up. He entered, noting what appeared to be dirt (blood) on the walls and only later noting the deceased though it is difficult to see how he would not see him, positioned as he was. He went to Kings Cross Police Station and informed police.

[NP215] has taken part in a lengthy record of interview, made a statement, given samples to police and generally done all possible to assist them. No piece of evidence indicates his involvement in this matter.

The deceased was beaten up and stabbed to death. He received some 15 stab wounds. He died between 5.30 and 11.30 pm on Sunday, 11 June, 1995, presumably some time after [NP215] left the message on the machine (no such message was found by police and any message may have been deleted by the deceased).

The direct cause of death was the stab wounds to the chest, other injuries being superficial cuts and scratches and defence injuries to the upper limbs. Head, facial injuries and a spinal injury indicate that the deceased was well beaten up. They raise the possibility, as do the condoms found, that the assailant and the deceased were not alone in the unit at the time of death. Importantly an injury to the right side of the face shows a shoe print and indicates he may have been stomped to the face, possibly after the knifing. He seems also to have received a blow to the mouth. One stab wound (# 4) was such that he would not have lived long (injury to the liver, diaphragm and heart).

Detective Constable Thurtell concluded:-

"Evidence establishes that the deceased was last seen alive on Sunday, 11 June, 1995 at about 6.30 pm at King Steam Sauna, Level 1, 38-42 Oxford Street Darlinghurst. The deceased's body was found in his home at [REDACTED] Onslow Avenue, Elizabeth Bay about 5.30 pm on Monday, 12 June, 1995, by his boyfriend [NP215] it is the opinion of the

investigating police that after leaving King Steam Sauna he has met person or persons at an unknown location or upon returning to his home has met some person by arrangement. The deceased has then had sexual intercourse with a person or persons. It would appear that after the sexual act he has been stabbed, possibly in the bathroom and other parts of the unit. Evidence suggests that he has also been hit in the face with a metal frypan. There is evidence to suggest that a struggle has taken place in the bedroom and hallway and the deceased has eventually been placed in the position he was found with a pillow under his body. There is evidence to suggest that the deceased's body has been sponged down with the sponge located on his neck. Dr. Bradhurst was satisfied that the knife blade located in the bedroom was the murder weapon. There were no signs of a forced entry to the unit and no property stolen (with the possible exception of cash from his wallet).

Known associates and the ex-lover of the deceased, [NP215] have been interviewed and there is no evidence to suggest that they are involved in the murder of the deceased. Enquires and information received from the public led to the interview of three suspects, [NP188] [NP198] [NP198] and [NP202] who have been eliminated from this inquiry.

It is the opinion of investigating police that the frenzied attack, the positioning of the body with the pillow under the torso, the sponging down of the body, and the signs of sexual intercourse may indicate that the offender or offenders may be homosexual or homophobic."

As I said earlier, a [NP199] arranged the meeting between the Deceased, [NP215] and [NP214]. He did not assist police by providing samples which may assist in eliminating him from their inquiry. He has not attended court, claiming illness. He had, however, the right to refuse to provide samples and it is in my view and the view of Detective Senior Constable Thurtell, that adjourning the inquest and forcing him to come to court will be unlikely to take the matter further. Certainly I cannot force him to provide samples such as others have provided.

There was no evidence of forced entry, indicating an invitation, an opening of the door and then a forcing in, or a key holder.

The Crime Scene was competently and carefully examined and analysed. It is the opinion of Detective Constable Van Leeuwen that he was stabbed in the bedroom, tried to get to the front door, made it to the bathroom where he may have again been stabbed and rendered unconscious or deceased. he has then been dragged to the location found and placed as found. This view of events appears to me to be reasonably likely

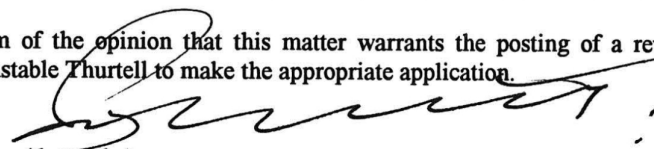
Mr. Brennan enjoyed short term relationships regularly, with a range of persons often met either through advertisements in the newspaper or at the steam bath. It may be that he met his assailant some time after leaving the company of [NP215] and [NP214]

I am unable to record a finding as to who committed this homicide. As with all "unsolved murders, the file will remain open and reviewed periodically by police.

FINDING:-

**THAT KENNETH RICHARD BRENNAN DIED ON OR ABOUT 11 JUNE, 1995 AT
[REDACTED] ONSLOW AVENUE, ELIZABETH BAY, OF STAB WOUNDS TO CHEST,
INFLECTED THEN AND THERE BY PERSONS UNKNOWN.**

I am of the opinion that this matter warrants the posting of a reward, and ask Detective Senior Constable Thurtell to make the appropriate application.



(John Abernethy)
N.S.W. Senior Deputy State Coroner,
Glebe. N.S.W.
17 September, 1996.