

Daily Telegraph 22/07/2002 - P4

Product Type: TEXT DOCUMENTS: Investigators Note

Date of Note: 21 Jul 2002

Brief Description: Attached as an annexure to this investigators note is a copy of Daily Telegraph 22/07/2002 - P4

GAY HATE: GANGS LINK TO DEATHS

Lifting the lid off a culture of hatred

Newsreader Ross Warren disappeared 13 years ago today. In this exclusive report ANGELA KAMPER uncovers the link between Warren and the brutal deaths of five other gay men

WOLLONGONG TV star Ross Warren was last seen driving on Oxford St through Taylor Square.

The 24-year-old's body was never found. His car keys were discovered on a ledge at the bottom of a cliff in South Beach with his brown Nissan Pulsar parked nearby.

Continuous pleas by his mother Kay Warren for police to reopen the case have now brought to light the scale of the brutal gay-hate beatings which took place in the eastern suburbs 12 years ago.

Gay-hate crimes were never reported before 1988, the beatings were treated as assaults.

The severity of the beatings was never understood and so the connection between those carrying out the crimes was never made.

It was not until Mrs Warren's push that police unearthed a loose link between the deaths of her son and five other victims and the gay-hate gangs operating between 1987 and 1991.

Now police believe the gangs involved in the eastern suburbs beatings were leaders to other gangs who visited Alexandria Park.

One victim succeeded in giving evidence to the coroner next year told The Daily Telegraph he was dragged up a hill towards the edge of a cliff before making his escape.

The victim who does not wish to be identified said he was punched and kicked repeatedly after being called a "poofster".

"There were two that did the beating and two young girls watched it happen with no compassion or sympathy," he said.

"After being beaten by these people and knowing what FTK stood for I thought I was going to die."

The victim was beaten a month after 23-year-old John Russell was found dead near Marks Park.

He said the two youths yelled: "You're a poofster and you don't deserve to live."



Part Time Killers graffiti.

After calling for help he said the only reply he got was from a resident who called back: "I don't help poofsters."

"When you are gay there is a level of acceptance that there will be some hatred towards you," said Craig Hills, a close friend of Mr Warren.

As an anchor working for WIN television in Wollongong, Ross Warren spent his weekends in Sydney where a vibrant gay community had established itself.

"He was one of those people everyone liked," Mr Hills said.

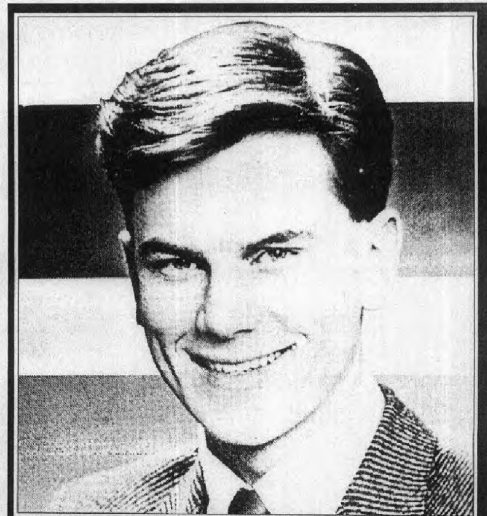
"He was very gentle, very kind and never raised his voice."

Mr Warren had visited Marks Park before. A popular meeting spot for gay men since the early 1960s, during summer up to 100 men would gather there at once — not only to "get lucky", but to socialise and enjoy the seaside view.

But the park also meets the Bondi to Cronulla walk, where more than 80 members of two gangs known as The Bondi Boys — also went by the name Part Time Killers.

Another gang of three boys "hung out" only metres away.

Four months after Mr Warren's



Main picture: newsreader Ross Warren whose body has never been found, and (below) victims John Russell, Kitchieorn Paltanajaturathaporn, Raymond Kraam and Richard Johnson

disappeared the body of John Russell was found at the bottom of the cliff.

It was facing the cliff wall and the back of his shirt had been pulled up.

Trails have shown it is unlikely he would have twisted his body around in a 12.5m fall.

The most essential piece of evidence was a batch of hair found in his left hand, which police have not been able to match.

"He had just received an inheritance and planned to move up to 'Crest Heads'," said a friend who had a drink at the Bondi Hotel with Russell the night he went missing.

"I had a dozen others turned up to the Waverly Legion Club for his farewell and he never showed."

Due to the inheritance police believe it is unlikely Mr Russell would have been planning suicide.

Seven months after Mr Russell's death Thai national Kitchieorn Paltanajaturathaporn, 34, was also found at the bottom of a cliff at South Beach.

Blood was spattered all over the footpath.

Another man who was with him was also beaten but managed to survive and give evidence.

The gang of three juveniles was convicted with Mr Russell's murder.

Since Operation Tardale began, investigating a correlation between the deaths and gay-hate gangs several others have come forward with their stories.



Murder hunt uncovers gangs linked by hate

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rock ledge at South Beach a couple of days later. Mr Russell, 31, a bartender, was found dead at the bottom of the same cliffs.

The other unsolved murders include Raymond Kean, who was beaten to death at Allen Park in Randwick, on January 1, 1991, and William Allen, beaten at Alexandria Park on December 20, 1988.

Members of the three gangs, who stole money and assaulted gay men, have already been linked to two other murders.

● That national Kitchieorn Paltanajaturathaporn, who fell to his death from a cliff on the Bondi-Tamarama walkway on July 20, 1990. The three members of the Tamarama gang were convicted of murder in this case, and

● Richard Johnson, who was beaten to death at a park in Alexandria Park on January 24, 1990. A charge of eight were convicted for his murder.



Iron bars used in one of the murders

Two other men, who were assaulted in Bondi where Mr Russell and Mr Warren went missing, are expected to give evidence at the coronial inquiry, early next year.

One of them was dragged to the edge of a cliff and threatened after being asked if he was gay.

Among the dozens of people interviewed by police are 14 who have previously faced murder charges.

One of those interviewed includes a first grade football player.

Evidence in the investigation include hair found in John Russell's left hand and water pipes found in the sea at the bottom of the cliff.

Water pipes were used in an attack on a gay man in Centennial Park in December 1988, the crime scene, post-mortem examination and crime scene photographs.

Other evidence includes re-examination of police have used covert operations to gather further evidence that will be presented before the coroner next year.

They are hoping more people who visited Marks Park in private may beat in South Beach, will come forward and phone Paddington police station on 855 8258.

Profiles of teen gangs

● THE BONDI BOYS — also known as The Part Time Killers. Used a graffiti tag PTK. Up to 30 members, aged 15 to 18

● Hung out in Bondi and on the Bondi-Tamarama walk of night, near Mark's Park

● THE TAMARAMA GANG
No gang title, three members aged 16 to 17
Met on the Bondi-Tamarama walk at night

● THE ALEXANDRIA GANG
No gang title known to police, up to 15 members, aged 15 to 18
Met in Alexandria Park