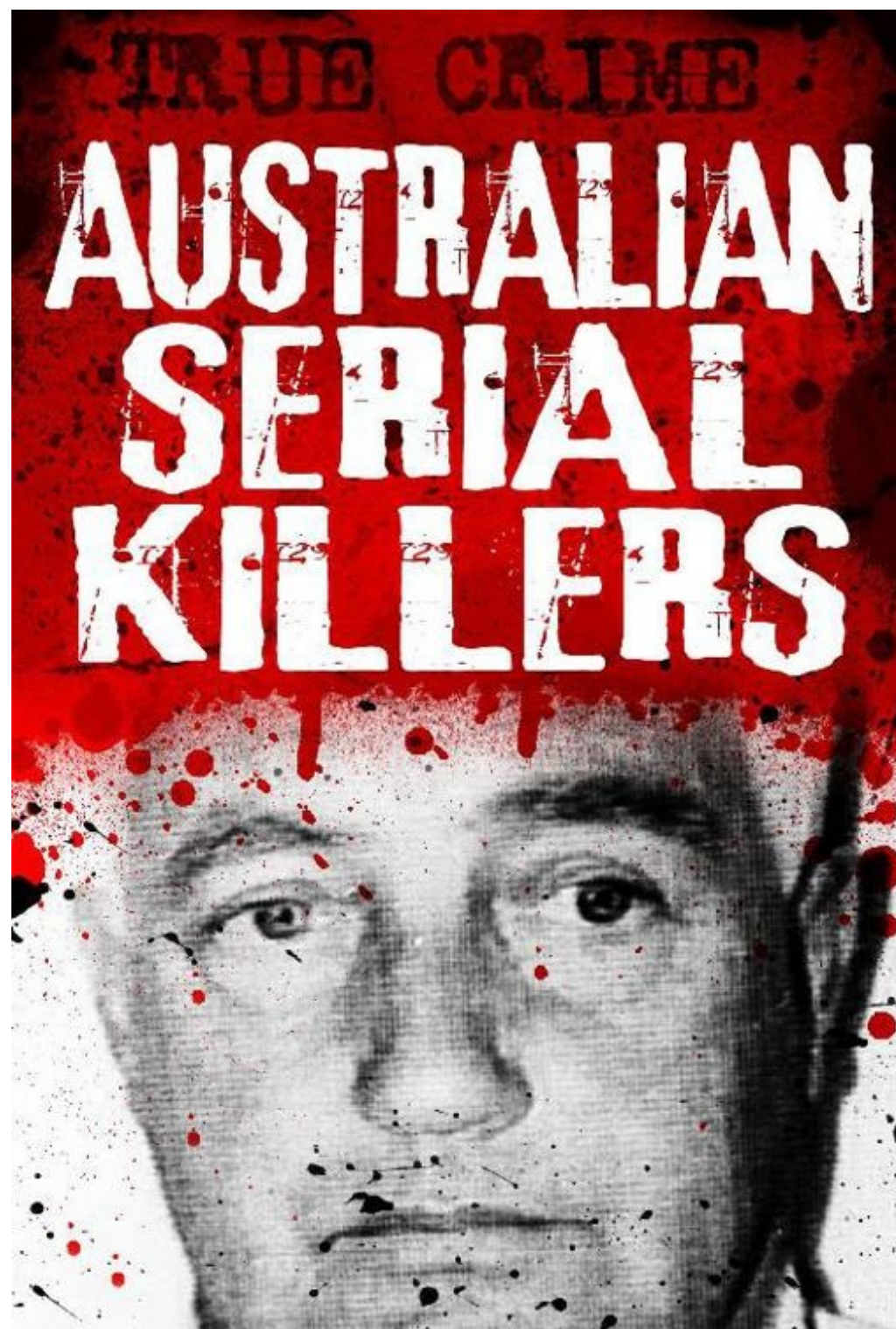


TRUE CRIME

AUSTRALIAN SERIAL KILLERS





Australian Serial Killers

The rage for revenge

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Eric Edgar Cooke

The city of Perth in Western Australia lies more than 1,600 miles away from the nearest major city, Adelaide. Perhaps, back in the 1960s, it was this isolation that made its inhabitants so relaxed. It was the kind of place where people rarely bothered to lock the doors of their houses or their cars; the people were friendly and trusted each other, always ready to lend a helping hand.

That all changed one summer night in 1963 when Eric Edgar Cooke unleashed a one-man crime wave, a spree of senseless killing that shocked Perth, changing the city and its inhabitants forever.

Cooke had already killed, in 1959, when he broke into a house owned by a divorced woman who lived alone. As she slept in her bedroom, he searched the rest of her house for cash and valuables. Finding none, he entered the bedroom but was surprised to find the woman awake. She leapt out of bed and struggled with him until he fumbled in his pocket for the small knife he carried in case of emergencies. He plunged it into her body several times, killing her.

He had never had much of a chance. Born in Perth in 1931, with a cleft palate, he underwent a successful operation to improve his looks. But his speech was never quite right and he was inevitably bullied at school. Things were not much better at home. His father was a violent alcoholic who beat his wife, son and two daughters regularly with both fists and a belt. His father hated Eric so much that if his mother seemed to be paying too much attention to him, she was beaten for it.

Needless to say, he became a withdrawn, quiet child, with few friends. He also began to suffer from headaches and blackouts which were not helped by a bad fall from a bicycle and injuries received when he unwittingly dived into a pool of shallow water when he was fourteen. He was examined by several doctors who, initially suspecting some kind of brain damage, carried out an exploratory operation. None was found.

Cooke was kicked out of a number of schools for disruptive behaviour and by the age of fourteen had dropped out of the education system altogether. He found work, but as his father often spent his wages on booze, all his earnings had to be given to his mother to help feed and clothe herself and his sisters. Life went from bad to worse. At sixteen, he made the mistake of trying to protect his mother from one of his father's drunken beatings. He ended up in hospital for three weeks, telling doctors that he had been in a fight with other boys.

Eventually, he was called up to do his national service and finally learned something. Unfortunately for Perth and a number of its inhabitants, it was how to use a rifle.

He had already begun his criminal career before going into the army. Giving all his earnings to his mother left him little to live on and he had resorted to housebreaking to bolster his wages. It was easy with all those unlocked doors. While the occupants watched television, he would sneak in and raid their purses and wallets. Not only would he steal, however. He became a peeping tom, enjoying watching women get ready for bed or making love with their husbands.

Demobbed from the army, he carried on where he had left off, breaking and entering and sometimes when he got bored or found nothing worth stealing, vandalising the house he was in or even setting fire to it. Eventually, however, he was caught, his fingerprints connecting him with numerous burglaries. He went to prison for three years.

In 1953, aged twenty-two, he married an eighteen-year-old British immigrant by the name of Sally and he would have seven children with her, although even now his bad luck continued – one of his sons was born with a developmental disability, while a daughter was born without a right arm. He was working, however, as a truck driver, although at the weekend he pursued his criminal activities to bring in some extra cash.

The law caught up with him again in 1955 when he was given two years' hard labour for stealing a car. In 1960, having got away with the killing of the divorcee, he returned to prison. In spite of his record, however, the police believed him to be harmless.

How wrong they were was about to become evident.

That summer Saturday night in 1963 at around two in the morning, Nicholas August, a married man, was sharing a drink in his car with barmaid Rowena Reeves. Suddenly, Rowena thought she saw a man and August leaned out of the window and told him to 'Bugger off!' thinking he was a peeping tom. When August chucked an empty bottle at the figure in the dark, Rowena noticed that the man had a gun in his hands, and was alarmed to see that it was aimed at them. She pushed her companion's head down as a bullet whizzed into the car, grazing his neck and thudding into her forearm. August fumbled with the keys and switched on the engine as quickly as he could. He pushed his foot down hard on the accelerator, gunning the car past the shooter and almost hitting him. By the time they reached the local hospital, Rowena had slipped into unconsciousness through loss of blood, but, fortunately, both survived.

The night was still young, however, and Eric Cooke's next victim wasn't so lucky.

An hour after Nicholas August and Rowena Reeves had been attacked, a couple of miles away, fifty-four-year-old George Walmsley was awakened by the sound of his doorbell. Puzzled as to who would be at the door at this time in the morning, he got out of bed, went to the door and opened it. Immediately, a bullet smashed into his forehead. He was dead before he hit the ground.

A little later, at a boarding house located just around the corner from where George Walmsley had died, a nineteen-year-old student, John Sturkey, who was sleeping on the building's verandah was discovered shot between the eyes.

But it was not over yet. When Brian Weir failed to show up for work at the Surf Life Saving Club next morning, one of his colleagues went to get him out of bed, thinking he had merely overslept. He found Weir in bed alright, but his sheets were soaked in blood and there was a bullet hole in his forehead. He lived, but suffered serious brain damage before dying three years later.

The press went crazy and a large reward was offered for information leading to the arrest of the person they were calling the 'Maniac Slayer'. It was the random nature of the shootings that terrified people most. They had no idea where and when he would strike next and took to sleeping with loaded guns by their beds.

All went quiet for three weeks.

Joy Noble was making breakfast one Saturday morning in her West Perth home when, glancing out of the kitchen window, she was horrified to see a naked young woman lying on the grass in her garden. Initially, she feared that it was her daughter, and first made sure that she was safe and well before investigating. The body was that of Lucy Madrill, a twenty-four-year-old social worker who lived in a neighbouring street. She had been raped, strangled and, bizarrely, dumped on Joy Noble's lawn. The police were flummoxed, but, with absolutely no evidence to support the theory, claimed that the murderer must have been an Aborigine.

Cooke laid low for the next six months before shooting dead, on 10 August 1963, an eighteen-year-old science student, Shirley McLeod, leaving the child she had been babysitting unharmed. The gun was

different, but the investigating officers had no doubt that their man had just claimed his fourth victim. They began to fingerprint every male in Perth over the age of twelve and there was talk of closing down the alleys that ran down the backs of houses. Doors in the city were now firmly locked at night. It was a stroke of luck rather than a great piece of detective work that finally enabled them to track their man. On Saturday 17 August an elderly couple were out picking flowers in a wooded area in the pretty Perth suburb of Mount Pleasant when they spied a rifle concealed in some bushes. It turned out to be a Winchester .22 and police determined it was the weapon that had been used in the recent killings. They reasoned that their killer would almost certainly return to collect the weapon, staking out the area for two weeks before he finally turned up. Eric Cooke was arrested, handcuffed and at last taken into custody. The entire city breathed a sigh of relief.

At first, he denied everything, but gradually he began to open up, admitting to some two hundred and fifty break-ins and car thefts, and remembering the smallest details of crimes committed years previously. He told how he had abused women while they slept, and even described how one girl thought she had fallen out of bed and banged her head when really he had hit her with an object but before he could continue his assault, he had been scared off. He told them of hit-and-runs that he had deliberately perpetrated, running people over and then speeding off without stopping.

He had obtained the Winchester during a burglary while the owners of the house were watching television in the lounge. He had taken it and some cartridges thinking he could sell it, but instead showed the babysitter, although he claimed to have absolutely no memory of the incident, only realising what he had done when it was reported on the next day's television news.

He confessed to the murder of Lucy Madrill, telling officers that she had woken up when he made noise as he robbed her house. He had struck her and then strangled her with the flex of a lamp. He had then raped her lifeless body before dragging her from her house with the intention of stealing a car and dumping her body somewhere. Finding only a bicycle, however, he had left the body on Joy Noble's lawn and cycled home.

All he could say about the fateful night the previous summer when he had shot five people, was that he had done it because he 'wanted to hurt somebody'. He had stolen the gun and a car, and had driven around until he found Nicholas August and Rowena Reeves. He had merely been spying on them but lost his temper when the bottle was thrown at him. The rest were just pieces of opportunism. The only shooting he claimed to regret was that of John Sturkey. Ultimately, he conceded that he was 'just a cold-blooded killer'.

He confessed to the 1959 murder of thirty-three-year-old Patricia Vinico Berkman, lover of local radio star Fotis Hountas. She had received multiple stab wounds to the head as she lay in bed in her apartment in South Perth. Furthermore, he claimed to have killed wealthy twenty-two-year-old socialite Jillian Brewer later that same year. A twenty-year-old deaf mute, Darryl Beamish, had confessed to killing her but later claimed that he had been forced to make the confession. Nevertheless, he was found guilty and given a death sentence. Cooke, however, cast doubt on the verdict by recalling tiny details about the flat. He also solved a mystery about the murder. When the woman's body was found, all the doors to the flat were locked from the inside and there was no sign of forced entry. Cooke explained that he had stolen one of the dead woman's keys when he had broken into the flat a few months previously. The appeal court judges did not believe Cooke's confession, but at least Beamish did not hang; his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Eric Edgar Cooke had no such luck. He was hanged in Fremantle Prison on 26 October 1964, the last man to be hanged in Australia.

Unlucky to the bitter end.

William 'The Mutilator' Macdonald

He became a killer on the spur of the moment, he later claimed. It was 1960 and William Macdonald, a thirty-six-year-old emigrant from England started drinking with fifty-five-year-old Amos Hurst in a hotel near Roma Street in Brisbane, Australia. They repaired to Hurst's room in the hotel and continued the session, both becoming extremely drunk. Macdonald suddenly felt an uncontrollable urge to strangle Hurst and put his hands round his neck and squeezed until blood spurted from the other man's mouth. Macdonald punched him hard in the face and let him slide to the floor. He was dead.

He removed his clothes and lay him on the bed before carefully washing the blood off his clothes and hands. He left the room, calmly walked out of the hotel and returned to his lodgings.

He worried for a few days until, picking up a newspaper, he found an obituary of Hurst. He was astonished to read that he had died of a heart attack. No mention was made of him being strangled. It seemed that Hurst's death had initially been considered to be suspicious but the coroner was unable to establish conclusively whether the bruising on his neck had killed him or whether he had received it in a fight before his death. They opted for the fight and, to his delight, Macdonald had got away with murder.

William Macdonald had always been different to the rest. Born Allen Ginsberg in Liverpool in 1922, his childhood had been a lonely and solitary one – as is often the case with serial killers. He had almost no friends and was unable to form lasting relationships.

Eventually, his life going nowhere, at the age of nineteen he enlisted in the British Army. It was there that he would have the experience that would define his life and tell him who and what he was. He was raped by a corporal who threatened to kill him if he told anyone. There was no problem for Macdonald, however, because not only did he enjoy the experience, he wanted more. He was, later discovered to his surprise, homosexual.

He had suffered from behavioural problems since an early age and while still a child had been diagnosed as schizophrenic. The same problem resulted in his discharge from the army and in 1947, aged twenty-three, his behaviour was becoming so erratic that his brother had him committed to an asylum. It was an experience filled with horror that ended when his mother obtained his release. He still heard voices and suffered from delusions, however, but when he sought help the only treatment once again was for him to be incarcerated in an institution. It made little difference. When he was released three months later, the same old voices were still echoing in his head. Resolving to make a major change in his life, in 1949 he changed his name by deed poll from Allen Ginsberg to William Macdonald and emigrated to Canada. Six years later, he relocated to Australia, just one of the thousands of Britons hoping to find opportunity in the wide open spaces Down Under.

Sex was still a problem, however. In Australia, as it had been in Britain and Canada, homosexuality was a criminal offence. Sexual liaisons had to be sought in grubby public toilets or in secluded areas of public parks. He had not been in the country for very long before he was arrested for soliciting sex in a public toilet with a man who happened to be an undercover police officer. Macdonald was put on two years' probation.

Murder seemed to give him just as big a thrill as sex, however, and having got away with one, he decided to look for another victim. He purchased a knife and before long was getting drunk with a potential target in a bar. They bought a bottle of sherry and took it to a local park to continue their carousing. The other man fell to the ground, dead drunk. Macdonald felt the urge to kill again, straddling the other man's comatose body and pulling out his knife. Before he plunged it into his companion, however, he felt the urge suddenly leave his mind. He slipped the knife back into its sheath and walked away, leaving behind a very drunk but very fortunate man.

He adopted another new identity – Alan Edward Brennan – when he moved to Sydney in 1961 and was employed as a sorter by the Australian Postal Department. Soon, he was a well-known figure in the public toilets and cruising sections of the city's parks.

On one venture into a park, Green Park in the Sydney suburb of Darlinghurst, he befriended a man named Alfred Greenfield. He lured Greenfield to a well-known hangout for drinkers, the alcoves at the nearby Domain Swimming Baths, by telling him he had some booze secreted there. When they arrived and found a secluded spot, Macdonald waited until Greenfield was comatose, pulled on a plastic raincoat and drew his knife. He stabbed Greenfield in the neck and body repeatedly until he was certain he was dead. He then removed his trousers and underpants and sliced off his genitals which he later threw into Sydney Harbour. He took off the blood-splattered raincoat, wrapped the knife in it and went home.

When the body was discovered next day there was outrage. The media went into great detail about the shocking nature of the killing and dubbed the perpetrator 'the Mutilator'.

The police, however, were puzzled. It was a crime without any obvious motive. There was speculation that it may have been a crime of passion, sparked by jealousy, but nothing emerged to support this theory. The investigation stalled, even with a \$2,000 reward for information.

The next one, on 21 November, was easy. Forty-one-year-old Ernest Cobbin was already drunk when Macdonald met him and it did not take much to lure him to the toilet of a nearby park. Even drunk, however, Cobbin must have been puzzled when his companion slipped on a plastic raincoat, especially as it was not raining. His bemusement did not last long, however, because Macdonald pulled out his knife with a six-inch blade that he had recently purchased and plunged it into his throat. Again and again he stabbed Cobbin, spraying the toilet cubicle with blood from his severed jugular vein.

As Cobbin lay dead, the blood from his neck reduced to a trickle, 'the Mutilator' pulled down his trousers and underwear and sliced off his victim's penis and testicles. This time he wanted to be close to them before disposing of them, however. He took them home, washed them and took them to be buried with him. Next day, he threw them off Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The media went crazy but the police still had nothing to go on. It was another murder with no motive. The victim had no enemies and there were no witnesses. Months passed and they were no closer to finding the serial killer whose actions were hogging the front pages of every newspaper in Australia.

The urge came on Macdonald again on 31 March 1962. He found a drunk man, Frank McLean, on a Sydney street and suggested conspiratorially that they go into an alley for a drink. When they turned the corner into the unlit Bourke Lane, Macdonald suddenly pulled out his knife and stabbed the 6ft tall McLean in the neck. McLean was a strong man and began to fight but Macdonald was able to punch him in the face and force him to the ground where he stabbed him frenziedly. When the big man lay dead in front of him, he sliced off his genitals and crept out of the alley. The stolen body part would end up in the waters of the harbour.

The case terrified the inhabitants of Sydney and the media frenzy continued. The authorities, under huge pressure to find the serial killer who was on the rampage, turned to clairvoyants. They then

thought that he must be a doctor because of the neatness of the mutilations he had carried out. The reward was increased to \$10,000 but they seemed no closer to apprehending him.

Macdonald lost his job at the sorting office but decided to open a delicatessen. He found suitable premises and moved into the apartment above. The urge to kill was never far away, though.

James Hackett was a vagrant who had the misfortune to bump into Macdonald in a bar one night. Macdonald now had a place of his own to which he could take his victims and he invited Hackett back to his home. As usual, when Hackett had drunk himself into oblivion, Macdonald pulled out a knife and thrust it into the comatose man's neck. Hackett woke up, however, and a desperate struggle ensued. When Macdonald was stabbed in the hand in the midst of the fight, he became enraged, stabbing Hackett repeatedly in the heart, blood spraying everywhere. He made a futile effort to cut off Hackett's penis, but, exhausted, fell into a deep sleep where he sat.

Next morning he awoke to a room resembling a slaughterhouse. There was blood on the walls and the ceiling and there was so much of it slooshing about on the floor that it threatened to seep through the ceiling, of his delicatessen below.

First of all, he had to do something about his hand which had been badly cut in the fight. He cleaned himself up and went to the local hospital where the wound was cleaned up and stitched. Returning to the horror of that room, he dragged Hackett's corpse downstairs and left it in a space under the shop. He spent the remainder of the day scrubbing and cleaning, trying to remove every stain. But it was impossible. The stains would not come off the walls or out of the floorboards where the blood had soaked into the wood. There was only one option open to him. He had to flee. He packed his bags and travelled to Brisbane where he found lodgings in a boarding house. He dyed his hair black, grew a moustache to disguise himself and waited for the news that Hackett's body had been discovered and that they were looking for him.

The days passed, however, and there was nothing. Eventually the body was found, but Macdonald's amazing luck was in. It had decomposed so badly that it was impossible to establish the cause of death or to accurately identify it. The police simply presumed that it was the body of the shop-owner Alan Brennan, and closed the case. Once again, he had got away with murder.

Macdonald could have carried on but for one fatal mistake. He foolishly returned to Sydney and was spotted by a former workmate who was astonished to see Alan Brennan, whose funeral he had attended six months previously, walking nonchalantly and very much alive along a Sydney street. He approached him, but Macdonald fled. The police were informed and the following day the newspaper had the story. 'Case of the Walking Corpse' ran one headline.

Macdonald went to Melbourne where he found work on the railways, but his disguise did not hide him for long. The police were now certain that he was 'the Mutilator' and it was only a matter of time before he was arrested.

William Macdonald was inevitably found guilty and given a life sentence, but in 1964 was declared insane after beating another inmate to death and sent to a psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane.

By 1980, he was considered sane enough to be returned to a mainstream prison where he remains to this day. Ironically, 'the Mutilator', one of Australia's most vicious serial killers, claims to have no desire to be released on parole because he believes the streets of Sydney are not safe.

Paul Charles Denyer

Killing was part of his vile nature. As a child, he began by slitting the throats of his sister's teddy bears. From that, he graduated to slitting the throat of the family kitten and hanging it from the branch of a tree. It was later discovered that he was also responsible for disembowelling a friend's cat and then slitting the throats of her kittens. He was fascinated by blood, gore and death, and spent his spare time watching slasher movies like *Halloween*, *The Stepfather* and *Fear*. It was only a matter of time before his urge to kill animals became an urge to kill humans. In a seven-week period in 1993, he would stab and slash to death three young women and violently assault another, a forty-one-year-old woman who was lucky to escape with her life.

Denyer was born in Sydney, Australia in 1972, the third of six children. The family had emigrated from England and settled in Campbelltown, a south-western suburb of Sydney. His parents told him he had rolled off a bench as a baby and banged his head, but it is unknown whether this had any effect on his later development into a monster.

At kindergarten, it was noted that he found it difficult to mix and make friends, but by the time he went to primary school, he seemed like a normal kid. Life changed in 1981, however, when his father found a job as manager of a steakhouse in the South Oakleigh suburb of Melbourne. The children were unhappy with the move, particularly nine-year-old Paul who had settled in well at school and did not relish making new friends and establishing himself in a new school. He was right. The move did not suit him and he became a loner, with no friends and little interest in his schoolwork.

His size did not help. He had grown into a large child, taller and fatter than his classmates. He was also developing an unhealthy fascination with knives and clubs, of which he had a large collection. He made lethal slingshot guns that fired pebbles and ball-bearings. It was around the age of ten that he began attacking his sister's teddies and the family cat.

His first brush with the law came shortly before his thirteenth birthday when he was arrested for stealing a car. He was released with only a warning, but a couple of months later he was charged with theft, wilful damage and making a false report to the emergency services. He was charged with assault at the age of fifteen after forcing another boy to masturbate in front of some other children.

Aged twenty, finally, he met a girl called Sharon Johnson while he was working at a supermarket. He lost that job when he deliberately ran a convoy of empty shopping trolleys into a woman and child, knocking them down and injuring them. He applied to join the police force but his application was rejected because he was by this time grossly overweight. He was fired from his next job in a marine workshop because he spent all his time making the knives and daggers with which he was still obsessed.

People started calling him 'John Candy' because his size matched that of the large Hollywood film star, but by 1993 he was a social misfit who was unable to hold down a job of any kind.

Meanwhile, his fascination with death and killing had been increasing, fed by a diet of slasher movies, especially *The Stepfather*, the story of American mass murderer John List, which he watched continuously.

In 1992, he and Sharon had moved into a flat in the city of Frankston. Sharon had to work two jobs

keep them afloat, while Denyer remained at home with nothing to do but cause trouble.

The first incident occurred when a neighbour arrived home one night to discover that her flat had been broken into. Clothing had been ripped and slashed and thrown around the apartment, and her pictures were smashed. Then another tenant of the block reported a peeping tom. Worst of all was what happened to another neighbour, Donna, who lived with her fiancé, Les, and their baby in an apartment in a nearby block.

One night in February 1993, Les and Donna came home with their baby late at night to find that someone had scrawled in blood on the wall next to the TV the words 'Dead Don'. In the middle of the kitchen floor they discovered the disembowelled body of Donna's cat Buffy with a picture of a bikini-clad woman over it. The cat's entrails had been spread around the kitchen and the words 'Donna You're dead' were written in its blood on the wall. It was a horrific scene.

The flat had been ransacked and Donna's belongings were everywhere. Cupboard doors had been smashed and a picture of a half-naked woman, stabbed through the middle, was put in the baby's cot. On the mirror on the dressing table in Donna's bedroom was sprayed in shaving foam the words 'Donna and Robyn'. What made it even more bizarre was that she had no idea who 'Robyn' was.

Needless to say, Donna did not spend another night in the flat. She moved in with her sister Tricia until she could find a new place to stay. Tricia's neighbour was Paul Denyer.

Denyer reassured her that she would now be safe and boasted that if the police ever found out who was responsible he would personally take care of him. Meanwhile, the urge to do more than torment people had taken hold of Denyer. He claimed his first victim on 11 June 1993.

Elizabeth Shavers was found, partially clothed, on Saturday 12 June, having been reported missing when she failed to come home the previous night by the uncle and aunt with whom she was staying. Naked from the waist up, her bra around her neck, she was found in Lloyd Park on the Cranbourne Road in Langwarrin, not far from Frankston. Her throat had been cut and she had been stabbed viciously six times in the chest. Four deep cuts ran from her breasts to her navel and there were four more running at right angles to those, forming a grisly pattern across her abdomen. Her nose had been broken and there were cuts and scratches on her face. The post-mortem would confirm that she had not been sexually assaulted.

Police were unable to establish a motive for the murder. Elizabeth had no enemies and was not involved in drugs or dubious relationships. The only conclusion they could arrive at was that she had been killed randomly or someone had attempted to rape her and it had gone tragically wrong.

The investigation was extensive. Officers knocked on thousands of doors in the area and the bus driver and people who had been travelling on the bus she took that night were questioned. Nothing turned up. Just under a month later, they had another seemingly random incident to investigate. Fortunately the victim survived, however. On 8 July, forty-one-year-old bank clerk Roszsa Toth was attacked by a man as she made her way home from work. Her assailant had a gun and dragged her into a nature reserve. She fought for her life, however, biting his fingers down to the bone and scratching him. He meanwhile, pulled out clumps of her hair as he struggled to bring her under his control. She succeeded in fighting him off and staggered onto the road to stop a passing motorist. Her attacker fled into the night to lick his wounds. When police arrived at the scene to investigate, they found nothing to indicate who the man was. All they knew was that her fight had saved her life.

Twenty-two-year-old Debbie Fream was not as strong as Roszsa. She was found next day by a farmer near Carrum Downs. Reported missing later on the night that Roszsa Toth had been attacked, she bore twenty-four stab wounds to her neck, chest and arms and had been strangled. Debbie had given birth to a son just twelve days previously and had disappeared after driving to a local shop to buy a bottle

milk.

The police were now convinced that there was a serial killer on the rampage in Frankston. The bars in Frankston were deserted at nights and women locked and barricaded their doors. Every man became a suspect. The media followed every minute detail of the massive manhunt that had been launched, and a help centre, Operation Reassurance, was opened to advise women living locally how to protect themselves and what they should do if attacked.

He was expected to strike again and he did on the afternoon of 30 July. Seventeen-year-old Natalie Russell was cycling home from college in Frankston when she disappeared. A frantic search was launched, but her brutally wounded body was discovered eight hours later in some bushes next to a cycle track that ran between two golf courses. She had multiple stab wounds to the face and neck and her throat had been cut. Again, she had not been sexually assaulted but the savagery of the attack was shocking.

Denyer had made a fatal mistake, however, that would bring his career as a serial killer to an end. A tiny piece of skin was found on Natalie's neck and when analysed was found not to be hers. It had to be the killer's. There had also been a sighting by a police officer of a yellow Toyota Corona near the cycle track that afternoon at around three o'clock, which was the time that the coroner estimated Natalie had died. Not only that, the policeman had written down the registration of the car from its registration label because it had no plates.

Everything began to happen very fast. When the number was fed into the police computer, it brought up a report by a postman who said he had earlier seen a man in a yellow Toyota who seemed to be trying to hide. The car also popped up as having been seen in the vicinity of where Debbie Fream's body had been found. The car belonged to Paul Denyer.

When they called at Denyer's flat at 3.40 p.m. the next day, he was out. They pushed a card through his letterbox asking him to contact them. At 5.15 p.m. they received a call from Sharon, but so as not to arouse her or Denyer's suspicion, they said that it was no more than a routine enquiry. Shortly afterwards a large team of officers arrived at Denyer's apartment.

When he opened the door, he expressed surprise at the large police presence, but calmly invited them in. The first thing the detectives noticed were the cuts on his hands. He, of course, provided alibis and stated that although he had been in the vicinity of a couple of the killings, he had absolutely nothing to do with them. When they asked him about the scratches, he explained them away by saying he had got his hands trapped in a fan while working on his car.

Denyer was taken to Frankston police station for further questioning and denied everything until the early hours of the next day. When they asked him for samples to run a DNA test, he knew the game was up, however. Suddenly, he blurted out, 'Okay, I killed all three of them'.

His confessions were chilling. Of the killing of Elizabeth Shavers he said, 'Walked in a bit of bushland beside the main track in Lloyd Park. Sat there, you know, stood in the bushes for a while just – I can't remember, just standing there I suppose. I held the "gun" to the back of her neck, walked across the track over towards the other small sandhill or something. And on the other side of that hill she asked me if she could, you know – go to the toilet, so to speak. So I respected her privacy. So she turned around and everything while she did it and everything. When she finished we just walked down towards where the goal posts are and we turned right and headed towards the area where she was found. I got to that area there and I started choking her with my hands and she passed out after a while. You know, the oxygen got cut off to her head and she just stopped. And then I pulled out the knife and stabbed her many times in the throat. And she was still alive. And then she stood up and then she walked around and all that, just walking around a few steps, and then I threw her on the ground and

stuck my foot over her neck to finish her off’.

Asked why the killing of Natalie Russell had been so savage, he told a tale of brutality and horror that places him amongst the worst killers in not just Australian history but in criminal history.

He had been waiting for a victim for about twenty minutes when she showed up. He sneaked up behind her, grabbed her and put a knife to her throat, cutting himself in the process and leaving behind the piece of skin that would convict him. She struggled at first but he stopped her by telling her he would cut her throat if she continued. She then told him if it was sex he wanted he could have it, if it meant he would let her live. But Denyer found this repulsive, offended by what he viewed as her loose morals. He forced her to kneel in front of him and then to lie on the ground. She struggled again and he cut her face. As she kneeled on the ground in front of him again, he wound a strap around her neck to strangle her but it broke. He then threw her to the ground again as she struggled once more and cut her throat, a small cut, he said. He then stuck his hands down her throat, ‘grabbed her chords and twisted them’. As she started to lose consciousness he cut her throat properly – ‘one big large cut,’ he told the disgusted officers, ‘which sort of cut almost her whole head off. And then she slowly died’.

He then explained that as he walked back to the Toyota, he saw the officers taking down the details of his registration number. He had simply turned round and walked home.

He told them he ‘just wanted to kill’, adding later that he hated women, or at least all women apart from his girlfriend Sharon Johnson.

Paul Denyer pleaded guilty to all charges and on 20 December 1993, was sentenced to three terms of life imprisonment with no possibility of parole.

In prison, Denyer has begun dressing as a woman and has also filed requests to learn what the Victorian government’s policy is on gender reassignment surgery for prisoners.

It seems that the man who hated women now wants to become one.

Ivan Milat

Belanglo State Forest is situated south of the town of Berrima in the Southern Highlands of the Australian state of New South Wales. Open to hikers, it is about three kilometres from the Hume Highway that runs between Canberra and Sydney. On 19 September 1993, a couple of people orienteering noticed a foul smell emanating from what appeared to be a pile of rubbish. They warily walked towards it and to their horror discovered that the rubbish was, in fact, human remains.

When police were called in they immediately began to speculate that these remains might have something to do with backpackers who had mysteriously disappeared in the area in the past few years. Four Germans, a couple of English girls and two Australians from the state of Victoria, had all vanished into thin air and not a trace had been found of them since.

Their speculation was confirmed to be correct when it was announced that two bodies had been found and that they belonged to the two English girls, Caroline Clarke and Joanne Walters. They had been killed by a powerful individual, undoubtedly a man, and Joanne had been stabbed with such power that her spine had been cut and two ribs had been completely severed. Caroline had also been stabbed, but he had also shot her in the head several times. Chillingly, it was found that she had been shot from three different directions as if the killer had used her head for target practice.

He seemed to have hung around for a while. There was a fireplace, built with stones, and a number of cigarette butts lay around on the ground. Trying to build a profile, police surmised that the killer was a local man who knew the area. Given that Caroline had been killed in what seemed to be an execution style and had not been sexually assaulted, it seemed likely that he was the kind of man who liked to exert control over people. The murder of Joanne had been very different, however. The killer – or killers; they believed that more than one person had possibly been involved – had launched a frenzied attack on her that had a sexual element. Her shirt and bra were pushed up and the zipper of her jeans was undone, although the button was still fastened. She was wearing no underwear and it was presumed that the killer had taken it away with him as a trophy.

According to the profiler, the girls had been killed purely for pleasure.

Police knew that they were looking for a very dangerous killer and a massive search of the area was launched. Nothing further was found, however, and the police announced that they were confident that there were no more bodies in the forest.

They were wrong.

A few months later, as Bruce Pryor was driving along an unfamiliar and unused road in the forest, he came to a bare, rocky spot in which was a small fireplace built from rocks. He stopped the car and climbed out to stretch his legs and take a look around. On the ground, not far from the fireplace, he noticed a bone which, if he were not mistaken, resembled very closely a human thigh bone. He walked around to see if there was anything else and sure enough, hidden amongst some undergrowth, he saw something gleaming white. He took a closer look and was horrified to discover a human skull.

The clearing hid two bodies that were soon identified as the missing Victoria couple, James Gibson and Deborah Everist, who had disappeared on a backpacking trip in 1989. Strangely, James's backpack and camera had been found seventy-eight miles north of Belanglo Forest after they had disappeared.

seemed as if the killer had dumped them there in an effort to divert attention from the forest and confuse the investigation.

Only the couple's bones remained, but it was soon evident that they had each received multiple stab wounds. Deborah's skull had been fractured several times and there were slash marks on the forehead of her skull. Her bra was found and it had a stab wound through one of its cups. Police also found a pair of tights that looked as if they may have been used to tie up one of the victims.

Embarrassed at having been wrong in their assertion that there were no more bodies in the forest, the police launched another massive search, accompanied by special sniffer dogs.

It was established that the bullets and casings found at the scene of James's and Deborah's deaths had been fired from a Ruger repeating rifle. The bad news was that this was one of the most popular rifles in Australia, with around 5,000 of them in private ownership. Nonetheless, gun clubs and local gun owners were questioned. One man provided officers with descriptions of a couple of vehicles he had seen in the forest the previous year. He claimed that he had seen a man and woman in one of them and that he had thought for a moment that they were bound but could not be sure. He knew the name of the owner of the vehicle. It was Alex Milat.

Meanwhile, however, the search revealed more bodies. Twenty-six days after the last two had been found, a search team entered a small clearing where they found a pair of women's pink jeans and a length of blue and yellow rope. There was also the trademark fireplace. One officer stopped as he almost stepped on what looked like a human bone. A little further on lay a human skull. On close inspection, the officer noticed something wrapped around its forehead – a distinctive purple headband. German backpacker Simone 'Simi' Schmidl had travelled the world and had last been seen hitchhiking on the Hume Highway out of the town of Liverpool in the direction of Sydney. Now her bones lay in the forest, partially clothed, her shirt and underclothes pushed up around her neck. She had died from multiple stab wounds. The pink jeans were not hers, though. They belonged to another German girl, Anja Habschied, who had gone missing with her travelling companion, Gregor Neugebauer, from Sydney's Kings Cross area just after Christmas 1991.

Gregor had been strangled and shot, and the bullets matched up with the ones that had been used in the other killings. Anja's death had been most horrific of all, however. Her top two vertebrae and her head were missing. She had been decapitated with a sharp instrument such as a sword or a machete. She had been made to kneel for it to be done. The killer had turned her death into a horrific ritual execution. This was one of the most extraordinary series of murders that had ever been encountered. Serial killers generally find a method that works for them and stick to it. This serial killer seemed to want to experiment with a variety of methods – beating, strangling, decapitating, stabbing and shooting. Men and women had been sexually assaulted in some way. Their zippers were often down but always the top button of their trousers was fastened. The killer also appeared to spend time with his victims piling on the cruelty and confirming the sadistic nature of the murders.

The authorities were flooded with information but began to develop suspicions about the Milat family and Ivan Robert Marko Milat in particular. He was born in 1944 into a large Yugoslavian immigrant family, but little is known about his childhood except that his family lived in an isolated, rural spot and he had thirteen siblings. From an early age, he had an interest in guns and hunting, and he and his brothers had gained a reputation for wildness and lawlessness. They had had many brushes with the law.

In 1971 Ivan Milat had been arrested and charged with raping two woman hitchhikers but he was acquitted due to insufficient evidence.

Astonishingly, he could have been arrested for kidnapping backpackers some time before the bodies

were found. On 25 January 1990, Englishman Paul Onions was on his way to find work fruit-picking in the Riverina area, a couple of hundred miles south-west of Sydney. Onions had taken a train from Sydney to the city of Liverpool and had then walked out of the city to hitchhike on the Hunter Highway.

After a few hours by the side of the road, he walked to a small shopping centre to buy a drink and when he stood there drinking, a well-built man came up to him and asked if he was looking for a lift. Paul was delighted to accept and was soon sitting in a four by four beside the man, who told him his name was Bill. Bill threw a lot of questions at Paul about his time in Australia and at first seemed pleasant enough. As the journey went on, however, Bill started to become irascible, making racist comments and making Paul feel uneasy. Eventually the man went silent and seemed morose.

Just outside the town of Mittagong, Paul became even more uneasy as Bill's driving seemed to be getting erratic. He seemed edgy and was constantly looking in his rear-view mirror. Suddenly, he stopped the truck, saying he wanted to get some cassette tapes from the back. He climbed out ordering Paul to remain in the vehicle. Paul was puzzled because there was a pile of cassettes in the space between the seats. He decided to get out as well but, as he did so, Bill growled at him to get back in. He did as he was told, but when Bill climbed back in he reached down beneath his seat and drew out a large black revolver and pointed it at Paul. 'This is a robbery,' he snarled at him, also pulling out a length of rope. Paul made a grab for the door handle, pulled the door open and leapt from the car. He jumped into oncoming traffic that swerved wildly to avoid him. A van approached and, waving his arms, he threw himself in front of it, forcing its driver, Joanne Berry, to stop. He ran round, opened her passenger door and jumped in. He screamed that the man in the four-wheel drive had a gun. Joanne considered for a split second. In the back of the van were her sister and her four children. She slammed her foot hard on the accelerator and sped off to the nearest police station.

Tragically, however, no one took any action. Paul made a statement and waited to hear something but there was no contact. He returned to England and put it down to experience. Then in 1994, the police called him and asked him to return to Australia. There was someone they wanted him to take a look at. Early on the morning of 22 May 1994, police spread out around the Milat property. They shouted for Ivan to come out and give himself up. He had nowhere to run and was under arrest shortly after.

Inside they discovered a huge amount of evidence implicating him in the murders, including sleeping bags, clothing and camping equipment. There was also an arsenal of guns and ammunition. A long curved sword was later found in a locked cupboard at the house of Milat's mother. It had probably been the weapon that was used to behead Anja Habschied.

Milat was charged with seven murders and with the attack on Paul Onions.

His trial was the most sensational in Australian legal history, especially when Milat claimed that he had been framed by other members of his large family. However, he was found guilty and given several life sentences.

Having sworn that he would try to escape at every opportunity, he almost succeeded in 1997. The breakout was foiled and Milat's accomplice was found mysteriously hanged in his prison cell next morning.

Ivan Milat has been questioned about countless other disappearances and it is almost certain that he had killed a number of times before 1989. His brother, Boris, in hiding from the other members of his violent family, has told the media, 'the things I can tell you are much worse than what Ivan's meant to have done. Everywhere he's worked, people have disappeared, I know where he's been'. No further charges have been made, however.

The Snowtown Murderers

As they killed, they played a CD of the song *Selling the Drama* from Live's album *Throwing Copper*, turning the murder into a ritual of sorts, although they didn't call it murder. It was 'playing' for high stakes, too. They murdered nine people in Australia's worst case of serial killing, in the seven years during which the slaughter took place, making \$95,000 from welfare and credit card fraud. Not only did they turn on each other, in order to keep their secrets within the circle.

Their first murder was relatively straightforward – a twenty-two-year-old homosexual, Clinton Trezise, was hit on the head with a heavy instrument, possibly a hammer, and then buried in a shallow grave in a remote spot in the agricultural hinterland of Lower Light, about fifty kilometres north of Adelaide.

Gradually, however, they became more elaborate, not to mention more horrific, in their methods. Dismemberment, removal of limbs, de-fleshing and torture all became part of the game of death they enjoyed playing. It was so gruesome that when the case eventually came to trial, three jurors had to drop out, unable to bear the gorier parts of the testimony, while others required counselling after the conclusion of the trial.

At the centre of it all was thirty-two-year-old John Justin Bunting, a man filled with hate. When he was young, he whiled away his time by burning insects in acid, and as a teenager was linked to neo-Nazi groups. As an adult, his hatred was directed at homosexuals and paedophiles. At his home on Waterloo Corner Road, in the northern Adelaide suburb of Salisbury North, Bunting devised a large chart on a wall in one of the rooms. On it, using paper and lengths of wool, he had created a network of the names of people he suspected of being paedophiles or homosexuals. Now and then, he would vent some of his anger and disgust by selecting one of the names at random and making an offensive telephone call to them.

The police had become concerned about the number of missing persons cases in the Adelaide area and a task force, named Chart, was assembled to try to get to the bottom of them. The trail led to a disused bank in the town of Snowtown, one hundred and fifty kilometres north of Adelaide.

Once, it had been a bustling small town branch of the State Bank of South Australia, home to the savings and mortgages of the farmers who owned local farms and the businessmen who serviced the needs of the families who lived in the area. Now, it was long closed and dust had settled on its fixtures and fittings. It had recently been used for other purposes, however. On 20 May 1999, as police entered the red-brick building in the town's main street at the culmination of their long and complex missing persons investigation, anticipation hung heavy in the air. They would not be disappointed.

The main area of the bank contained electrical and computing equipment, but as police opened the door to the bank vault's ten centimetre-thick metal door, a horrific smell was unleashed from within. Behind the door they found the source of the stench. Six black plastic barrels stood there ominously. Inside them was acid in which floated human body parts from eight different people. The remains included fifteen human feet.

At the same time, police found evidence in a rented house not far from the bank, home to a suspect in the case. The occupants had very much kept themselves to themselves and neighbours were unable to provide any information about them.

In the early morning of the following day, police raided houses in the northern suburbs of Adelaide. Three men – John Bunting, twenty-seven-year-old Robert Joe Wagner and forty-year-old Mark Ray Haydon – were arrested and charged with the murder of an unknown person between 1 August 1994 and 20 May 1999. It was almost certain that more charges would be made as the investigation proceeded. They were remanded in custody until 2 July 1999.

The media, of course, were having a field day, speculating wildly about the motives for the killing. Some suggested that the neo-Nazi links of one of the accused might provide the reason, while others posited that there might be psychosexual motives. To the police, however, it seemed clear that there was a financial motive behind them. They believed the answer lay in social security payments. The Australian agency responsible for these, analysed the list of missing persons provided by the police and discovered that a number had never been reported to them as missing or dead. Their payments, therefore, were still being issued and were being collected years after their real beneficiaries had disappeared.

On 2 June, police raided another property in the northern suburbs and arrested nineteen-year-old James Spyridon Vlassakis. Vlassakis had met John Bunting when he was just fourteen after his mother moved in with him. He worshipped him and was entirely in thrall to Bunting's overwhelming personality. He attempted to kill himself twice during his first week in custody, adding even more sensational elements to an already sensational case. For his own safety, they locked Vlassakis up at James Nash House, the South Australian Department of Correction's maximum security psychiatric clinic.

Meanwhile, more houses were raided and searched, possibly as a result of information provided by Vlassakis.

Six of the eight bodies found in the Snowtown bank vault had been identified by 3 June but the names were withheld. Furthermore, another body was still expected to be found. Police searched back through cold case files until they discovered that an as-yet unidentified corpse had been found by a local farmer in a field in the rural agricultural area of Lower Light, fifty kilometres north of Adelaide on 16 August 1994. As DNA cross-matching was begun, police raided another two properties, one in Riverland, near the Murray River, the other to the north of Adelaide.

The names of some of the dead began to be released to the media and the public, revealing a fascinating network of relationships with the accused. The Acting Police Commissioner stated that this was a group that 'preys upon itself'.

Forty-year-old Barry Lane was a convicted sex offender and transvestite who went under the name 'Vanessa'. He had lived for eight years with one of the accused, Robert Wagner, at 1 Bingham Road in Salisbury North, just a street away from John Bunting's house at Waterloo Corner Road, where bodies would later be found. Wagner would help to kill Lane.

Lane had also had a relationship with Clinton Trezise whose disappearance had begun the investigation. John Bunting, for his part, was engaged to Gail Sinclair, sister of another victim found at the bank, Elizabeth Hayden, who was the wife of another accused man, Mark Hayden.

The remains found at Lower Light were identified as those of Clinton Trezise. It was a significant breakthrough.

The search for bodies was not over, however. On 23 June, the former address of John Bunting, on Waterloo Corner Road, was searched. Officers used ground-penetrating radar, developed from technology created by the British Army for finding land mines during the Falklands War. It had already proved its worth in criminal investigation during searches of the property owned by English serial killer, Fred West.

A concrete slab, once covered by a rainwater tank, outside the house's back door was smashed and the device was wheeled over the exposed earth. It showed that an area about two metres square had been disturbed sometime in the recent past. A short while later, a body was found buried a couple of metres down. It had been dismembered, put into two plastic bags and buried, and had been in the ground for three or four years. The ground radar discovered a second body a few days later, beneath the location of the first. This one was not wrapped in plastic.

Another of the accused, Mark Hayden, had lived in Elizabeth East with his father, close to Waterloo Corner Road. Haydon was remembered by neighbours as quiet and unassuming and would spend most of his time under the bonnet of his car. Neighbours also remember his rough-looking visitors but there was never any noise or trouble. In 1995, Elizabeth Sinclair arrived, marrying Hayden a couple of years later. In 1998, the couple moved to another north Adelaide suburb, Smithfield Plains. Shortly afterwards, Elizabeth Hayden disappeared. On 22 November, Mark went to pick up two of her sons who had been at the house of Elizabeth's brother, Garion, and informed him that he and Elizabeth had had a row and she had left him. Next day he claimed that she had run off with a boyfriend and before leaving had cleaned out a bank account held jointly by him and his father.

Mark seemed unconcerned, even by the fact that she had emptied his bank account, and Garion and his wife became suspicious. They also doubted the story because, after a fairly miserable life during which she had had eight children by a number of different men, Elizabeth seemed to be settling down with Mark. Three days later Garion reported his sister missing to the police.

Robert Wagner and Barry 'Vanessa' Lane also lived not far from Waterloo Corner Road. Lane's flamboyant dress – pink shorts in summer, for instance – and his record of paedophile convictions made the house a target for local children and the two men built a high fence around the building and kept four Doberman Pinchers to keep people away. Wagner, illiterate and dependent upon Lane, was a white supremacist with a loathing for gays and Asians, and a member of the far-right group National Action.

In July 2000, Wagner, Bunting and Haydon pleaded guilty to four charges of murder in the Adelaide Supreme Court and were sentenced to life imprisonment with a twenty-six-year non-parole period.

John Wayne Glover

They called him the ‘Granny Killer’ or the ‘Monster of Mosman’. He was a vicious serial killer who specialised in the particularly brutal killing of elderly women. His method was always the same. He would select his victim and force her into an alley or secluded spot where he would proceed to pulverise her with his fists and a hammer in a frenzy of violence and horror. When she lay in a bloody heap at his feet, he would remove her underwear and would then strangle her with her own pantyhose. This last act was the calling card that identified the killer as the same one in all six cases.

John Wayne Glover was not the type. A large, friendly man in his late fifties, he was considered an ordinary family man who loved his wife and two daughters and could be trusted with anything. He lived in a comfortable house in the fashionable and well-off Sydney suburb of Mosman, right beside Sydney Harbour. He worked as a sales rep for the Four ‘n’ Twenty Pie Company and was a volunteer with the Senior Citizens Society. A real good bloke, as the Aussies would say. But in reality he was a heartless killer who spent the easily won proceeds of his murders on gambling and booze.

Glover, born in Wolverhampton in England, had been convicted of various petty crimes in 1947, being discharged from the British Army when these emerged. He emigrated to Australia in 1956, initially living in Melbourne. He had always had problems with older women, perhaps suggesting reasons for his later activities. He had never got on with his mother Freda, a woman who had had several husbands and many relationships. In Australia, when he married Jacqueline ‘Gay’ Rolls in 1968 and moved into his well-off in-laws’ house in Mosman, he encountered another older woman with whom he did not get on – his mother-in-law Essie Rolls, a cantankerous, domineering individual.

His offending did not stop when he emigrated. Not long after arriving Down Under, he was convicted on two charges of theft in Victoria, and in New South Wales he was also convicted of stealing. In 1962, aged twenty-nine, while employed as a television rigger with the Australian Broadcasting Commission, he was arrested for the assaults of two women in Melbourne as well as theft.

These assaults presaged his later, more vicious assaults. The victims were beaten about the face and body and forced to the ground as he frenziedly ripped the clothes from their bodies. On each occasion the screams of the women alerted local people to what was happening and Glover was forced to flee before he could rape or kill them.

After the second of these attacks, residents reported seeing a young man running into a nearby garden and police cornered Glover and arrested him. He told them that he had had a fight with his girlfriend and had been feeling very emotional. He was released on bail the following morning. As he was leaving the police station, however, he was intercepted by two other police officers who wanted to ask him some questions about a similar assault a few weeks previously. He confessed under the questioning and was charged with that attack, too. He was lucky, however, receiving only a three-year suspended sentence.

He was in trouble again in 1965, picked up on a peeping tom charge. Sentenced to three months, he served only six weeks before being paroled. It would be many years before he broke the law again, apart from a minor shoplifting charge in 1978. Not everyone is convinced that he was squeaky clean during that time, however, and there are at least five unsolved murders between 1965 and 1989 that involved similar methods to those later used by Glover.

In 1982, he was dismayed to learn that his mother Freda was following him by emigrating from England to Australia. He was even more upset when he learned that Freda planned to move into the Mosman house as a companion to Essie. His wife and her parents knew nothing of Glover's criminal past and he was certain that Freda could not be trusted to keep it quiet. Fortunately for him, however, he succeeded in dissuading her and she went to live in Gosford, one hundred miles north of Sydney, just far enough away. She died in 1988 of breast cancer and he was diagnosed as having the same condition, an extremely rare occurrence amongst men. He underwent a mastectomy but developed prostate problems that rendered him impotent. It would later be said that he changed around this time as a result of his health problems.

On 11 January 1989, eighty-four-year-old Margaret Todhunter was walking in a quiet road in Mosman when Glover drove past. He parked his car and, when he was certain no one could see him, walked up to her and punched her in the face, snatching her handbag in which was \$209. He took to his heels with the handbag as she shouted after him. Given what happened to Glover's other victims, she could consider herself very lucky.

Gwendoline Mitchellhill was not quite so lucky a couple of months later.

On 1 March, Glover spotted Mrs Mitchell hobbling along with the help of a walking stick. He opened the boot of his car and took out a hammer, tucking it into his belt, out of sight. He followed at a safe distance and when she arrived at the secluded entry to the retirement village where she lived, he raised the hammer above his head and brought it down heavily on her skull. He continued to bludgeon her about the head and body before grabbing her purse which contained \$100. She was still alive when she was found but was dead by the time the emergency services arrived on the scene.

The two attacks had the police puzzled and they were not even certain that they were connected. Finally, they reasoned that it was just another mugging – there had been many in the area – that had gone very wrong.

It was ten weeks before Glover killed again. Lady Winifred Ashton had been playing bingo at the social club that Glover also frequented and was walking home when Glover saw her. He again followed her into the foyer of her apartment building where he attacked her with the hammer. She was a frail little old lady who was suffering from cancer at the time, but she put up a fight. However, Glover bashed her head continuously on the concrete floor until she was unconscious. He then removed her pantyhose and, pulling it tight around her thin neck, strangled her. He had established a calling card that would tell police that it was the same man carrying out these horrific crimes. He also arranged her shoes and walking stick neatly at her feet. He found \$100 in her purse and returned to the social club to buy drinks with it and play the poker machines to which he was addicted.

The police now knew they were dealing with a serial killer, a homicidal maniac who was heartless enough to unleash his violence on defenceless old ladies. Although he never had any interest in sexually assaulting the women he killed, he now very strangely started assaulting elderly, bed-ridden women in the nursing homes he visited in his capacity as a pie salesman. He began on 6 June by putting his hand under the nightdress of seventy-seven-year-old Marjorie Moseley at a retirement home in Belrose. When the police were called, she was unable to describe her assailant and they made no connection between these crimes and the murders.

He did it again on 24 June at another retirement home, when he lifted an elderly lady's dress and fondled her buttocks, and in the neighbouring room he stroked another woman's breasts. Staff, alerted by the woman's shouts, came running and questioned Glover but he left without being held or his identity being established.

On 8 August, he assaulted Effie Carnie in a back street of Linfield, not far from Mosman, not killing

her but stealing her groceries. He impersonated a doctor on 6 October, putting his hand up the dress of a woman patient in a nursing home at Neutral Bay, a harbourside suburb, but again escaped.

On 18 October he started a conversation with eighty-six-year-old Doris Cox and walked with her in the secluded stairwell of her retirement village. Suddenly, he smashed her face against the wall, using all of his strength. He rummaged in her purse, but finding nothing, left her for dead and went home.

Unfortunately, Mrs Cox's description of her attacker had police looking for a considerably younger man than Glover. It was a lucky break for him, especially when police began to think that they were probably looking for a local teenager with a grudge against grandmothers. Police concentrated all their efforts on this and Glover was free to continue his attacks.

On 2 November, he offered to carry home the groceries of an elderly woman in Lane Cove, about ten miles from Mosman. The woman offered him a cup of tea in return but he declined. On his way back to the main street he passed eighty-five-year-old Margaret Pahud and, turning, hit her on the back of the head with a blunt instrument, probably his hammer. When she collapsed to the ground he struck her again on the side of the head, killing her. He grabbed her handbag and took off after neatly arranging her clothes as usual. Shortly after, he was buying drinks in the social club with the \$300 he had found in her purse.

Twenty-four hours later, eighty-one-year-old Olive Cleveland became his fourth victim. He engaged her in conversation on a bench near her retirement village in Belrose. When she stood up to go home he grabbed her from behind and pushed her down a ramp onto a secluded lane. He beat her and slammed her head continuously against the concrete until she lost consciousness. He then removed her pantyhose, wrapped it around her neck and strangled her. Having tidily rearranged her walking stick and clothing, he removed \$60 from her handbag and headed for the club. An increasingly worried state government increased the reward they were offering for information from \$200,000 to \$250,000.

Although they were not yet being linked to the murders, on 11 January 1990 there was a significant breakthrough in the investigations into the molestations of the elderly women in nursing homes. Glover had visited the Greenwich Hospital that day in his work outfit. With an official-looking clipboard in his hand, he entered the hospital's palliative care ward which was occupied at the time by four elderly women. He pulled up the nightdress of one of them and touched her indecently. When she screamed for help, a hospital sister arrived and found Glover. He ran out of the ward, but she managed to get the registration number of his vehicle and the police were called.

Glover was identified as the attacker and he was asked to come to the police station to answer some questions. When he failed to appear, they called his house to be told that he had tried to take his own life and was in the Royal North Shore Hospital. He refused to answer any questions but handed staff at the hospital a note saying, 'no more grannies ... grannies' and 'Essie started it'.

When the note was passed to the squad investigating the Granny Killings, they knew they had the man. But they did not have any evidence and unless he talked, he would have to be allowed to go free. They decided not to alert him to their suspicions and put him under surveillance.

He still managed to kill one last time. On 19 March, he visited sixty-year-old divorcee Joan Sinclair, a friend of his. Police officers watched him enter the house at around ten o'clock but by one o'clock there was no sign of him leaving and there appeared to be no movement inside the building. Increasingly concerned, at six o'clock they entered the building where they found Sinclair's battered body, naked from the waist down and with the tell-tale pantyhose tied around her neck. Glover's hammer lay in a pool of blood on a mat. Glover was found unconscious in the bath, which had been filled with water. He had washed down a handful of Valium with a bottle of whisky and had then slashed his wrists.

Glover survived and at his trial pleaded not guilty on the grounds of diminished responsibility, ~~blaming his action on the aggression he felt towards first his mother and then his mother-in-law~~. However, the prosecution argued successfully that Glover had been well aware of what he was doing and had tried to trick the police into believing they were dealing with a sexually motivated murderer. In fact, it was claimed, Glover needed his victims' money to feed his addiction to the poker machines at the social club he attended.

Sentenced to life imprisonment without parole, he hanged himself in his cell on 9 September 2005. Just days before he killed himself, Glover handed a sketch to his last visitor. It was a drawing of a park and in amongst the palm trees was the number nine. This figure is believed to represent the number of murders that he had committed but had never been charged with.

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