

BOUND

BY

BLOOD

BOUND

BY

**THE TRUE STORY
BEHIND THE
WOLLONGONG
MURDERS**

BLOOD

JOHN SUTER LINTON

A Sue Hines Book
ALLEN & UNWIN

First published in 2004

Copyright © John Suter Linton 2004

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher. The *Australian Copyright Act 1968* (the Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10% of this book, whichever is the greater, to be photocopied by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) under the Act.

A Sue Hines Book
Allen & Unwin
83 Alexander Street
Crows Nest NSW 2065
Australia
Phone: (61 2) 8425 0100
Fax: (61 2) 9906 2218
Email: info@allenandunwin.com
Web: www.allenandunwin.com

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Linton, John Suter.

Bound by blood.

ISBN 1 74114 176 1.

1. Valera, Mark. 2. Murder – Australia – Case studies.

3. Murder – Investigation – Australia. I. Title.

Cover design by Nada Backovic
Text design and typesetting by Pauline Haas
Printed in Australia by McPhersons Printing Group

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*It is one thing to write at a distance about tragedy,
and quite another to meet with those who are left
behind, to see their pain and feel the void that has been
created in their lives. They cannot be replaced. I only
hope that in some way this book goes towards revealing
each victim for who they were. And that they'll be
remembered as they were, not for being victims.*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	viii
1] THE BEGINNING OF THE END	1
2] THESE THINGS DON'T HAPPEN TO ORDINARY PEOPLE	6
3] DAVID JOHN O'HEARN: 'GENEROUS TO A FAULT'	20
4] TWO WEEKS TO THE DAY	31
5] FRANCIS NEVILLE ARKELL	36
6] MY NAME'S JOHN ...	51
7] THESE THINGS TAKE TIME ...	61
8] THE GETAWAY CAR	86
9] PRIME SUSPECT	92
10] IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO	104
11] CONFESSIONS AND OTHER EVIDENCE	131
12] KILLING SOMEONE IS LIBERATING	143
13] BARRIE ALAN HODGE AND CHRISTOPHER ANDREW ROBINSON	155
14] SATAN ON TRIAL	163
15] JUSTICE AND RETRIBUTION	185
16] JACK PAUL VAN KREVEL: A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, AUSSIE BLOKE	201
17] I DONE IT ... HAPPY?	222
18] THERE WAS NO LESSER SENTENCE	238
19] HEY, BABE, IT'S FINISHED	247
20] THE END OF A BLOODY CHAPTER	264
21] AFTERMATH	277
APPENDIX	283
ENDNOTES	287
PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS	288
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	289

INTRODUCTION

In June 1998, the city of Wollongong, on the south coast of New South Wales, was rocked by two brutal and horrific murders in as many weeks. The victims were a shopkeeper, David John O'Hearn, and the former Lord Mayor and State Member of Parliament, Francis (Frank) Neville Arkell.

Their families and friends bore the pain as people asked why the two men had been so brutally murdered. Had they been responsible for their own downfall? Were they both living secret lives? The lines between fact and fiction blurred as fabrication and half-truth spread throughout the community.

Then there was a third victim, Jack van Krevel, who was, himself, portrayed as an abuser of children. He admitted as much in court, but was he telling the whole truth? And why had he allowed himself to be persecuted? Was his death retribution?

This book is an attempt to give the victims — David O'Hearn, Frank Arkell, and Jack van Krevel — a voice. It is also an insight into the investigation. Many people believed the police were lucky to have caught the killer, that they would have never caught up with the perpetrator had certain circumstances not happened, and that the killer would be free today, possibly killing again. Was this true?

The book explores the way the Homicide detectives employed a methodical approach in order to narrow their enquiry, and the investigation, while starting with two murders, expanded to include other unsolved murders dating back as far as ten years. The Homicide Strike Force would eventually arrest other offenders for two separate murders.

Writing this book was a difficult and, at times, emotional journey. The crimes are recent. Memories are vivid and the pain felt by family and friends is still strong. Not everyone wanted to talk about the events. Their scars have yet to heal. Most just wanted to put the ordeal behind them and did not want to be reminded. Others wanted to redress the allegations and rumours that still abound today.

There is a warning. This book does have descriptions of the brutality suffered by the victims. It is not included to be sensational, but rather to reveal the callousness with which the crimes were perpetrated. To understand the horrendous nature of the murders is to have empathy for the family and friends of the victims and to have an appreciation of the far-reaching and incredibly thorough police investigation.

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2000

1] THE BEGINNING OF THE END

ON A DARK, MOONLESS WINTER'S NIGHT, JUST AFTER midnight on Friday 18 August 2000, a climactic end to a series of bizarre events was about to be played out. The stage was a nondescript suburban wooden house in Centenary Street, Albion Park, near Wollongong, just over 80 kilometres south of Sydney. Inside, snug against the chill in their separate beds, were a father and his daughter. The daughter cradled her two-year-old child.

Outside, a young man climbed over neighbouring fences to access the backyard. He lurked at the rear of the house in search of a covert entrance and a weapon. He found both. A small axe hung from the side wall of the rear garage, near a screen door and above a pile of wood, while a window had been carelessly left open at the side of the house. Opportunity prompted. With the axe in hand, Keith Schreiber stood on a yellow bucket to lift himself through the window with great stealth, so as not to alert his intended victim.

Schreiber took a risk. The room he entered, previously the bedroom of his mate, Mark, was now where the two-year-old granddaughter slept. Except that night Tia was sleeping with her mother in the adjoining bedroom. Schreiber had luck on his side.

Carefully, Schreiber allowed the narrow light of a torch to lead him to the kitchen where he retrieved another weapon, a sharp carving knife. Once a regular visitor to the house, Schreiber knew which room his victim occupied. He felt his way past the bedroom where the young mother and her daughter slept, to a third bedroom at the front of the house. He doused the light and edged through the door, pushing it open slowly, taking deliberate steps, trying not to wake his victim. But he took one step too many and bumped a set of drawers beside the bed. The victim became startled and arose to a half sleep. Raising the axe high in both hands and claspng the knife between his teeth, vengeance consumed the 21-year-old and he began chopping at the victim's head and neck.

Forty-seven-year-old Jack van Krevel screamed with the realisation of what was happening. The doona cover became sodden as the body underneath wriggled and kicked in self-defence. Jack, his head and neck severely beaten, protested in vain, 'Hey, hey . . . hey.' He rolled free of the bedclothes and fell to the floor.

Schreiber lunged at the body with the knife, attempting to stab Jack's heart, but the darkness prevented him from hitting his mark. 'Die, you fucker. Hurry up and fucking die.' Schreiber wanted it to end quickly. Jack was holding on, if not fighting back, and Schreiber was becoming more and more frustrated with the situation.

In the next bedroom, separated from the carnage by a flimsy plaster wall, Belinda van Krevel took hold of her young daughter, Tia, as strange, incoherent noises disrupted their sleep. They heard Jack screaming, then they heard him groan, gasping for life.

‘What’s happening?’ Tia grew concerned for her grandfather, who only hours before had been playing catch with her and making her laugh when she threw the ball and hit his nose. ‘What’s happening? Poppy? Poppy?’

Jack’s resilience surprised Schreiber. It infuriated him. He expected Jack to die quickly. To be dead after the first few blows, to never recover from his sleep. He just wanted him to die. Instead, Jack kneeled on the floor, his head and upper body lying on the side of the bed, spilling blood from twenty-five blows of the axe and numerous stab wounds. But he was still alive. Schreiber left and retrieved a brass-handled fire-poker from beside the fireplace in the lounge room. He returned and turned the light on, needing to assess the situation and decide how best to finish his victim. Jack stared back at his assailant, but was too feeble from the attack to run or retaliate. All he could do was call Schreiber’s name with a guttural breath, perhaps in disbelief, or maybe in the hope that familiarity might stop the attacker.

Schreiber belted Jack with the poker, telling him, ‘This is from Mark . . . fucking paedophile bastard . . . you’ll never molest another kid again.’ He struck Jack several times with the poker and axe till he heard Jack’s neck crack. It was done. Jack was dead. In a final act to humiliate Jack and cause him pain, Schreiber began to slice and dismember the body with the knife. Not that Jack would have known.

After some time all went quiet. Belinda and Tia remained in their bedroom under the protection of their doona. The door to their room opened slowly, ajar enough for Schreiber to glance in and disturb the sanctuary, though he would have seen little in the dark. Leaving only a bloody smear on the door as evidence of his visit, Schreiber returned to the kitchen and drank water from the sink tap. In his mind retribution had been exacted. He believed Jack van Krevel to be a paedophile, and he had delivered Jack from evil and saved those who were his victims. Justice was done.

Schreiber then departed the way he had arrived, through the bedroom window, leaving a bloodied footprint on Tia's patterned mattress. Curiously, he also put the yellow bucket back where he had found it, just behind the house next to the barbecue.

Belinda waited a little while longer, making sure the intruder had gone and it was safe. She bundled Tia into her car and drove 10 kilometres to Warilla police station, arriving there around 3.20 am. The police observed Belinda to be breathless and her eyes were red, as though she had been crying. She pleaded with them, 'There's blood everywhere ... help me ... I'm scared.'

If the police didn't recognise Belinda from the many times her face had appeared in the newspapers and on television in recent times, they knew her when she gave her surname: van Krevel. Her brother Mark Valera, who'd changed his name by deed poll, was sitting in a cell at Silverwater Correctional Complex in Sydney's western suburbs, awaiting sentencing

after having been found guilty of the horrific murders of shopkeeper David John O’Hearn and former Wollongong Lord Mayor and State Member of Parliament, Francis (Frank) Neville Arkell two years earlier.

During those two years and for the next three, the callous and violent murders of David O’Hearn, Frank Arkell and Jack van Krevel were shrouded in rumours and stories of physical and sexual abuse, of secret lives and relationships, and accusations of paedophilia that made headlines nationally. Each allegation was a defence, fuelled by the need of the three accused to justify their actions. The claims would confuse truth with fiction, damaging reputations and leaving a community in turmoil.

12-20 JUNE 1998

2] THESE THINGS DON'T HAPPEN TO ORDINARY PEOPLE

JUST AFTER 5 PM ON FRIDAY 12 JUNE 1998, DAVID O'HEARN locked the doors to his Kanahooka Road corner shop. Kanahooka Road is the main road running west to east from the Princess Highway to picturesque Kanahooka Point, overlooking Lake Illawarra, which attracts weekend picnickers and cyclists. Apart from providing access to the suburb of Kanahooka, the road was also the thoroughfare to two retirement villages, Lakeside Leisure Centre, a roller-skating rink, and the Lakeside Memorial Park and Crematorium.

David's shop was a mixed goods store, supplying locals with their daily essentials of bread and milk, coffee and tea, canned foods, and an assortment of biscuits and confectioneries. The lean, suntanned, silver haired 60-year-old shopkeeper was known for his perpetual smile, friendly banter and service. It was also known amongst the regulars, including those from the neighbouring retirement villages, that if you were short of cash, David would just run a tab. He'd record your

name and the amount owed in an exercise book he kept under the counter. There was never any hurry to pay him back, it was just 'when you can'.

That day David left the shop and as usual drove his late model, navy blue Hyundai Sonata towards his home at Albion Park Rail, over 10 kilometres away, on the southern outskirts of Wollongong. He took the most direct route, turning left from Kanahooka Road and travelling along the Princess Highway, stopping at the Coles supermarket at Dapto for a few groceries. There he met a friend of his mother's. David routinely saw his 89-year-old mother each Saturday afternoon at lunchtime, usually taking along a little 'goodie' for her to eat. He spoke briefly with his mother's friend, asking her to 'give my love to Mum' as he departed to complete his journey.

A few minutes before 6 pm, David parked his car in the garage beside his townhouse. A young man loitered at the entrance to the townhouses then walked down the long driveway to unit number six. David may have seen him previously as the young man lived in the street just a few blocks down, sharing a house with his best mate, Keith Schreiber, Keith's sister and her boyfriend. His name was Mark van Krevel, although he would later change his surname to Valera.

Almost as soon as David had entered his house, there was a knock on the door. He turned the porch light on to reveal van Krevel, clad in black trousers, boots and jacket, the gear he wore to work as a kitchen hand at Planet Hollywood in Sydney. Van Krevel told David he was looking for somewhere to live, and he wondered if David had a room to let or knew of somewhere offering accommodation. There was obviously nothing in van

Krevel's behaviour that alerted David to his visitor's intentions, or made him feel uncomfortable in his presence. David replied that he didn't have a room, but he invited van Krevel in to discuss the situation to see if there was some way he could help the young man. This was not unusual for David, as he was known to always do what he could for people in need, friends and strangers alike.

The townhouse was two-storeyed. Downstairs was a combined living and dining room with an adjoining kitchen, laundry and access to the garage. Upstairs were two bedrooms and a bathroom. The living area reflected David's expensive taste in furnishings. The lounge chairs, side tables, coffee table and cabinets were all highly crafted and French polished. Lead crystal glassware and decanters, silverware, and artwork by Australian outback painter Pro Hart completed the decor.

Van Krevel sat on the lounge, a plush blue two-seater, while David went to the kitchen and poured a glass of orange juice for himself and his visitor. The two chatted briefly as van Krevel gulped the juice, as though quenching a dire thirst. David told the young man that there were several hostels in Wollongong where he might find accommodation, and even offered to contact them on his behalf. Once they'd finished their drinks, David took the empty glass from van Krevel to place in the sink to be washed.

Van Krevel now had his opportunity and he took it. A whisky decanter sat on a side table near the lounge, within arm's reach of van Krevel. While David's back was turned, van Krevel grabbed the heavy, cut-glass decanter and struck David in the head. He fell face down onto the floor. Van Krevel stood

over David, raised the decanter high above his head and brought it down with force, striking his victim repeatedly as he counted each blow: '... seven, eight, nine'. He stopped.

David was dead. But van Krevel wasn't finished.

On the morning of Saturday 13 June, crates of milk and bread were piled and left untouched outside the Kanahooka Road corner shop, well past opening time. It was unusual as David was always up at 5 am and ready for business around 7 am. David lived for his business, a business he planned would fund his retirement. A friend drove past that morning and, noticing the shop wasn't open, became concerned. He phoned his son, Joshua, who had worked for David during his school years; although he was now employed full-time elsewhere, he still helped David out on a casual basis. Joshua was also alarmed, knowing his boss and friend was a man of habit and would never neglect his shop.

Joshua phoned David's house, but got no answer. He tried David's mobile and, again, got no answer. He then phoned David's elder brother, Graham, but he had obligations and it fell to David's sister, Kris, to go to her brother's unit to try and find out what had happened. There was sure to be an explanation. Anything was better than fearing the worst. They hoped David had just slept in.

When Kris arrived with her husband, they noticed the porch light was still on. There was no response when Kris rapped on the door and she tried to spy through the windows, but the shades were drawn. The Sonata was parked in the

garage, so Kris assumed David had to be home. The front door was closed and there were no windows open to gain entry. A few moments later, fuelled by their growing concern, Joshua, his father and younger brother arrived. Together with Kris and her husband, they banged on the door and called to get David's attention. Again, there was no response. Joshua decided to try the front door. To their surprise it opened. It had been left unlocked. Kris and Joshua only took a few steps before they saw David. His headless and mutilated body lay on the floor of the living area, just inside the doorway. It was a bloody and horrific scene. David was disfigured beyond recognition. They both ran from the townhouse, screaming uncontrollably.

It was a moment in each of their lives that will live with them forever. Even now, years after the event, Kris's eyes well and her body trembles at the mere mention of that day. It is a moment they will never fully erase. Ambulance officers treated Kris and Joshua for shock. Joshua would later be taken to hospital for counselling.

The uniformed police arrived promptly and secured the area, preserving the crime scene for specialist officers. Detective Senior Constable John Northfield was first on the scene, dispatched from Warilla police station, the operations centre for the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command (LAC). Illawarra is the name given to the south coast region of New South Wales from just north of Wollongong to the coastal town of Gerroa. The Lake Illawarra LAC extends from Unanderra, a southern suburb of Wollongong, to Gerringong, about two kilometres north of Gerroa.

Detective Inspector Peter Woods, in charge of detectives at

Warilla, arrived minutes later to lead the investigation. Officers from the local Crime Scene Unit, highly trained specialists at detecting and gathering forensic evidence, donned their protective blue overalls, boot covers and gloves to avoid contaminating the scene, and began videoing and examining the unit for evidence. They dusted for fingerprints, recorded every area where they found blood and took samples, in case the offender or offenders had themselves been injured during the attack, though there was no obvious sign of a struggle. The whole townhouse was videoed, photographed and examined. Anything that was suspected of being used in the commission of the murder was bagged and taken away to be tested further and to be used in evidence at a later stage. Items found in the living area included a small metal saw, four knives, a razor blade and a corkscrew.

David's body had been severely mutilated. The killer had decapitated, disembowelled and almost severed the body in half. The head, with one eye gouged, had been left in the kitchen sink, which was partly filled with water. A portion of the intestine had been removed and placed on a silver tray. Another length of intestine had been laid out along the kitchen bench. David's left hand had been cut off and discarded on the lounge. David's penis had also been cut and the handle of a hammer inserted with force into his rectum.

Apart from brutally dismembering David's body, the perpetrator had scrawled satanic symbols in blood on the walls: an inverted cross, pentagram and the word 'Satan'. 'Satan' had also been written on a large ornate mirror above the side table in the lounge room. It was unusual, to say the least, and at one

point had the detectives thinking that the killing might have been ritualistic. With more than twelve years experience in the Forensic Services Group (Crime Scene Unit), Detective Sergeant Barry Doherty would later say that the murder and mutilation of David O'Hearn was 'like nothing I've ever seen before'.

After the Crime Scene officers had completed their examination, Detective Inspector Woods and his team entered the townhouse. They observed that the place had also been looted. Drawers and cupboards in the upstairs rooms, the bedrooms, had been opened and their contents disturbed. Clothing and other items had been left lying around in a manner that told them the perpetrator was looking for something, most likely jewellery or money — small pieces that could be concealed and sold on quickly, unlike the television and video that had been left untouched. Police weren't just dealing with a killer, but also a petty thief.

The murder scene told detectives that the offender had spent a lot of time in the townhouse, as evident from the callous and deliberate mutilation of David's body, the writing of satanic messages, and the theft of personal items yet to be identified. Whoever had committed this crime wasn't in a hurry.

With the flashing lights and a stream of police vehicles filling the normally quiet avenue in Albion Park Rail, onlookers were drawn to the blue and white tape cordoning the area, to peer at all the commotion and surmise about its cause. Amongst the growing crowd was a relative newcomer to the avenue. Mark van Kregel, who had only lived there a few weeks, turned to one of his neighbours and asked, 'What's goin' on?'

The neighbour told him she thought someone had been murdered.

Van Krevel simply replied, 'Oh,' and returned home.

Inspector Peter Woods led the investigation with a ten-man strike force given the codename 'Lema'. The strike force, to be located at Warilla, was made up of detectives from that station and other stations in adjoining LACs along the south coast, or the Southern Region as police refer to it, including Bega, Cooma, Batemans Bay and Queanbeyan. The reason police are brought in from outside the investigating LAC is so as not to totally deplete the resources of the primary command area. After all, there were still other crimes to be investigated.

Officers on the strike force worked on the case for twenty-four hours before notifying Crime Agencies' Homicide and Serial Violent Crime Agency. Nowadays, specialist detectives from Homicide are called in from day one on any murder, as the first forty-eight hours are vital in collecting evidence that can determine the course of an investigation. Homicide detectives only deal with murders, while local detectives juggle everything from robberies and car thefts, to sexual assaults, and while the fundamentals of investigating are similar for all crimes, there are aspects in a murder investigation that require a specific skill set.

Detective Senior Constables Joe Cassar and Dave Laidlaw from Homicide joined Strike Force Lema on day two. Joe Cassar had heard about the murder on the news the day before and was expecting a phone call. They were the 'on-call'

Homicide team and they joined Lema as ‘specialist investigators’, lending their knowledge and experience to the Warilla-led strike force. Their first assignment was to attend the post-mortem. As Joe Cassar put it, ‘We ran with the ball from there.’

Joe Cassar and Dave Laidlaw blended in well with the detectives on Strike Force Lema. They were Wollongong boys, born and raised, brought up on the swirling waves and white sandy beaches, a contrast to the city’s better-known character of coal mines and steel production. Joe and Dave both knew Wollongong well and always kept in touch with the south coast police as a courtesy, knowing there would come a day when they would work side by side. Their intimate knowledge of the area was one reason why their bosses in Crime Agencies had assigned them to Lema.

Joe was soon to discover that he had another advantage of sorts. As it turned out, David O’Hearn’s sister-in-law, Pam, knew Joe from when he was a student at the local Christian Brothers School, where Pam was employed as an administrative assistant. Their association helped Joe quickly gain the family’s confidence. What Joe knew of the O’Hearns, through Pam, was that they were just an average family, and he found it hard to comprehend how any one of them could have become a victim to such brutality.

Joe was able to offer the O’Hearns some solace. Having attended the post-mortem, he was able to tell the family that David had died quickly, after the first couple of blows, and, as such, he wouldn’t have felt any pain from the injuries that followed. It gave the grieving family some comfort. At least David’s

loved ones knew he hadn't suffered, though they couldn't understand why he was killed. Things like this didn't happen to ordinary people.

Although Kris had discovered the body and knew it to be her brother, the police still required a formal identification as a requirement under the Coroner's Act. Pam volunteered her son Andrew, who at the time was an officer with the NSW Police Service. The family believed he would be the best person to handle the situation, given his training and experience as a cop. It was logical, and the investigating police supported the family's choice. They also needed a spokesperson from the O'Hearns, a close relative, someone who would be able to manage, given the circumstances, questions from the media. Andrew agreed.

While Andrew, as a police officer, had been exposed to similar situations, he quickly discovered that nothing could have prepared him for this. The body in the morgue wasn't a stranger, someone else's loved one. It was his uncle David, the person he and his family adored and cared for. Andrew continued to do whatever the police asked of him, however distressing it became, knowing he was still the better choice, saving his parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings from further pain.

For the first time since he had taken over the business two years earlier, David O'Hearn's shop was officially closed, with relatives placing a sign on the door that read 'Shut until further notice'.

By Sunday 14 June, police had quickly pieced together David's last known movements, from the time he finished work

and his brief stop at Coles in Dapto, to the estimated time he arrived home. Based on the receipt from Coles and the fact that perishables were found in David's car, police were sure the estimated time of death was soon after 6 pm. They conducted a 'door to door' investigation through the block of townhouses and other dwellings along the avenue. This didn't reveal any information or sightings of the possible killer. There were no noises, no suspect vehicles and no strangers to report. Just an ordinary Friday evening in June.

In any murder investigation it is important to know as much as possible about the victim. The victim's likes, dislikes, personality, associates, friends, family — anything and everything about them can lead to revealing a motive and point to a suspect, especially as around eighty per cent of murders are committed by people known to the victim. Strangers commit the remaining twenty per cent and these are the hardest to solve.

The police, therefore, were anxious to find out all they could about David John O'Hearn. Talking to the family, they learned that David had returned to the Wollongong area in the last four years. Before then he had lived and worked in Tasmania since the mid 1970s. He'd come back to retire where he was born and raised, to be close to his siblings, their children and, most importantly, his mother, Marion.

His family described David as a very caring and gentle man, while neighbours could only add that he kept to himself and was 'a bit of a loner'. Police learned that David's life extended from Wollongong to Sydney, Brisbane, and Hobart, so they found themselves making arrangements to interview other family members, friends and work associates in three states.

A sad irony also came to light. David had recently sold his Albion Park Rail townhouse and placed a deposit on a property in Dapto, to be close to his family and the shop. The sale of the townhouse had all but gone through. Had there not been a delay, David would have been out of his townhouse two weeks earlier, and most probably out of harm's way.

Local radio, television stations and the newspaper the *Illawarra Mercury* appealed for anyone with information to contact police, particularly anyone who knew David socially. On Monday evening, 15 June, Inspector Woods appeared on the nationally televised *Australia's Most Wanted*. He admitted police had not yet found a motive for David O'Hearn's murder, and again an appeal for information was made. The program generated thirty-two calls to the police phone-in service, Crimestoppers. Detectives now had to follow up each piece of information, however insignificant it might be, to either exclude it or mark it for further action.

Satanic symbols aside, on the surface the crime appeared to be one of retaliation, given the extent to which the killer had gone to mutilate and demean David's body. However, the police could not allow themselves to become fixated with just one scenario. Regardless of obvious first impressions, they had to explore all possibilities as a matter of course. They couldn't afford to be blinkered. Was David killed by someone he knew, or was it a stranger? Had David disturbed an intruder who then killed him, even though there was no sign of forced entry? Was the ransacking just a red herring? Had the killer killed before? Was the killer associated with a satanic group? Were the satanic drawings a red herring? And so on, and so on.

On Tuesday 16 June, Inspector Woods organised a press conference at Warilla police station. It was Andrew's time to make an appeal, as nephew and the family's spokesperson. Fighting back tears, Andrew bravely addressed the waiting journalists. On occasion he would be forced to stop and collect himself, overwhelmed by emotion.

Andrew spoke of an uncle who was a hard worker, a gentleman and 'a quiet sort of bloke'. He also told the media of the pain his family was going through. Talking about the effect of the killer's actions, Andrew said, 'I wouldn't like to see any family be put through what he put our family through ... it has come as a total shock ... the whole family is very disturbed by the gravity of the murder ... it's hard to believe this has happened ... the full impact hasn't set in.' Andrew admitted that his family didn't know a lot about his uncle's social life. To them, David had always lived alone and he attended family functions on his own. They didn't believe David went out much either, only because his business demanded the majority of his time. As the police had done previously, Andrew made an impassioned plea '... for anyone who did know him outside of work to come forward, talk to investigators and help them out'.

A week after David O'Hearn's body was discovered, Peter Cullen, editor-in-chief of the *Illawarra Mercury*, wrote a lengthy piece on page five headlined, 'Does Anybody Know David John O'Hearn?' It was the same day the O'Hearn family gathered to pay their last respects to the man they all loved.

David was cremated at Wollongong City Memorial Gardens. His brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces all openly shed their emotions and consoled each other. Amongst the

gathering was his 89-year-old mother, Marion. Wheelchair bound, she'd made the journey from her retirement home to farewell her favourite son. Everyone knew how much David meant to his mother, and none of his siblings was ever envious or jealous of him. He'd done a lot for his family, earning their love and respect. While dealing with their own pain, David's brothers and sisters knew that their mother had lost a large part of her life. She'd suffered the cruellest cut, when a parent is left to bury their child. It would be a loss from which she would never recover.

' GENEROUS TO A FAULT '

3] DAVID JOHN O'HEARN

AT THE AGE OF FIFTY-FIVE, DAVID O'HEARN DECIDED he'd return to the town of his birth. He used to travel back to Wollongong from Tasmania at every invitation, and sometimes just to surprise his family. Finally he decided he'd been away long enough, more than twenty years, and his failing kitchenware business in Hobart gave him the push he needed to move on.

David sold his Sandy Bay home and business in Hobart in 1994, and initially set up base in Miranda, a southern suburb of Sydney and less than an hour's drive to Wollongong. He found a job in a Goldmark jewellery store while he searched for two investment opportunities. The first was property, something that he could possibly rent or live in and sell later. The second was an appropriate business close to where his family lived. A business that would involve dealing with people and one that would also provide a nest egg for the years to come, either through the income it would generate or as an asset. David was coming home.

Born in December 1937, David was the third child in a family of eight. He had two elder brothers, Tony and Graham,

a younger brother, John, and three sisters, Anne, Kris and Sue. A fourth sister, Sandra, died at eighteen months of age from meningitis.

David was somewhat of an enigma within the O'Hearn family. To his two younger sisters, Kris and Sue, he became more of a father figure than a brother. Their father, as Sue puts it, '... wasn't the greatest of fathers ... that's the truth and you can't get away from that'. 'He liked his beer,' Graham remembers.

John and Anne, who were closest in age to David, remember him as a bossy older brother who tried to keep them in line. As siblings do, they'd retaliate with taunts about how he would fuss over his wavy hair and his meticulous appearance, and generally give him a hard time.

Tony and Graham had left home as soon as they were able. Tony remained in the Wollongong area while Graham settled in Tasmania. David was left, taking on the responsibilities normally reserved for an older sibling. Their mother, Marion, worked long hours providing for the family, often returning home in the evenings to find David had fed, bathed and got the girls ready for bed.

David contributed however he could to supporting his mother, brother and sisters emotionally and financially. If there was anything his younger sisters needed — clothes, school-books, spending money, a lift somewhere — they went to David. From the age of twelve, he always had a part-time job. He first worked for the local fruit and veg man, helping him with his horse-and-cart rounds on Saturday mornings. He did the same for the baker and then the milkman before leaving school and

getting full-time employment with the local newsagent when he was fifteen. To celebrate, he bought a green and pink vase for his mother, spending the whole of his first pay.

Through the years David would continue to buy his mother gifts, particularly the latest kitchen appliance or time-saving device that hit the shelves. He did it because he wanted to make his mother's life easier and wanted her to have the best. It was his way of repaying her for struggling financially for years with eight kids. His brothers and sisters all recall David giving them the best birthday and Christmas presents. He was a very giving man to family and friends alike, generous to a fault.

Being eighteen during the 1950s, and with the Korean War under way, David, like Tony and Graham before him, did his National Service. It was compulsory for all young Australian men. After the three-month basic training, David was required to do two years in the CMF (Civilian Military Force), now known as the Army Reserves. He enjoyed the experience and even extended his time in the service voluntarily, reaching the rank of sergeant.

David stayed with his family till he was in his late twenties, employed by a large retail store, Fairlies, in Wollongong. He began as a sales assistant, and then found himself being promoted to floor manager. David was a natural at sales. He was a people person, instinctively knowing the type of person he was dealing with, and relying more on their behaviour and body language than words.

David never liked being given orders, particularly if they were dished out without any consideration given to his feelings, so when he found himself responsible for staff, he made a point

of 'asking' them to do things. He approached his co-workers with the respect he expected from his superiors and in turn earned their respect. It was a character trait that David never lost. When police interviewed David's former colleagues, not one had anything negative to say about him. They all valued their time with him and found him to be a generous, patient and giving supervisor.

Working for other people never really suited David. He wanted to be his own boss. Perhaps as a result of his earlier experience with part-time jobs, David always had the ambition to own his own business. And he knew he would.

With his sisters all grown and able to care for themselves, David left Wollongong for Sydney and bigger opportunities in 1966. There he worked in Peapes, an exclusive menswear store on George Street in the city. Peapes was 'the' store during the 1960s and 1970s, frequented by Sydney's elite. The interior was ornate and resembled a men's club more than just another clothing store. David enjoyed rubbing shoulders with society types and the personalities of the day, and he stayed with Peapes for a couple of years before taking a job with a larger retail chain.

Through those years, David's siblings remember their mother making trips to Sydney to supply her son with essentials so he'd eat properly. David's Achilles' heel was his love of the finer things in life. He was particularly fond of water views. He'd found himself an apartment in Rose Bay, an exclusive suburb in Sydney's east, overlooking the harbour. While the place was exquisite and the furnishings splendid, the rent didn't leave David with much change for groceries, so his mother came to his rescue.

David's days in retail didn't last long as the urge to be his own boss drove him to move on. He took on the lease of a kiosk near the ferry wharf at Mosman, on Sydney's north shore. The wharf is located at the foot of Taronga Zoo and has one of the best panoramas of Sydney Harbour. It was the perfect location for David, if only for the spectacular vista.

David ran the kiosk in partnership with a friend, Michael, for eighteen months. Then they opened a takeaway snack bar called Friar Tuck's in Balgowlah. Buried in suburbia on the north shore, it was still near enough to the beaches of Manly for David to work on his tan. Friar Tuck's was a successful business, but not without its problems. David and Michael thought one or more of their employees might be helping themselves to the profits, so David called his mother in. Marion would work at the counter, giving David the freedom to roam the shop and subtly check on his staff. His mother was always there to help.

In 1973 David made the decision to relocate to Tasmania, following his older brother, Graham, and his younger brother, John, both of whom were now married and had families of their own. David wanted a change from Sydney and figured the Apple Isle would give it to him. He settled in Hobart and worked for an established retail chain, Myer, before venturing into business for himself.

During his time away he kept in close contact with Tony, Kris and Sue, who were still in Wollongong, and Anne, who had settled in Brisbane, attending every wedding, christening and birthday, and even making surprise visits home for Christmas. One time, as Kris remembers, he paid a \$100 cab fare from Sydney airport to Wollongong. When he arrived no one was

home, so he got one of the neighbours' kids, who was a friend of Kris's son, to climb through an open window and let him in. Kris and her family came home to find David sitting on their lounge watching television.

While every member of the O'Hearn family loved David, the one person who rejoiced at having him home the most was his mother, Marion. When in Hobart, David would frequently pay for Marion to fly down and join him. She didn't have to work or bring food this time, all she had to do was relax and treat the excursion as a holiday. David made sure all her needs were met. Unfortunately, as the years progressed David's mother couldn't make the trips and eventually found herself being cared for in St Luke's Retirement Home. It was his mother's frailty, his retirement plans and the poor performance of his kitchenware business that all culminated in David deciding to return in 1994.

By 1996 David had found an investment property, a townhouse in Albion Park Rail, and a mixed business on Kanahooka Road. Everything was falling into place. When David purchased the business he agreed to keep on the delivery boy, Joshua, who the former owners had employed. David soon became a good friend of Joshua's family. Once when Joshua's sister was travelling to Sydney and his parents were concerned for her wellbeing, without hesitation, David gave the young girl his mobile so she could keep in touch with her parents. Those who knew David knew he'd help anyone, any way he could, either through practical assistance or just by listening to their woes.

When news of David's death reached his family, everyone was understandably distraught and filled with disbelief. They'd

lost a treasured son, a loved brother, and a favourite uncle. No one could understand why anyone would want to take his life. His family knew him as a gentle soul. David never raised his voice or exhibited any form of anger. He was no saint, his family would agree, but they found it impossible to believe he could have done anything to bring about such a horrific end to his life. How could he have become a victim?

David's life was so intertwined with his family's that, even today, they exude a sense of emptiness when speaking about him. Each brother, sister, nephew and niece has their own memory of David, different and diverse, though they have their love in common. He wasn't only a brother and an uncle, but a surrogate father, friend and counsel. Kris and Sue would often confide in him about problems with their children, finding David had a simple solution that worked. David's advice came from knowing people, knowing his sisters' kids, and putting himself in their shoes. It was easy for David because he was an uncle, and could see the situation without becoming embroiled in the emotions of a parent.

Maxine, Graham's wife, often found herself sitting up till the early hours with David whenever he'd stay at their place. As Graham and Maxine's children were older and self-sufficient, David knew he could keep his brother and sister-in-law up till late. It was his opportunity to indulge in a few glasses of wine, normally outlasting Graham, but having Maxine to keep him company. Their laughter would cause Graham to wake up again. The next morning, feeling the worse for wear, David would stare at Graham and promise 'never again'. And he didn't, until the next time he was at Graham and Maxine's place.

Initially the media portrayed David as a 'quiet guy who kept to himself', but then they started digging, inferring that he may have had a 'secret life'. While the family couldn't give adequate answers to questions about David's social life, mainly because he wasn't a traditionally social person, it appeared to fuel the speculation that he was living another life. In reality, David's social life consisted of enjoying a few wines with his brothers and sisters and attending family functions. He preferred to read a book or the newspaper, or quietly watch TV rather than go out to pubs or clubs. He didn't appreciate crowds or loud noises. Even when Tony invited him out to a local club for a meal, a couple of beers and to play the pokies, David's reaction was always, 'Do we have to . . . can't we just have a meal and come home?'

Even the police, having interviewed friends, business associates and former colleagues, could not find anyone who spoke negatively about David, or knew of him having another life or dark secret. No one called police, even anonymously, suggesting a motive for David's killing.

At the media conference Andrew O'Hearn did ask anyone who knew his uncle socially to contact police. This is a standard request and should not be presumed to mean David had in any way been secretive. The media, however, seemed to latch on to the possibility that David was living a secret life.

The O'Hearn family was hurt by the media coverage leading up to and including the eventual trial. Even in the first two weeks it didn't help them when on Wednesday 17 June, just five days after the murder, the *Illawarra Mercury* ran the page one headline, 'Victim Knew His Killer', with the opening par

reading in part, '... O'Hearn probably had a secret life and his killer was someone with whom he had clashed'. The article quoted Dr Richard Basham, a senior lecturer at Sydney University. He was reported as saying he was 'concerned' about the lack of personal details in David's life, and that David, '... could have been someone compulsive who possibly had no private life but it is more likely he had a secret life'.

The O'Hearns knew that David's life was an open book, and they couldn't understand all the speculation. As the victim of a horrific crime, his family accepted that David would lose all right to privacy, but that didn't mean they had to accept unfounded theories.

Given the shock and trauma David's death caused family members, it's not surprising that some of the quotes attributed to them seem vague and lacking substance. Even so, they couldn't believe the media weren't satisfied. But, as the weeks and months went on, the O'Hearns would have to bear more questions and 'speculation'.

David's sexuality would become another issue in the weeks following his murder. The police, having interviewed colleagues and friends in Sydney and Hobart, did establish that David had had homosexual relations, though he did not have a partner at the time of his killing. In fact, David had only had a handful of partners, and he'd had monogamous relationships with all of them; there was never any evidence or suggestion that he engaged in promiscuous behaviour.

David's family never enquired about his sex life. That was David's business. Kris asked him once if he regretted not having kids, and David replied, 'I do ... your kids are my kids.'

His brothers and sisters all remembered him dating and having various girlfriends in his youthful years. He was a smart dresser and took care of his appearance, spoke correctly and adhered to the rules of etiquette. He did, however, get one of his girlfriends pregnant, so the thought that he could be gay was a surprise to his family, particularly his two older brothers.

'He was still in the cupboard,' Tony, the patriarch of the family, said. 'The only thing you could guess a little bit was he was a little bit effeminate, maybe.'

Kris added, 'Because David dressed very well, trendy clothes, brought us nice presents, spoke to us beautifully, some people would think that . . . I never ever thought that of my brother and that's the truth.'

Sue justified, 'He certainly wasn't going to come out and tell Tony he was gay, was he?'

'Tony's the older generation,' Kris explained. '. . . and he (David) never spoke about it . . . we just didn't know.'

David never admitted or denied being straight or gay to any of his family, except one, because he was never asked. Providing he was happy they didn't care. It was irrelevant — they all loved David as he was.

David's younger brother, John, put the question to David after a few wines one evening and David coyly answered, 'Oh well, if you want to look at it this way, I'm bisexual.'

Graham saw his brother as being 'asexual', not having as much interest in relationships as he had in his businesses. Graham's assessment came from the years he and David spent together in Tasmania, and from filling in for David at his

Kanahooka Road shop. David's energies and drive went into his work, and the whole family referred to him as a workaholic.

After David's death, when his family were going through his paperwork at the shop, they discovered his 'credit' book under the counter. Most of the pages in the exercise book were filled with the names of people David had given credit to, mostly elderly people from a local retirement village. Graham remembered one occasion when he covered for his brother in the shop while David went and did the banking. A gentleman entered, grabbed a loaf of bread and as he left he yelled to Graham to 'book it up'. Graham didn't know what the customer meant and stopped him, taking back the bread. He hadn't realised David's benevolence, and after seeing the exercise book wondered how he ever made a profit.

If there was a way to summarise David that also shed some light on his tragic end, Maxine, his sister-in-law, put it best when she said, 'David was very generous, he'd help anyone . . . he was generous to a fault . . . and that was his fault.'

20-27 JUNE 1998

4] TWO WEEKS TO THE DAY

DESPITE INTENSIVE SCRUTINY INTO DAVID O'HEARN'S life and repeated calls for information from the public, investigators on Strike Force Lema couldn't find an obvious motive for his tragic end. They then opened another line of enquiry, believing David's murder had been random and opportunistic. Police began searching their intelligence records on local persons who had come to their attention, for a variety of reasons, in an attempt to identify possible suspects: to use a cliché, 'the usual suspects'. They were looking for anyone who displayed bizarre behaviour, had satanic interests, exhibited violent tendencies, had made threats against other persons or had spoken of mutilating and torturing people, and, of course, parolees having served time for violent crimes.

There was another issue detectives on Lema needed to clarify. Had the killer brought their own weapons to the scene? During the post-mortem Dr Allan Cala found that the lacerations and mutilations were consistent with the use of the small metal saw, knives, razor blade and corkscrew found at the scene. From what Joe Cassar knew of David from his family, it didn't appear to him that David was much of a handyman, which

made him wonder if the tools belonged to David or had been carried in by the killer. Admittedly they were basic tools that could be found in anyone's home, but the detectives needed to be sure of their origin. Joe returned to the Albion Park Rail townhouse along with Detective Senior Constable Jason Woods. They searched the garage but found no toolbox nor any sign of tools being kept there. In a small cupboard above the fridge in the kitchen, Joe found his answer. He discovered an open bag that contained other tools, a screwdriver and the like. It appeared David had packed all the tools away in one bag as part of his preparation for leaving. Members of the Strike Force were now satisfied that the implements were David's, and that the killer had not planned the savagery but improvised with what they could find.

Having assessed the names gathered from the intelligence on possible suspects, investigators came up with five persons of interest. Among the five names was a young man known to have satanic interests and who had exhibited bizarre behaviour in the past. Even more importantly for the police, he lived in Albion Park Rail, just a few doors down from David O'Hearn. His name was Keith Schreiber.

Detectives from Strike Force Lema went to Schreiber's address. They were met at the front door by a polite, cordial, Mark van Kregel. Schreiber wasn't at home, but van Kregel spoke to detectives about his housemate. Van Kregel invited the officers in and he also allowed them to see Schreiber's bedroom. In the bedroom, the police noticed macabre drawings of headless bodies, corpses and disembowelments. The graphic content of the pictures seemed to depict the recent crime scene

and the atrocities performed on David O'Hearn's body. The drawings only heightened the investigators' suspicions. They then asked van Krevel to accompany them to Warilla police station. Van Krevel wasn't a suspect, but, being Schreiber's friend and housemate, he may have had information that could implicate Schreiber, and the police weren't going to let an opportunity pass.

Van Krevel complied with the detectives' request. Originally the officers were going to electronically record the interview, but the equipment was playing up and they settled for a typed version. What van Krevel had to say didn't surprise the investigators. He denied any knowledge of the murder, other than seeing police in the street on the Saturday afternoon. He didn't give anything away and hadn't given them anything to confirm their suspicions of Schreiber. Once the typed record of interview was complete, it was handed to van Krevel for his signature and placed in a plastic jacket to be referred to later if need be.

Detectives spoke with Schreiber some time later. Schreiber worked as a fish gutter in Nowra, 69 kilometres south of Wollongong, and told the investigators that he was with his boss at the time David O'Hearn was murdered. As for the gruesome drawings, it turned out that Schreiber had copied the images from CD covers of his and van Krevel's favourite death-metal group, Cannibal Corpse. The officers confirmed Schreiber's alibi with his employer, and it seemed he was out of the picture.

The police didn't concentrate all their efforts just on Schreiber. Investigators on Strike Force Lema were split up and given individual tasks, looking at the five possible suspects and

furthering their enquiry into David O'Hearn's background. Of the five names that popped up through intelligence, there were still a couple that seemed even more likely than Schreiber. One person of interest had made threats to mutilate the body of another person in a similar fashion to the attack on David O'Hearn. He even mentioned performing particular atrocities that, at the time, only the police were aware had been suffered by David O'Hearn. The team of detectives on Strike Force Lema couldn't afford to ignore any potential suspect or piece of information until the person or lead had been fully investigated. Police had to be confident before eliminating anyone or anything from their enquiries.

On the morning of Saturday 27 June, Joe Cassar was at Warilla police station, still looking for answers to David O'Hearn's murder, when he received a call from Detective Senior Constable Sean Lynch. Lynch had been called to attend a murder scene, along with a second officer, Detective Senior Constable Adrian Beck, both from Wollongong police station. The victim this time was a high profile politician, former Lord Mayor and Member of the New South Wales State Parliament, 68-year-old Frank Arkell. His elderly housekeeper made the shocking discovery around 8 am.

Frank Arkell had been viciously beaten about the head, strangled with an electrical cord and had tiepins inserted into his eyes and face. While the body hadn't been as horrifically dismembered or abused as David O'Hearn's, Sean Lynch still thought there could be a connection and asked Joe Cassar to attend. The on-call Homicide team had also been notified.

As Joe Cassar would soon learn, there were similarities between the two murder scenes, which could mean this was the perpetrator's second victim in as many weeks — in fact, two weeks to the day.

'MR WOLLONGONG'

5] FRANCIS NEVILLE ARKELL

'IT'S NOT HOW YOU FALL, IT'S HOW YOU GET UP THAT counts.' So said Frank Arkell, Lord Mayor of Wollongong, to journalists after seeing his beloved city come through one of its worst recessions during the early 1980s. After Wollongong experienced a downturn in the steel and coal industries between 1983 and 1985, and unemployment levels doubled the national average, Frank Arkell proudly announced in 1987 that the city's future was looking 'tremendous', coining the phrase 'wonderful, wonderful Wollongong'.

Retrenchments by BHP, Australia's largest steel producer, from their Port Kembla operations severely damaged Wollongong's economy during the 1980s. Steel works and coal mining were the backbone of the Illawarra, and particularly 'the Gong', as its residents affectionately know it. Naturally, as job opportunities declined, locals began looking for work in and around Sydney. The economy suffered further with what is known as 'escape spending', where people from Wollongong preferred to shop in Sydney's southern suburbs and the outer western area of Campbelltown, being attracted to the wider range of goods and lower prices available through greater competition.

To combat the growing decay, Frank Arkell and Wollongong Council began selling the city to developers and investors, turning around its image from a steel city to one that offered pristine beaches, white sands, lush bushlands, and a leisurely lifestyle. Tourism and hospitality would be the industry of the future. The pitch worked, and Wollongong began its metamorphosis.

Wollongong's central business district underwent a transformation. Crown Street, right in its heart, was closed off and made into a pedestrian mall between the cross streets Keira and Kembla. In addition a large retail complex, the Crown Gateway Shopping Centre, was developed housing around seventy specialty shops. Light industries, both private and government, relocated to the Illawarra region. Hotel accommodation to international standards began springing up, as did restaurants and cafes. There was also a shift in population, as people from Sydney started buying properties at cheaper prices in Wollongong and commuting back to Sydney for work. Frank hoped to attract enough business to the area so that the new residents from Sydney would eventually find employment in the Gong.

During the turbulent 1980s, Frank Arkell had a whiteboard in his office on which he'd list his objectives for Wollongong, which included attracting manufacturers, broadening the economic base and improving transport. The heading above the list read, 'Selling Wollongong to the World'. Frank lived for his job and he lived for Wollongong.

Francis Neville Arkell was born in September 1929. His family was one of the first European families in Wollongong, originally owning and working the land as farmers and graziers. As the population in the Illawarra grew, the Arkells began selling their land and diversified into property management. Frank was raised and lived all his life in the family home at number 1 Reserve Street. He was educated at the local Christian Brothers School, went into banking, and worked for the Australian Stock Exchange before moving into real estate.

In 1965 Frank stood as an independent in the local council elections and won. Ten years later, Frank defeated Tony Bevan for the position of Lord Mayor of Wollongong. Frank would wear the mayoral robes for seventeen years. While in office, Frank became a high profile mayor, attending as many as ten functions in one day, starting early in the morning and finishing late at night. He would walk along Crown Street, stopping people, shaking their hands and asking for their thoughts on the city and what they wanted done. He tried to be the people's mayor. He was also a consummate politician, described as being energetic, enthusiastic, passionate, positive, flamboyant, arrogant, abrupt and quick-tempered. When giving a speech at an opening or special function, Frank would acknowledge the event and then launch into the problems facing Wollongong, using it as a platform to inform his constituents about what the council was doing to make the city a better place. He used any and all opportunities to campaign for his ideas.

Being a public figure, Frank Arkell was the subject of a lot of rumour. People speculated about his sexuality as he had never married and never appeared to have a partner in his life.

When asked about this, Frank would give his well-used line, 'I'm married to Wollongong.' An Independent who was not aligned with either of the two main political parties, Frank would also say, 'If you are not married by the time you're thirty you are gay, if you have got any money you are corrupt, and if you are not a member of the Labor party you are a clandestine member of the Liberal party.'

Wollongong, with most of its workforce being blue collar, was considered by political analysts as being a very safe Labor seat. The Australian Labor Party has its origins in the union movement, and is known for representing the interests of working class Australians. In 1981, Frank Arkell decided to stand as Wollongong's local Member in the New South Wales State Parliament. His opposition was long-standing Labor member Eric Ramsay. Ramsay won the election, but Frank surprised his critics, losing the contest by as little as 51 votes. At 54 years of age, Frank fought back and won the 1984 election with a 2500 vote majority, taking the seat of Wollongong out of the hands of Labor for the first time since 1971 when the Liberals had held it. Australia was at the height of the recession in 1984, and Frank campaigned strongly, promising jobs and highlighting the failures of both state and federal governments to give assistance to Wollongong. Frank was returned as state Member for his second term in 1988, increasing his majority to 3072 votes. During this time Frank also remained Wollongong's Lord Mayor.

While Frank's plans to pull Wollongong out of the 1980s recession was working, he almost suffered a setback in May 1987 when the media began reporting on an outbreak of legionnaire's disease. Between April and June that year thirty-eight cases of

legionnaire's had been diagnosed, many more were suspected, and there had been seven deaths. The State Health Minister at the time, Mr Anderson, named Frank's jewel, the Crown Gateway Shopping Centre, as being the 'common link' between each case. The shopping centre was almost deserted as people refused to go near it. Tests on the Crown Gateway's air-conditioning ducts proved negative. A nearby building was tested and showed high levels of legionnaire's bacteria. Frank went into rescue mode, heavily promoting the shopping complex and even organising a public relations luncheon in the centre for civic leaders, health officials and the media.

After Frank's election victory in 1988, he continued to sell his 'wonderful, wonderful Wollongong' to the world and the rest of Australia. Frank had been credited with helping to reduce the number of unemployed from 23 per cent in 1984 to 13 per cent by 1988. He was founder of the Leisure Coast Council that managed to secure 4500 jobs between 1981 and 1988. Environmental issues were also close to Frank's heart, earning him a second nickname, 'Mr Green'. Frank was a driving force in making the community aware of the dangers of pollution, beach erosion, sewage, and the importance of 'greening Wollongong'. Long before it became fashionable with politicians, Frank promoted tree planting, offering residents as many native saplings as they wanted free of charge. Frank had visions of creating a 'green corridor' around Wollongong and extending through the suburbs and commercial areas. There could never be too many parks and open spaces for Frank. He even donated land adjoining his family home in Reserve Street to be turned into a reserve with a play

area and tennis court. Abandoned cars were towed to holding yards, sewage used to fertilise parks, and regeneration programs implemented to improve the beaches and shoreline. 'Rise and Shine' became the slogan Frank used to 'clean and green' Wollongong. The city and the whole of the Illawarra became a showpiece of environmental consciousness.

The 1980s appear to have been Frank Arkell's high point as he demonstrated his leadership, political savvy, and foresight in averting the slippage of his beloved Wollongong into the abyss of recession. The 1990s, however, were to be his downfall. Frank would claim to be a victim of the 'tall poppy syndrome'. The beginning of the end came in 1991 when Frank lost both his mayoral position and the state election.

In May, Frank Arkell lost his seat in State Parliament to the Labor candidate, Gerry Sullivan, who won by 50 per cent of the primary vote. It was a huge victory for Labor. Despite Frank's record he believed he caught the mud being thrown at him by his rival over the unemployment issue. Mud sticks and Frank was blamed for 'not creating jobs in the Wollongong area'. Other people thought Frank had stretched himself too far in being both State Member and Lord Mayor. Trying to retain his mayoral post, Frank campaigned with the slogan, 'I work hard for Wollongong because I love this City . . . let me finish my work'. Frank's love of the city was never in question, but it was not enough and again it was Labor that would take his robes. David Campbell became the new Lord Mayor of Wollongong in September.

Even after his losses, Frank continued to tread the hustings, walking down streets and through shopping centres

shaking hands and listening to people's problems. He was a fighter and wouldn't give up.

In 1991 former Lord Mayor Tony Bevan died of cancer. What he left behind was a trail of incriminating evidence linking himself and others to an organised paedophile ring operating in Wollongong and Sydney during the 1970s and 1980s. The evidence was in the form of telexes and cassette recordings. Bevan appeared as the leader, referring to himself as 'Hook' or 'Commander Hook', procuring boys as young as thirteen to have sex with him and his clients. Communication between Bevan and others within the ring was coded. Bevan would refer to the boys as 'the royal party', 'lasses', 'she', and 'trade'. Money sent to Bevan from his clients was known as 'the royal mail'. Other terms included 'cracking', meaning male prostitution, 'rough trade', implying a boy was not attractive, and 'hot', used to describe someone who might inform on the group to the police or other authorities.

Tony Bevan had actually come to the attention of the police as early as 1982, but the investigation stalled. The witness, according to reports, appeared unreliable and Bevan was never charged. As the years went on, with fresh allegations levelled against the former mayor, police would conduct further investigations, but no charges were ever laid against Bevan.

In 1994 the New South Wales Parliament voted in support of a Royal Commission into police corruption, after a motion by then independent Member and anti-corruption activist John Hatton, who claimed to have evidence of substantial corruption within the police service. Parliament appointed Justice James

Wood to lead the Commission and hearings began on 24 November.

While the Commission, known as the Wood Royal Commission, was to investigate police corruption, its terms of reference were extended to include investigation of alleged police protection of paedophile rackets. Some of the tapes and telexes belonging to Bevan had found their way into the possession of the Commission's investigators. There were believed to have been 96 cassettes, of 90 minutes duration, but only 48 were recovered. The other 48 had been erased by an associate of Bevan's.

One of the tapes featured a conversation between Frank Arkell and one of Bevan's boys. A copy of that tape — or it might have been the original, it is uncertain — was sent to the *Illawarra Mercury*. It became known as the 'scorpion' tape. The *Mercury* forwarded it to the Commission, alleging that the tape revealed Frank attempting to procure sex from the boy, though there is a report that suggests the person was actually nineteen or twenty years old at the time. The tape is also believed to have been made in the late 1970s.

In December 1994, Deirdre Grusovin, a Labor Member of State Parliament and Shadow Minister for Housing, read a statutory declaration made by self-confessed paedophile Colin Fisk. Using parliamentary privilege, she named two people Fisk had alleged were paedophiles, prominent Sydney solicitor John Marsden and Frank Arkell. Mrs Grusovin's actions caused an uproar, and resulted in her being reprimanded by her party and resigning from her shadow ministry. The opposition leader at the time, Bob Carr, apologised in parliament to John

Marsden and Frank Arkell, saying Mrs Grusovin had made ‘an error of judgement’. He went on to say, ‘Without supporting evidence this matter should not have been aired in parliament.’ Colin Fisk would later recant his statement, making another statutory declaration to lawyers for John Marsden, saying he was depressed at the time he made the declaration and that it was based on ‘hearsay’.

In March 1996, the Wood Royal Commission began hearings into police protection of paedophile rings. There were numerous witnesses and the contents of the Bevan telexes and tapes were made known. The Commission wanted to speak with Frank Arkell about the allegations against him and to see if he had anything to do with corrupting police for protection. To protect his identity the Commission gave him the codename W1. Investigators visited Frank and he gave a statement. He was called to the Commission, but instead, his legal team presented medical certificates claiming that he was unfit to attend. It is understood Frank was too unwell mentally and was suffering depression.

The Commission did hear evidence from various men who claimed to have had sex with Frank when they were teenagers, as young as fourteen, and on one occasion in a public toilet. Bevan and his associates knew Frank as ‘Farkless Arkless’. Another witness, W14, admitted to Justice Wood that he had helped Tony Bevan attempt to blackmail Frank over a rezoning of land for a property deal in the late 1970s. W14 had retrieved details of Frank’s business dealings, passing the information on to Bevan so that he could use it to come to an ‘arrangement’ with Frank to help convince council to rezone the land. Frank

Arkell would tell the *Daily Telegraph* on 5 November 1996 about the property deal and Bevan: 'I did Tony Bevan out of \$8 or \$9 or \$10 billion ... I hated his guts ... he wasn't a good alderman and he wasn't a good man.' In answer to the scorpion tape, Frank defended himself: 'I was being set up ... the tape is not complete and skilfully produced.'

A month earlier Franca Arena, a Labor Member of the State Parliament Upper House, the Legislative Council, identified Frank Arkell as W1. Mrs Arena was frustrated with what she believed was the inactivity of the Commission and asked if Frank Arkell was being protected from prosecution. Justice Wood lifted the suppression order on Frank's name so he could publicly answer the allegations. Frank released a statutory declaration he had made on 21 August, denying the claims of child sex and saying, 'I have never had sexual contact with a male under eighteen and never in a public toilet.'

The media swooped on Frank's Reserve Street home. He would hold his wrists up to journalists, indicating he hadn't tried to kill himself as some reports had suggested after he failed to appear before the Commission. He continued to deny the allegations against him, condemning paedophiles, saying they should be locked up and have the key thrown away. Explaining why he didn't attend the Royal Commission to give evidence he said, 'I dropped my bundle and I just did not have confidence in myself.'

Justice Wood found there was no evidence to link Frank Arkell to any corruption of the police service, which was his brief. Therefore, the allegations against Frank were passed on from the Commission to the then newly formed Child

Protection Enforcement Agency (CPEA). The CPEA would review the evidence and decide if any charges were to be laid. On 1 May 1997, Detective Sergeant Phil Linkenbagh, with Detective Inspector Gordon Ball and Detective Senior Constable John Tzinberg, arrested Frank Arkell at his home and charged him with twenty-nine child sex offences. The offences, dating between 1973 and 1984, included fourteen counts of indecent assault on males, eight counts of sexual intercourse with a male without consent, five counts of buggery, and two counts of using a stupefying drug to commit an indictable offence on four victims aged between fourteen and eighteen.

The committal proceedings against Frank Arkell were heard at Wollongong Local Court in front of Magistrate Paul Johnson in February 1998. The four alleged victims gave their accounts during the five-day committal hearing. The first man claimed he had sex with Frank six times in 1984, as part of Bevan's boy sex ring. The incidents took place in a high-rise apartment and at units in East Corrimal and Windang, northern and southern Wollongong suburbs respectively. His testimony was found to be different to what he had first told Commission investigators, though he explained he told the investigators of his changes but they told him 'it was too late'. The court accepted his account, but dismissed eleven of the twelve charges that were laid in relation to his testimony.

The second alleged victim claimed to have been drugged and raped by Frank Arkell in 1984. He knew Frank well and had considered him a 'second father'. He admitted he was in financial trouble and had applied for victim's compensation, had a

history of psychiatric problems and had attempted suicide. The court accepted his account and understood, given his circumstances, that he would have been advised by his legal representatives to apply for compensation — meaning any monetary gain was not a motivation.

A third man, serving a sentence for child sex offences himself, told the court he had sex with Frank Arkell in a public toilet in 1973 when he was only fourteen. The defence barrister for Frank Arkell, Phillip Boulten, said that the witness ‘rates as one of the most unimpressive witnesses to ever grace a witness box’. ‘This man lives in his own reality,’ Mr Boulten added. ‘He was unreliable, disreputable and his criminal record included convictions for dishonesty and perversion.’ Magistrate Paul Johnson acknowledged that the man had only come forward after his own arrest in 1996, and considered Mr Boulten’s submission ‘carried a considerable deal of persuasion’.

The final alleged victim, who admitted being an associate of Bevan, said that Frank Arkell had picked him up walking along a road in May 1978. Frank drove him not to his home, but to Reserve Street, where it was alleged Frank gave him a spiked drink and then raped him. The rape is said to have taken place when he was nineteen. Tony Bevan, on being told by the man that Frank had picked him up, had the man phone Frank while Bevan recorded the conversation. Another associate of Tony Bevan’s, who witnessed the phone call to Frank, admitted in court that the conversation did not seem like a conversation between a rapist and his victim. The alleged victim denied knowing the call was being taped, and denied he was conspiring with Bevan against Arkell at the time.

After hearing all the evidence and submissions, Mr Johnson dismissed twenty-four of the charges and one of the alleged victims, the man who claimed to have had sex with Frank in a public toilet when he was fourteen. The magistrate decided there was a sufficient case against Frank Arkell relating to four of the charges, involving two of the accusers. The Director of Public Prosecutions was left to decide whether they would proceed with a fifth charge involving the alleged victim who said he had had sex with Frank six times in 1984. By the time the trial date of 14 September had been set down, and the defence counsel had successfully moved the trial from Wollongong to Parramatta in Sydney's west, Frank Arkell would only have had to face the four charges of unlawfully administering a stupefying drug and buggery. The victims were aged seventeen and eighteen at the time of the offence. The Director of Public Prosecutions admitted the charges did not constitute child sex offences, but they were serious and carried a penalty of up to twenty-five years gaol.

Whether the allegations against Frank Arkell could have been proven, no one will ever know. He had beaten twenty-four charges during the committal hearing, and the Director of Public Prosecutions decided not to pursue a separate charge, making it twenty-five from twenty-nine charges dropped. Magistrate Paul Johnson did, however, believe there was a strong enough case for four of the charges to be presented to the higher court. Frank and his alleged victims never had their day in court. The evidence was never tested in front of a jury, and no one will know what the outcome would have been.

In the days that followed Frank's death, the media incorrectly reported that Frank was a paedophile, and claimed he was facing twenty-nine charges. Some journalists relayed the accounts of the testimonies given during the committal that had been dismissed by the court. Stories were also told of Frank having sex with underage boys in his office at State Parliament and having them chauffeured in his government car from Sydney to Wollongong, as claimed by Alex Mitchell from the *Sun Herald*. Ray Chesterton from the *Daily Telegraph* went so far as to say that however Frank Arkell died it was not enough in comparison to how he mercilessly treated his victims.

Phillip Boulten, Frank's defence barrister, called the media coverage that followed his client's death 'a travesty of justice'. Giving an interview on ABC Radio, Mr Boulten accused the media of 'whipping up hysteria' after Frank was first arrested and continuing to 'hound' him until his death. Later, in an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, he said, '... the treatment that the media gave to what has to be regarded, on any view of it, as an unspeakable and inexcusable murder, was completely unfair and uncivilised ... it's just been outrageous ... in most instances it's been lacking in any form of judgement or fairness'.

Even the Wollongong community reacted strongly to Frank Arkell's sudden death. Letters condemning Frank were sent to the *Mercury*, saying he had got what he deserved and that justice had been taken from his victims. There were also letters of support, remembering what Frank had done for his wonderful Wollongong. The community was divided. There was a call to remove the Arkell Street sign, believing it to have been

named after Frank. It wasn't. The street was named in honour of the family who were one of the first to settle in the area. Some people have proposed erecting a monument to Frank, but the proposals have been defeated. At the time of writing, Wollongong Council have no plans to erect any monument to Frank Arkell.

Frank Arkell served the city of Wollongong for twenty-seven years, ten as alderman, seventeen as Lord Mayor and almost eight years as State Member of Parliament. He was Wollongong's greatest salesman. Few would argue he did not contribute to the city's future. Sadly, however, he will most likely be better remembered for being accused of child-sex offences, and for his bloody death.

26-27 JUNE 1998

6] MY NAME'S JOHN ...

AT AROUND 11.34 AM ON FRIDAY 26 JUNE 1998, MARK VAN Krevel made a call from a public phone box on Wollongong railway station. The call, which lasted fifty-two seconds, was to the home of Frank Arkell.

Since his identity as special witness W1 in the Wood Royal Commission was revealed in State Parliament, Frank had endured abusive phone calls and vandalism. The windows of his house were smashed by rocks, firecrackers were thrown into his yard, and graffiti was sprayed across his fence reading 'W1 you're a wanker'. People in the street now avoided him, where once they would have greeted him with enthusiasm, or at least a polite acknowledgement. Frank feared for his home in Reserve Street, West Wollongong, afraid of what might happen if he was away for too long a time. Frank still had his friends and supporters, but the numbers appeared to be dwindling.

Frank Arkell took van Krevel's call that Friday morning. Van Krevel gave his name as 'John', explaining that he was a gay teenager and needed someone to talk to. He was insistent he needed to speak with Frank.

It's very probable that Frank identified with van Krevel. While Frank publicly spun the line that he was 'married to Wollongong', being too busy for a wife and family, it was known

amongst the local media that Frank was a closet homosexual. Frank's sexual preference had never been a concern or issue providing he did his job as Lord Mayor and State Member of Parliament, representing the interests of his community. Perhaps feeling an empathy with 'John', then, Frank agreed for the young man to visit him. Given Frank's situation with the impending trial, the decision to see the young man may have seemed foolish, but as friends and supporters would testify, he always went out of his way to help others in need.

That day 68-year-old Frank had gone about his business as usual, being driven by a friend to the Leisure Coast Garden Centre in Fairy Meadow, just minutes from Keiraville, to collect some plants he had ordered. Frank would often stop in at the centre, which also sold groceries, but on this Friday he hoped to pick up some pennyworts. He suffered from arthritis and the low-growing ground cover plant, with serrated leaves that grow to the size of a fifty-cent piece, is renowned for preventing and easing the crippling disease.

The time was just before 1 pm, and Frank was told his order hadn't come in. The owner of the complex, Geraldine Bojic, greeted her regular customer with a wave and a 'hello' from the back of the garden centre. Frank left for the car park, where he was seen being driven away in a navy blue EA Ford Falcon. By all reports, Frank was driven straight home, because some neighbours remembered seeing him in the reserve adjoining his home at around 2 pm.

Gilmore Park had once been part of the Arkell property, before the family donated it to Wollongong Council. Frank maintained a special interest in the park, planting Australian

natives and tending to it as regularly as he could. In fact, neighbours said it became his escape after he'd lost his political standing, and particularly once the child-sex allegations were made public. One neighbour told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that, after the paedophile charges, 'you hardly saw him except in the park on a Saturday or Sunday, looking after the gardens, wearing a red or yellow shirt'.

Frank lived in a detached orange-brick granny flat at the rear of 1 Reserve Street. His mother had lived in the weather-board house at the front, which had been Frank's childhood home. He chose to remain in the granny flat even after his mother's death some fifteen years earlier. It was reported that Frank never ventured into the main house, except for meals, as his flat had all he needed barring a kitchen. In fact, Frank appeared to use every room in the main house, with exception of his late mother's bedroom, which had been kept almost as a shrine after she died. Her clothes were still in the wardrobe and her nightwear tucked under the pillow.

While Frank slept in the granny flat, it seems he divided his time between the two abodes. The flat had a small 'walk-in' wardrobe, but Frank still kept more of his clothes in another bedroom that also contained files and papers, and bookcases jammed with books. There were filing cabinets in other rooms throughout the house. The lounge room had a television, and by a single chair angled towards the TV was a stack of recent newspapers.

At around 3 pm on Friday 26 June, Frank, dressed in a white singlet and green tracksuit trousers with a yellow stripe, looked up to see 'John' standing at the sliding door to the flat.

Frank was finishing making his bed, tucking in the sheets. They greeted each other, and John slid the door open and walked in. Frank told his visitor to take a seat as he needed to go to the bathroom. He turned his back, walking around the double bed that dominated the room to an ensuite. The flat was small, cluttered with books and magazines, yet organised and neat.

It was then, just seconds after arriving, that van Krevel pushed Frank into the back wall and began punching and kicking him in the head as he fell to the ground. Frank, in vain, threw his arms back to fight off the attack, crying, 'What are you doing ... what are you doing?'

Van Krevel looked around and grabbed a glass ashtray from a table next to the bed. He repeatedly struck Frank across the head with the sharp corners of the ashtray, inflicting cuts and fractures. Frank, his face bloodied, managed to lift himself into a kneeling position while van Krevel continued his attack.

Frank looked up at his attacker and said, 'I thought we were friends.'

'No, I hate your guts ... I want to kill you.' Van Krevel began hitting Frank harder.

Frank attempted to crawl away. He wasn't making it easy for van Krevel. Van Krevel discarded the ashtray and took hold of a heavy wooden desk lamp, wrapping the electrical cord around Frank's neck, strangling him. Frank still hadn't died, so van Krevel took the lamp and began belting Frank across the head with its base. As he'd done when attacking David O'Hearn, van Krevel lifted the lamp above his head before delivering each blow. Van Krevel counted, but lost track after forty blows. Frank was dead.

Van Krevel looked around the granny flat and found a collection of five-pronged wooden stakes sitting in an alcove. They were souvenirs Frank had collected. Van Krevel took one of the stakes and stabbed Frank in the neck. The wood broke off as van Krevel tried to extract it. He then laid the boot in for good measure, repeatedly kicking Frank in the head. So severe was the attack, van Krevel's beige Colorado boots and black Nike tracksuit trousers, with a thick white stripe down the outside, were heavily stained by Frank's blood.

At around 8 am on Saturday 27 June, Frank's housekeeper, Maria, walked down the driveway to the granny flat to deliver the morning newspaper. She'd been the Arkells' housekeeper for over forty-two years, and continued to clean and tidy the house after Frank's mother had died.

As Maria arrived at the flat, she found the sliding door open, and from the doorway she saw clothing and other items strewn across the room, and then the battered and bloodied body of Frank Arkell lying face up on the floor at the foot of his bed. Maria, in shock and disbelief at what she'd just seen, entered the main house and phoned the ambulance and police.

Detective Senior Constables Sean Lynch and Adrian Beck from Wollongong police station were among the first officers at the Reserve Street home. They didn't need to enter the flat as the scene could be observed from just outside. Frank's body was visible and the flat and house appeared to have been ransacked. It was obvious Frank was dead and there was no need for the ambulance. The area was cordoned off, waiting for the arrival of the local Crime Scene Unit and the on-call Homicide team.

Detective Lynch, convinced in his own mind there was a connection between this murder and the murder of David O'Hearn, phoned Joe Cassar at Warilla. Whether there was a connection or not, Joe and his partner Dave Laidlaw drove the twenty minutes to Keiraville, to represent Homicide till the on-call detectives arrived.

Like thousands of proud fathers across Australia on a Saturday morning, Russell Oxford was watching his young son's soccer match from the sidelines when he got the call informing him of Frank Arkell's murder. The experienced Homicide Detective Sergeant, a graduate of the New York Police Department's Homicide Investigators' Course, wasted little time in excusing himself and headed to Wollongong. There, Russell and the other on-call officer, Detective Senior Constable Pamela Young, met up with Joe and Dave, and Geoff Leonard, the on-call Homicide Inspector.

One by one, all the appropriate police units arrived and gathered before entering the crime scene. The house was easy to locate, if only for the words 'WI YOU'RE A WANKER' sprayed along the fence. Also, at least five windows of the main house had been smashed. Frank had long since given up repairing the damaged windows and graffiti. Homicide, local detectives and Crime Scene officers conferred with each other to decide how best to approach the flat to collate evidence and examine the scene. Unlike what often happens in television dramas, police do not enter en masse and trample all over a murder scene, but rather they secure the area and very system-

atically begin their observations and examinations. It's crucial that a murder investigation proceeds this way, otherwise contamination could spoil vital evidence.

Officers were delegated to search the adjoining Gilmore Park, which included a children's playground and tennis court. The search was instigated in case the killer or killers had discarded any evidence or left a trail of the victim's blood indicating the direction they had taken.

The blue-suited Crime Scene investigators entered the granny flat first, videoing and photographing every inch of the blood-ridden abode. The attack was so vicious, blood splatters were observed on the ceiling. Crime Scene dusted for prints, took blood, hair and other samples, and bagged anything they believed had been used in the commission of the crime or constituted evidence, including a pair of Colorado boots and Nike tracksuit pants. A pair of blue Nike socks were later found in the weatherboard house, near the television in the lounge room.

The boots were heavily blood-soaked, and bloodied prints from the treads were found on Frank's chest and throughout his flat. The remaining officers stood at the front door to the granny flat, observing their colleagues' discoveries. Once the scene had been filmed and a cursory inspection made, the double bed was removed and placed against the side fence to give the Crime Scene investigators more room. The cover sheet, quilt cover and Frank's neatly folded purple and white pyjamas were also placed outside, beside the bed.

The stained boots and tracksuit pants became of interest to the police when compared with other shoes and pants belonging to Frank Arkell. Firstly, it was obvious that Frank was

a conservative dresser, wearing mostly suits, plain ties, some nondescript flannel type tracksuits similar to the green pair he was wearing, and what could be considered sensible black shoes. The brands Colorado and Nike seemed too young and fashionable to fit Frank's style. When compared side by side, the boots were a larger size than Frank's, and the tracksuit pants smaller waisted.

It was a sure bet the clothing and boots had been left by the killer, but why? Did it mean he couldn't wear them home because he lived with someone who would have noticed? Was he on foot and didn't want to be spotted, needing to travel by public transport or taxi? How was he dressed when he left? Had the killer brought a change of clothing? Had he left in a car? Had he left by foot, naked from the waist down?

Wollongong police checked their incident reports for the night before in case anyone had called in seeing a naked person or prowler in the vicinity. It may seem odd, but it does happen. No one had seen any naked or semi-naked person that night. So, had the killer taken his victim's clothes?

As Frank lived alone, it would be difficult to assess what had been taken, if anything. Russell Oxford asked Maria, who did Frank's washing, if she could identify any clothing of Frank's that might be missing. Given what she'd just gone through, discovering the body, Maria was in no fit state to give assurances. She was very distressed and ambulance officers treated her for shock. Maria did, however, confirm that the beige boots and black tracksuit pants with the white stripes were definitely not Frank Arkell's and she'd not seen them before that day.

Once the Crime Scene officers had finished doing their job, the detectives decided to 'audit' Frank's clothing. They went inside the main house, into the room where Frank kept some of his clothes. Detectives noticed his suits and other apparel appeared not to have been disturbed, but several tracksuits lay scattered about the room. Methodically they paired each tracksuit top with its bottom till they found a black top but couldn't locate its matching pants. If the killer had left clothed, then it was likely he wore Frank's black tracksuit pants.

The main house appeared to have been ransacked. Other than the clothing that had been tossed about, drawers and cupboard doors had been opened, and the contents left lying around the normally neat and tidy house. Obviously the killer was looking for money or other items to steal, as they had done two weeks earlier — assuming it was the same offender.

The detectives discussed the likelihood of a connection between Frank Arkell's murder and that of David O'Hearn. Firstly, both victims had been severely beaten about the head. Second, tiepins had been inserted into both of Frank Arkell's eyes and his cheek. Similarly, one of David O'Hearn's eyes had been gouged. Thirdly, both men were known to be homosexual. Fourthly, it appeared the perpetrator used weapons of opportunity found in both locations rather than bringing their own murder weapon with them. Finally, the fact that there were two vicious murders in the same region in two weeks seemed more than coincidental.

Despite the similarities, there was nothing conclusive to say they were connected and it was decided the two murders should be treated as separate incidents, with Russell Oxford

leading the enquiry into Frank Arkell's death, and Joe Cassar and Dave Laidlaw working with the Warilla detectives looking into David O'Hearn's. After all, the police couldn't ignore the fact that Frank was nearing his trial and his murder may have been a revenge killing. The physical evidence taken from Frank's granny flat might also throw up a match between the crime scenes, but it would take a few weeks, even a month or more, for all the analysis to be complete.

In the case of Frank Arkell, the police had two good pieces of evidence: the Colorado boots and the Nike tracksuit pants. Both pieces of apparel were quite distinctive. The tracksuit pants had a thick white stripe down the outside of each leg. Russell decided to keep the details of the clothing from the media, believing them to be his trump card in identifying the killer when they had a suspect in sight, the idea being that they would match the tracksuit pants with the top. As Frank was found to have a top with missing pants, it was thought the killer would have a top that matched the discarded Nike pants. Also, it was possible the killer might keep the pants he stole from Frank as a keepsake or trophy.

All Russell had to do now was contact the manufacturers of the boots and tracksuit and find out who made, distributed and sold them. It would prove to yield some interesting results.

28 JUNE—31 JULY 1998

7] THESE THINGS TAKE TIME ...

DETECTIVE SERGEANT RUSSELL OXFORD HEADED THE enquiry into the murder of Frank Arkell, initially under the codename Strike Force Limestone, and later renamed Lincoln. The change came because limestone was the name of another police initiative.

Corrimal police station became Russell Oxford's centre of operations. Corrimal is a northern suburb of Wollongong, falling inside the Wollongong Local Area Command, as did Frank Arkell's house in West Wollongong. Working with Russell were fellow Homicide Detective Senior Constables Pamela Young and Peter Cotter, who had attended the scene on day one, eight local detectives, and two officers from the Child Protection Enforcement Agency (CPEA). All up, the strike force enquiring into the murder of Frank Arkell numbered thirteen investigators.

It was important to have the CPEA on board, as they had responsible for compiling the evidence against Frank Arkell and arresting him at his home on 1 May 1997 on child-sex

charges. The CPEA officers provided background information on Frank that they'd put together prior to his arrest, including a list of Frank's four alleged victims, two of whom were to have their evidence heard at Parramatta Court; the other two had had their cases against the former Lord Mayor dismissed at the committal hearing. As police had to investigate the likelihood that the murder may have been motivated by revenge, all four men were interviewed. Detectives from the strike force also spoke to neighbours, associates, friends, political colleagues, and the Arkell family to find out more about Frank's life and to search for a motive.

While some of the team were out talking to the many people who knew Frank and tracing his last known movements, Russell Oxford still had the killer's boots and tracksuit trousers. Calls were made to Colorado and Nike. The boots had a tag that displayed a batch number. Colorado quickly told police that the number corresponded to a style that was sold exclusively through Mathers Shoes. Mathers happened to have a store at a shopping complex called the Square in Shellharbour, a large coastal suburb, just south of Wollongong and near Albion Park to the west. Russell instructed his team to visit the store to find out how many pairs of the beige boots had been sold and to retrieve details of credit card purchases. Of course, Russell knew that following this line of enquiry wouldn't help him if the killer had bought the boots with cash, but it still needed to be done.

Russell also considered the option of viewing old security footage from the Square, looking for anyone carrying a Colorado bag, but it was an extreme measure that would be enormously time consuming, tying up valuable resources, and

it wouldn't tell them if the bag contained beige boots. Russell decided to wait and see what the credit card receipts brought them. Also, video footage is normally only kept for a week, and there was no knowing how old the boots discarded at the murder scene were.

Getting information on the tracksuit pants was a little more difficult. There was no tag with a batch number or any identifying mark peculiar to that pair. Nike's headquarters are in Melbourne, so Russell sent a couple of detectives down to identify the style of tracksuit and to find out what they could. Being shown a photo of the trousers, Nike management confirmed the pair was from a discontinued line, quite distinctive in comparison to their later styles. They did give police a similar tracksuit and description of the matching jacket, but couldn't give any details of where the items might have been distributed or sold.

Police had the names of six people who had purchased beige Colorado boots from Mathers Shoes at Shellharbour. The people were located and detectives from the strike force visited their homes, asking them about their boots without revealing why. Police didn't want the fact that they had the killer's boots to be spread about the city. Each person produced their pair, and some were even wearing them as they spoke to the detectives.

Although it was a dead end the police still had to follow it through. The question for Russell now was, should he release information about the items to the media? What would this gain, and how would the killer react? The pros and cons had to be weighed.

With two violent murders in the same area in two weeks, and one of the victims being a prominent figure and former state politician, high ranking police also looked into the details of the murders. In Sydney, the head of Crime Agencies' Homicide and Serial Violent Crime Agency, Detective Superintendent Ron Smith, was scrutinising the initial reports, crime scene photos and other information relating to the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. He was joined by his superiors, Assistant Commissioner Clive Small and Detective Chief Superintendent Rod Harvey, in going through all the material. They were asking the same questions as both the Homicide teams on each of the murders.

Another recent killing in Sydney caught their attention, as the similarities to David O'Hearn's death were too striking to be ignored. The victim was Trevor John Parkin, a convicted paedophile whose body had been found by police on 29 December 1997 in a unit on Glebe Point Road, Glebe, an inner city suburb of Sydney. Parkin had been severely bashed about the head with what might have been a wooden object and his body extensively mutilated, with the killer or killers using a knife and an electrical orbital sander. The cord of the sander had been wrapped around the victim's neck and used to secure his hands tightly, in a sadomasochistic fashion. His left testicle had been cut off and discarded in the kitchen sink. The pathologist concluded that the disembowelment, tying of the victim, and the severing of the testicle were all done after death.

Clive Small, Rod Harvey and Ron Smith agreed that the investigations into the murders of O'Hearn and Arkell should continue to remain separate, as any link at this early stage was

purely circumstantial. They did recommend, however, that both investigations should come under one Homicide command, in the event that more solid evidence was found connecting the two murders. The brief was given to also investigate the case of Trevor Parkin. Detective Inspector Paul Mayger was directed to head the massive task of overseeing all three investigations while at the same time looking for clues that might link them to a possible serial offender. The strike force took on the Arkell's enquiry name Lincoln.

Once the directive was made to have the investigation of David O'Hearn's murder come under the umbrella of Lincoln, Strike Force Lema went from being a locally led murder enquiry to a Homicide controlled investigation. This meant that Paul Mayger found himself in charge of more than thirty detectives working on three individual cases, with Homicide detectives Joe Cassar and Dave Laidlaw on Lema, Russell Oxford, Pamela Young and Peter Cotter on the Arkell case, and Detective Sergeant Wayne Hayes and Detective Senior Constable Mal Lanyon looking into the Parkin enquiry. Mayger appointed Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins, another member of the Homicide Squad, as his second in charge.

Paul Mayger was a veteran Homicide detective. In his twenty-two years in the police service, the last twelve had been spent in Homicide, which is an unusual feat by present day standards. Normally, to gain promotion most officers must leave one branch and take a more senior position with another, but Paul had managed to gain promotion from within the Homicide Squad. It's an achievement he shared with two other serving officers at the time, Detective Sergeants Paul Jacob and Russell Oxford.

Paul is an archetypal cop. Tall, burly, no-nonsense, and powerfully spoken. His voice could be heard across a crowded room if he so wished. While, because of Paul's years in the service, he appeared to be 'old school', he actually embraced new technologies and approaches to his work. Needing to keep track of all the investigations being conducted in Wollongong and Sydney, it was Paul who decided a new computer system needed to be developed.

In 1998 police were restricted with a computerised management procedure called Taskforce Investigations Management Systems (TIMS). TIMS was not connected to a mainframe, so investigators had to input their information at the station where the enquiry was being conducted. In the case of David O'Hearn it was Warilla, and with Frank Arkell it was Corrimal police station. This meant all the information was being kept on the database of the two stations, inaccessible to the other or to Paul Mayger at Homicide.

Local detectives from the Leichhardt Local Area Command involved in the murder of Trevor Parkin, Detective Sergeant Mick O'Keefe and Detective Senior Constable Lance Goldsmith, were called in and housed inside the Homicide Squad headquarters in Sydney with Wayne Hayes and Mal Lanyon. Paul could at least keep his eye on one investigation as it unfolded.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and while the police were a couple of years away from implementing a mainframe computer system to free up their officers, Paul got the IT section to supply his various teams with modems and extra telephone lines. A special room had been set up dedicated to

coordinating the three investigations. Two analysts were given the job of receiving and evaluating the information as it came in, passing it on to Paul and then referring tasks back to the teams. That was the idea. The reality was that there were problems with the technology and it didn't always work as it should have, but Paul had a contingency plan. He organised for computer disks from the Wollongong teams to be couriered up to Homicide each day. As full disks arrived on the analysts' desks, blank disks were being sent back. Paul thought it would take a couple of weeks for the new system to run smoothly, eventually negating the need to courier disks back and forth.

Paul also had daily telephone conferences with the strike teams. It became important to share information, particularly as they might be looking for a serial killer. The need to coordinate the teams became critical. As an example, Paul explained there was a suspect who 'looked good' for both the O'Hearn and Arkell murders. Both Russell Oxford and Joe Cassar's teams were aware of him and, had it not been for the sharing of information, they would have duplicated, or might even have jeopardised, each other's enquiries.

Although Paul had three murders that appeared to be linked in different ways, he suggested to his superiors that he look at other crimes of a similar nature. By this it was accepted that Paul would look at all murders where the victims had been homosexual. Unlike the media reporting at the time, police were not just investigating those victims known to be paedophiles.

As it was, Trevor Parkin was a convicted paedophile. Two days before his death, Parkin had been released from Long Bay

gaol after serving two years for six child-sex offences. The offences had been committed between 1985 and 1996. Frank Arkell was to have faced charges where the alleged victims had been seventeen and eighteen at the time of the offences, though he had been charged initially with child-sex offences. David O'Hearn was the 'odd man out', a 'cleanskin'; the only connection he had with Parkin and Frank Arkell was being homosexual.

If there was a serial killer, the murders of David O'Hearn and Trevor Parkin appeared to be the two that would have been committed by the same offender. Every officer assessing the crimes found them to be too similar for it to be a coincidence, even though the victims' backgrounds were very different. Frank Arkell's death, the thinking went, could have been a copycat killing, or one committed by an associate of the serial killer, or it might just have been a coincidental murder. Just as there were similarities between Trevor Parkin and David O'Hearn's murders, Paul believed there were also parallels between the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. The fact that tiepins had been inserted into Frank's eyes and that David's eye had been gouged told Paul there was a connection.

When Paul worked as a detective senior constable with Homicide in March 1989, he investigated the murder of an elderly woman in Mosman. The victim had been bashed with a claw hammer and strangled with her own pantyhose, which had been tied in a bow. Beside the elderly woman was a pair of her shoes, placed together as though ready to be put away. Paul and the other detectives on the scene noted the shoes but didn't take much interest in them, until the next killing. The crime scene of the second victim was strikingly similar, down to the

neatly places shoes. Paul enquired if the ambulance officers or uniformed cops had arranged the footwear for any reason. They hadn't. The shoes became one of the common denominators that identified the victims of Sydney's 'Granny Killer', John Wayne Glover. Glover would murder another four elderly women on Sydney's Lower North Shore before being captured and sentenced to six life terms, never to be released.

'Offenders have all sorts of weird and wonderful idiosyncrasies ... trophy hunters ... all sorts of things,' Paul explained. 'So, once we saw the pins stuck in the face and the eyes, that was very unusual ... straight away that says to you this is similar to the previous murder ... the gouging of the eye. If the pins hadn't been inserted, say if just one [victim] had their eyes stuck and not the other, the only link you would have would be geographical, and the sexual tendencies of the people involved ... you wouldn't have the same degree of connection. Even with the attacks on the eyes, there is nothing to say it is the same offender, but it certainly alerts you.'

As Strike Force Lincoln got under way, there was a result from the Crime Scene investigations at both David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell's murder. Fingerprints had been found at both locations, different to the victims', although they had yet to be checked against files in the Fingerprint Section.

Paul decided to widen his search and include a check of other unsolved murders of victims who had been known to be homosexual, going back as far as ten years. Other than the crime scenes of David O'Hearn, Frank Arkell and Trevor Parkin was 63-year-old Leo Leslie Press, who was found battered about the head at his home at Harbord, on Sydney's northern

beaches, on 13 February 1988. He'd been hit on the head ten to twelve times with a bricklayer's lump hammer, which the killer then discarded next to the deceased's body before fleeing. Unidentified prints had been found on beer cans at the scene. Coincidentally, Paul Mayer, then a detective senior constable with Regional North Homicide, was involved in the initial investigation into Leo Press's murder.

Paul and his team were hopeful that the perpetrator(s) of the murders, if they were connected and had been operating since 1988, would have been caught on another offence, even a minor one, and been processed through the system. They were sure the murderer of David O'Hearn would be someone who'd 'pop up'. Fingerprints can only be identified if the perpetrator is on record, having committed a criminal offence prior to the killing and been processed, which involves having their finger and palm prints taken.

In 1998 the Fingerprint Section had to conduct a manual search of their records to compare prints from different crime scenes. Fingerprints were still taken using the old ink and pad, and the cards collected each day from individual police stations and couriered to the Fingerprint Section. Nowadays, fingerprints are taken digitally, with the offender placing his or her fingers and palms on a screen. With advances in computer systems and digital prints, the Fingerprint Section can check prints against unsolved crimes quite quickly. In 1998, it would take a week or more for Paul and his team to get a result from the Fingerprint Section.

While the wait was on for the fingerprint results, police reconsidered the unsolved murder of Leo Press, whose murder

bore resemblances to the modus operandi used in the other three killings. Each of the victims had been beaten savagely around the head. Two, Parkin and O'Hearn, had been disembowelled. In each of the cases, the tools of murder and mutilation were found to have belonged to the victim, or at least were found in the home of the victim, so the killer had not brought their own weapons. In the case of Parkin, however, the killer had left the scene with the murder weapons, the wooden object, which was an old bowling pin, and a partly serrated 'Laser' brand black-handled kitchen knife. The knife was an item identified as missing by Parkin's flatmate. And in all of the cases the killer had obviously searched the victim's premises looking for money or small valuables to steal.

It would be no surprise to Frank Arkell's killer that the police had found his boots, socks and tracksuit pants. The questioning of people who'd purchased the same kind of boots from Mathers hadn't brought the police any closer to a suspect, so Russell Oxford decided to release the details to the media. Russell and Paul Mayger agreed that by showing the items and describing their uniqueness, someone, somewhere, might know who they belonged to.

On Tuesday 30 June, a press release was sent out to all the major news networks, and the trousers and boots were displayed for photographers and television news crews. Russell Oxford fronted the media explaining, 'We're obviously anxious to speak to anyone who recognises the clothes or saw anyone wearing the clothes in that area.'

When asked if there was any connection between Frank's murder and that of David O'Hearn, Russell replied, 'People in Wollongong are certainly outraged by it all, obviously the public are concerned if there are any links with the murder of David O'Hearn. There are similarities and dissimilarities ... at this stage we can't find any link between the two men.' Russell added, 'We are working on a series of leads after a flood of information from the public.'

Originally, a neighbour had told police that Frank was seen gardening in the adjoining park at around 2 pm. Later, other neighbours informed police they'd seen Frank around 4.30 pm that day, again in Gilmore Park.

While the time of David O'Hearn's death had been established with some accuracy, the murder of Frank Arkell was a different matter. Forensic Pathologist Dr Allan Cala, who had also attended David O'Hearn's crime scene estimated that Frank died between 2 pm on Friday and 8 am on Saturday. Pathologists can only ever give an approximate time at which a death might have occurred. Body core temperature and rigor mortis are two indicators used by pathologists, and for victims found days, weeks or even months after death, the state of decay, maggots and their larvae are examined.

With their years of experience dealing with homicides, both Russell Oxford and Paul Mayger had learned not to rely on 'the time of death' as being exact. Paul remembered a crime scene incident in which the pathologist announced with all confidence that the body had been dead for two hours. All the investigators froze, staring at the doctor, before the doctor realised the detectives had been at the scene for at least four hours! Naturally, the doctor reassessed her findings.

Certainly the window of opportunity was large in Frank's case and police needed to narrow the time frame to help their investigation. Russell Oxford asked for anyone who might have seen Frank after 4.30 pm on Friday to contact police. Frank's attire — the tracksuit pants and singlet — and the fact that his pyjamas were still folded and the bed was made, also helped police, suggesting that Frank was killed before late evening.

Russell and his team checked Frank's phone records to see if he'd received or made any calls in the late afternoon or evening. If the phone had been used it could mean Frank was still alive at the time of the calls. It might also reveal the killer if he'd phoned Frank or used the phone to call an accomplice after the crime. Every avenue of enquiry had to be looked at and followed up. But there was no record of any calls having been made or received on Frank's phone during the evening.

After Russell's appeal, Crimestoppers received a call from a male who said he lived in the same street as Frank Arkell. On the morning of Saturday 27 June, at round 2.30 am, he had been driving home when he saw what he believed was a red car near Frank Arkell's house, possibly even coming out of Frank's driveway. That was all the information he gave, and he didn't leave his contact details. Russell and his team needed to know more.

By this time Russell's team had questioned the four people who alleged Frank Arkell had sexually assaulted them. Police verified the four alibis and there was no further action to take. It was one line of enquiry the team could file away.

On Friday 3 July, a week after the slaying of Frank Arkell, Russell Oxford went back to the media, appealing for the man who had seen the red car near Frank's house to contact them

again. Russell told the press gathering that ‘... the man’s information is crucial to the investigation’.

When pushed to say whether police had a suspect yet, Russell wouldn’t be drawn into giving specifics, but he did say that police would have to be suspicious of anyone who had a grudge against Arkell. With two horrific murders in two weeks, the media wanted to know if people in the Wollongong area should take precautions, although police had not yet stated there was any link between the killings. Russell answered: ‘I’ll suggest to people to live the way they want to live and take the normal, necessary precautions ... I can’t really give a blanket answer and say the community has to live in fear.’

On the same day, Paul Mayger, Detective Superintendent Ron Smith, head of Homicide, Assistant Commissioner Clive Small, and Detective Chief Superintendent Rod Harvey, along with detectives involved in the Parkin enquiry, met with the two Wollongong teams. It would be the first of many such meetings the ‘top brass’ would have with the teams on the ground, to add their experience and lend their support to the investigation.

Together the teams discussed their individual progress and shared information and theories. Privately, detectives were convinced the same person or persons had killed Parkin and David O’Hearn, given the brutality of the murders. They also thought that two offenders might have committed the atrocities. An associate, however, may have murdered Frank Arkell, or the killer was disturbed and fled, which could explain the discarded clothing, or he couldn’t find the implements with which to mutilate the body.

Given that the only solid link between the three victims was

their sexuality, police decided to approach various gay magazines covering the Sydney and Wollongong areas. They wanted to check the personal advertisements, in case the killer was luring their victims. For that reason, they expanded the enquiry to include screening personal ads published in local newspapers and gay magazines. Police even considered having an editorial written, to warn the gay community to be cautious and to report anything that might help the investigation. The result of the checks of the personal ads is unknown, but it's unlikely police found this line of enquiry productive. Detectives were also assigned to patrol the gay beats in both cities, questioning 'rent boys' — male prostitutes — about whether they had known or seen any of the victims, or had any information on any suspicious types but nothing of great interest arose from the exercise.

While the police follow all lines of enquiry, however trivial or insignificant they may appear, they are prioritised based on what is known of the victim, including their lifestyle. Police had established that all three victims were homosexual, but their lifestyles couldn't have been more different. Parkin was a convicted paedophile, seeking vulnerable and underage victims from public areas. David O'Hearn was a family man and had had only a handful of monogamous relationships. Frank Arkell was a public figure and, other than the stories of the four men who had alleged abuse, police had little more to go on.

Police still had their five 'usual suspects', the same five that had been identified after David O'Hearn's murder, and they slowly and carefully gathered intelligence on each of them, checking on their associates and friends, where they lived,

worked and 'hung out'. Certainly, the suspects were all capable of having killed or having had something to do with the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, given their behaviour, criminal history in some instances, and the fact that they lived in the Wollongong area. Parkin, however, was killed in Sydney, and if the same person butchered O'Hearn and Parkin, what was the connection to a Wollongong suspect?

Soon after Trevor Parkin's murder in December 1997, personal items belonging to the victim were found in a train at Waterfall station, which lies on the Illawarra rail line between Sydney and Wollongong. Once the three murders were drawn together under the investigating umbrella of Strike Force Lincoln, police surmised that the perpetrator could have killed Parkin and then caught a train south to Wollongong. The train from Sydney occasionally terminates at Waterfall, and passengers then catch a connecting train to travel to the south coast. It could have been the reason why Parkin's belongings were found under a seat in a train carriage. Admittedly, it was circumstantial.

Publicly, the police did not reveal any of the evidence they had to suggest the murders might be connected. In fact, despite the suspects, circumstantial evidence and commonalities of the killings, Paul Mayger still directed his teams to treat their cases as individual. Paul knew from his experience that fact can be stranger than fiction, and while there appeared to be links on paper, the reality might have been that totally different people had committed each of the murders. Police needed more evidence before they could narrow their enquiries.

Two weeks after Frank Arkell's murder, Harry Potter from

Sydney's Channel Ten news asked Russell Oxford if the people of Wollongong should be fearful of another murder. Russell was put on the spot, though it was an obvious question as O'Hearn and Arkell had been killed exactly two weeks apart. The experienced Homicide detective wasn't going to be drawn into giving Harry a good 'sound bite', a headline for the night's bulletin. He dealt with the issue as diplomatically as he'd done before. He avoided saying the killings were directly related, and repeated that the people of Wollongong should take whatever precautions they felt they needed. He wasn't going to give Harry a sensational story. While Russell played down the chance of another killing, the reality was that the police themselves did think it possible. It wouldn't be the first investigation in which the perpetrator slipped under the net and committed another murder despite the number of police in the area. Thankfully, the weekend went by without incident.

In just over a week the Fingerprint Section got back to Paul Mayger with their results. On the upside, a positive match was made in the killing of Leo Press. The prints found at the scene now matched a person on record known as Barrie Allen Hodge. Hodge had been processed on minor offences after being 'carried in a stolen conveyance' and driving under the influence (DUI). Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins was given the task of reopening the Press case to gather new evidence against Barrie Hodge.

It had been established that Press was in the habit of trolling the streets in his car to pick up hitchhikers, from whom he'd then solicit sex. At the time, Press had been living with his brother and niece at a house in Harbord. Leo Press and his

brother ran a business together in Chatswood on Sydney's lower north shore. On the night of the murder, 12 February 1988, Press's brother was working late and his niece had returned to their country home in northwest New South Wales.

Police were called to the Harbord house by the victim's brother, who found Press around 4 am on his return from work. Leo Press was still alive. He was taken to hospital but died at 9 am as a result of multiple head injuries. When police examined the crime scene they discovered bloodstains upstairs in the victim's bedroom and a large amount of blood near the body itself, which was located in the hallway near the front door of the house. The attack had begun upstairs. The bricklayer's hammer was the obvious weapon as blood and hair adhered to the instrument, which had been found next to the battered body. The hammer was identified by the victim's brother as belonging to the victim, and he stated the hammer was normally kept in the deceased's toolbox. Fingerprints were discovered on two of four near-empty beer cans found on a table in an office located on the first floor of the house. Because the offender was not on record at the time of the killing, police drew a blank when they checked for prints.

While the fingerprint check revealed a suspect in the Press investigation, it didn't produce the name of a possible killer in the Parkin, O'Hearn or Arkell murders. Neither did the prints found at the Parkin scene match any of the prints found at the other two crime scenes. And there was no match between any offender on record and the prints discovered at David O'Hearn's and Frank Arkell's.

The reaction of detectives on Strike Force Lincoln was

mixed. It meant that whoever killed David O'Hearn might have had nothing to do with Parkin's murder, despite the graphic similarities. The three murders might have been unrelated, which meant the police were looking for three different perpetrators. Then again, it might mean that all three perpetrators were involved in the murders, and by some chance, each had left a print at the different crime scenes. They were the two extremes such results can imply.

In the case of Parkin, a full handprint was taken from the scene. That meant that if the perpetrator left a single fingerprint at another scene, say from his index finger or thumb, then a match could be made comparing the print to the index finger and thumb of the full handprint. While individual fingerprints were discovered at O'Hearn's and Arkell's, they were not prints of the same digit and therefore could not be compared — a thumbprint from one scene cannot be compared to an index fingerprint from another, though they may both belong to the same person; a thumbprint can only be compared to another thumbprint. Nor did these prints match the handprint taken from the Parkin murder scene, although the O'Hearn and Arkell prints might still have belonged to the same person. Police now had to look at where the prints were found to see if they could be the killer's.

At David O'Hearn's home, the prints were found on the decanter that was used to bash him. It was a sure bet they belonged to the killer. Meanwhile at Frank Arkell's home, the prints were located on the front sliding door to the granny flat. Prints on a front door are never as conclusive as those found on a murder weapon, but this doesn't mean they can't be used to

convict an offender. In Arkell's case, it certainly put the person at the murder scene. Even so, if there was another reason for the person to have been at Frank's, then police would have to rely on more than the fingerprints. Police would have to produce other evidence linking him to the murder scene. In this case, they had the shoes and tracksuit pants to match to the killer. They could even have taken DNA swabs of the boots, or had a forensic podiatrist examine the wear on the boot compared to the killer's other shoes. It's all part of putting together a solid case.

The similarities between the Parkin and O'Hearn murders still had some of the investigating detectives convinced there had to be a connection, although, on the surface, the fingerprints appeared not to support that theory. Some police believed that if two offenders were involved in the murders, then what they had could be the prints of one at the Parkin murder and the prints of the other at O'Hearn's. For those who held strongly to the Parkin/O'Hearn link, this was their only explanation of the differing fingerprints. Future lines of enquiry would either vindicate or disprove their theory.

It was of concern that no known felon's name was on record against the prints. It meant that the horrific crimes had been committed by a first offender. Even so, it didn't rule out the suspects police were already looking at, as not all had records. To keep an open mind, there was also no evidence to say someone with a record hadn't assisted with the murders. A known offender could have been at the scenes, but had been more careful.

With calls for help from the public, the Crimestoppers line became inundated with people giving the names of persons

they knew who wore Colorado boots and Nike tracksuits. Detectives then had to follow up each call, identifying the individuals who owned similar clothing, talking with them, and eliminating them from the enquiry. Investigators found themselves talking to 'quite a few people', all of whom could account for their boots and tracksuit pants. As in the first enquiry into the boots, police would knock on a door to be greeted by the person wearing the Colorados or Nike pants.

Although it may seem like a nuisance receiving and following up calls based solely on a person's alleged ownership of a pair of boots or a tracksuit, police actually rely on public appeals. While they may find 99 per cent of the information leads to a dead end, there's still the hope that the one per cent will help further the investigation. Police will never say any public information is a waste of time. At the very least, it allows them to eliminate people from the investigation, helping them to narrow the focus of their enquiry.

Crimestoppers received another call from the man who'd seen the red car. This time, detectives questioned him formally. He gave them a description of a red Nissan Skyline, but he couldn't be sure if the car was leaving Frank Arkell's or the neighbour's driveway.

On Tuesday 14 July, Inspector Paul Mayger released a media statement, seeking assistance in finding the driver of the red Nissan Skyline. He told journalists: 'The car was seen in the vicinity which means it could have come from anywhere so the driver of the vehicle may want to come forward and be eliminated.' He added, 'We've located one car of that description already but it had no connection with the case.'

Paul would not be drawn, despite the media's best attempts, to comment on whether any of the murders were connected. He did reveal for the first time that other unsolved murders were being investigated as part of Strike Force Lincoln. 'Certainly, we'll be looking at any unsolved murders that may have been related to these ones . . . we've got no set time period but we'll work back over the last ten years at least.'

News of David O'Hearn's will was reported in the *Illawarra Mercury* on Thursday 16 July with the headline, 'Murder Victim's Will Mystery'. David had had the will drawn up in 1971 when he was living in Sydney, and under its terms his friend and business partner at the time, Michael, was the major beneficiary. They had jointly purchased a unit in Burwood, in Sydney's west, as an investment property. The will was security, to be used by Michael to keep the business and the mortgage on the unit financial should anything happen to David. Michael made a similar will, making David the beneficiary — not an uncommon practice. For the O'Hearn family there was no mystery, but the article didn't explain why the will had been written. Readers were left to make their own assumptions, which only infuriated the O'Hearn family.

Andrew, David's nephew and spokesperson, was quoted in the piece as conceding that David might have been gay. This may have seemed a vague answer, but David's family never questioned his sexuality. It was never an issue for them. Andrew, at the time of the article, was still coming to terms with the tragedy, as well as defending allegations that his uncle had a

secret life and was a paedophile, so he could be forgiven for not elaborating on his answers.

The article did give Andrew the opportunity to refute an earlier piece that featured convicted con man, Bob Squires, stating he had been seduced by Frank Arkell and David O'Hearn at a youth forum in 1976, when he was sixteen. In the piece that appeared two weeks after the Arkell murder, Squires gave a graphic account of the alleged assault, claiming to be the 'missing link' between Arkell and O'Hearn. The problem with the article is that David O'Hearn was living and working in Hobart in 1976, a fact that would have been known had David's family been asked.

The alleged abuse was printed on page one, while on page five a separate article appeared with Squires relating his life of crime, resulting from years of sexual abuse which he claimed started from when he was twelve. Squires admitted he'd served a total of eight years gaol on false pretence and fraud-related charges. The Squires account only served to deepen the O'Hearns' suffering. Andrew contested the legitimacy of the allegations and said his family had been disgusted with suggestions that David had been a paedophile. Police shared the O'Hearns' feelings, particularly as they had not found any evidence to substantiate paedophile allegations against David.

Because of the nature of the murders, the police were obligated to check everyone who claimed to have had anything to do with either victim. Russell Oxford sent detectives to Queensland to interview a man who alleged in another paper that Frank Arkell had abused him. Likewise, enquiries would have been made into Bob Squires to a point where police were

satisfied of the substance, or lack thereof, of his allegations, not needing to pursue the matter formally. Certainly, to this day, police have never discovered evidence to say David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell knew each other.

It wasn't only the newspaper coverage that upset the O'Hearn family. They found watching the television news a bitter experience, especially when one night the bulletin led with the heading 'Paedophile Killer', featuring David's face along with Frank Arkell's, as the news anchor read the latest update. There was no getting away from it, leaving the O'Hearns naturally sceptical of everything they read and heard.

By the end of July the police were still piecing together all the physical evidence and information they had on the Parkin, O'Hearn and Arkell murders, and the investigation into Leo Press's murder was under way, with Stuart Wilkins at the helm.

A profile of the murderers of Trevor Parkin, David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell was commissioned from Dr Rod Milton, a forensic psychiatrist. Profiles receive a mixed reaction within Homicide. Not all detectives are enamoured of the art of criminal profiling. Regardless of how accurate the profiles may be shown to be once the offender is arrested, police often find it is the 'grunt' work that gets them their results — the physical evidence, tip-offs, and continual scrutiny, reviewing and cross-checking of all the information gathered. Inspector Paul Mayger and his teams were satisfied with the progress they were making, and the profile hadn't offered any further insights into the murders, or suggested any other lines of enquiry that they hadn't put together themselves. It appeared Lincoln was on track, and as Paul said, 'These things take time . . . they can take

months. We have a number of persons of interest and we're working our way through the list but often we can't eliminate anyone. We can put them in the category of highly unlikely if they were in gaol or something like that.'

The media, however, wanted more information and were still pushing police to say the murders were connected. Paul responded with, 'As I've said before, there are various similarities between the three cases but we can't say with 100 per cent certainty that they are linked.' Paul did admit that his teams were looking at ten suspects and, as at that time, were unable to rule anyone out of their enquiries. The number of suspects had doubled as a result of information received from the public.

AUGUST 1998

8] THE GETAWAY CAR

WAS THE RED NISSAN SKYLINE THE CAR USED BY THE killer or killers to extract themselves from the scene of Frank Arkell's murder? The sighting of the vehicle at 2.30 am on Saturday 27 June fitted in with the time frame of Frank's murder. Police needed more information than that supplied by the witness, but despite pleas to the public, none was forthcoming. No one else in the street knew of, or had seen, the red Skyline. Some owners of vehicles answering the description within the Wollongong area had been checked and eliminated from the enquiry.

A check of incident reports at the time of Frank's murder revealed that a dark red Nissan Skyline had been stolen from Robert Street, Corrimal around 7 pm on Friday 26 June. It could have been the same car as seen by the witness on the Saturday morning. Police planned another appeal as the stolen car had yet to be recovered.

Inspector Paul Mayger was seeking information on the driver of another vehicle, the navy blue Ford Falcon that chauffeured Frank Arkell to the Leisure Coast Garden Centre on the Friday afternoon, where Frank had been enquiring about an

order he'd placed. While police had spoken to Frank Arkell's family, friends and associates, they had yet to identify the person driving the Falcon, or anyone with knowledge of the vehicle. Was the killer actually driving the Ford? And was the Nissan only a coincidence?

Paul Mayger held a press conference in Sydney, passing on information about the two vehicles, down to the registration number of the stolen Nissan, SWT 405. He also renewed appeals for information on the Colorado boots and Nike track-suit pants, as nothing had come from existing enquiries. Paul decided to show more of his hand, revealing to the media that the killer might still own and be wearing a tracksuit jacket that matched the abandoned pants found at the scene. A similar suit, as supplied by Nike, was put on display for the cameras, in the hope that it would 'jog someone's memory'. 'Police would like to hear from anyone who can identify the clothing as belonging to anyone associated with Frank Arkell,' Paul added.

Detectives on Strike Force Lincoln would only have to wait a couple of days before the stolen maroon Nissan Skyline was discovered in bushland off Mount Ousley Road, part of the main highway linking Wollongong to Sydney and the far south coast. The location was and continues to be a popular dumping ground for stolen cars. Mount Ousley is just west of Wollongong, where suburbs such as its namesake and Mount Pleasant are nestled into the slopes, surrounded by thick eucalypts and offering homes a magnificent vista of the Illawarra coastline.

The discovery of the maroon car didn't come from a tip-off, but rather a routine search of various dumping grounds

around Wollongong by local police. The car had been extensively damaged and stripped of its wheels. As soon as police had identified the car as the vehicle sought by Strike Force Lincoln, it was impounded and sent away for tests, fingerprints, hair fibres, blood and other forensic analysis. At the same time a call was put through to Homicide.

In contrast to depictions on popular television crime shows, results of forensic tests can take weeks. The reality was that Strike Force Lincoln wasn't the only investigation with evidence requiring analysis and testing. As is always the case, there are many crimes being perpetrated at any one time across New South Wales, and those that require the testing of physical evidence must join the queue. Handling media enquiries following discovery of the vehicle, Russell Oxford remained cautious, saying, '... the stolen car appears to be a significant breakthrough but I have to stress that it may not be the car we're looking for ... this car is maroon, the car we're looking for is red ... it may or may not be the same car.'

Russell also theorised about the involvement of the car. Was it the getaway vehicle? If so, it meant Arkell was killed in the early hours of Saturday morning. It was possible, given the time frame in which the death could have happened. Unlike at the O'Hearn crime scene, it didn't appear that the killer had spent a lot of time at the house and granny flat. Police knew, however, that Frank hadn't yet retired to bed, as evident by his folded pyjamas and neatly made bed. Certainly, it was possible for Frank to have still been awake after midnight. If, however, Frank had been murdered earlier, in the afternoon or early evening, how could the police account for the car? It could be

that the car had nothing to do with Arkell's murder. Then again, it could be that the killer had returned to the scene to make sure that Frank was dead, or even to show an accomplice that the job had been done. Detectives on Strike Force Lincoln needed to find the car and its driver quickly, if only to rule them out of the investigation.

Whether the stolen car was or was not connected to the murder of Frank Arkell, Paul Mayger and Russell Oxford decided to employ a special technique to find the answers. They approached the witness who agreed to be hypnotised, in an attempt to recall the driver and any other details that were blurred. Arrangements were made with a hypnotist to conduct the procedure.

For evidentiary reasons there are strict guidelines when applying hypnosis. A qualified practitioner who is independent of the New South Wales police service must perform the procedure. It must be videoed, to ensure the witness isn't given suggestions that may prejudice his or her true recollection of events. And the witness must agree to being hypnotised without any coercion on the part of the police.

Hypnosis is not an uncommon tool for the police to use. It's been employed in a number of cases where details were needed to reconstruct crime scenes and identify the perpetrators, or at least to find clues to their identities. Hypnosis can also be used as therapy to help a victim overcome a traumatic experience.

The witness in this case, once relaxed and submerged within their memory, recalled his drive home down Reserve Street. He saw a 'fire engine red car', possibly a Nissan Skyline

or a Holden Commodore, driving erratically past Arkell's house. He also remembered seeing the driver, a male about 30 years of age, with thin build and light olive complexion, and his hair was dark or black, short and brushed forward.

From the description, police made a computer generated FACE image. It was circulated to media outlets on Friday 28 August. By this time, police had also discounted the stolen Nissan from the investigation. None of the results from the forensic evidence taken from the vehicle was linked to the murder of Frank Arkell.

Addressing the media, Paul Mayger explained that a detailed description of the driver of the red car had been obtained by hypnosis. Speaking of the wanted driver, Paul said, 'He was seen driving a motor vehicle previously described as either a Nissan Skyline or possibly a red Commodore sedan and whilst we're unsure of the exact make of that vehicle we are sure it's a bright red vehicle.'

Paul added that the witness had stated that the computer image was at least a 75 per cent likeness of the person he'd seen driving the red car.

Police still hadn't located the driver of the blue Ford either. Remarkably, police had two vehicles and two drivers unaccounted for. Journalists queried whether the driver of the blue car could be the same as the driver of the red vehicle, which urged Paul to explain, 'We don't know if it is the same person driving the blue car because we don't have a description of that person . . . I would like to repeat the appeal to the driver [of the blue car] to come forward.'

Strike Force Lincoln received up to twenty calls from the public putting names to the image released through the media. Once all the calls had been collated, and the records searched for anyone matching the description, police then narrowed their enquiry down to three people who 'bore a striking similarity' to the image.

Earlier in the month, on Thursday 6 August, a seemingly unrelated incident occurred at Albion Park. Two men wearing black clothing and with balaclavas over their faces entered the Ampol Service Station on the Highway just before 9.30 pm. One brandished a samurai sword, wielding it threateningly at the console operator. The accomplice carried a machete. The operator, under direction from the two thieves, opened the register, and then drew back while the one carrying the machete went for the money and grabbed cigarettes from the display. In total, the offenders got away with \$307 in cash and several packets of cigarettes. The pair then ran out and along the highway. The incident was recorded on the service station's security video, but the offenders were difficult to identify given their all-black clothing and balaclavas.

1-30 SEPTEMBER 1998

9] PRIME SUSPECT

FROM AN OUTSIDER'S POINT OF VIEW, THERE APPEARED to be little activity coming from Strike Force Lincoln during September. Other than the publication of the computer FACE image, and the mention that police had three suspects fitting the description, the investigation didn't receive much media coverage. It had become 'old news'.

Police, admittedly, had nothing new to offer. Detectives on all three cases — Trevor Parkin, David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell — were still following leads, re-checking information received, and continuing to gather intelligence on their suspects. Slowly but surely they eliminated a number of suspects from the investigation, whittling down the figure of possible offenders from double to single digits.

On the positive side, Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins had sifted through all the evidence related to the ten-year-old murder enquiry into Leo Leslie Press. Stuart had located the whereabouts of the main suspect, Barrie Alan Hodge, whose fingerprints matched those found on beer cans at the crime scene. At the time of the murder Hodge was eighteen, which

made him twenty-eight when police finally caught up with him. Supporting evidence was still being collated, and Stuart was only weeks away from making his arrest. Strike Force Lincoln was on their way to their first result.

Calls to Crimestoppers and the Corrimal police station were still being received, giving information concerning the Colorado boots and Nike tracksuit. One call in particular caught the attention of the Arkell investigating team. It was from a young woman called Mary. It was not her real name, but for reasons that will become obvious, this witness requested that her identity be protected.

Mary contacted police because she knew someone who owned a pair of boots and tracksuit pants that matched the items found in Frank Arkell's granny flat. It wasn't just that the person had the same clothing, so much as the fact that she hadn't seen the pieces since late June, after Frank Arkell's murder. She said her boyfriend always seemed to wear the boots and the pants. She became suspicious when she asked him where his boots were, and why he wouldn't wear them when they were about to go out. He'd give Mary excuses, even saying he'd loaned them to a friend. When Mary pushed for more details, her boyfriend would become angry and agitated.

There was another aspect of her boyfriend's strange behaviour that unnerved Mary. He would repeatedly tease her, asking her what she would do if he'd killed someone. He also told her he had 'done something bad' and admitted to having a guilty conscience, although he never explained what he meant.

One time when they were listening to the news on the

radio about the investigation into David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, the reporter mentioned that police had 'ten suspects'. Mary remembered her boyfriend saying very casually, 'they'll never find who did it'. She also recalled how obsessed he became with reading about the investigation in the papers every day. One afternoon when she went to throw out the newspaper, her boyfriend yelled at her, saying he hadn't read it yet. There was something about Frank Arkell in it. He'd not shown much interest in the papers before the murders.

Mary and her boyfriend eventually broke up. Mary, however, kept thinking about the clothing, the excuses her ex-boyfriend gave, and the teasing. A similar tracksuit to the one her former boyfriend owned had been shown recently on the news and it rekindled her fears. She didn't want to believe he could do such a thing, but she felt she needed to tell police, if only to put her own mind at rest. Mary was very emotional when she spoke to police. It was a difficult decision she'd made. She didn't know if she was being paranoid, or if her boyfriend was capable of killing Frank Arkell. Mary gave police the name of her former boyfriend: Mark van Krevel.

The name Mark van Krevel didn't ring any immediate bells for Russell Oxford and his team, but it did eventually when they learned he was a friend of Keith Schreiber. The information was relayed to Paul Mayger at Homicide. A quick check with detectives on Strike Force Lema, looking into the murder of David O'Hearn, revealed that Mark Jack van Krevel had been interviewed a couple of days after the O'Hearn killing. Both Keith Schreiber and Mark van Krevel lived in the same street as David O'Hearn. Van Krevel had volunteered to be interviewed by

detectives, who questioned him about the murder and his best mate, Schreiber. Police had a typed record of interview still on file, which van Krevel had signed.

If the clothing found at Frank Arkell's murder scene did belong to van Krevel, police still needed more evidence to link him to the crime. They had the fingerprints found at both the O'Hearn and Arkell murders, but how could they find out if either of the prints matched their new suspect? Mark van Krevel didn't have a police record; if he had, and if the prints were his, they would have shown up on the initial check.

So, Paul Mayger and his team used what resources they had at their disposal. They had to think creatively: how could they get van Krevel's prints without hauling him in and tipping him off? The answer struck Paul immediately. It was obvious. Paul knew that Mark van Krevel would have had to handle the typed record of interview, so his prints would still be on it. The sheets of paper were kept in a plastic sleeve in a folder along with other information related to the O'Hearn enquiry. Paul got on the phone and instructed Joe Cassar to get the typed interview dusted for prints straight away. Naturally, there would be other prints belonging to the interviewing detectives on the pages. They would be identified and eliminated, leaving only one, as yet, unidentified set of prints, which had to be those of Mark van Krevel. This was the first step in identifying whether van Krevel had anything to do with the two murders. Again, Paul and his team would have to wait patiently for the results, which could take a week or more. In the meantime, detectives from Strike Force Lincoln were assigned to find out what they could about Mark van Krevel.

Police learned that van Krevel had moved house. He'd left the Albion Park Rail address, as had Keith Schreiber, and they were no longer living together. Police were able to locate the van Krevel family home, in Centenary Street, Albion Park, but he wasn't living there either. After some checking, they found Mark van Krevel had taken up residency at Hebron House, a hostel for homeless youths in Gladstone Avenue, Wollongong, run by the Christian group Assembly of God. Police learned that he'd left his job as a kitchen hand at Planet Hollywood in Sydney, and that he'd taken up tae kwon do, attending a martial arts academy at Unanderra. Detectives on Strike Force Lincoln also looked for any connection between van Krevel and the two Wollongong victims, be it through friends, associations or even shared interests. Other than living in the same street as David O'Hearn, there seemed nothing to connect him with David on a personal level. Given there was no obvious connection between Frank Arkell and Mark van Krevel, it looked as though, if van Krevel had committed the murder, Frank's death was a random act, except that Frank's notoriety might have been a factor. All would be known in time.

Investigators on Strike Force Lincoln would have their patience rewarded. The Fingerprint Section made a match. Russell Oxford was at his home when he got the call to say there was a match between the prints on the typed record of interview and those found at the O'Hearn murder. Before Russell could get the word out, he received a second call. It was Fingerprints again. They had just matched the prints on the interview with those found at Frank Arkell's granny flat. Mark van Krevel had been at both locations. It must be said that while the prints from

the crime scenes matched those unidentified on the typed record of interview, it was through logical deduction and elimination that the prints were believed to be Mark van Krevel's. Police could not say they were definitely the suspect's till such time as they processed him and made a formal match. Russell called Paul Mayger then passed the word around to other members of the team. The investigation picked up momentum.

Even though the police could link van Krevel to the two murders, and had good reason to believe the discarded boots and tracksuit pants were his, they still questioned whether he acted alone or had an accomplice. Keith Schreiber had been a suspect early in the investigation, and police couldn't be sure he didn't have anything to do with the murders, particularly now his friend, van Krevel, was implicated. After all, both had been living in the same house, which was located in the same street as David O'Hearn. And, being best mates, wouldn't van Krevel have at least told Schreiber?

The other question was, did van Krevel have anything to do with the murder of Trevor Parkin? Mark van Krevel worked in Sydney at Planet Hollywood at the time of Parkin's killing. He travelled by train on the Illawarra line from Albion Park to Sydney and back each working day. Trevor Parkin's personal items found in the train carriage at Waterfall station, where the south coast trains occasionally terminate, could have been left by van Krevel. Another piece of evidence found at Parkin's Glebe unit could also link van Krevel to the scene. The evidence was never made public, but it was an item from van Krevel's workplace. Police theorised about van Krevel's involvement. Given the personal items found in the train at Waterfall and the

evidence retrieved from the murder scene, police did have good reason to connect van Krevel to the Parkin killing, even if it was only circumstantial.

Strike Force Lincoln received the results of the fingerprints analysis sometime during the second last week of September. On Wednesday 30 September, Paul Mayger and Stuart Wilkins drove from their Sydney headquarters to Corrimal police station, meeting with detectives from the O'Hearn and Arkell enquiries. Absent were Russell Oxford, Joe Cassar, and another three detectives from the team, Mal Lanyon, Mark Robinson and Morrie Gallina. They were all attending a Homicide Investigators Course that was being run by Russell and Detective Sergeant Paul Jacob at the Police Academy in Goulburn, 138 kilometres southwest of Wollongong. The course, which Russell had developed with another officer in 1995, was to conclude on Friday 2 October. Paul had decided that Mark van Krevel would be arrested either on the Friday or even into the weekend, whenever his team was at full strength. The timing would depend on the readiness of his team and whether they felt there was any more evidence or background material they needed.

Despite popular belief, police do not arrest suspects straight away, particularly in matters as serious as murder. Police must be thorough and be sure of their evidence so a charge can be laid, even if the accused refuses to answer questions, taking his or her right to remain silent. They can't rely on the accused giving them a confession. Likewise, there's no point in police interviewing a suspect and revealing the evidence against them

if the offender can walk away. Police don't want to give the suspect the opportunity of knowing as much as they do and being free to cover their tracks, possibly destroying incriminating evidence, tampering with witnesses, or even taking the chance to flee the area. Police must also think like the suspect when reviewing the evidence to find any holes by which the offender could 'get off'. As Paul explains it: '... because of the way the Evidence Act is structured these days and the requirements on police for disclosure, you really need to finalise the investigation ... have your brief of evidence ready to go before you make an arrest. In the old days it was said, "Charge 'em and the brief will follow", but that doesn't happen anymore ... you have to be ready ... you have to be sure.'

Paul gave a briefing to his officers on the evidence and how the arrest would be carried out, including coordinated searches of van Krevel's room at the Gladstone Avenue hostel and the family home at Albion Park. He decided that Russell would interview van Krevel, along with another officer from the O'Hearn enquiry. With their pooled knowledge of the two Wollongong murders, the detectives would be able to keep a consistent contact with van Krevel. Paul didn't want his prime suspect being fazed or disorientated by having to face a string of interrogators asking him the same questions about different murders. The interview regarding Trevor Parkin would be kept separate and be conducted by two of the investigators working on that case. 'Keep the number of interviewing officers to a minimum and keep it simple' is Paul's philosophy. It comes from Paul having attended interviews in the past where five or

more detectives were all asking the suspect questions. Paul knew how unsettling and unproductive a situation like that could be for both parties.

As the Inspector and head of Strike Force Lincoln, Paul would have enough to do reporting to his bosses, preparing media statements and writing briefing notes on the day of the arrest. He didn't believe it was his place to also interview van Krevel and, as he puts it, '... that's what sergeants are for ... that's why I've got very competent detectives'.

While in Wollongong, Paul and Stuart drove past the hostel, carrying out a reconnaissance. Paul wanted to see for himself where his suspect lived. It was more from curiosity than necessity. Satisfied with their plan and that everything was in place, Stuart Wilkins and Paul Mayger returned to Sydney that afternoon.

On the evening of Wednesday 30 September, Mark van Krevel paid his rent as usual to one of the hostel managers, Gaye Heaton. According to what she told the media later, his demeanour seemed normal. He didn't appear troubled or nervous. In fact he didn't exhibit any behaviour that would explain the events that followed.

Mark van Krevel had been living at the hostel, Hebron House, for nearly two months. The hostel is a refuge for troubled, homeless youths, run under the umbrella of the Lighthouse Christian Centre. Residents are never asked questions about their lives, and van Krevel never volunteered any information about his family or where he'd lived previously. He kept to himself, was polite and quiet. He hadn't even informed

them he had officially changed his name by deed poll on 3 September. Mark Jack van Krevel was now legally Mark Mala Valera. The reasons for his change of name are unclear. There was a suggestion that his new name had some association with his interest in the Korean martial art of tae kwon do, but neither Mala nor Valera appear to have anything to do with the sport. Another suggestion was that the names have a connection to his newfound interest in Eastern philosophies. Again, no link is evident. Valera would later say he changed his name for personal reasons and because of his hatred for his father, Jack van Krevel.

That evening in his room at the hostel, Mark Valera readied himself for his tae kwon do class. It had become an obsession and he would often train about eight times a week, obtaining skills that would bring him close to the level of a blue belt. There are six levels of belts in tae kwon do: white, yellow, green, blue, red and black. Each colour represents a level the student has attained, from white, signifying the birth, to black, reflecting the student's self-knowledge and enlightenment. Blue is in the middle, signifying the sky and the student's hunger for learning to help them grow and develop.

When Mark Valera walked into the Unanderra gym for his class, he appeared agitated. For reasons known only to Valera, that particular night he wanted to talk, to release a burden he'd been carrying around for some time. He wanted to speak with his instructor, Rodney Day, the man he referred to as 'sensei' and 'the chief examiner'. In Rodney's office Valera asked his mentor, 'Would you think any less of me if I did something wrong ... would you stop me from training if I did something wrong?'

Rodney Day said it would depend on what he'd done and how bad it was. He took a guess, but was far from the mark. He waited for his student to tell him. What Valera admitted to was met with disbelief. The instructor thought his student was seeking attention and told him as much, but Valera just shrugged his shoulders. Rodney sent Valera out to the gym area while he gave himself time to absorb what he'd been told — that Mark Valera had killed David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell.

While the students were getting ready for the class, Rodney Day organised for another instructor to give the training. He told Valera to change back into his street clothes, and that they were going for a drive. Valera didn't want to go to the police. Rodney relented, suggesting they get something to eat and talk. They went to McDonald's in Wollongong. They stood in the car park and talked. When Rodney, who was still trying to establish whether or not Valera was lying, asked him why he killed the two men, Valera just said 'Arkell deserved it', and David O'Hearn had been 'a random thing'.

'So, it could have been just anybody?'

'Yes,' Valera answered.

Convinced that Valera had committed the murders, Rodney Day eventually talked Valera into handing himself in to the police. He had no choice. Valera agreed, but with two conditions. Valera wanted to see the training centre one last time, and then there was an item of 'sentimental value' he wanted to collect from his room at the hostel. Rodney complied with each of the requests.

They first drove back to Unanderra, where Valera soaked in the atmosphere of the gym, the 'dojang', where he'd practised his martial art. Then it was on to the hostel in Gladstone

Avenue. The item of sentimental value turned out to be a puma carved skinner knife in a sheath. There was also a wooden-handled samurai sword he kept in his room that he didn't want to go missing if he was to be arrested. He wanted Rodney to take care of the items for him. Valera assured Rodney that neither had been used in the murders. He told his instructor, referring to how he'd killed the two men, '... I used what there was'.

Rodney stood by his car while Valera went inside the hostel. After Valera had collected his things he spoke to a fellow resident, Rees, who he met on his way out. He asked Rees if he 'knew about Frank Arkell'. Rees replied that he did, and then Valera said, 'Well, I killed him.'

Rees didn't know what to do or say. He shook Valera's hand and wished him luck.

'I'm going away ... for a long time,' Valera added in parting.

Valera returned to his waiting instructor a few minutes later with his treasured possessions, the knife and the sword. He placed them in the boot of the car and allowed his sensei to drive him to meet his fate.

At around 8.55 pm on Wednesday 30 September, Rodney Day and Mark Valera arrived at Wollongong police station. The knife and sword were left in the car as the two men walked into the foyer. Rodney approached the desk and spoke to a young constable, Fiona Allgayer, telling her that his companion wanted to confess to the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell.

As Rodney had done earlier, Constable Allgayer took a moment to comprehend what she'd been told, and could only respond by saying, 'I'll just get someone.'

30 SEPTEMBER—1 OCTOBER 1998

10] IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO

AT ABOUT 9.20 PM ON WEDNESDAY, RUSSELL OXFORD had just finished giving an evening lecture at the Homicide Investigators Course at Goulburn when his phone rang. The caller was Steve Davies, another detective from the Arkell investigation. He told Russell a man had walked into Wollongong police station to confess to the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. There was a pause. Russell thought of their prime suspect. Had they targeted the right person? Steve Davies continued, saying the man was Mark van Kregel, their number one suspect. Russell immediately arranged for other members of the Strike Force to be contacted, those being the local detectives working on Lema and Lincoln, and fellow Homicide investigators. Inspector Paul Mayger, of course, was at the top of the list.

Paul was relaxing at home when he answered his phone to, 'There's a bloke at Wollongong admitting to two murders.' Paul couldn't believe it. He'd been pipped at the post. But weren't there three murders? Why had there only been an admission to

two? He phoned Stuart Wilkins and, together, they quickly made their way to Wollongong police station.

Russell considered the idea of taking the course detectives with him to Wollongong. After all, what better 'on-the-job' training for a Homicide course than to be involved in a real serial killer enquiry? There'd be a lot of work to be done, and many hands would be needed. The fact that van Krevel had admitted to the two murders meant that there was twice the amount of work. Two lots of evidence, two crime scenes, two families to contact, two interviews to take place, and so on. If van Krevel were to admit to having an involvement in the Parkin murder, the workload would triple. Russell toyed with the idea, and certainly the officers on the course would have been keen. Russell, however, thought twice and decided the team that began the investigation should be there to finish it. Russell, Joe Cassar, Mal Lanyon, Mark Robinson and Morrie Gallina headed for Wollongong, leaving Detective Sergeant Paul Jacob to continue running the course.

On the drive from Goulburn to Wollongong, the five detectives put voice to their thoughts and plans. Why had van Krevel suddenly decided to hand himself in? Was he covering for an accomplice, or was he alone? Was he involved in the Parkin murder? If so, why admit only to O'Hearn and Arkell? What would be the priorities in what they had to get from van Krevel? What did they need to know and what could they prove? Russell also wondered if the two murder scenes would still be available to them. It had been over three months and new people might be living in the Albion Park Rail townhouse and the Reserve Street home. If van Krevel was cooperating fully, he

might agree to be taken back to the crime scenes, to show the detectives what he did and how he did it. If the homes were occupied, how would the investigators approach the owners: 'Oh, hi ... Your house was the scene of a murder ... We've got the man who has admitted to the killing ... Mind if we come in?'

The other situation that needed to be handled well was preventing any leaks to the media. When Russell spoke with Steve Davies, he told him to try and 'keep a lid' on the development. The detectives would be busy enough with all that is involved in the interrogation and charging of the suspect, without having to answer a barrage of questions from journalists. There'd be plenty of time to address the media once van Krevel was formally charged. The other point was that detectives didn't want the victims' relatives finding out about van Krevel from the news. They preferred to tell the O'Hearn and Arkell families personally. That way, the families would have the chance to ask questions and learn exactly what van Krevel was being charged with and what evidence the police had against him. It would avoid the stress and feelings of isolation that can come from hearing about a breakthrough second hand.

The driving time also gave Joe Cassar the opportunity to brief Russell on the O'Hearn enquiry, from the types of injuries inflicted on the victim, physical evidence retrieved from the scene, to where the investigation had progressed before van Krevel had been identified. Joe told Russell everything he knew, though Russell had a fair idea from the weekly conferences involving the whole of Strike Force Lincoln. Joe was able to fill in the details.

While van Krevel had handed himself in, there was no assurance that he was going to talk or cooperate. He wouldn't be the first to pre-empt an arrest, that is, if he knew police were closing in on him. Some suspects use it as a defence tactic, designed to try and put off the police, and to have them reveal what they know. This is why the investigators must be thorough with their brief of evidence. They have to be sure they have enough to charge, hold, and bring a perpetrator to trial even before they've planned to.

There was also the issue of the three murders and whether they were connected. Paul Mayger often said to his team, and in addresses to his superiors, that if two of the murders were linked and one had been committed by someone else, then it would be Parkin and O'Hearn that were connected and the Arkell murder was a stand-alone: the atrocities committed against Parkin and O'Hearn were too similar to be ignored. Yet as the investigation unfolded, Paul had evidence putting van Krevel at both the O'Hearn and Arkell crime scenes, but nothing to show him at Parkin's, other than circumstantial evidence. As it was, van Krevel was only admitting to the two Wollongong murders.

As van Krevel waited at the police station for the detectives from the strike force, Inspector Peter Lincoln, from Wollongong, asked him if he wanted anyone contacted — a solicitor, family member, anyone he wished to have by his side? Van Krevel declined. He had the person he wanted, his sensei, Rodney Day.

Upon his admissions to the murders, the local police took van Krevel into custody. A little after 10 pm, Steve Davies arrived

with Detective Senior Constable Sam Foster. They found van Krevel sitting in an interview room with Inspector Lincoln and Rodney Day. Sam Foster addressed van Krevel, telling him they were still waiting for ‘Detective Sergeant Oxford and other police.’

Van Krevel looked up and replied, ‘Yeah . . . that’s fine.’

Steve Davies then got van Krevel a cup of coffee.

After a suspect is arrested, police have four hours in which to question him or her. The time normally begins from the moment they walk into the police station. There are circumstances in which that time is suspended, such as when the suspect asks for a solicitor. The time it takes for a solicitor to arrive is not included as part of the four hours. In this instance with van Krevel, the time it took Russell, Joe and the rest to travel from Goulburn was accepted as ‘time suspended’, which meant that when Russell arrived, the clock would begin ticking.

Around 11 pm, Russell Oxford, Joe Cassar and the other detectives from Goulburn arrived at Wollongong. As they left their vehicle, they noticed a lone figure leaning against a car, studying them intently as they entered the police station. The five detectives deduced it was a local journalist, possibly a freelancer. From the lack of television cameras, they also figured he was just a print guy and, hopefully, wouldn’t go blabbing the story around till his paper printed it first, well after all the formalities. The detectives conceded it was never going to be easy to ‘keep a lid’ on the events of that night.

Russell and Joe entered the lower ground floor of the Wollongong police station. Van Krevel was standing near the lifts, wearing a black jacket with a hood, the same jacket, it

would be revealed later, he wore when he killed David O'Hearn. He was in the company of Inspector Lincoln. Russell walked over and introduced himself and Joe Cassar, explaining their involvement in the investigations of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. He said to van Krevel, 'I understand that you came into the police station tonight and confessed to killing these men ... is that right?'

'Yes,' van Krevel answered.

Russell cautioned van Krevel, making sure he understood he had the right not to say anything if he wished, and then excused himself and Joe. They needed to talk to the other detectives and organise themselves before returning to interview van Krevel. Before Russell and Joe left, Russell decided to satisfy his curiosity. He asked van Krevel why he had turned himself in.

Van Krevel casually replied, 'It's the right thing to do.'

Inspector Lincoln led van Krevel away to the interview room.

Paul Mayger and Stuart Wilkins had arrived soon after the rest of the team. With all the detectives gathered in the conference room, the exception being Stuart Wilkins who was instructed to sit with van Krevel, Russell and Paul began discussing approaches they'd take with the suspect. The interview would be conducted in two parts, keeping each of the murders separate. Russell would lead the interrogation with Joe Cassar at his side. They would ask van Krevel about David O'Hearn first, and then Frank Arkell. Questioning relating to the Parkin murder would be conducted separately. Detective Sergeant Mick O'Keefe and Detective Senior Constable Lance

Goldsmith from the Leichhardt Local Area Command who had originally worked on the Parkin case would interview van Krevel.

As Paul Mayger explained, drawing from his experience, ‘When you look at the similarities and the MO, the Parkin and O’Hearn were the two that really matched together ... very, very close ... and I don’t always believe, even though they [the perpetrators] throw their hands up [confess], many of them hide things for whatever reason. Even if he isn’t admitting to it [the Parkin murder], we have to find out if he had any involvement ... he could have witnessed it and not participated ... we don’t know, but we must try and find out.’

Russell briefed the team on what work had to be done to bring their earlier plan forward, such as warrants to search van Krevel’s room at the hostel and the family home at Albion Park. Each of the detectives was allocated their tasks. It wasn’t just the interrogating detectives who would be busy that night. All the paperwork and background material from both the O’Hearn and Arkell enquiries had to be collected from Warilla and Corrimal police stations. Crime scene photographs, results of forensic tests, the Nike tracksuit pants, and whatever evidence was available, had to be brought to the station, each piece ready for Russell and Joe to show van Krevel.

Given the four-hour time limit, Russell knew it was going to take longer if van Krevel was going to cooperate with police. Questioning a suspect for two murders would be lengthy. As such, a warrant for an extension of time, known as a Detention after Arrest Warrant, had to be lodged with the local magistrate. The paperwork needed to be ready to go if required.

It was planned that, once Russell and Joe finished the separate interviews, and providing van Krevel agreed, they would take him on a 'walk-through' at the crime scenes. The walk-through allows the perpetrator to physically take police through the execution of the crime. It gives them the opportunity to explain to police in detail how they gained entry, how the offence was committed, and what they did afterwards. It's a corroborating piece of evidence that assures police the offender did in fact do what they are admitting to. Only they would know the gruesome details. The walk-through also gives police some insight into the motivation for the offence, as this exercise is viewed from the perpetrator's point of view. 'It's very different talking about the crime to having them show you what they did,' Russell Oxford explained.

Arrangements needed to be made with the victims' families to access the locations, David O'Hearn's townhouse and Frank Arkell's granny flat and house. Luckily, both premises were still unoccupied. A police videographer had to be contacted and ready to go when everything was in place.

With everyone busily performing their particular duties, Russell and Joe entered the interview room where van Krevel and Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins were seated. It was their time now and Stuart Wilkins left them to it. Russell told van Krevel he'd be asking him questions about David O'Hearn and, as is standard procedure, explained that the interview would be taped. He also asked if van Krevel wanted Rodney Day to sit with him through the interview. Van Krevel declined the offer, but asked if he could see Rodney before he left. Russell promised he'd arrange it. Without further delay, the recorders were

switched on and the interview began at 12.55 am on 1 October 1998.

During his years as a Homicide detective, Russell Oxford had come across all sorts of killers, male and female, of all ages and types of personality. He wasn't and still isn't easily surprised, but he did find van Krevel unique. It wasn't that van Krevel, on first appearances, looked clean-cut, was polite in his behaviour and seemed 'not what you'd imagine'. Rather, it was van Krevel's 'matter-of-fact' manner, his indifference, that caught Russell's attention. Until he met van Krevel, he had not met anyone who could describe their horrific crimes without any emotion. Some murderers exude loathing when they talk about their victims, anger at having been caught or, sometimes, remorse. But not van Krevel. Joe Cassar described van Krevel's casualness as being 'naïve'. Joe didn't think he realised the enormity of the situation — that he was facing a life term for the murders.

Van Krevel gave his name as Mark Mala Valera, so Russell checked with him that his name had been van Krevel, and that he was the same person who had been interviewed at Warilla police station three and half months earlier. Valera stated he was formerly Mark Jack van Krevel. With confirmation of his identity, Russell asked him about the murder of David O'Hearn.

Valera didn't hesitate, saying, 'I don't know anything much about David himself but I murdered him, yes, and I don't know much about him ... I didn't know him as a person.'

Valera told how he'd knocked on David O'Hearn's door and asked about accommodation, using it as a ruse. David

invited him in and gave him a drink of orange juice. Seeing the heavy cut-glass decanter, Valera grabbed it and used it to hit David over the head when his back was turned. Valera explained he was angry and wanted to kill someone. Anyone. Asked why he chose David, he said, 'I've seen him around because I lived in the same street . . . I had on my mind I wanted to kill someone that day and I went to his [David O'Hearn's] house. I seen that he was the only one in his house and I went there.'

Asked again why he chose David in particular, Valera answered, 'I don't know. Just random, I seen him out there, I don't know, it was just random . . . I've seen him like in his garden, yeah, just when I'm walking.'

Valera then gave a general description of the murder and the mutilations. In answer to whether he had brought a weapon to the murder scene, Valera denied he had. He said he 'used what was there', just as he'd told Rodney Day. Russell asked if he had planned the murder.

'Just that day, I hadn't been planning any other day, just that day because . . . I just said, like, I was really angry and I said to myself, I could kill someone.'

'I stress out a lot,' he added.

While Valera appeared keen to describe how he had killed David O'Hearn, Russell had to interject on occasions to slow him down and have him give more detail. Police must be sure of how everything was done to match it to the autopsy, crime scene and other evidence. It doesn't suffice to have the suspect say he just bashed the victim and he died. The evidence is in the detail.

Russell was again a little surprised by the specifics Valera gave. When discussing how Valera first assaulted his victim, Russell casually mentioned David had been struck 'about ten times'. Valera immediately corrected him, adamant he had struck David exactly ten times in total. The first time was when David stood and had his back turned, then nine more times as his victim lay on the ground. Russell asked how he knew he'd hit David nine more times.

Still displaying indifference to what he'd done, Valera simply replied, 'I counted . . . I hit him ten times.'

After Valera had bludgeoned David to death with the decanter, he went upstairs looking for money and jewellery. Anything of value. He found a cross on a gold chain and pocketed it. He admitted he still had the jewellery, which was at his room at the hostel.

Having had a good look around, Valera returned downstairs where he found the knives, hacksaw and other instruments with which he began mutilating the body. He also found a bag under the stairs and opened it. Inside were 'hand grips', the type used for strengthening arm muscles. Valera thought about taking those, but later changed his mind. After mutilating the body, he admitted to using his victim's severed left hand as a 'paintbrush' to scrawl satanic messages on the walls, the pentagram, inverted cross and the word 'satan'.

When asked about the significance of the pentagram, Valera responded, 'No significance really, I just drew it there'.

In regards to the inverted cross, he said, 'Just, in satanic terms, I'm not satanic, but in satanic terms, it's like Jesus hanging upside down in hell.'

Russell was curious to know where he'd learned about the symbols. Valera told him it was from listening to music he and a friend enjoyed by groups like Deicide and Cannibal Corpse.

Russell asked why Valera had left David O'Hearn's severed head in the kitchen sink. Valera said that after he first decapitated his victim, he held on to the head, 'just looking at it' for about five minutes. He wanted to clean it and keep the skull. 'I was going to like keep his head but then I just said, stuff it, and I left it there.'

In answer to Russell's question about why he attempted to gouge David's eye, Valera admitted, 'My intention was to take his eyeball out of his head but then I found it was a bit hard so I just like stabbed it.'

Midway through the interview, at 1.40 am, Russell and Joe suspended proceedings to change tapes. Valera was taken to another room where he was given time with Rodney Day. They spent about fifteen minutes talking before Valera was ushered back to resume his interview.

During the break Russell and Joe updated Paul Mayger and the team. Their excitement heightened as they heard what Valera had to say, and how cooperative he was being. The adrenalin fuelled the weary detectives, keeping them focused. It was going to be a long night. Most of the team had been up since 6 am the previous morning, and they knew that the whole process wouldn't be completed till that afternoon when Valera would be formally charged.

'It's a real roller-coaster ride,' Paul Mayger remembered. 'Not just your emotions, but your levels of tiredness. You get these adrenalin rushes and you're just about asleep on your feet,

but you come good again with each bit of news. The rush you get when you get a confession, an arrest, especially a confession, is just huge ... I must say though, that ... those adrenalin rushes are few and far between, so it is a hard slog, it really is.'

Russell Oxford and Joe Cassar recommenced the interview at 2.02 am. By 2.57 am both detectives had everything they wanted to know about the murder of David O'Hearn on audio and video tape. During the interview Russell asked on several occasions, about four or five times, why Valera committed the murder and why he targeted David O'Hearn. His answer was the same each time: 'I don't know ... it was just random ... it was a random thing ... I was stressed ... I mean I was angry that day, but no particular reason, no.'

To clarify, Russell asked, 'Have you ever done anything like this when you've been angry?'

'No.'

'When you've been angry on previous occasions, what have you done?'

'I don't know, I used to like, when I was younger, I used to chuck stupid tantrums when I was younger, nothing like that, no.'

Valera admitted that he'd seen David on previous occasions, out the front of his townhouse and in the street. On the day of the murder, Valera walked purposely from his place to David's, intent on killing him. Valera saw his victim, walked down the driveway and knocked on the door.

'And had he not been there,' Russell enquired, '... would you have gone to another house to do something or would you simply ... ?'

'I don't know, it was just him, I seen him go into his house, I don't know if I would have done anyone else if I seen them.'

Asked whether he suspected someone might walk in on him while he was killing David, Valera said, 'No, I wasn't thinking that.'

'But, you mentioned before that he lived alone, did you, is that something that you knew that he lived alone?' Russell asked.

'No, no. For all I knew he could have had a wife but I didn't know.'

'All right. So, did you know whether David was hetero or homosexual?'

'No, I didn't know at all.'

'You didn't know?'

'No.'

Valera was shown a number of crime scene photos that he identified. He explained the contents of the photos to the detectives and signed them as evidence that he'd seen them. He also agreed to assist the detectives further by accompanying them to the crime scene where he would be videoed. Valera didn't appear to be holding anything back. Again, Russell and Joe broke from the room and briefed the other detectives. Formalities were undertaken with the securing of the tapes, both audio and video, and the identification and logging of evidence.

Four hours were almost up and at about 3.10 am, Steve Davies applied for a Detention after Arrest Warrant from the on-call magistrate, Mr Brian Coady. The application was granted and an extension of a further eight hours was granted.

At 4.06 am Russell and Joe began to ask questions about Frank Arkell's murder. The motivation for murdering Frank Arkell was different. Valera said a friend had told him that Frank Arkell was a paedophile, and subsequently he'd read articles in the papers about Frank Arkell facing child-sex charges and decided he should die. Before killing Frank, Valera admitted he made prank phone calls to the former mayor, sometimes hanging up, and on other occasions abusing him.

'I knew he was a convicted paedophile . . . He is a very, very horrible man. I know it wasn't for me to take it into my hands but I felt that someone should kill him because of all the nasty things he has done to kids.'

Valera gave yet another detailed account, this time of how he killed Frank Arkell. He told the detectives how he phoned Frank Arkell from a phone box at Wollongong station, convincing Arkell he was young gay boy whose name was 'John'. Then he went to his granny flat and fought with him till he died. First Valera pushed and kicked his victim, hit him with an ash-tray, attempted to strangle him with an electrical cord attached to a lamp, then beat his victim with the base of the lamp more than forty times. Valera continued to kick Frank after he'd died and tried to stab his victim's neck with a five-pronged wooden stake, but it snapped off after the first thrust.

Russell Oxford asked why he discarded his pants and boots. Why leave them behind?

Valera thought that was obvious: ' . . . they were covered in blood.'

After killing Frank Arkell, Valera took his bloodied boots off, not wanting to trail blood through the house. He then

broke into the main house, again looking for valuables and a change of clothes. He opened drawers and rifled through cupboards, finding a pair of black tracksuit pants. He didn't see anything he thought was worth stealing. He took his socks off in the lounge room and left them there. He returned to the granny flat, carrying the pants under his arm. Back at the granny flat, Valera changed into his victim's pants. He found a box of tiepins on the window ledge of the walk-in wardrobe, and used two to pierce Frank's eyes and stuck a third into one cheek.

When asked about the significance of this, Valera said, 'Just seen 'em so, just put them in.'

Valera then went home, had dinner and attended a taekwondo class that evening.

During the interview Russell showed Valera sections of a lamp. At first Valera didn't recognise it, but after Russell crudely assembled the three pieces, Valera admitted it was the heavy wooden lamp he used to beat Frank Arkell to death. He hadn't realised the lamp broke during the attack. Valera identified his beige Colorado boots from crime scene photos, as they were still away being analysed. He told Russell he bought the boots from Mathers shoe store in Shellharbour Square a year and a half earlier. He paid in cash. The boots cost him \$99. Valera had purchased the Nike tracksuit pants, matching jacket and socks from a sports store in Wollongong. The whole ensemble cost him about \$160. Like he'd done during the earlier interview, Valera agreed to return to the crime scene.

Russell asked if Valera had ever driven to Frank Arkell's house in a red car. He said he hadn't. Russell asked if any of his

friends owned a red Holden Commodore or Nissan. Again, Valera replied in the negative. To this day, police still haven't identified the driver of the red car seen near Frank Arkell's house on the morning after his murder. They have also never discovered the identity of the driver of the blue Falcon.

The interview concluded at 5.48 am.

While Valera was being interviewed, warrants had been prepared to search his family home at Albion Park and the hostel in Gladstone Avenue, Wollongong. Again, Magistrate Brian Coady authorised the paperwork. Normally the suspect is present during a search, but as time was of the essence, and Valera would be required for the walk-throughs, police opted for an independent officer to join the search, one who had no involvement with either the David O'Hearn or Frank Arkell enquiries. Inspector Maher from the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command agreed to accompany the detectives and view the searches as an impartial observer. Each of the searches would also be videotaped and conducted in front of a person living at the premises.

At 4.30 am Homicide Detective Senior Constable Peter Cotter briefed the detectives who would be conducting the searches and allocated responsibilities. Steve Davies was to be the exhibit officer, listing and numbering each of the items found during the searches and handing over what was required for forensic testing to Detective Senior Constable Ron De Bruin from the Crime Scene Unit. Detective Senior Constable Mark Cracknell was to video proceedings, Detective Senior Constable Audrey Pearson and Plain Clothes Senior Constable Janet Chadwick would assist with the search, along with Homicide Detective Senior Constable Pamela Young.

At around 5 am, Jack van Krevel, Mark Valera's father, was woken by members of Strike Force Lincoln. Peter Cotter told Jack of his son's arrest and admissions. Jack was taken aback, but not totally surprised.

Jack had told close friends that he thought the boots and tracksuit pants from Arkell's murder scene belonged to Mark, but he didn't want to believe it. They supported him, telling him the clothing could have belonged to anyone — 'all the kids wear them'. Jack would also tell police that he and his son had an argument a couple of weeks earlier, before his arrest, in which Mark threatened him and said, 'You'll be number three'. Jack knew he was referring to the murders but, again, hoped his son was just displaying bravado, and really had nothing to do with either killing. At 5 am on Thursday 1 October 1998, Jack's fears were realised.

With the video camera rolling and Inspector Maher observing, Peter Cotter executed the search warrant. He and Pamela Young explained the warrant to Jack and informed him of the circumstances of his son's arrest. Jack agreed to the search and led the detectives to the rear bedroom, which had been Mark's. In his interview with Russell Oxford, Mark had said this was the room where he stored the clothing he wore to kill David O'Hearn and the pants he stole from Frank Arkell's house.

Being the exhibit officer, Steve Davies logged the items and the time they were discovered by the other detectives. In a black canvas suitcase, Pamela Young found a Nike brand tracksuit top. Underneath a desk in the bedroom, Pamela found a pair of black cotton tracksuit pants and a pair of black army

pants. All the items were held up, photographed and videoed. Pamela then located an Adidas brand sports bag lying on the floor of the bedroom, with 'Cannibal Corpse', 'Tomb of the Mutilated', and 'Hammer Smashed Face' written on the outside. The bag's contents astonished the detectives. The bag contained sixteen knives of various shapes and sizes, a knife blade and a bayonet.

In a wardrobe, Janet Chadwick found a canvas bag containing a Slavia brand air rifle, while a pair of green canvas lace-up boots and a picture of Valera with 'I want your life' written on it were also taken.

Jack watched the whole of the search procedure, from the start to its conclusion at 7.20 am. Steve Davies logged all the seized items, and then gave Jack a copy of the list. The police returned to Wollongong police station where the exhibits were secured. When they arrived at the station, they learned that Valera had been taken on his walk-through.

At a little after 6 am on the morning of Thursday 1 October 1998, Valera, his identity hidden under his black jacket, was bundled into the back of an unmarked police car at the rear of Wollongong police station. Joe Cassar noticed Valera wasn't wearing any shoes, and asked him if he wanted to put them on.

Valera replied, 'No, I'd rather go bare feet.'

Soon afterwards, three vehicles left the compound heading for the Albion Park Rail townhouse. Russell Oxford, Joe Cassar, Paul Mayger and Stuart Wilkins accompanied Valera to the scene of David O'Hearn's murder.

They soon learned the news was out. As they arrived at the townhouse the four detectives noticed a television film crew and press photographers hidden in bushes, attempting to get a glimpse of the man who had murdered David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. Paul drove his car down the driveway first, positioning it so as to obstruct the view of the cameras. Senior Constable Jeff Maurer from the Video Operations Section was waiting. He quickly attached radio microphones to Russell and Valera. He took his video camera from the car and starting rolling.

Valera kept his jacket over his face as he was helped out of the car. Russell didn't want him being 'spooked' by the media circus that was beginning to gather. Paul and Stuart stood guard, blocking the media's view as best they could while Russell and Joe led the cloaked Valera into the house.

Since David O'Hearn's murder the blood-soaked carpet had been pulled up, exposing the nailed edging. Although he was warned, Valera, unable to see clearly with the hood drawn over his face, stood on the sharp tacks. He hopped around for a moment to ease the pain. Naturally, the shock of treading on the nails caused Valera to utter an expletive. Valera apologised immediately. He hadn't meant to offend the detectives with his foul language. Valera's over-politeness was another behavioural twist that took Russell and Joe by surprise. He even apologised once during the interview when he used a swearword, being angry with himself when he couldn't remember something.

Safe inside from prying media eyes, the jacket was removed and Valera began describing the lounge area as he remembered it from that fateful Friday 12 June, over three months earlier. He

pointed out where the lounge had been where he'd sat drinking the orange juice, the location of the television and video, the side table where he had found the decanter that he used to bash his victim's head, and where a silver platter lay with his victim's intestines draped over it. Valera reconstructed the scene for the detectives, in minute detail.

Russell asked Valera to re-enact how and where he first attacked David O'Hearn with the decanter. He stood where the lounge was, pretending to reach for the heavy glass object, and then struck out, as though David was there. Valera told Russell that David fell and, while demonstrating his actions, said he continued to hit his victim as he lay on the floor.

'... six, seven, eight, nine,' Valera dutifully counted the number of strikes, as he had done at the time of the murder.

Russell checked his notes, clarifying with Valera that he struck David O'Hearn, 'about ten times?'

'No,' Valera quickly corrected the detective. 'Once, then nine more times ... I counted ... nine times when he was on the floor.' He wanted Russell to get it right.

Russell and Joe then took Valera upstairs, where he showed the detectives the rooms he entered and how he went about looking for things to steal, taking the gold chain and cross, and eventually finding a pair of gloves in a cupboard. He wore the gloves and returned downstairs where he found a saw and hammer in a bag, packed away in a small cupboard above the fridge. He found the knives in the kitchen drawer. He then began dissecting his victim's body, severing the left hand and head.

When Russell asked him why he drew satanic messages on the walls, Valera said, 'I just did it ... I'm not satanic.'

Valera, again in detail, described and enacted the mutilations he performed on his victim. Russell and Joe conferred, making sure they had everything they needed. There was one last question. Russell wanted to know about the hammer. He wanted Valera to tell him what he did with it, as Valera had not mentioned anything about the hammer, other than to say where he had found it. If Valera was to be believed as being the only perpetrator, then police had to be sure he committed all the atrocities himself. He had to account for all that happened that day. If he could only recall certain events and not all, then police would have the right to believe someone else was involved. Being asked about the hammer was necessary, as it was the only thing Valera had left out.

This was the first time Valera showed any sign of emotion. In fact, he appeared embarrassed as he told the detectives how he forced the hammer into his victim's rectum. He lowered his voice as he uncomfortably re-enacted the moment. Russell asked him to repeat it, to show how difficult or not it was to perform the task. Valera did, still exhibiting a great sense of self-consciousness.

At 7.19 am, about the time the other detectives were concluding their search of Valera's family home, Russell and Joe escorted Valera into the granny flat at 1 Reserve Street, West Wollongong. Their journey from Albion Park Rail was traced by a contingent of media. The circus kept close watch. Having the media gathered in the adjoining park and about the house made things difficult for Russell and Joe. They couldn't have Valera walk down the driveway and show them exactly how he entered the flat, for fear of having his face splashed across the

news that day. Valera would have to tell the detectives how he arrived and left the flat.

Inside, as he had done at the townhouse, Valera went through the motions of how he killed Frank Arkell. He showed the detectives where Frank hit his head when he first pushed him, where he had found the ashtray and the lamp, the wooden stake, and the tiepins. While they were in the flat, Russell had Valera explain what he did when he returned from having ransacked the main house, to save them traipsing back though the media cauldron. Valera showed exactly where he left his boots and tracksuit pants, and explained that he left the flat, jumped over the side fence into the reserve and made his way back to Wollongong train station.

Valera was cloaked again in his jacket and taken to the main house. There he led detectives to each of the rooms he had entered, describing them as he found them on that day. Since Frank's death his family had cleared out a lot of the furniture and bits and pieces that were hoarded there. Valera took Russell and Joe to a spare bedroom, showing them where he found the pair of black tracksuit pants. He also indicated, in the lounge room, where he'd taken off his socks, deciding to go home barefoot.

At around 8.10 am the detectives who had searched Valera's family home now descended upon Hebron House. Pamela Young spoke with the manager, Chris Foley, and executed the search warrant. They were taken to unit number five, a small bedroom which Valera occupied on his own. There, Janet

Chadwick found the gold chain and crucifix, and a letter 'M' pendant, in Valera's toiletries bag on his bedside chest. Janet also found a book titled *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers* in the top drawer, along with an envelope with three drawings of pentagrams within circles, an inverted cross, and the word 'satan' written on it.

Inside the book the detectives noticed other inscriptions, lists of names, including David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, plus written references to 'who will be my number three?' The items were photographed, videoed and listed on the Property Seizure/Exhibit Form. A copy of the form was given to the manager of the hostel and the search was concluded at 8.45 am.

Back at Wollongong police station, Russell and Joe viewed the seized items with great interest. On several occasions Russell asked Valera where he got the idea to mutilate David O'Hearn's body. Valera said he didn't know, he just did it, and during his walk-through he admitted to hearing about such things in the lyrics of the band Cannibal Corpse. Russell wished he had known about the book and the other items during the interview, but in reality it didn't matter. Valera had given them a confession and all the evidence they needed to believe he had committed the killings.

After the walk-through at the Arkell property, Valera was driven back to Wollongong police station. He was taken to the charge room where he was given a meal. Blood and hair samples were given, which he had agreed to earlier. The samples were handed to Ron De Bruin from the Wollongong Crime Scene Unit. The black jacket Valera had been wearing was taken from him and given to Detective Senior Constable Steve

Davies. Being the jacket he wore when he murdered David O'Hearn, it would be tested for physical evidence after being added to the list of seized items.

The detectives working on the Parkin enquiry took this opportunity to have a word with Valera. Mick O'Keefe and Lance Goldsmith asked Valera if he knew anything about Trevor Parkin. Valera didn't. They asked if he had, or knew of anyone who had, taken part in the murder of Trevor Parkin. Valera denied having anything to do with the murder. He said he didn't know who Parkin was or anything about him, least of all who killed him. If Valera was involved in Trevor Parkin's murder, he didn't give anything away to police.

Valera appeared before magistrate Brian Maloney at Wollongong Local Court on Thursday afternoon. Police prosecutor Sergeant Terry Robinson read the court a statement of facts outlining their case against Valera. Sergeant Robinson said the prosecution had 'overwhelming' evidence. He described some of the horrific details of the murders, while Valera sat emotionless, occasionally glancing around at the gathered media representatives. No plea was entered. Valera's Legal Aid solicitor requested bail but it was refused given the seriousness of the offences and Valera's own lack of community ties. The magistrate remanded Valera in custody to reappear on 22 October.

The news that night and the next day described Valera as standing in court, emotionless and wearing a white shirt with 'I live with FEAR everyday ...' While the statement on the shirt seemed poignant under the circumstances, and certainly added drama to the unfolding events, the continuation of the wording

on the shirt read '... on the weekends *she* lets me play GOLF'. Not really poignant. Just another joke T-shirt.

Naturally, the adrenalin was still high among members of the strike force. It was a long day and Paul Mayger and his superiors, Assistant Commissioner Clive Small, Detective Chief Superintendent Rod Harvey, and Detective Superintendent Ron Smith, applauded the detectives for the end result. Everyone on the team had done their jobs well. Any celebrations were short lived, though, as Russell Oxford, Joe Cassar, Mal Lanyon, Mark Robinson and Morrie Gallina all returned to the Police Academy at Goulburn for the continuation of the Homicide course.

The only downside to the result was the fact Valera had handed himself in. Because of this, police had no need to publicly reveal that they had been investigating him, therefore it was obvious for those outside the investigation to assume he was never a suspect. Some people still believe police would never have caught Valera had he not given himself in. The truth was very different. Strike Force Lincoln had narrowed their investigation and Valera was their prime suspect. Paul Mayger and his team were only days away from arresting him when he turned up at Wollongong police station. The investigating detectives' readiness with exhibits and evidence linking Valera to the crime scenes proved they had him in their sights, but it was never generally known.

Even though they had Valera and his confession, the detectives' work had only just begun. All the items seized had to be included in the brief of evidence. Some were sent for forensic testing. Statements had to be made by each of the investigators

in relation to their role in the enquiries, what they witnessed at the crime scenes and, if involved, the execution of the search warrants. A list of Valera's friends, associates and family members was drawn up, with each of them needing to be interviewed by the police. If anything, Russell and the others were given a respite being back in Goulburn, because there was still a great deal of work to be done when they returned to their desks.

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2000

11] CONFESSIONS AND OTHER EVIDENCE

ALTHOUGH POLICE HAD A CONFESSION AND HAD FOUND items belonging to David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell in Mark Valera's possession, they needed to gather witnesses who could give some indication of Valera's state of mind, his behaviour and his actions before and after the killings. It was procedure and would be added to the brief of evidence already assembled by the investigators. Valera, after all, had been charged with murder. Police believed Valera had, knowing the consequences of his actions and with premeditation, killed both David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. He had not given detectives any excuse or mitigating circumstances to explain why he had murdered. The crimes had been committed with deliberate, cold calculation.

In situations where an offender admits to the crime, they may also plead guilty at the initial hearing, whereby the magistrate then refers the matter directly to the Supreme Court. At the Supreme Court the judge hears the evidence, takes submissions from both prosecution and defence counsels, then

decides on the sentence. There is no jury involved. The judge may lessen the sentence of the offender, given that they admitted guilt and saved the court system both time and money. This is, of course, dependent upon the seriousness of the matter.

In cases such as Valera's where no plea had been entered, though he had admitted to the crime, a committal hearing begins for the defence to challenge, if need be, the weight of evidence submitted by the prosecution. It is not necessary or usual at this stage for the defence to question all the evidence or to cross-examine all the relevant witnesses, but only those it believes could be to their advantage. It also gives the defence an opportunity to prepare a challenge to the evidence, as well as to argue points of law. At the end of the committal hearing the magistrate will then decide if the case should be referred to the Supreme Court. If so, a jury will be called and the trial begins.

Paul Mayger, Russell Oxford, Joe Cassar and other members of Strike Force Lincoln worked together to keep ahead of any possible defence Valera might come up with to lessen the charge of murder. If Valera did have a reason for killing, he didn't say anything about it during his interviews or the walk-throughs. He gave nothing away other than the fact that he 'wanted to kill someone' when he murdered David O'Hearn, and he believed from what he'd heard that Frank Arkell was a 'bastard paedophile'. They were his reasons and he never said anything different to police or to his instructor, Rodney Day.

Detectives from Strike Force Lincoln interviewed Valera's flatmates from when they lived at Albion Park Rail. Valera had been living there with his best mate, Keith Schreiber, Keith's

sister Annette, and her boyfriend, Adam Brauer. On the evening of 12 June, straight after the murder of David O'Hearn, Valera admitted to police that he walked home, gave his girlfriend a kiss, had a quick shower, and then joined the others in drinking bourbon.

Annette and Adam gave a similar account, and stated that Valera had appeared 'happier than normal' that evening. Valera wasn't always the happiest of people to be around, they would say, but that night he seemed really happy. He went out and got dinner from the local KFC, returning with a packet of cigarettes each for his flatmates. They also remembered seeing the gold chain and crucifix. Annette asked Valera once where he got it and he replied, '... that's for me to know and you never to find out'.

After Frank Arkell's murder, the two flatmates, Annette and Adam, became concerned when they saw the photos of the tracksuit pants and shoes allegedly belonging to the killer. They knew Valera owned similar clothing and had worn them often, but after Arkell's murder they never saw them again. Annette admitted Valera was 'weird', but never thought he was a violent or an angry person. Adam also identified the book, *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers*. He'd seen Valera reading the book on a number of occasions in the lounge room, and sometimes he'd leave it lying around on the coffee table.

Mark Valera's father, Jack van Krevel, told police in his statement that he had been hard on his son, sometimes hitting him with an open hand and, on occasion, the back of his hand. He had tried to get to know his son, but the two of them always seemed to clash. He'd cared for Mark and his daughter, Belinda,

from when Mark was three. His wife Elizabeth had left him, initially taking both children when Mark was over two and Belinda just a few months old. The Family Court awarded both parents custody, but they lived with Jack, who became a sole parent.

Jack admitted he wasn't impressed with Mark's friend Keith Schreiber. Schreiber influenced Mark in his music and other interests, including a fascination with Adolf Hitler. Jack said he wasn't happy when Mark asked to watch a program on the former dictator because Schreiber told him to. Later, in an attempt to understand his son better and to bond, Jack invited Mark to watch another special on Hitler, hoping they could talk about it and share a moment. Valera replied he 'wasn't into Hitler anymore, because Schreiber wasn't'.

Jack recalled the only time Mark had previously been in trouble with the police was when he and a friend broke into their school. Mark was never charged and the property damage was repaired. To Jack's knowledge, as far as recreational pastimes, Mark was into motocross and basketball, but had recently taken up tae kwon do.

Jack wasn't initially aware that his son had changed his last name. Mail had arrived at his house addressed to a Mark Mala Valera, but Jack sent the letters back with 'not known at this address'. The mail came while Valera was living at Hebron House. It wasn't till they had had their argument, when Valera threatened his father with being 'number three', that he told Jack he'd changed his name because he 'hated being a van Krevel'.

Belinda van Krevel, Valera's younger sister, told police that her brother knew Frank Arkell prior to his murder. She told

them that Valera would visit a friend who lived in the same street as Frank and they'd make abusive phone calls to the former mayor. They also threw eggs at his place, and once when they walked past and Frank greeted them, Valera allegedly became angry and aggressively shouted at the elderly man. She said her brother was 'very short tempered'. She denied Valera knew David O'Hearn, although her brother did have another friend who lived near David's corner shop on Kanahooka Road.

After the murders, Belinda said that her brother had an argument and threatened their father, Jack, saying he was going to be his 'number three'. When she asked her father what Valera meant, he allegedly laughed and told her her brother was referring to David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. When she visited Valera at the Remand Centre at Silverwater gaol in Sydney's southwest, she told police Valera had said to her 'something along the lines that they [David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell] deserved it'.

Explaining the relationship between Valera and Keith Schreiber, she said, 'They were best friends ... they were very close ... they did everything together. Mark had exactly the same army gear as Keith ... when they'd get dressed up you couldn't tell them apart, except for the eyes.'

Even though Valera had not given police any reason to suspect he was not the only perpetrator of the horrific murders, they still needed to make sure. If anyone else was involved, or knew anything of the murders prior to Valera's arrest, Schreiber was the most likely of all of Valera's associates. Detectives questioned Schreiber. According to Russell Oxford and Joe Cassar, Schreiber was genuinely surprised Valera had committed the

killings. Schreiber even visited Valera at Silverwater voicing his disbelief to his friend. He couldn't accept what Valera had done till he had heard it from his mate himself.

The investigating detectives also received information from other sources about conversations they'd had with Valera. Valera allegedly boasted about witnessing a murder, but not actually taking part, and to throwing a 'Chinaman' off a train, although there was another version that suggested he tied an Asian male to a tree and left him for dead somewhere in the Royal National Park at Audley, in Sydney's south. The two events involving an Asian male were also credited to Keith Schreiber. Police could never substantiate any of the stories.

In relation to the Parkin enquiry, Valera had denied any involvement. Police would have to accept that the similarities between the mutilations of David O'Hearn and Trevor Parkin were just that. There was nothing to connect Valera with the murder. Detectives working the case would have to continue trying to find Parkin's killer.

With Valera in custody and charged with two murders, it didn't take long for Stuart Wilkins to get a brief of evidence ready against Barrie Hodge for the murder of Leo Leslie Press on or about 13 February 1988. On 9 October, over ten years after the murder, Stuart Wilkins and other detectives from Homicide brought the 29-year-old Barrie Hodge in for questioning. Hodge was living in the northern beaches area of Sydney with his then de-facto wife and three-month-old daughter.

Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins told Hodge that he was investigating the murder of Leo Press. He cautioned Hodge

and asked him if he'd ever heard of the victim. Hodge denied any knowledge. Had Hodge ever been to the victim's house in Harbord? Again, Hodge denied having been there and knew nothing of the murder.

Their conversation ended with Stuart stating, 'Just so it is clear in my mind, you have no knowledge of the person, Leo Press, you have never been to Oliver Street, Harbord, and you have no information or knowledge in relation to the murder of Leo Press between 12 and 13 February 1988, is that correct?'

'Yes, that is right,' Hodge answered.

The interview between Stuart Wilkins and Hodge had not been taped. Stuart then told Hodge that their conversation, from this point on, would be electronically recorded as a matter of record. Before resuming the interview, Hodge requested his solicitor.

With his legal representative by his side, Hodge agreed to the formal interview. First, Stuart Wilkins read back the questions and answers from his notes, checking with Hodge that the former conversation had taken place. Hodge agreed. Stuart asked more questions before revealing the evidence.

'All right, I now wish to tell you, Mr Hodge, that suspect fingerprints were located by fingerprint experts on the 13 February 1988 at the murder scene at Oliver Street, Harbord ... those fingerprints have now been identified as belonging to you ... do you understand this?'

Hodge replied that he understood, and when asked if he had anything more to add, he said, 'I know nothing concerning this murder in 1988 and on legal advice I don't wish to answer any further questions at this time'. Hodge remained silent. It

would be up to Stuart Wilkins and his team to build up the brief of evidence.

After appearing before the magistrate at Manly Local Court, Hodge was granted \$6000 bail. Through his solicitor, Hodge denied knowing anything about Press, having been to his house, or the murder itself. His solicitor described the evidence as ‘the weakest circumstantial case I have ever seen’. He went on to say, ‘A single fingerprint on a can of beer . . . a crime ten years old . . . you might as well shoot arrows in the air’.

Mark Mala Valera reappeared at Wollongong Local Court on 22 October, represented by Aboriginal Legal Aid solicitor John Sheldon. Valera’s mother, Elizabeth, was part Aboriginal and as a result he was entitled to representation from Aboriginal Legal Services. Ray Willis appeared for the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Valera, looking more rested than at his previous appearance on 1 October, was dressed neatly in a grey, white and blue striped shirt, black trousers and black shoes. His family turned out in support. His mother Elizabeth, father Jack, sister Belinda and her infant daughter Tia sat in the court, smiling back at Valera as he occasionally turned to them. Jack and Elizabeth, who’d been separated for fifteen years, were now brought together by their common love of their son.

During the court proceedings, which again outlined the case against Valera, his confession to the murders of David O’Hearn and Frank Arkell, and the physical evidence linking him to the crimes, Ray Willis said fresh charges would be laid

against Valera. The charges were stealing and break enter and steal. Valera was being charged with breaking into Frank Arkell's home and stealing a pair of black tracksuit pants, as well as stealing a nine carat gold chain and crucifix from the home of David O'Hearn.

Police had discovered the pants and jewellery when they executed the search warrants. As a matter of completion, according to Paul Mayger, the Director of Public Prosecutions decided to charge Valera with the thefts. The items would be used in evidence, connecting Valera to the murders. His former flatmates and girlfriend had already mentioned the gold chain and crucifix, which Valera had flaunted in front of them, never revealing where he'd got the jewellery from. Although a minor charge compared to murder, the stolen items were significant in showing Valera's indifference to his victims.

On 20 November, Valera appeared at Wollongong Local Court again. This time police charged him with possession of an unlicensed air rifle. The rifle, a Slavia brand, was the one found in the wardrobe at the van Krevel family home.

Throughout the various court appearances since 1 October, Valera had always been referred to as van Krevel by the magistrates, and his birth name appeared on all the court documents. John Sheldon asked the court that his client be known as Mark Mala Valera, having legally changed his name by deed poll on 3 September. The magistrate Paul Johnston accepted the change of name and amended the paperwork.

Valera would spend the Christmas of 1998 inside the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre at Silverwater Correctional Complex. His mother told the media her son was

doing well and that he was content with his situation. 'He's really good . . . he's got it made, keeping fit doing push-ups on his knuckles and other exercises,' she said.

Prisoners on remand are kept separate from the main population, that is, those serving their sentences. While this is the case, it doesn't mean that remand prisoners don't have the opportunity to mix with experienced crims awaiting trial. Very often, and there's nothing to say this happened with Valera, the more knowledgeable criminal will take a first offender under their wing. They'll explain the court process, how juries work, and what line of defence to present to beat the charge, or at least lessen the sentence. What they lack in academic degrees the 'bush lawyers' make up for in hands-on experience. Certainly, Valera would have had the opportunity to learn from those who had been there before him, which could explain the allegations and antics he would later display in court.

Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins suffered a setback in the case against Barrie Hodge on 16 December. The Director of Public Prosecutions re-examined the evidence against Hodge and decided there wasn't enough to pursue the charges. An application was made to the magistrate of the Manly Local Court to discharge the case. It was granted. The discharge didn't mean Hodge was off free. It meant police were still able to investigate the charge to gather new evidence. If, after further investigation, more evidence came to light, then Hodge could be rearrested.

Stuart Wilkins wasted little time in acquiring new evidence. He searched and located various friends and associates

known to Hodge during 1988. The search took Stuart Wilkins interstate and as far as London, England. He was able to locate a former girlfriend of Hodge's, in fact, his girlfriend at the time of Leo Press's murder. She told Stuart that Hodge turned up in the backyard of her house late on the night of the murder. Hodge was physically shaking, crying, and had blood on his T-shirt and jeans, telling her he thought he had killed someone. Hodge asked her not to tell anyone what she had seen or what he'd told her.

Another two persons admitted to police that soon after the murder they too had had conversations with Hodge in which, in a distressed state, he confessed to having bashed a man after being sexually fondled by him. Hodge said he didn't know how seriously he had injured the man. Amazingly, after all the publicity Leo Press's murder received at the time, not one of his friends or his girlfriend contacted police with any information. Still, they were now willing to testify and Stuart began putting together a new brief of evidence.

Sometime in December, Strike Force Lincoln received some interesting news pertaining to their enquiry into the murder of Trevor Parkin. Police always believed, based on the mutilations, that there was a connection between Parkin's murder and that of David O'Hearn. Of course, after Valera's denials of the Parkin murder, and having acquired only circumstantial evidence, police could not make a connection. Yet, similar to the breakthrough police had had with the David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell investigation, a young woman came forward with

information relating to Parkin. Recent publicity surrounding the case had prompted her to act.

She told the investigating detectives she had been the girlfriend of a young man who told her he had killed someone with a bowling pin then 'cut him up'. She learned of the murder after an argument around Christmas 1997 when he threatened her, saying he'd killed before and he'd do it again, adding, 'I don't give a fuck.'

The young man kept the bowling pin as a reminder, but had buried the knife in his backyard. In fact, he'd given his girlfriend the bowling pin, wrapped inside a blue plastic bag, to wash. She threw the bag away, but not before noticing what she believed to be dried blood on the pin and adhering to the plastic bag. She washed the bowling pin, leaving it on the side of the sink to dry. The girlfriend also told police of her former boyfriend's cruelty to cats. On two occasions he deliberately tortured the animals, using a cigarette lighter, plastic bag and a 'flick pocket knife'. On one of the occasions the mutilation on a cat was performed as a means of, again, threatening the girl after yet another argument.

It was all Paul Mayger and his team needed to begin investigations into eighteen-year-old Christopher Andrew Robinson. They would talk further with the girlfriend and contact associates, who would have even more to tell them.

12] KILLING SOMEONE IS LIBERATING

WHEN RODNEY DAY, VALERA'S TAE KWON DO INSTRUCTOR, accompanied the nineteen-year-old to Wollongong police station on 30 September 1998, he also had a knife and samurai sword belonging to Valera in the boot of his car. Rodney handed the items to police after Valera was taken in for questioning, though his student assured him the weapons had not been used in the commission of the crimes.

The knife and sword were bagged and tagged by police, along with the sixteen other knives, knife blade and bayonet belonging to Valera. Not being connected to the murders, they were of little interest to detectives on Strike Force Lincoln. They were, however, of great interest to local detectives, particularly the samurai sword, which was believed to have been used in the armed hold-up of an Ampol Service Station at Albion Park on 6 August 1998.

Belinda van Krevel had told Homicide detectives in her original record of interview that Keith Schreiber, while they were having a few drinks together, had admitted to her having

taken part in the hold-up. Local police reviewed the security footage. Even though the two offenders were clad in black and wore balaclavas, detectives were certain they were looking at Valera and his mate, Schreiber. Schreiber wielded the sword while Valera, carrying a knife, helped himself to the cash drawer and cigarettes. Police arrested Schreiber and interviewed Valera. Both admitted to the robbery.

Valera made another trip to Wollongong Local Court on 12 January where he was charged with being armed with a dangerous weapon and robbing a sales assistant of \$307 and a quantity of cigarettes. This meant Valera was facing two murder charges, along with armed robbery, stealing, break enter and steal, and illegal possession of an air rifle.

During this hearing the Director of Public Prosecutions representative, Brett Diggins, informed the court that forensic testing had yet to be completed in relation to the murders. He said the remainder of the brief of evidence with the forensic results would be handed to the defence by the end of the month. John Sheldon, Valera's solicitor, asked for an extension of time so that defence experts could review some of the evidence. An adjournment was granted till 11 February.

Over two weeks later, Keith Schreiber had his day in court. On 28 January, he pleaded guilty to the armed robbery. The magistrate committed Schreiber for sentencing in Wollongong District Court on 26 February.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, as part of the brief of evidence against Schreiber, tendered documents to the court that were also related to the case against Valera. In a statement made to police, a male associate of Schreiber's gave an account

of a conversation in which the two spoke about Valera's serial killer book and the list of people's names he wrote in it, including O'Hearn and Arkell. Schreiber allegedly told the male that he recalled seeing the list and quoted some of the names from memory, including a local Member of Parliament. The male asked Schreiber if Valera had ever told him he committed the murders. Schreiber replied he was never told, but he did 'put two and two together'. Asked why, Schreiber allegedly said, 'I just took a guess because of the list.'

The statement included a confession of the armed hold-up by Schreiber to his male associate. The Director of Public Prosecutions also tendered the record of interview made by Valera's sister, Belinda van Krevel.

Mark Mala Valera would appear before the local magistrate in Wollongong Local Court three more times before being committed to the Supreme Court for trial. The first was 11 February, the second was on 11 March. At both these appearances the charges were again read to the court, yet Valera still didn't enter a plea. On the second appearance, however, his barrister, Geoff Halsall, acting for Aboriginal Legal Services, asked for an adjournment to allow Valera to undergo psychiatric assessment. Mr Halsall had recently taken charge of the defence case and felt that Valera might have a partial defence of 'diminished responsibility'. He also said he might call some of the prosecution's witnesses at a preliminary hearing, dependent upon advice from the doctor examining his client. An adjournment was granted to 13 May.

The fact that Valera was now mounting a psychiatric defence to explain why he killed David O’Hearn and Frank Arkell didn’t surprise Paul Mayger and his team. In Paul’s words, ‘... they try it on ... after all, they’ve got nothing to lose’.

‘It comes down to us doing a proper and professional job,’ added Russell Oxford. ‘It’s the details ... how we, as professionals, conducted the investigation, the interview, and the walk-through, the handling of evidence ... we have to be methodical in everything we do. But, we have twelve people to convince when it goes to trial ... the defence only have one ... just one juror can, not get him off, but certainly force another trial, which can be to the defence’s advantage. They can learn from their mistakes and make their case stronger. We have to get it right, first time.’

Under New South Wales’ judicial system a jury must be unanimous in its verdict, guilty or not guilty. If one or more of the jurors don’t agree with the majority, then that trial is dismissed and a new trial must be set. New South Wales does not accept majority verdicts.

Dr Hugh Jolly was commissioned by the defence to assess Valera. Dr Jolly first visited Valera at Silverwater gaol on 6 May. When asked by Dr Jolly why he killed David O’Hearn, Valera answered that ‘the devil told me to kill somebody’. He admitted to listening to his ‘death metal’ music before leaving his house and walking past David’s townhouse. After a conversation with David, he accepted the invitation to enter the townhouse, whereby he was given a ‘spiked drink’, then, afterwards, began attacking his victim wishing it to be his father. He admitted to

not knowing David O'Hearn prior to the murder, and said he had washed David's head believing that if he put it back on the body it would heal.

Valera gave an account of his childhood suffering at the hands of his father, who he alleged had physically abused him from the age of about six or seven. His earliest memory was of being locked inside a toy box. He claimed his father held a rifle to his head and threatened to shoot him, and he remembered on several occasions wetting himself through fear of what his father was going to do to him.

On 13 May Valera appeared before Magistrate Paul Johnson at Wollongong Local Court wearing a black suit and a crucifix around his neck. The magistrate read the charges and the brief of evidence against Valera, describing the horror of the murders and the callousness Valera showed towards his victims. It was reported that while Paul Johnson read the lengthy document, Valera reacted with a smile, then covered his mouth with his hand and giggled.

The magistrate read relevant sections of the police interview, in which Valera admitted he didn't know David O'Hearn, and said his motive for killing Frank Arkell was because Valera thought him to be a 'very, very horrible person'. Paul Johnson detailed all the evidence, including the serial killer book. It was revealed that the book had a list of more than forty names of people who could be viewed as potential targets. Various inscriptions that Valera had made were read out, including 'who will be my number three? David O'Hearn, Frank Arkell, who's next, probably your mum or whoever gets in my fucking way'.

Valera had also circled a small section that defined a particular type of serial killer. The definition stated that the killer can hide their evil behind a 'mask of sanity', a phrase coined after a study conducted in 1976 into the personality of psychopaths. The study found that psychopaths hide behind a pretence of normality, manipulating those around them and never showing their true, selfish nature. In respect to serial killers, they of course are hiding their evil intent while acting like an everyday, normal person. Valera not only circled the definition, but wrote 'ME' in big letters above it.

Magistrate Paul Johnson then committed Valera to stand trial at the New South Wales Supreme Court, on a date to be fixed, for the murders of David John O'Hearn and Francis Neville Arkell.

After Valera had been committed to trial, Ray Willis from the Director of Public Prosecutions took an unusual step and decided to address the assembled journalists before proceedings were officially closed. The reason for this was the continuing media coverage given to Valera. He was labelled a paedophile killer and there were continual references to David O'Hearn's sexuality. Inferences were made, sometimes through inaccurate reporting, suggesting that O'Hearn may have been a paedophile and that he and Frank Arkell knew each other. Both the O'Hearn and Arkell families took exception to the way their loved ones were portrayed, and Ray Willis decided to set the record straight for their sake.

Turning to where the journalists were seated in the court, Ray Willis said, 'The selection of David O'Hearn as a victim was an entirely random thing. Mr O'Hearn's murder was not in any

way motivated by any sexual orientation he may have had and indeed the defendant denied any knowledge of [David's] sexual orientation. Apart from the fact the prosecution alleges the defendant killed both men, there is no evidence that there was any connection between the two murders, nor that there was any connection between the two deceased.'

On 4 June, Keith Schreiber appeared before Judge Joe Phelan at the Wollongong District Court to be sentenced for his part in the armed robbery. Schreiber had already pleaded guilty to having held up the Ampol Service Station on 6 August the previous year, with his accomplice, Mark Mala Valera. Judge Phelan had heard earlier, on 26 March, in relation to Schreiber's state of mind, that he had fantasies to 'teach bullies a lesson'.

Schreiber believed there were people who picked on others who were less fortunate, and he felt 'powerless', unable to rectify this situation. He wanted to correct the imbalance, but didn't believe he could. He was frustrated and angry, having himself been a victim of neglect, teasing and bullying over several years. A tendered psychiatric report stated that while Schreiber didn't suffer from any psychological problems, he did exhibit a low opinion of himself.

Maureen Phillips, Schreiber's Legal Aid solicitor, told the court that her client suffered from insomnia and had become aggravated with attempts to find employment. Schreiber had left the job in Nowra and taken casual work two days a week for which he received only \$1.70 an hour. Lack of money caused Schreiber to be resentful and angry. Ms Phillips contended that

a prison term would not be an appropriate sentence for her client, but he would benefit from a structured and supervised program to help his self-esteem and improve his work skills. The program would be decided and assessed by the New South Wales Probation and Parole Service.

Judge Phelan accepted that Schreiber had kept out of trouble until the armed robbery, though the offence was a serious one. 'Hardly a week goes by that this court doesn't have to deal with someone who has just become an adult and has held up one of the local service stations . . . it really has to stop,' the judge warned. Referring to Schreiber wielding the samurai sword during the robbery, Judge Phelan commented, '[Schreiber] frightened the life out of his victim.'

With all the submissions and evidence, Judge Joe Phelan decided to suspend sentencing in consideration of the fact that Schreiber had enrolled into the Illawarra Institute of Technology and was close to completing a welding certificate, which was to improve his job opportunities. The judge commented, 'It seems a pity to interfere with his progress to date which seems much better than before.'

The sentencing was adjourned till 17 September. Schreiber was eventually given community service for his part in the armed robbery. He was under the supervision of a probation and parole officer, who would later have Schreiber attend stress and anger management courses. It was obvious Schreiber was a very angry young man, having a history of getting into fights with little provocation.

Dr Hugh Jolly visited Valera again in December 1999. During this assessment Valera told Dr Jolly that he had met with Frank Arkell on several occasions before the murder. Frank Arkell had befriended him, and after their third or fourth get-together, they entered into a sexual relationship, which did not include intercourse. On the day of the murder Frank requested Valera be the active partner in performing anal sex. Valera refused, but gave Frank a back massage instead. It was during the massage that he was ‘overtaken by something’, and decided to kill.

Revisiting the murder of David O’Hearn, Valera said he’d been to David’s store earlier on the day he killed him. He went to the Kanahooka Road shop with some friends. David apparently stared at Valera strangely, enticing Valera to return to the store later, alone. During the second visit, Valera said that David took him out the back to a closet and masturbated him, then arranged for him to call around to David’s home later that evening.

At David’s, Valera said he was shown a pornographic video. To explain his state of mind, he also claimed that a picture, one that was hung at Valera’s home at the time, showed a devil’s head. Valera believed the satanic face stared at him, and he hadn’t been able to clear it from his mind. The image haunted him and was with him as he watched the video with David.

Dr Jolly’s assessment was that Valera obviously lost control when killing both his victims, but he couldn’t be sure of the cause. Further time was needed. Dr Jolly ruled out that Valera suffered from manic depression psychosis, major depression or schizophrenia. He did, however, believe that Valera’s actions might be the result of lengthy periods of physical and

emotional abuse during childhood, a crisis of sexual identity, and an interest in satanism.

It was finally announced in December that Mark Mala Valera would stand trial for the murders of David O’Hearn and Frank Arkell in early 2000. A date for the arraignment was set for 4 February, when the defence would state their readiness. If there were no delays it was expected Valera would stand trial sometime around late February, early March.

January 1999 had been quite a month for the detectives on Strike Force Lincoln. Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins had worked hard putting together a new brief of evidence against Barrie Hodge for the murder of Leo Press. On the afternoon of 22 January, Stuart and his team rearrested Hodge at his northern beaches home. He was taken to Manly police station and charged with murder. The next morning Hodge appeared before the magistrate at Central Local Court in Sydney. The police prosecutor read the evidence against Hodge, including the statements made to police by his former girlfriend and two other friends, who he had told of the assault. The magistrate granted Hodge bail on the condition that he did not make contact with any of the witnesses.

At the time that Stuart Wilkins was arresting Hodge, investigators working on the 1997 murder of Trevor Parkin — Mick O’Keefe, Lance Goldsmith and their Homicide counterparts, Detective Sergeant Wayne Hayes and Detective Senior Constable Mal Lanyon — were themselves taking into custody an eighteen-year-old man on the other side of Sydney, in the

southwestern suburb of Narwee. The man was transported to Hurstville police station where he admitted he killed Parkin, but clarified it was in self-defence. He said that Parkin tried to rape him with a knife, and he just defended himself. He denied knowing Mark Valera, or having committed the killing with another person present. The detectives then charged him with murder. Because he was under eighteen at the time of the murder, and therefore a juvenile, Christopher Andrew Robinson appeared in the Lidcombe Children's Court the following morning. He was remanded in custody.

Police then executed warrants to search his premises. Going on the information given to them by his ex-girlfriend, detectives found the buried 'Laser' brand carving knife. It was located in the backyard, stabbed into the ground under a thick growth of grass and bushes. Crime Scene investigators just pulled the knife from its earthy sheath.

A friend who had been staying with Robinson at the time of the murder told police the same story as the former girlfriend. The friend was home the night Robinson returned from killing Parkin. Robinson told him all that he'd done, describing the murder in gruesome detail and saying on several occasions, 'killing someone is liberating'.

Robinson had blood down his shirt and on his shoes, and flaunted the knife and bowling pin, but the friend wasn't convinced, believing the blood came from Robinson himself. His mate noticed he had a black eye and thought Robinson had just got into a fight and his nose had bled. He also didn't believe the story because Robinson 'seemed too calm'. Robinson wasn't upset and spoke of the events in a casual manner. As well as the

murder weapons, Robinson also had a bag containing a stereo he had stolen from where, he said, 'the coaches go'.

Police found other people who Robinson told of the killing. He said to another acquaintance that he 'waited behind a door, hit him [Parkin] with a bowling pin and cut him up'.

According to another girlfriend who he met in June 1998, Robinson admitted to using heroin and being a male prostitute to help pay for his habit. He also told her about Parkin, and how he met his victim at Central Station in December 1997. Robinson said, '... the moment I looked into his eyes I knew I was going to kill him and he knew I was going to kill him and I knew he was a paedophile and he knew that I knew ... It's like he wanted me to do it ... we both just knew ... I just walked into the kitchen and got the knife and I slashed him up.'

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2000

13] BARRIE ALAN HODGE AND CHRISTOPHER ANDREW ROBINSON

IT WAS THE LATE 1980S. IT WAS SUMMER. IT WAS A FRIDAY night and eighteen-year-old Barrie Hodge was enjoying a few beers and a get-together in his mate's backyard, while music spilled out from the house. INXS, U2, and the Oils. Maybe even some Aussie Crawl, playing the anthems of the youth of the northern beaches. Hodge was a northern beaches boy.

It was a typical teenage party — the guys in jeans, short-sleeved shirts and T-shirts, and the girls in jeans, tops, and light cotton dresses. The beer flowed, mixers and soft drinks for the girls, cigarettes were passed around and, for the more adventurous, the odd illicit drug. Hodge was game. He snorted a line of speed, or something someone had given him. It didn't matter much, it was all part of being at the party.

Hodge was there with his girlfriend, Karen. It was getting late. A friend offered the two a lift to Manly, where Karen lived. The friend dropped them off and Hodge saw his girlfriend

home. Hodge then decided to hitch a ride to his place at Beacon Hill, just a few kilometres northwest of Manly. A car pulled up and the elderly driver offered Hodge a lift. The driver was 63-year-old Leo Press. As Leo started to pull out he suggested that Hodge go back to his place at Harbord, a neighbouring suburb, for 'a few more beers'. The lure of a free drink was accepted.

Leo showed Hodge into his house, which Leo shared with his brother and niece. They were alone. Leo had earlier taken his niece to the airport, from where she'd flown to see relatives in the country, and his brother was working late. Leo and his brother owned a bakery on Sydney's lower north shore. Leo and Hodge sat in an upstairs room drinking beer, and Hodge had a couple of cigarettes. After a few cans, Hodge felt ill and 'crashed out'. Maybe Hodge had had too much alcohol, or maybe something had been slipped into his beer. In any case he needed to sleep.

Hodge didn't know how long he'd been sleeping, but he woke to someone touching and kissing him. Leo was fondling his genitals and kissing him on the face and lips. Hodge reacted and pushed Leo away. He was scared and repulsed by the elderly man's advances. According to Hodge, Leo came at him again and he escaped downstairs, where he found a bricklayer's lump hammer. He struck Leo on the head two times to stop him.

The autopsy report showed that Leo was first assaulted in the upstairs room then, bleeding, made his way downstairs where the assault continued. It was established that Leo had been struck ten to twelve times across the rear of the right side

of his head causing deep lacerations, skull fractures and brain damage. Leo wasn't dead when Hodge ran from the house. Leo would die in hospital at 9 am on Saturday 13 February 1988.

Running from Leo's house, Hodge hailed a cab and had the driver take him to his girlfriend's place. He was shaking and crying. There were bloodstains on his clothing. He told Karen that he thought he'd killed someone, explaining the circumstances of the night. He was a frightened boy. He didn't know what to do. Hodge finally got home and changed his clothes. When he saw his mate, Peter, whose party he'd been at the night before, he told him all about the attack, saying again that he thought he'd killed someone. A few weeks later, at another party in Manly, Hodge felt anxious and depressed, crying in self-pity. David asked him what the matter was. Hodge was hesitant, but eventually told David the whole story.

Karen, Peter and David never informed police about their conversations with Hodge, or his admissions, despite the media coverage surrounding Leo Press's murder. They kept their mate's confidence. Hodge escaped punishment for his crime, marrying, starting a family and a business. He became a good family man, a solid citizen, and the anguish he suffered in 1988 had lessened with time. Ten years passed before Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins from Strike Force Lincoln caught up with Barrie Alan Hodge.

At the trial in July 2000, Hodge pleaded not guilty to murder but guilty to manslaughter, saying he was provoked. The trial lasted six days, with Hodge still enjoying his freedom under the conditions of bail, till the jury returned their verdict on 11 July. Having heard all the evidence the jury rejected the

claim of manslaughter and found Barrie Alan Hodge guilty of murder. Hodge was taken into custody for the first time.

On 6 September Justice Dunford passed sentence. He was particularly scathing about Hodge's friends who had not contacted police when Hodge told them what he'd done. Justice Dunford appreciated that friends honour each other's confidences — it's an Australian tradition — but it did shock him that they would withhold information concerning something as serious as a murder enquiry.

Numerous submissions were made by the defence on Hodge's character and involvement in the community. Justice Dunford accepted that, apart from the murder, Hodge was a person of good character and a worthwhile member of society. There was of course the 'minor' charge of being a passenger in a stolen car and driving while under the influence. His Honour didn't believe the earlier offences were relevant with respect to the sentencing, but were only mentioned at the trial as the means by which the police had earlier identified him with the crime.

Justice Dunford also believed that there was no premeditation, and that Hodge had not purposely set out to kill Leo Press that evening. The judge accepted Hodge had shown remorse for his actions. Leo Press's niece had received an apology from Hodge for her uncle's death, and the niece included this in her Victim Impact Statement. His Honour described Leo's niece as a person of 'remarkable compassion and forgiveness'.

Hodge's age, just a few months shy of thirty-one, his background and lifestyle, were additional considerations Justice

Dunford took into account before imposing the sentence. He admitted that Hodge would find gaol conditions more 'onerous' and difficult than the majority of other prisoners. While that might be so, His Honour couldn't ignore the seriousness of the crime, but felt that 'special circumstances' allowed for a reduction of the non-parole period.

Having made his address in which he outlined the reasons for the sentence he was about to give, Justice Dunford sentenced Barrie Alan Hodge to fifteen years imprisonment with a non-parole period of just seven years, effective from 11 July 2000. This meant that Hodge would be eligible for release on 11 July 2007 at the earliest.

Hodge's legal team lodged an appeal in February 2001. The appeal was presented on two grounds, that one, the trial judge failed to direct the jury adequately in relation to what could be made of a conversation between Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins and Hodge, and two, that because of this the trial miscarried. Justices Hodgson, Levine and Howie heard the argument and after careful consideration and reviewing the original trial transcript, they found Justice Dunford had directed the jury correctly and unanimously agreed to dismiss the appeal. Hodge's sentence remained in force.

On the evening of 26 December 1997, Boxing Day, Christopher Andrew Robinson travelled into the city with his mate, Andrew. They went to a hotel where they spent a few hours drinking and passing the time. Slowly they made their way to Central railway station. Andrew was consuming a beer, a quick one for the road.

Local police patrolling the station noticed Andrew and arrested him. He was taken to Surry Hills police station and charged with drinking in a prohibited area. Robinson had escaped their attention. Andrew would be held for about three hours before being released.

Trevor John Parkin was a convicted paedophile and had only just been released from Long Bay gaol a couple of days earlier. A friend of Parkin's had allowed him to stay at his unit on Glebe Point Road, Glebe, in inner city Sydney, about a fifteen to twenty minute walk from Central Station. As most Sydneysiders were still enjoying the last of their Christmas holidays, Parkin and Robinson found each other that late evening.

Robinson, seventeen years of age at the time, was a self-confessed heroin addict who prostituted himself to pay for his habit, though he also admitted to 'rolling' his clients in order to avoid the sex and get away with money and/or goods. Parkin was just out of gaol, and while there's no evidence to confirm it, it can be inferred that Parkin's approach to Robinson was to secure sexual favours. However the conversation went, Robinson agreed to accompany Parkin to his unit at Glebe, where they sat and shared a joint.

Parkin answered nature's call, and while he was in the bathroom, Robinson looked around for what he could pilfer. He was looking for money or small valuables he could pocket and sell on. A bowling pin caught his eye. He held the pin in his hand and waited beside the toilet door for Parkin to emerge. Parkin came out and Robinson brought the solid bowling pin down on his victim's head 'a couple of times'. Parkin fell to the floor, gasping for air.

Robinson went to the kitchen and grabbed a knife, plunging it repeatedly into Parkin. He found an electrical orbital sander and used the long cord to hog-tie his victim, around the neck and linking the hands. He turned Parkin over and with the knife, sliced his stomach open. He also cut off the left testicle and discarded it in the sink. Robinson would later tell a girlfriend that he mutilated the body because, 'I wanted the police to think they were dealing with someone who really meant business, like a complete psycho who was out to get him, like a real mental case.'

Robinson wrapped the bowling pin in a blue plastic bag and the knife in a clear bag, taking both with him as he fled. On his way home he stole a bag containing a stereo from a coach depot. Once home, he related the events to his mate, warning Andrew not to tell anyone or he'd kill him. He buried the knife in his backyard and kept the bowling pin on display, using it to threaten his girlfriend at the time.

When Homicide Detectives Wayne Hayes and Mal Lanyon arrested Robinson on 22 January 1999, he tried to say the killing was in self-defence, but when he appeared in the Supreme Court on 10 July 2000, he pleaded guilty to the murder. Robinson underwent psychiatric evaluation, and evidence was given by all those in whom he had confided to having committed the murder. Robinson's history of abusing animals was discussed at length, as were inconsistencies in what he told each of the psychiatrists, and his lack of remorse when recalling the atrocities he performed on Parkin.

On 19 October 2000, Justice Adams passed sentence. His Honour opened by saying that the fact that the crime had been

committed by an ‘extremely dangerous and disturbed individual’ was obvious and required no psychiatric training. The opportunity for rehabilitation was considered, as Robinson was seventeen at the time of the killing and was now twenty. Justice Adams, however, found there was no clear evidence in the psychiatric assessments to say that Robinson wouldn’t reoffend. Given the gravity of the crime and for what Justice Adams described as ‘the protection of the public’, he decided that both the sentence and the non-parole period should be lengthy.

Christopher Andrew Robinson was sentenced to forty-five years, with a non-parole period of thirty-five, meaning that he would be eligible for release by January 2034, at fifty-three years of age.

FEBRUARY, JULY 2000

14] SATAN ON TRIAL

AN ARRAIGNMENT WAS HELD IN SYDNEY ON 4 FEBRUARY 2000 to set a date for the trial of Mark Mala Valera. Defence counsel John Nicholson SC explained that the defence was not yet ready to proceed, but that his client would be pleading 'not guilty' to one charge. The charge was not specified. At a second hearing on 14 February, Mr Nicholson still required time. It was hoped that the trial would begin by 28 February, but the court granted the defence extra time and no date was fixed.

Dr Jolly, acting under instruction for the defence, continued his assessment of Valera in February, but he was still no closer to finding the cause of what he believed was Valera's loss of self-control. During the assessments, Dr Jolly's job was made difficult by interruptions from the prison routine and by Valera's own mood swings.

The defence employed a psychologist, Mr Taylor, to help with the assessment. Mr Taylor saw Valera at Silverwater on 3 July, going over his history and his account of David O'Hearn's murder. Valera repeated the same story he'd told Dr Jolly earlier, saying his father had been physically abusive towards him. On the second visit, on 8 July, Valera told the psychologist that his father, Jack van Krevel, had sexually assaulted him from the

age of seven, and had forced him to have anal sex from when he was twelve. Valera then said that his father had him insert his penis into his father. He was not a willing partner, but obeyed because he was scared. As well, Valera told Mr Taylor that he would be forced to masturbate his father and perform oral sex. He also added a detail about the murder of David O’Hearn. Valera now said that David loosened his jeans and squatted on all fours when he asked Valera for sex.

Mr Taylor then asserted in his report that Valera had suffered a psychotic episode and experienced dissociation when he killed David O’Hearn and Frank Arkell. He decided that Valera had a borderline personality disorder, and while he knew what he was doing when he was attacking his victims, he could do nothing to stop himself. Basically, Valera had lost all control at the time.

The sessions with Mr Taylor were documented and his report passed on to Dr Hugh Jolly. Dr Jolly would see Valera again on 19 July, this time armed with the admissions of sexual abuse as told to Mr Taylor. Valera had confirmed all he had told Mr Taylor, and went on to say to Dr Jolly that his father had had anal intercourse with him twenty times in four years. This information formed the basis of the defence case and gave Dr Jolly his reason for Valera ‘losing control’ and committing murder.

The trial of Mark Mala Valera for the murder of David John O’Hearn and Francis Neville Arkell began on 12 July 2000 at Wollongong Courthouse, court number three. Just before the proceedings officially got under way, Justice Timothy Studdert addressed potential jurors, explaining the gruesome nature of the case and the fact that they would be required, as

was their duty, to view crime scene photographs and hear evidence that they might find distressing. He excused those jurors who thought they might find the case too disturbing, referring them to other jury panels. Finally, four women and eight men were chosen and the proceedings commenced.

For the first time since his arrest on 30 September 1998, Valera entered a plea. He pleaded not guilty to murder, but guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of provocation and diminished responsibility.

Crown Prosecutor Paul Conlon presented the case against Mark Valera, disputing any claims of manslaughter by quoting the various statements Valera had made to police when he handed himself in. Mr Conlon told the court that the accused admitted to not knowing either of his victims. He read from Valera's record of interview where Valera stated that David O'Hearn's murder was random and Frank Arkell was killed only because Valera believed him to be a 'very, very nasty person'. He detailed some of the atrocities performed on the victims, the decapitation and disembowelment of David O'Hearn and the beating, strangulation and mutilation of Frank Arkell's face with the tiepins.

Mr Conlon mentioned the petty thefts from both crime scenes, and the conversation between Valera and his father, Jack van Krevel, in which Valera threatened his father with 'being number three'. There was also another conversation, overheard by a relative, in which Valera was alleged to have said, 'Dad is number three . . . I haven't finished my journey yet'.

Given the evidence the police had gathered, the prosecution could not accept a plea of manslaughter: Valera's actions

amounted to murder and nothing less. Mr Conlon told the jury they would see the police videos of Valera's interview and the walk throughs of the crime scenes. Testimony would also be heard from Valera's former girlfriend, flatmates, parents and sister, as well as expert witnesses.

Mr Nicholson SC, appearing for Valera, immediately rejected the claims of the prosecution. He said that the grotesque and bizarre injuries inflicted upon the victims were an 'insight' into Valera's state of mind: his client had suffered over ten years of mental, physical and sexual abuse from his father, and he committed the 'god awful' murders because he suffered from an abnormality of the mind at the time. 'Satan was in that room, at least as far as Mr Valera was concerned . . . it was only when the power of satan flowed through him, or when he perhaps became satan, that Mark Valera was so powerful that he could kill the man he hated . . . his father,' Mr Nicholson told the court. Nicholson added that Valera had 'lost complete control' when his two victims asked him to have sex with them, and it was at that moment that he was reminded of his father's abuse: Valera's hatred for his father welled up and he 'exploded'.

During the opening statements by counsels, Valera smiled, waved and gave the thumbs-up to friends in the gallery of Wollongong Courthouse. Keith Schreiber and Valera's sister, Belinda, were both witnesses for the prosecution and were excluded from the court till after presenting their evidence. Even so, the rules didn't stop Schreiber pressing his face up against the glass panel in the door leading to the courtroom, attempting to catch Valera's eye. Also, Belinda, when left unsupervised, would

make her way into the court before being noticed by a member of the defence team and being escorted back out. Although she had been warned not to, Belinda allegedly snuck in frequently prior to giving her evidence.

The discoveries of the two victims, David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, were re-lived by David's sister Kris, his friend Joshua, and Frank's housekeeper Maria. Ambulance paramedic George King and Detective Sergeant Barry Doherty also gave evidence of the scene at David O'Hearn's townhouse on the day. Sergeant Doherty described the carnage, the discovery of the knives, razorblades, corkscrew and hacksaw, and the satanic drawings, the pentagram, inverted cross and the word 'satan' written twice, once on the wall and once on the mirror.

To save time with the handing of photos around the court, each jury member was given their own set of crime scene photos. Justice Studdert warned them that it was necessary, in the interest of justice, that they look at the photographs. 'Undoubtedly, there are photos in here that are going to distress and lead to shock . . . it is necessary, however, that they be received and considered as part of the evidence,' Justice Studdert informed them. He also told them that they should heed the evidence 'calmly and dispassionately in the overall fabric of the case'.

Under cross-examination, John Nicholson SC asked Kris if her brother David was a practising homosexual. Kris replied that he was gay, 'but not practising'. Likewise, Maria denied that Frank Arkell had frequent visits from young men.

Crown prosecutor Paul Conlon enquired about a photo that was found in David's townhouse. The photo was of three

teenagers, and it was believed that Mr Nicholson would try to assert that the photo was evidence of David's fondness for young men. Kris scoffed at the suggestion and immediately identified the boys in the photo. One was her son, one Maxine's, and the other was Tony's son. They were David's nephews and the picture had been taken at a family gathering. There was nothing sinister in it. Paul Conlon had decided to get in first and defuse any inference that Mr Nicholson might raise about the photo and indeed Mr Nicholson didn't refer to the photo in his cross-examination.

When Rodney Day entered the courtroom to give his evidence, Valera stood to attention in the dock. He bowed and addressed Rodney as 'sensei', and waited till his instructor was seated in the witness box before resuming his own seat. Rodney gave his account of the night of 30 September 1998, when Valera admitted his guilt. He spoke about how he didn't believe Valera at first, but accepted that Valera had committed the murders after they talked at length, eventually convincing Valera to hand himself in to police. Since Valera's arrest, he'd written Rodney up to thirty letters, some running to nine pages, and had also contacted his sensei by phone on occasions. Rodney admitted that Valera hero-worshipped him, but he had not done anything to promote it. In fact, he said he made it a habit not to encourage too much conversation with any of his students, preferring to keep casual contact to just 'hello' and 'how are you going?'

John Nicholson SC asked Rodney if Valera's name change from van Krevel had any significance in relation to tae kwon do. Rodney knew Valera had changed his name but denied it had

anything to do with the Korean martial art. He did concede that Valera had written to him once saying he wanted to change his name to something associated with Rodney.

Valera attended the Unanderra gym almost every day, sometimes twice a day, while he was student of tae kwon do. Rodney said that Valera was dedicated and keen and was still in the early stages of training.

When Rodney Day was excused from the court, Valera again stood to attention, paying homage to his 'chief examiner' and 'sensei', waiting till Rodney had cleared the court before sitting.

As the jury watched the many hours of interview and walk-through videotapes taken by the investigating police, Valera sometimes allowed himself to glance back at the gallery and wave and smile to his friends. Most of his attention, however, was on the television screen. Together with the members of the jury, Valera watched and listened to himself calmly describe the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell to Russell Oxford and Joe Cassar.

Occasionally he would sigh, more from weariness and boredom than from any real emotion about what he had done. As it was on the night for the investigating detectives, the video account was chilling, with no detail too small for him not to recall. The walk-through tapes showed a more animated Valera acting out how he had attacked then mutilated his victims.

Under questioning Belinda repeated the details she'd given to police in her interview at Warilla police station soon after her brother's arrest. John Nicholson, however, wanted to know if she had ever witnessed anything between her father and

Valera. Belinda recalled her father, wearing only a dressing gown, reading her a story in bed when she was twelve. She then heard Jack leave her room and go to Valera's. She didn't see or hear anything more, and her brother didn't tell her anything about what went on either. All Belinda could do was say she heard her father enter Valera's room and shut the door. She did say that she witnessed her father going to Valera's room on several occasions.

When Jack van Krevel walked into court, Valera reacted dramatically, hiding himself down under the dock. In contrast to his attitude to Rodney Day, Valera displayed little respect for his father, and as Jack gave his testimony, sobbing could be heard coming from the dock.

As he'd said in his statement to police, Jack felt he'd been hard on his son. He didn't believe Valera deserved the punishment he meted out, which involved hitting his son with an open and closed fist. At one time he threw a shifting spanner at him. Jack admitted to Paul Conlon, 'I was very hard on Mark.'

Under cross-examination from John Nicholson, Jack said he had abused his son because of his wife, Elizabeth, who left him when Valera and his sister were very young. Initially she took the children, but later they ended up back with Jack and he became a single parent. He said Elizabeth had told him that Valera wasn't his son, and over the years he did have doubts. He agreed Valera didn't deserve the beatings, which included kicking him, and one incident in which Jack held a .303 rifle to Valera's head when he was about seven. Valera apparently wet himself, though Jack said the rifle wasn't loaded, but that fact wouldn't have changed the traumatising effect of the incident.

He also teased his son over his stutter, and verbally abused him. At other times when Jack wanted his son to do something, he would stare at him with clenched fists.

During his testimony Jack began fighting back tears, feeling sorry for his son, and remorseful for how he had behaved towards him, though relatives and friends watching on in the gallery didn't believe everything he was saying. They would later tell journalists that Jack perjured himself to save his son. Yes, he had been hard on Valera, but never to the extent he admitted in court. Regardless, Jack didn't deny any of the alleged incidents levelled at him.

Jack said that he and his son never saw eye to eye and that he would get 'really cranky'. They would argue over Valera's choice of friends, his interest in heavy metal music and the time he'd spend alone in his room either listening to the music or watching violent videos on his personal television. 'The biggest mistake I made was buying him a TV and video for his room ... he never came out of it,' Jack told the court. The testimony of Jack van Krevel lasted one and a half days. On the second day, John Nicholson alleged that Jack had sexually abused his son. Jack vehemently denied it. He said he would admit to physically assaulting his son, but the idea that he had sexually interfered with him was 'absolutely ridiculous'. 'I will admit to anything else, but nothing like that ever happened,' he said.

Justice Timothy Studdert addressed Jack van Krevel, telling him he had the right to object to answering any questions that might incriminate him. Jack went ahead and answered each question posed to him by the defence without any objection. Justice Studdert then offered him immunity

should he wish to admit to the allegations of sexual assault. Should there have been any evidence of such abuse, then Valera's claims of diminished responsibility would be given legitimacy. Justice Studdert wanted the truth to come out, which is why the offer was made. Jack understood the position of the court and the implications, but refused. The offer of immunity was made to Jack twice during his cross-examination, as John Nicholson pushed the point, looking, possibly, to weaken Jack's resolve. Jack still didn't accept the offer, denying any such abuse.

Jack also denied allegations made by his former wife, who, in her interview with police soon after Valera's arrest, stated that Jack would have her masturbate him in front of the children. He would force her, she said, to perform the act by withholding money till she had done so. Interestingly, neither Valera nor Belinda gave any evidence to support Elizabeth's claims.

In 1997 Valera had attempted suicide. He told Russell Oxford this during his initial interview in 1998 when Russell asked if he'd ever had any psychiatric problems. Valera denied he had, but did say he'd 'seen a shrink a few times'. It was revealed that Valera had attempted to slash one of his wrists and went to Shellharbour Hospital. He was at the hospital for three hours, spoke with the resident psychiatrist for about '10 to 15 minutes', and was discharged after being given a phone number for a help line. John Nicholson confronted Jack with the attempted suicide, suggesting to him that Valera had committed the act because of his 'sexual predatory behaviour towards' Valera.

'No, of course not . . . that's ridiculous,' Jack bit back.

Asked if Jack had noticed the cut marks on Valera's wrist in 1997, Jack said he had, but that he didn't know his son had tried to kill himself. Valera had, for years, disfigured himself, carving satanic drawings into his skin. When Jack saw his son's wrist, he simply thought Valera had just marked himself again. If Jack asked his son questions they'd only end up arguing, so he never pursued the matter.

Mr Nicholson wanted to know why Jack had beaten his son. Jack, taking responsibility for his son's actions, said, 'It was because I was sick in the head . . . I still am.'

As Jack left the witness box he passed the dock where Valera continued to cower behind the panel, out of sight. Jack looked to where his son would have stood and was heard to say, 'Don't go to gaol . . . I don't want you to go to gaol.'

The testimony of Valera's former girlfriend was very emotional. She broke down when asked to identify the gold chain and crucifix, which now had an 'M' pendant attached to it. Valera bought the 'M' after their relationship ended and added it to the chain. The ex-girlfriend told Paul Conlon she had worn it because it was a gift from Valera, but she gave it back when their relationship finished. One time when she was wearing the chain she said that Valera's sister, Belinda, asked her 'if it was the one he stole'. She went on to tell the court what she'd told police earlier, about how Valera's mood changed at the time of killings, how he taunted her, how he'd told her he had a guilty conscience, was 'bisexual' and had done 'some bad things', and how he became obsessed with news of the Arkell investigation. At one point during her evidence, she asked the court to tell Valera to look away, as he was pulling faces at her.

Dr Allan Cala, the forensic pathologist who worked on both the David O’Hearn and Frank Arkell murders, gave an account of the injuries inflicted on the men. His evidence was standard, though he was forced to concede to John Nicholson that the attacks on both men were ‘not inconsistent with unbridled rage’.

Valera’s former flatmates, Adam Brauer and Annette Schreiber, took the stand next, stating that Valera had been reading his book on serial killers, *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers*, at least four weeks prior to the murders. They reiterated their distaste and their complaints about his and Keith Schreiber’s choice of music. ‘We didn’t like the lyrics ... it talked about death and mutilation,’ Annette Schreiber told the court. Adam said, ‘I would ask them to turn their music off because I didn’t like it ... it was satanic music basically ... I called it death metal ... it was sung in a really evil voice ... it was about killing people.’

They also gave accounts of seeing satanic symbols on nearly everything Valera owned, including a scrawled ‘code’ that only Valera understood. The couple also said they had become concerned when they saw the boots and pants left at the Arkell murder scene. They knew Valera owned similar clothing, but hadn’t seen it after Arkell’s death.

When asked about Valera’s demeanour on the night David O’Hearn was killed, Adam responded with, ‘He wasn’t really a happy person to be around most of the time, but on this particular night he seemed happy.’ Annette added, ‘He was happier than normal that night.’ Asked by Paul Conlon if Valera was usually happy, she replied distinctly, ‘Not this happy, no.’

The first witness called for the defence was Mark Valera

himself. Valera entered the witness box and, in contrast to his bravado and emotional behaviour in the dock, his eyes were downcast and he avoided looking at anyone in the court. His attention and concentration were focused on his defence barrister, John Nicholson SC, as his examination began. Valera gave the account he'd given the psychologist, Mr Taylor, and his psychiatrist, Dr Jolly, about having had a relationship with Frank Arkell and an encounter with David O'Hearn prior to their murders. When asked why he killed the two men, Valera said he felt 'put on the spot' by their advances.

According to Valera, he met Frank Arkell in 1996, when he was seventeen. They became friends, but it wasn't till the next year that their relationship became sexual. Feeling uncomfortable after their first encounter, Valera claimed Frank Arkell said to him, 'don't be ashamed by it . . . I've had another young man come here before'.

Valera told the court that he had been to Frank Arkell's home about eight times during 1997, and on each occasion they had sex. He kept going back to Frank because he had no one to talk to and he found the former Lord Mayor 'understanding'. Valera alleged he was told by Frank, 'If you ever need someone to talk to, you can come here and I'll be your friend.'

In 1998 Valera visited Frank a few more times, again having sex together, before the afternoon when he killed him. On that day, Frank asked Valera to penetrate him anally. Valera said he was reminded of when his father had requested he do the same, and that he '... felt put on the spot . . . I didn't want to'. Valera then 'exploded' and grabbed the ashtray, which he used to bash his victim.

When asked why Valera performed the sexual act on his father, but not on Frank Arkell or David O'Hearn, Valera explained that his father had 'told' him to, while the others only 'asked' him. Interestingly, Valera had previously denied penetrating his father when first questioned by his defence counsel. After an adjournment, Mr Nicholson requestioned Valera about whether he'd been asked to penetrate anyone else, putting David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell aside. Valera answered yes, that his father had 'told him to do that'. He added, '... I didn't really resist ... I couldn't because I was scared'.

Paul Conlon picked up on the inconsistency, but had to wait his turn before he could pounce.

Valera inserting his penis into his father's anus was a significant point for Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor when finding a reason for Valera's 'loss of control'. If Valera were to deny the act ever happened, he would then damage his motivation for the murders.

Hearing Valera allege that he and David O'Hearn had a liaison in the closet of David's shop, David's elder brother Graham let out a mock laugh for the whole court to hear. Justice Studdert stopped the examination and addressed Graham, asking what he was laughing at. Graham told the judge he thought Valera had taken an oath to tell the truth, but he wasn't. Justice Studdert warned Graham that the situation was 'no matter of mirth' and threatened to expel him should he have another outburst. As hard as it was listening to Valera make allegations against David, Graham and the rest of the O'Hearn family held their tongues.

Valera went on to talk about the pornographic video he

and David O'Hearn watched, which featured lesbian and heterosexual couples. He described David getting on the floor on all fours, inviting Valera to anally penetrate him. That was when he grabbed the wine decanter and bashed David over the head, killing him. He then went to the kitchen, taking knives and a hacksaw, and began his 'frenzied' attack.

At one point during the mutilation, Valera claimed to have caught a glimpse of himself in the lounge room mirror. Valera stated that his 'eyes were lit up like a Christmas tree', his pupils dilated, making him look 'devilish'. 'I scared myself and I jumped back.' Valera went on to say he felt he was writing his name, his signature, when he wrote 'satan' on the mirror. Interestingly, Valera's nickname at school was 'satan', given to him because of his fascination with devil worship and his cutting satanic symbols into his skin and littering his belongings with the same drawings.

During the examination Valera appeared embarrassed and his delivery was patchy. There were long pauses before he answered, and his counsel had to prompt Valera when giving details of his sexual encounters with his victims. Valera's testimony, in this regard, was not as coherent or as confident as when he initially spoke to police.

To explain why he hadn't mentioned any of the encounters with either Frank Arkell or David O'Hearn, Valera said he was embarrassed. He said he lied to police, rather than telling them of the sexual relationships.

Paul Conlon began his cross-examination, referring to Valera's book *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers*, and the list of potential victims Valera wrote on the inside cover. The list

was headed, 'Who will be my number three?' Names of friends and relatives, including Keith Schreiber, were written in red pen, in no apparent order or preference. Mr Conlon read from the book, 'Who will be my number three, David John O'Hearn, Frank Arkell, who else? The first is your best, you always remember your first, who is next?'

'It's angry writing,' Valera said in his defence. 'Any moron could write that . . . the Queen could write that, it doesn't mean anything.'

Paul Conlon shot back, 'The difference is the Queen has not killed two people.'

Mr Conlon read another piece of Valera's writing from the book: 'Killing people doesn't give me pleasure. I just done what had to be done.' Valera was asked if he had written those words in reference to Frank Arkell. He denied it, saying, 'It's just nonsense'. Then, in defence of himself, Valera said to the court, 'If I was a killer I wouldn't have handed myself in.'

Paul Conlon wanted to clear the confusion Valera had got himself into about whether or not he penetrated his father. Mr Conlon took Valera back to the first time his counsel John Nicholson asked about the incident. Valera had replied he 'didn't'. Yet the second time Mr Nicholson asked him, Valera replied that he had penetrated his father. Under cross-examination from Mr Conlon, Valera admitted he 'didn't' anally penetrate his father, though he couldn't say why he told Mr Nicholson he did.

Mr Conlon went on to make the point that the first time Valera had confided in anyone about the alleged sexual abuse from his father was a week before the trial began when inter-

viewed by Mr Taylor on 8 July. Valera had not confided in his mother, sister or any of his friends. The closest anyone came to substantiating his allegations was his sister, Belinda, who said she heard, on occasion, their father walk down the hallway and into Valera's room. She never saw anything to indicate Jack van Krevel was sexually abusing his son.

Dr Hugh Jolly took the stand next. He described his sessions with Valera and gave his assessment, which was also based on discussions Valera had had with Mr Taylor. Dr Jolly said that Valera's delusions were influenced by a combination of satanic music and his reaction to a picture, the one hung at the townhouse he was living in at the time of the killings, which depicted the head of a devil. 'He felt he was under the influence of something in the picture . . . he felt the figures were moving and had taken almost an active role,' Dr Jolly explained.

The forensic psychiatrist believed Valera had an 'altered state of consciousness' when he killed David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, and that this was what led to his 'loss of control'. Dr Jolly linked Valera's poor relationship with his father to his need to connect with an older man, explaining the attraction towards Frank Arkell. Valera was searching for warmth, security and the acceptance and care of a parental figure. Dr Jolly added that Valera was 'at risk of homosexual entrapment'.

Dr Jolly accepted that Valera was consumed by hatred for his father, stemming from the alleged physical and sexual abuse. When describing to Dr Jolly the murder of David O'Hearn, Valera said, 'I was imagining that to be Jack, I was thinking and wishing it was Jack, he [David O'Hearn] wasn't the right person to kill.'

In reference to Valera's scribbblings in *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers*, both Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor didn't feel any conclusions could be drawn from them. Some of the writing consisted of lyrics from the band Cannibal Corpse, while other pieces were just Valera's expressions of hatred and anger. Dr Jolly didn't think what Valera had written in the book gave any insight into his state of mind, and Mr Taylor thought Valera's writings were just fantasy to exorcise his angry feelings.

The prosecution's forensic psychiatrist, Dr Rod Milton, assessed Valera at Silverwater Correctional Complex on 17 July, during an adjournment in the trial. At their meeting, Valera told Dr Milton what he'd already told Mr Taylor and Dr Jolly about his physical and sexual abuse at the hands of his father and the reason he killed David O'Hearn. Valera denied he chose David O'Hearn at random. He explained he 'exploded into rage' when David asked him to participate in anal sex. He didn't 'plan to kill' David O'Hearn. Valera added he had only ever had anal sex with his father, who forced him to do so. When describing why he killed Frank Arkell, Valera told Dr Milton, '... he wanted me to do it to him ... I exploded again ... I didn't plan to kill him that day.'

Dr Rod Milton assessed Valera, using their meeting, transcripts of the police interview, walk-through tapes, and statements from the various witnesses who appeared at trial. He found Valera to be in the upper range of average intelligence and could not find any significant abnormalities. Dr Milton didn't believe Valera suffered from any delusions or hallucinations, and his cognition was good.

Referring to the police walk-through video, Dr Milton felt Valera displayed a great awareness of the events and, in his detail, showed he was in control of himself when killing both his victims. Valera exhibited an understanding of what he'd done, knowing it to be wrong. Dr Milton concluded that it was unlikely Valera was in a state of uncontrolled rage, psychosis or dissociation at the time of either killing. Dr Milton also noted Valera's casual behaviour when describing the atrocities to police, showing indifference and a lack of feelings for the suffering of either David O'Hearn or Frank Arkell.

Rejecting Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor's assessments of Valera, Dr Milton said that Valera met none of the criteria for a borderline personality disorder under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), an international diagnostic reference for mental health professionals. Dr Milton believed Valera understood what he was doing when he killed his victims, knew what he was doing, and was in full control of what he was doing. He said Valera's motivation for the murders was 'a general feeling of anger, perhaps arising from loneliness, shyness, teasing at school, and unhappiness in a family situation'.

Again refuting what Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor had said, Dr Milton believed Valera's writings in *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers* were relevant in understanding the state of mind he was in at the time of the murders. In fact, writing in the book 'was in the fashion of serial killers'. The list of friends and relatives, including his two victims, suggested to Dr Milton that when Valera wrote it he was displaying pleasure in what he'd done.

MY LIST

Who will be my No.3?

The possibilities are endless

(list of names)

Some Satanic faggot

Some horny faggot

Some sexy prostitute male or female

Not anyone in particular

When Valera wrote ‘I’ll kill anyone who gets in my way . . .’ Dr Milton felt this indicated a homicidal intention towards anyone who might interfere with what he wanted to do. Pleasure in reflecting on the killings, as well as pleasure in the killing itself, was obvious when Valera penned, ‘The first one is the best, you always remember your first, who’s next?’

Dr Rod Milton had viewed the police walk-through videos, but Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor hadn’t. It is not known why, as the defence were given copies of all the evidence, including the tapes, on which the prosecution were basing their case. Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor relied on what Valera had told them for their assessments, trusting him to truthfully relate his childhood experiences and recall the events of the murders. The defence psychologist and psychiatrist not viewing the police tapes would be an important issue Justice Studdert would make comment on during sentencing.

With Valera having alleged that David O’Hearn had lowered his jeans and, on hands and knees, invited Valera to penetrate him, the prosecution had to prove that the victim was dressed at the time he was attacked. Certainly, when police

found the deceased, his jeans were around his ankles, and for the jury viewing the crime scene photos it would appear there was substance in what Valera was saying. There was no way for the jury to know exactly when the victim's jeans had been lowered. Both Detective Sergeant Barry Doherty and Dr Allan Cala gave forensic evidence to prove David O'Hearn was fully dressed at the time he was attacked. They showed the blood splatters on the jeans, in particular a large stain at the back near the top. The staining could only have happened if the jeans were worn up around the waist at the time when he was struck over the head with the decanter. Together, Barry Doherty and Dr Cala proved beyond doubt that David O'Hearn was wearing his jeans up during the attack.

As for the pornographic video Valera alleged to have watched with David O'Hearn, police did find a video in the recorder on the day they discovered the body. In fact, the television had been left switched on when police arrived. During Valera's interview with Russell Oxford, he was asked about the television. Valera said it was on when he entered the townhouse. He couldn't be sure but he thought he turned it off. Asked why, Valera said it was annoying him, yet he couldn't recall turning it back on before he left, but he must have if police found it that way the next day. The police didn't think there was any great relevance in the television being on or off, they were asking Valera simply to 'get into his head' and to try and understand what motivated him.

The whole television issue wasn't given a second thought, until the trial. On the day police found David O'Hearn's body, they extracted a videotape from the recorder. It was a home-

recorded tape with a handwritten label that said either ‘Queen’ or ‘Queens’ — the author of the label couldn’t remember precisely. The tape was a feature on the late Princess Diana and other members of the Royal family. Nothing pornographic, simply a copy of a television program made for David by his brother Graham, who’d written the label.

2-18 AUGUST 2000

15] JUSTICE AND RETRIBUTION

SUMMATIONS IN THE TRIAL *Regina vs Mark Mala Valera* began on 2 August. The Crown Prosecutor Paul Conlon addressed each of the allegations made by Valera about his victims and his history of sexual abuse. The prosecution needed to discredit Valera's evidence if a charge of murder was to be proven. Mr Conlon argued that Valera's claim to have been involved in a sexual relationship with either victim could be proven to be a lie when looking at how the victims were dressed when their bodies were discovered. He showed the jury a photograph of Frank Arkell lying on the floor of his granny flat after he'd been killed. He asked the jury to look carefully at the clothing, the tracksuit pants and singlet. Mr Conlon believed it was unlikely, given the state of Frank Arkell's dress, that he had just had sex with Valera: 'How does that sit with the story that he [Valera] and Frank Arkell were having sex on the bed before he exploded and suffocated him?'

While David O'Hearn had been found with his jeans around his ankles, the forensic evidence given to show he was wearing his jeans when he was bashed proved Valera had lied to

the court. Mr Conlon detailed what Detective Sergeant Barry Doherty and Dr Allan Cala had told the court, emphasising, 'If the jeans were up when David O'Hearn died, then this is murder.' Mr Conlon highlighted the evidence given by Dr Rod Milton, the motivation he gave for Valera committing the killings, and the relevance he placed on the writings in *The A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers*.

Addressing the sexual abuse allegations made against Valera's father, Jack van Krevel, Mr Conlon told the jury that if they rejected the claims, 'then the prosecution says the case cannot succeed on either provocation or substantial impairment by reason of abnormality of the mind'.

John Nicholson SC agreed that his client, Valera, had told lies, but not in court. Mr Nicholson said Valera had lied to police during his interview with the detectives because he was hiding his shame. 'It's our case that in the interview there were deliberate lies by Mark Valera and those deliberate lies are important clues for you. We are saying they are put to avoid talking about sex.' The fact that Valera only admitted to the sexual abuse from his father a week before the trial also proved to Mr Nicholson how ashamed Valera was of his past. Likewise, Valera didn't want police to know of his relationship with either victim for the same reason.

Mr Nicholson took the jury through Valera's examination in court when he was asked about his relationship with David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell. He admitted that Valera seemed hesitant, gave long pauses, and needed coaxing to give answers, but this was because Valera '... was extremely uncomfortable when talking about anything sexual. He was embarrassed to

reveal his homosexual involvement because it reflected badly on him. He wasn't the ugliest boy around town, and there was at least one young girl interested in him, yet the best he could do sexually was to be a lover of a man [Frank Arkell] who was 50 years older than himself. Can you imagine that? Think of somebody when you were 19 who was your grandfather's age.'

Talking of the attack on David O'Hearn, Mr Nicholson told the jury that the gouging of David's left eye was Valera's act of revenge against his father. Valera had stated his father would stare at him, which unnerved and scared him. Jack van Kregel admitted to threatening his son by staring and holding his fists clenched. 'He was seeking to solve a problem with Mr O'Hearn that he has with his father and that is bizarre.'

Explaining the mutilations, Mr Nicholson said, 'They bespeak bizarre, they bespeak disarray, they bespeak disorganisation, they bespeak disturbed ... the mutilation itself cries out frenzied.'

In reply to the scientific evidence against Valera's allegation that David O'Hearn's jeans were down at the time he was bashed, Mr Nicholson said it didn't matter if the jeans were up or down. In fact, he argued, 'if they were up ... it means the reaction was instant ... it supports the accused's case'.

Valera's defence barrister also suggested that the writings in the serial killer book were not those of a murderer, but warnings Valera had written to himself. Mr Nicholson posed to the jury, 'Is he wondering what bad things he is going to do next? Or is he looking at a list of people and salivating with delight? His mind must have been in an absolute turmoil ... he must have wondered if he was a serial killer ... he may well have

decided that he was one because he had killed two people. These are the reflections of an angry young man trying to find something positive in what he had done and he couldn't do it ... he contemplated someone else could be "my number three" and handed himself in.'

Refuting Dr Rod Milton's findings, Mr Nicholson reminded the jury that Dr Hugh Jolly and Mr Taylor found Valera to have a borderline personality disorder and to be suffering from post traumatic stress. He argued that Valera's self-control was substantially impaired by his condition, resulting in an abnormality of the mind at the time of the killings.

Mr Nicholson asked the jury to consider 'whether his [Valera's] culpability should be reduced by proper application of the criminal law of this state', meaning that he wanted them to consider the evidence in order to reduce the charge from murder to manslaughter.

With both Crown and defence summations ended, Justice Timothy Studdert addressed the jury. He reiterated the evidence given by both sides, then told the four women and eight men that they needed to consider whether the conduct of the two victims, David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, induced Valera in any way to lose control and commit the crimes.

Justice Studdert directed the jury to consider four points and to ask themselves if the Crown had proven their case beyond a reasonable doubt. One, had the Crown proved beyond reasonable doubt that the deceased did not engage in conduct or utter words directed to or affecting Valera before the acts causing death? Two, had the Crown proven, if the deceased did engage in conduct or utter words directed at or

affecting Valera, that Valera did not lose self-control because of such conduct or words? Three, if Valera did lose his self-control because of such conduct or words, that his actions were not acts that occurred whilst he had lost self-control? Four, if Valera had caused the death of the deceased whilst in loss of self-control because of the conduct or words of his victims, had the Crown proved beyond reasonable doubt that that conduct or words were not such as could have caused an ordinary person in Valera's position to lose his self-control to the extent of causing death or grievous bodily harm?

On 8 August, Justice Timothy Studdert excused the jury to consider the evidence and decide the verdicts on two counts of murder.

Both the victims' families were present during the trial. Graham O'Hearn, one of David's older brothers, sat in the gallery for '99 per cent' of the time. Jan, David's sister-in-law, was present every day, while other family members attended as often as they could. Frank Arkell's sister-in-law Sonia, and his housekeeper Maria, also made appearances when they could. Both families were brought together by tragedy and gave support to each other throughout the proceedings.

The Director of Public Prosecutions assigned a Witness Assistance Officer to the O'Hearns. Her name was Gina Parker, and in the words of the O'Hearns, she was like a 'guardian angel'. Gina was a trained psychologist and other than helping them understand the complexities of the trial, she also counselled them, helping them come to terms with their grief at

having to relive David's death all over again. Gina was available to the O'Hearns twenty-four hours a day. She was always present at the court, and contactable by phone after hours. The trial was horrendous and extremely emotionally draining on the family, but having Gina Parker helped the O'Hearns to cope. The O'Hearn family, even today, feel indebted to Gina for her support and assistance.

Mr Paul Conlon also gained great favour with the families. He would, after each day, make himself available to summarise the proceedings and answer any questions. Initially, the O'Hearns and Arkells didn't understand why, when allegations were being made against David and Frank by the defence, Mr Conlon wasn't objecting. After that day, when both sides had given their opening addresses, Paul Conlon took the families aside and explained the strategies and tactics used in court. He made sure the families knew and understood the protocols, and that whatever the defence said wasn't going to be left unchallenged.

Though both families had confidence in Paul Conlon and his team, when the jury were sent away to discuss their verdict, a nervous apprehension fell upon the O'Hearns. They knew the case had been presented well, and they felt Mr Conlon had damaged Valera's claims that his victims had incited him into a rage, but they still had a doubt as to the verdict. It is only natural. The O'Hearns didn't want to see Valera get off, not that he would, but they feared the jury might find him guilty of manslaughter only. If the manslaughter verdict was given, then that would mean people believed what Valera said about David and Frank Arkell. The O'Hearns had seen enough mud thrown at David by the media and then Valera, and they hoped a guilty

verdict of murder would help wash it off. Another fear was that the jury couldn't come to a unanimous decision, which would mean having to go through another trial.

In a little over two hours after the jury were sent away to consider their verdict, they announced to Justice Studdert that they had come to a unanimous decision. All the relevant parties were called back into courtroom number three. Some people believe that if a jury comes to a quick decision then the verdict will favour the prosecution, and that if it takes a day or more, the defence is likely to be the winner. The reality is, there is no golden rule. Russell Oxford, who attended every day of the trial, has sat through too many not to know that what a jury decides is not reflected by how quickly they make that decision. He's also all too aware that despite the strength of the prosecution case, juries can be surprising and find in the defendant's favour.

Russell remembered the trial of a police officer who shot a member of his family he believed was a paedophile. Russell put together the brief of evidence. It was solid. The officer had found out that a member of his family was suspected of being a paedophile, went around to that person's house and shot him with his service revolver. It seemed a straightforward case. When it came to court, the police officer pleaded not guilty by way of diminished responsibility. The prosecution presented their case, arguing strongly against the defence. While the officer had reacted emotionally to the circumstances, the prosecution believed he was in full control of what he was doing. It appeared by the end of the trial that the prosecution had proven the police officer committed murder. The jury retired, and came back quickly with a verdict of not guilty. If he were a

betting man, Russell would have wagered on a guilty verdict. For Russell and the other police involved in the case, it was just another lesson to never predict how a jury will react.

With the prosecution and defence counsels in their places, Valera waiting in the dock, the public gallery filled with relatives on all sides, and journalists with pens poised, Justice Timothy Studdert asked the court sheriff to bring the jury in. The four women and eight men filed in quietly, each keeping their gaze on where they were directed. The air in number three court was thick with tension. The elected jury foreman stood, acknowledged the judge and stated that the verdicts had been reached with a unanimous vote.

On 8 August the jury of four women and eight men found Mark Mala Valera, formerly van Krevel, guilty of the murder of David John O'Hearn on 12 June 1998. They also agreed that he was guilty of the murder of Francis Neville Arkell on 26 June 1998.

The courtroom erupted. Valera's mother, Elizabeth Carroll, sobbed loudly, crying out, 'That's my son, I brought him into the world ... It's not fair ... his father did it to him.'

Valera looked over his shoulder to where the O'Hearns were sitting in the gallery and smiled at them. As he was being led away to the holding cells by court officers, he called to his mother, repeatedly saying, 'Paedophiles always get away with it, don't worry about it.'

Justice Studdert addressed the jury. He thanked them for their service and, in light of the gruesome evidence they had had to sit through during the trial, appreciated what they had endured and advised them that counselling was available.

Certainly, the crime scene photos they were shown would have been distressing. Even police who attended David O'Hearn's townhouse said it was one of the most horrific scenes they'd experienced. If a professional investigator found the murder disturbing, one can only guess what effect it would have on a juror.

Outside the Wollongong Courthouse, the media gathered to grab what quotes they could from family members and the legal teams. Belinda echoed her mother's feelings, telling television news crews that her brother's incarceration was the fault of her father. 'Mark's a good person,' Belinda said. 'He never did anything wrong by anyone ... my father drove him to do it ... he's the one who should be in gaol.'

Paul Conlon told the journalists, 'I thought it was the only proper verdict in the case ... the evidence in relation to substantial impairment was quite lacking.' John Nicholson SC would only tell the media pack that he didn't know when or if an appeal would be lodged.

Sonia Arkell and Maria avoided the media. David O'Hearn's sister Sue was relieved by the verdict, saying, 'We feel David's name has been cleared, he was a good man, a good uncle and brother ... justice has been done.'

Detectives from Strike Force Lincoln were pleased with the outcome. It had been a hard slog and they were rewarded. They, however, took exception to some of the media coverage following the trial. They couldn't understand why, in some of the reports, Valera's allegations of sexual abuse were repeated, either through his mother or sister, or in quotes from his testimony. To the police and the court, Valera had been found

guilty, which meant the sexual abuse claims had been disproved. The detectives didn't feel the point was clearly made in the reports, and people receiving the news may not have appreciated that Valera had lied about the abuse. After all, it was the investigating detectives who witnessed the carnage Valera had left, dealt with the effects on both victims' families, and built the case against Valera. They didn't want anyone being misled into having the slightest sympathy for such a 'heartless' killer.

Friends and relatives of Jack van Krevel defended him against the sexual abuse claims, and even against his own admissions that he had physically abused his son. His sister Sue and friend Anne Stanford were the two most vocal supporters. Both said that Jack had perjured himself on the stand in an effort to reduce his son's sentence. He didn't want his son going to gaol and would do anything to prevent it. Jack apparently was aware of what the defence were going to allege, that he had physically abused his son, and he agreed to accept whatever they 'threw' at him. At least until they tried to get him to confess to the sexual abuse. Jack vehemently denied ever sexually abusing his son. Despite the defence's best efforts, Jack never buckled, maintaining he was 'hard on Mark' but never abused him sexually.

Anne Stanford and her husband Peter were very close to Jack and his kids. Anne had become Mark and Belinda's surrogate mother during their primary school years and into early high school, picking them up from school, bathing them and caring for them until Jack returned home from work. Mark and Belinda would play with Anne's kids. Both families were close, often holidaying together.

Anne would repeatedly tell the media that she never saw any bruising or marks to indicate any type of physical abuse in

all the years she'd known the children. She remembered Mark and Belinda would wait up for their father and when they heard his footsteps they would run to his side. They'd even sit on Jack's lap while he was eating dinner, despite being told by Anne to leave their father to finish his food. Jack didn't mind, he enjoyed the attention his children lavished upon him. Not only did Anne never see any physical evidence of abuse, she never witnessed either child showing any fear of Jack.

Later, Belinda would elaborate on the alleged abuse committed by her father, saying her brother 'copped' the worst of it and when she'd try to step in and stop it, she'd 'cop a flogging as well'. Belinda would go even further and infer to Valera's best friend, Keith Schreiber, that her father was sexually interfering with Tia, her young daughter.

Belinda never raised any of this with police after Valera's arrest. The interview she gave police was lengthy and went over two days. She gave a detailed account of her own and Mark's childhood, but never gave supporting evidence of any sexual or physical abuse from her father. She also never contacted the Department of Community Services in relation to Tia's alleged abuse. Belinda accusing her father of beatings and sexual interference didn't come to light until after her brother's allegations during the trial. Her confiding in Schreiber would have a devastating result.

Schreiber was doing community service for his role in the armed robbery of the Ampol Service Station at Albion Park in August 1998, the robbery he committed with Valera shortly after Frank Arkell's murder. From all accounts Schreiber

seemed to be coping well, attending courses in stress and anger management arranged by his probation and parole officer. By the end of July 2000, with the trial against his best mate drawing to a close, Schreiber began suffering mood swings. He was depressed and angry, reacting to the trial, fearing for his mate and their future. He allegedly expressed suicidal and homicidal thoughts. He was frustrated and angry about life in general, although he had yet to specifically identify a target for his hate.

The probation officer noted a progressive deterioration in Schreiber's mood and appearance as the weeks went on. It was arranged for Schreiber to visit a psychologist, but he didn't keep the appointment. On 14 August, almost a week after Valera had been found guilty, Schreiber told the officer that he had not eaten and had slept badly for several days, finding himself homeless and living on the streets. The probation officer organised for Schreiber to be assessed by the Illawarra Health Service's Mental Health Mobile Treatment Team on 15 August. During the assessment Schreiber told them of Tia being sexually abused by Jack van Krevel. He was concerned for her welfare and, the staff psychiatrist noted, seemed to take the issue 'personally'. The doctor could find no evidence of mental illness that would justify detaining Schreiber under the Mental Health Act. The offer was made to him to remain in care voluntarily, but he declined and left Wollongong Hospital. The doctor did find that Schreiber was at 'long-term risk of harm to himself and others', but did not pose an 'immediate risk'.

On Thursday 17 August, Mark Mala Valera was in custody at Silverwater Correctional Complex awaiting his sentencing

hearing, which had been set down for 1 September. The media speculated whether Valera, at just twenty-one years of age, would be the youngest person in New South Wales to be given a life sentence. Justice Timothy Studdert would have to wait to hear submissions from the prosecution and the defence before deciding what penalty to impose.

On that Thursday, Belinda and Keith Schreiber had decided to visit their brother and good mate at Silverwater. Unfortunately for them, they were unable to see Valera and chose instead to drive to the Shellharbour Shopping Centre. There, Schreiber left Belinda in the car while he purchased himself a spinach roll. He also went to Best & Less, a clothing store, and bought himself a pair of black cotton gloves. He returned to Belinda and the two sat in the car and talked. Belinda told Schreiber she'd had an argument with her father, and during the fight Jack called Schreiber a 'pissy little ant poofter', saying he wasn't scared of Schreiber. Later Schreiber was to say he showed Belinda the gloves, but didn't say why he'd bought them. Belinda denied having any recollection of the gloves. After four hours Belinda drove out of the shopping centre and then returned to her home in Centenary Street, Albion Park. Schreiber was left to wander the streets alone with his anger and frustration.

That evening Belinda and a friend watched the television soap *Home and Away* while Jack played a ball game with two-year-old Tia. Around 8.30 pm the friend left and Tia's toys were put away. Belinda readied herself and Tia for bed. Although Tia had a room of her own, her uncle's former bedroom, Belinda decided to have Tia sleep with her that night.

Jack retired to his bedroom later. According to those who knew him, Jack would routinely check that all the doors and windows were shut and locked at night time. He even had a security alarm installed. He was paranoid about security, and he had good reason. Some days earlier, his ex-wife Elizabeth had warned Jack that Belinda had told her she'd put a 'contract' out on him. Elizabeth claimed Belinda had asked Schreiber to kill Jack with the promise of money and her car. Jack reported the incident to solicitor Paul Stanley from the Department of Public Prosecutions on 15 August. Paul Stanley was the solicitor assisting barrister Paul Conlon during Valera's trial. Jack told the solicitor that Belinda was meant to be saving her unemployment benefits, and when she reached \$32 000, Schreiber was going to kill him. Jack admitted to Paul Stanley that he didn't believe his daughter could raise the money, and both his 'wife and daughter were liars', so he didn't know whether to treat the threat seriously. Mr Stanley told Jack he should report the incident to the police and gave him an officer's contact details. Jack never got to call the police.

Belinda's siding with her brother and spreading the allegations of abuse only hurt Jack more deeply. Jack once told police he favoured Belinda over Mark when they were young, which could be one reason why he and Mark clashed. During the trial, Jack saw both his children turn against him. All he had left was his granddaughter, Tia.

Jack returned to Albion Park after a short stay in Wagga Wagga, western New South Wales. He'd only been home for a couple of days when Elizabeth told him about Belinda's contract. Whether Jack checked the doors and windows on 17

August is uncertain. It may have been his routine, but there's no knowing what he did that night. As for the alarm, it may have been turned on, but all reports indicate the alarm wasn't working that night.

A little after midnight, everyone in the van Krevel household was snug in their bed. The window to Tia's room, however, had been left open, giving access to a disturbed individual with vengeance on his mind. Keith Schreiber grabbed a large yellow bucket, normally used for paint or plaster, to gain enough height to lever himself through the window from outside. He carried a small axe — some would describe it as a tomahawk — that he'd found hanging on the garage wall. Once inside he went to the kitchen and found a carving knife and made his way cautiously to Jack's bedroom. Schreiber didn't want to wake Jack, knowing the 47-year-old carpenter would put up a good fight. Schreiber and Jack had come to blows once before. Jack never liked his son's friend, believing him to be a bad influence. Recent events had only hardened Jack's view of Schreiber.

Schreiber felt his way into the bedroom. As he got closer to his intended victim, he bumped into a chest of drawers beside the bed. The disturbance woke Jack, but Schreiber was too quick for his victim to react. Believing he was avenging his best mate and saving the life of a two-year-old, Schreiber unleashed his attack. Jack could do nothing. He raised his arms in a vain attempt to fight off Schreiber. He screamed, and with what breath he had left, identified his assailant in a guttural tone: 'Keith.'

Schreiber exacted his revenge, telling Jack, '... you'll never molest another kid again'.

Belinda heard the assault through the thin wall that divided her room and Jack's, but did nothing. She cuddled her daughter under the quilt cover. Tia asked what was happening to Poppy. Belinda had her mobile in her room, yet never attempted to make a call. Instead, she waited for the noise to stop, then walked out after a while when she felt it was safe to do so. She hoped to give the intruder time to leave. She noticed blood in the hallway and knew something terrible had happened. She would tell people later that she went out the back door and stood on the decking, staring at her car in the driveway. She thought she could see someone crouching behind it and went back inside, fearing for herself and Tia. She waited a little while longer before driving to Warilla police station, over 10 kilometres from her home.

Friends and relatives were amazed when they heard how Belinda reacted. Jack was a popular man and knew all the neighbours in the street. Belinda could have shouted or gone to anyone's door and got help. She didn't have to drive all that way to Warilla. It didn't seem to make sense, particularly as Belinda didn't reach the police station till about 3.20 am.

Belinda walked into the foyer, dishevelled, her eyes red from crying, Tia in one arm, and announced to the duty officer, 'There's blood everywhere ... help me ... I'm scared.'

Jack's death came three days before Belinda's birthday. She would turn twenty on Monday 21 August 2000.

16] JACK PAUL VAN KREVEL

JACK VAN KREVEL, BORN TO DUTCH IMMIGRANTS, WAS more Aussie than many who have been in the country for generations. He loved his footy, meat pies, T-shirts and stubbies, loved having a laugh with his mates, and told it like it was. Knowing Jack meant you had to have a thick skin. If what Jack said ever offended anyone, he would just reply, 'If friends can't tell you, then who can?'

Jack was the youngest of five children and the only one to be born in Australia, in September 1952. His siblings doted on him and knew him as the little blonde angel. Wollongong became the family home as the van Krevel children grew up, and would remain home for Jack. After school Jack studied carpentry and became a qualified draftsman, eventually starting up his own business as a builder. The work kept him fit. He was just shy of six foot, solidly built, fair-haired and, again because of his occupation, was always tanned. He definitely looked the outdoors type.

As the demand for housing grew in the Illawarra region, Jack's business grew with it. He became a popular builder and draftsman, and worked on the numerous housing estates springing up in and around the Albion Park and Kiama areas.

During his mid twenties he met Elizabeth. They married and while she was pregnant with their first child, Jack drew up the plans and started to build their dream home. He'd purchased a block of land at Albion Park. It was high on the western side, on what used to be pastoral property. First Jack built a double garage on the block. The garage was large enough for him and Elizabeth to live in, and was fitted out with all the basic essentials. Jack then spent his spare time building the house.

By 1979 the three-bedroom house was complete, though Jack still had plans to include decking at the rear. In April of that year Elizabeth gave birth to their first child, a boy, Mark Jack van Krevel. Jack had come from a large, close family, and he wanted the same for himself. He loved kids. By August the following year, Elizabeth had given birth to their second child, a girl, Belinda Jean van Krevel.

Soon after Belinda was born, the relationship between Jack and Elizabeth soured. They would argue. Elizabeth taunted Jack, suggesting that Mark was not his child. She left for the first time when Mark was about eighteen months and Belinda just a couple of months old. She later returned, only to leave again with the children. There are varying accounts of what happened next. Elizabeth said she lived out of her car and that the situation became too much and she returned the children to Jack. Friends of Jack's said that Elizabeth lived with the

children in Kiama. One day Elizabeth's mother called Jack to come and collect the children as Elizabeth had got herself into trouble and couldn't handle looking after them anymore. According to Belinda's police statement, Jack came to Elizabeth's home asking for the children. Elizabeth threw Mark along the floor at Jack's feet, saying, 'You can have that one [Mark], but you're not getting her.'

Whatever the circumstances, both Jack and Elizabeth went to the Family Court and were given joint custody of the children. Jack, irrespective of the court's decision, became a sole parent from when Mark was three and Belinda was two. Elizabeth never saw the children much from that time, moving about the area and not letting Jack know where she was living. He would, at times, through friends, find out Elizabeth's whereabouts and make contact, asking her if she wanted to see her children. Belinda would agree to go but Mark always refused to see his mother and Jack never forced him. On the occasions when Elizabeth called in to Jack's place to see the kids, Mark always locked himself in his room.

Being left with the children, Jack hired babysitters to care for them while he continued working. For whatever reason, none of the babysitters lasted very long. Jack apparently wasn't happy with the care his pre-school children were getting and decided he could do a better job. After all, he was their father. Jack stopped work. Luckily, money was never a worry for Jack. He wasn't rich, but had made a decent living. He could afford to stop work and put his children first. He planned to look after them until they were of school age, and then to organise his work hours around their school timetable. For Jack, who

thoroughly enjoyed his work, there was no sacrifice too great for his children.

Although Jack had chosen to dedicate himself to Mark and Belinda, there was a time when everything must have become too much for him as a single dad, as a result of which Mark and Belinda spent a short time with a foster family at Oak Flats, a neighbouring suburb. From Belinda's account, the stay was only for a week or two, to give Jack a break. Certainly, it would have been stressful, thrust into having to cope with two young children alone. It was during this time that Belinda alleged her brother was put into a chicken pen to sleep, though there has been no evidence to corroborate this story.

By the time Belinda was ready for school, Jack met an old friend from his teenage years, Anne. Anne was now married with her own family and lived a few streets away. Anne and her husband Peter Stanford had two boys and one girl. The second eldest was the same age as Mark. Knowing the situation Jack was in, Anne and Peter offered to look after his kids, taking them to school and picking them up afterwards. They made the offer because they could see Jack 'was climbing the walls'. Not that he wasn't coping, it was just that he desperately wanted to get back to work.

Jack accepted Anne and Peter's offer and the two families became close. Anne and Peter were known as 'aunty' and 'uncle', though Anne became a 'surrogate mother'. The children all played with each other, though they had a few skirmishes as kids typically do, and they'd even organise to go on holidays together. Mark and Belinda knew the Stanfords as well as they knew Jack's immediate family, his mother, sisters

and older brother. Jack and his children enjoyed a large and extended family support network.

Knowing how busy Jack was, Anne often said she was happy to give Mark and Belinda breakfast when he dropped them over, and to make their school lunches, iron their clothes and even darn them if needed. But Jack was a proud man and accepted his responsibility. Mark and Belinda were his children and he would look after them. So he rose at 5 am, put a load of washing on, fixed the kids' lunches, pressed their uniforms, made them breakfast, hung the washing out under the deck in case it rained, and took them to Anne and Peter's. It was a routine Jack followed every school day, from primary through to high school.

'The kids were always immaculate,' Anne remembered. 'They always came to me with their lunches ready ... cheese sticks, popper juices, sandwiches, fruit ... Jack always made sure they had enough to eat and that it was healthy. Their uniforms were always ironed ... never a button missing or needing a stitch ... and their shoes were always polished.'

Depending on Jack's workload, he would get to the Stanfords to collect his kids early in the afternoon, or sometimes later, around 6 pm. Mark and Belinda would hear their father's car and go running to greet him, hugging his legs as he tried to enter the house. Anne would occasionally cook Jack dinner if he was late, and both children would sit on his knee, just wanting to be close to their father. Anne would try to get them to leave him alone, so that Jack could relax, but he didn't mind. He loved his kids and missed them while he was at work, and craved as much of their attention as they wanted of his.

In fact, Anne remembered Belinda as being ‘daddy’s little girl’. She was plump, with red hair and freckles, and was always hugging her father. Jack tried not to show favouritism to either of his kids, but obviously had a soft spot for his daughter. Mark, on the other hand, was stubborn and threw tantrums if he didn’t get his way. Mark and Jack clashed. Jack was a devoted father and loved his kids, but he also had a temper, as did his son, and the two would argue. Mark had a shorter temper than his father and would test Jack’s patience to the point where Jack would strike out and hit his son. Despite what Mark alleged during his trial and what Jack admitted to, friends and family all said that Jack would only hit Mark as a reaction. Yes, he would hit hard, harder than he intended, but never enough to leave a mark according to those who knew him. Jack would, however, immediately feel guilty, apologising to Mark and wanting to make it up to him.

In all the years Anne knew the children, from primary to high school, she never saw any bruising or marks to indicate the violent beatings Mark alleged in court. When they were little Anne would bath Mark and Belinda, making sure they were ready for bed if Jack was running late from work. On hot days and during holidays, Mark and Belinda would go for a swim with Anne and Peter’s kids, wearing traditional Speedo costumes. If Jack had severely hit either of his kids, there were plenty of opportunities for the Stanfords and Jack’s family to have seen the marks. They never did. Also, no one appears to have any recollection of Mark being taken to hospital which, again, he claimed in court. No medical documents were ever tendered to support Mark’s allegation, nor did anyone who

knew Jack, be it family member or friend, ever witness his children being scared of their father.

During Mark's early primary school years, he was assessed as having learning difficulties and had to attend Albion Park Rail Primary School. The school had a special program for dealing with slow learners. Eventually Mark improved and he returned to Albion Park Primary School with his sister and the Stanford children. Interestingly, Keith Schreiber also attended Albion Park Rail School. Whether Mark and Keith first met each other there is unknown, but there was definitely the opportunity.

While Mark was in primary school, Jack's relationship with his son got the better of him. He felt he couldn't cope, telling his family and friends, 'Mark frustrates the living hell out of me ... what can I do?'

Jack enrolled in parenting skills classes being held at Albion Park Rail School in the evenings, and for the weeks Jack attended, Anne took care of his children. Jack blamed himself for the conflict with his son. He felt he wasn't a good parent and wanted to do whatever it would take to become one. Unfortunately, the course didn't improve matters.

Loyalty to family and friends was a quality Jack was known for, and while he and Mark argued, he would also defend his son to others. During primary school, Mark was known as a bully and would get into fights with other kids. Jack was in the unenviable position of having the other kids' parents knocking on his door in the evenings complaining about Mark. Whatever Mark did, Jack was one-eyed, and would believe it was the fault of the other child. He would find excuses for his son. The other

parents might not have accepted Jack's excuses, but he didn't care. Mark was his son, and despite their differences, he was proud of him and loved him.

As mentioned, Mark had a short temper, particularly with authority figures. In Year 6 at primary school Mark, displaying his temper, pushed a female teacher down a flight of stairs. Jack was called to the school. This was one instance he couldn't say wasn't Mark's fault. Even so, Jack never spoke about the assault to anyone in detail, blaming himself. He was embarrassed that his son could do such a thing. There was another incident Jack told detectives about after Mark had handed himself in. It was the incident in which Mark damaged school property and the police were summoned. It is uncertain whether this happened in primary or high school. Mark was never charged with malicious damage and, again, Jack never spoke about it to others.

On one occasion Jack appeared to shy away from Anne and Peter. They didn't understand why, thinking Jack might have turned moody. Instead, they later realised that Jack was behaving strangely because Mark had got into a fight with one of the Stanford children, and Jack was too ashamed, thinking Anne and Peter might be angry with him over the incident. Anne took Jack aside one day and told him that whatever the children did, she and Peter were not going to allow it to ruin their friendship. After all, as Anne told Jack, the kids will fight one day and be the best of friends the next, so why should their friendship suffer? As it was, the children got along well.

There were women in Jack's life after Elizabeth. He did go out on various dates, but there were two with whom he had long-term relationships. One of the women actually lived with

Jack and his kids, but the relationship didn't last. The other woman didn't move in, but again it ended. Apparently, Mark and Belinda didn't like either woman and weren't particularly keen for Jack to date. Whether they were the reason for the break-up of the relationships is speculation, but Jack decided to put his children first. He would say to family and friends when asked if he would remarry, 'It's not worth the hassle . . . there'll be time when the kids are grown up.'

Mark and Belinda were given the best of everything, and pretty much anything they wanted. Perhaps it was Jack's way of trying to make up for his kids not having a mother. Whatever the reason, Jack indulged Mark and Belinda. Mark took to motocross, joining the Yellow Rock Club at Albion Park. With the latest gear and newest bike, Mark became the envy of all the other kids on the track. For Jack, nothing was too good for his son. When Mark took up basketball, Jack purchased the most expensive pair of basketball shoes on the rack, just because Mark wanted them. Belinda had all she wanted as well. Whatever the latest fashion was, Mark and Belinda were among the first in Albion Park to be wearing it.

In winter, football was the main talking point with Jack. He supported the St George rugby league team, a southern Sydney team that later merged with the local Wollongong Steelers to form St George Illawarra. Mark barracked for the Canberra Raiders, the representative team of the national capital. Whenever St George and Canberra played, Jack would take Mark to the games, even organising trips to Canberra with the Stanfords, who also supported St George.

Jack was not mean or tight with his money as had been

suggested in the media. The reason why he was portrayed as such was because of stories family and friends told at his funeral, particularly how he would reuse teabags. It was a joke, nothing more than Jack's sense of fun in teasing his friends. The story started with Anne Stanford and another friend of Jack's, also named Anne. The two Annes were tea drinkers, while Jack was a coffee man. He would jokingly comment to the ladies that he was spending too much money buying tea just for them, and he'd decided he would reuse the teabags. The joke was in the fact that the two Annes liked their tea strong. Jack never offered any friend a reused teabag. Nor would he give visitors plain biscuits while hiding the Tim Tams. That was another joke shared at the funeral that had been misquoted. He would, however, ask friends if he could have their newspaper once they finished it. Jack never spent his money needlessly.

Because some of the work Jack did was 'under the counter', he had a safe installed in his home. Friends say Jack would have \$8000 to \$10 000 in cash in the safe at any one time. Apparently Jack was the bloke you went to if you were short of funds. He was known for lending people the money for rental bonds, rent, or just to tide them over till they were back on their feet. The loans were given interest free or, in some cases, just given away. He'd even given money to friends to pay off debts to other friends. To Jack, friendship and loyalty were worth more than a few dollars.

Although Mark was a competent motocross rider, he was a nervous driver. Jack bought him a car and lessons, but Mark never developed the confidence to sit for his licence. Belinda, however, was a good driver and Jack ended up buying her her

first car, a second car, and a third car, a Hyundai Excel, just before his death. All the cars were second-hand, but Jack made sure they were in good condition, and the Hyundai was only about eighteen months old.

When Mark reached Albion Park High School he met Keith Schreiber. Much to Jack's angst, the two boys became inseparable. They were best friends. If you believed Jack, Keith was a bad influence on Mark. If you believed Keith's family, Mark was the bad influence. Keith's family alleged they were warned by teachers from Albion Park about Mark's hold over Keith. Yet it was Keith who the teachers decided was too disruptive at school. They organised for him to leave high school early, securing him a job as a fish gutter in Nowra. Whoever was to blame, it appears they influenced each other.

Mark and Keith developed a fascination with satanism, serial killers and death. They would both talk about how best to torture and kill people, both trying to outdo each other with the most horrific stories. Mark would carve satanic symbols into his arms using knives or other sharp objects. His behaviour would earn him the nickname 'satan' from the other students. Both were known as bullies, although Keith claimed he hated bullies because he had been a victim. Apparently the local railway staff knew both of them well, having to reprimand them for their conduct. Even though the two of them would follow each other everywhere, it was Keith's behaviour that came to the attention of police.

Mark and Keith would tell stories to others, saying they threw people off the train. Mark claimed he cut his wrist once and had two girls suck his blood while travelling on the train.

After leaving school he told friends he had witnessed a murder, but did not take part. That was before he would commit his own thrill killings.

Belinda was fourteen and already under influences of her own around the time Mark and Keith were forging their friendship. The plump little girl suddenly lost weight. Anne was actually proud of her 'little girl', who had shed the baby fat and finally blossomed into a woman. Although her children knew, Anne wasn't aware that Belinda had begun to experiment with drugs. She hardly ate and drank copious amounts of water. After a while, Belinda's complexion turned pasty, her weight loss went beyond being attractive to being gaunt, and she dyed her red hair black and took on a gothic appearance. Her personality changed as well, from a happy, clingy little girl to an argumentative teenager.

Jack was never known to hate anyone, except Keith Schreiber. Family and friends knew Jack to be very forgiving. He never harboured any ill feelings. He even forgave Elizabeth for leaving him, which is why he would try and find her so Belinda, at least, could spend time with her mother. Whenever Elizabeth called him requesting money, Jack always gave it to her. After all, she was Mark and Belinda's mother. Again, Jack's sense of loyalty prevailed.

Keith Schreiber was the exception for Jack. He and Keith hated each other. He thought Keith was ill mannered and, naturally, a bad influence on his son. Regardless of Mark's later actions, everyone who met him, even the detectives on Strike Force Lincoln, commented on how polite Mark was. Jack himself had been brought up not to be coarse or lurid in mixed

company and to respect other people. If anything, Jack did a good job of instilling manners into his son.

As Mark's friendship with Keith grew, Jack saw his son pulling away. Mark would hide in his room and listen to his 'death metal' music by the group Cannibal Corpse, or watch horror movies he'd rented from the local video store. Jack had bought Mark a television for his room as a present, a move he quickly regretted. He never saw his son and when he did they would argue even more than they had previously, mostly over Keith. Keith would spend time at Jack's house, locked with Mark in his room. One time, when Keith was sixteen, Jack had had enough and told him to leave and that he wasn't welcome in the home. Keith stood his ground, shouting back, and Jack's temper erupted. He took a swing at Keith, but it is uncertain if it connected.

Jack knew he was dealing with the situation badly. He confided in friends who advised him to let Mark continue to see Keith, the idea being that Mark would eventually see for himself the type of person Keith was and end the friendship. Jack grudgingly agreed, knowing that the way he'd been handling the situation had only strengthened the two boys' resolve.

Mark was allowed to continue his friendship with Keith, but Mark had little respect for Jack at this stage and wouldn't have needed his permission. Keith's family also tried to prevent Keith from seeing Mark, but their efforts failed. Mark and Keith became each other's shadow.

Jack tried to get to know his son, to bridge the growing emotional divide. He noticed Mark had begun buying and collecting a variety of knives. It didn't impress Jack, but he

accepted his son's interest. He built Mark a display cabinet to house the collection. Jack hoped his efforts would be appreciated and Mark would use the cabinet. What Mark's reaction was to his father's attempt at compromise is unknown, but Mark never used the cabinet, preferring to keep his knives in a sports bag. For Jack, it was just another snub from his son.

When Keith Schreiber left school, Mark wanted to leave as well. Jack agreed, thinking it another opportunity to get his son back. He organised for Mark to work for him on the building site, maybe even groom his son to follow in his footsteps and help run the business. The arrangement only lasted about a month. Mark didn't like working for his father, and again they clashed. After a period of unemployment a friend eventually found Mark a job working as a dishwasher at Planet Hollywood in George Street, Sydney. Mark would catch the train from Albion Park to Sydney, leaving at 4.30 am to start work by 7.30 am.

Jack's hope that Mark's friendship with Keith would end was dashed. Mark eventually moved out, sharing a townhouse with Keith, Keith's sister and her boyfriend. Jack clung to the hope that one day Mark would 'come to his senses' and return home.

During this time Belinda was running her father around in circles as well. Belinda was involved in a number of relationships, often moving in with her boyfriends, on occasions for as little as a day. Jack would tell friends he was worried Belinda was turning out like her mother. He always hoped, after his dealings with Mark, that Belinda would be different, that she would make him proud. Instead, Belinda decided she wanted her independence and moved out to a unit. As Belinda was unemployed, Jack

financed her, even buying furniture. Belinda did have a job briefly, working at Leonard's Chickens in Wollongong for a day, before walking out. Jack spoke with the manager and Belinda went back for a second day. She decided the work was too much and she didn't get along with the manager or the other workers. Belinda remained unemployed.

Belinda fell pregnant when she was seventeen, giving birth to Tia in 1998. Jack doted on his granddaughter. He also seemed to have accepted Belinda and Mark for what they'd become. He'd apparently caught Belinda out lying to him, and according to friends, once found his newly purchased computer packed up and sitting in the lounge room. Belinda had apparently sold it, or was in the process of doing so when Jack stopped her. Jack decided Tia would grow up in a loving household and be given every opportunity Jack could afford.

Jack's worst fears were realised the day police woke him at 5 am to search Mark's old bedroom. He'd seen a pair of Nike tracksuit pants and Colorado boots on television only a few weeks earlier and knew instantly they were Mark's. He may have tried to deny it to himself — they were common items — but he couldn't shake the feeling they were his son's. A week earlier, he and Mark had had an argument. Letters were being sent to the Centenary Street address labelled Mark Mala Valera. Jack returned a few to their senders, thinking the letters had been misdirected, before his son turned up and announced he had changed his name. Mark didn't want to be a van Krevel anymore. The two men shouted at each other, and Mark left punching the wishing well in the front garden, warning his father he could be 'number three'.

When Mark was arrested and charged with the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, Jack was devastated. He gave a statement to police saying he had been 'hard' on his son, that he blamed himself for Mark's actions, and had shown a preference for Belinda.

Jack didn't know what he had done, or hadn't done, to cause Mark to become the person he was. He could have blamed Keith Schreiber, but he didn't, he accepted full responsibility himself. Despite being consoled by family and friends, Jack believed the whole mess was his fault. He saw his sister's kids, Anne's kids and other friends' children, all of whom had grown up normal, going to university and getting good jobs. Mark was a killer, and Jack carried the burden.

Jack desperately wanted to see his son free. His love for his son went beyond the horrendous crimes Mark had committed. He would often visit Mark in the Remand Centre at Silverwater, taking Mark's grandmother, Elizabeth, Belinda and Tia with him. Mark's reception to his father was cold, and as the trial drew near, Mark denied his father visitation rights. Jack was a witness for the prosecution, having witnessed the search of Mark's bedroom and being able to give information relating to his son's movements and conversations they'd had. Jack was also a concerned father and he would speak regularly with Mark's defence team. How much the defence revealed to Jack is unknown, but from conversations Jack had with friends, particularly Anne Stanford, it was obvious Jack knew Mark was claiming his father had physically abused him as a child. Jack did know that if the allegations were proven Mark had a chance to plead diminished responsibility. It was Mark's opportunity to

receive a lighter sentence, and an opportunity Jack wanted for his son.

The night before Jack was due to give evidence at the trial, he paced up and down Anne Stanford's kitchen. He chain-smoked, attempting to settle himself. He told Anne he would accept all 'the defence threw at him'. It was Mark's only chance. Anne tried to talk him out of it, not for his sake, but as she told her good friend Jack, 'Society doesn't deserve someone like Mark to be let free.'

Anne loved Mark, but she couldn't love what he had become. Her comment wounded Jack, and the two cried. No matter how much Anne attempted to convince Jack to let justice take its course, Jack only wanted to see his son free. Her plea for Jack to understand that Mark had chosen his own life, that it was not Jack's fault, fell on deaf ears. He felt responsible and only wanted to do what he believed was right for his son.

The two days Jack sat in the witness box were highly emotional for him, his family and friends. No one who knew Jack could accept what he was admitting to on the stand. Jack's sisters and the Stanfords would defend Jack to the media, but Jack himself shied away, refusing to comment.

In the witness box Jack admitted to all the allegations of physical abuse: that he had hit and kicked Mark, held a rifle to his head, locked him in a toy box, and at one point assaulted Mark so severely he had to be hospitalised. When asked if he had ever sexually abused his son, Jack vehemently denied it, despite being offered immunity from prosecution. Jack believed he was hard on his son and did lose his temper, but he never sexually assaulted Mark. While he wanted his son to be

free, Jack couldn't bring himself to admit to such a vile crime. The allegations of sexual abuse only deepened the emotional scars Jack had to bear.

Hearing the testimony of his ex-wife, who stated Jack would have her masturbate him in front of the children for money, and Belinda suggesting Jack had sexually abused his son, made Jack despair even more. Of course, at the end of the trial, with both Elizabeth and Belinda blaming Jack for Mark's actions in the media, Jack had had enough of both of them. It was the final straw. Where Jack believed he had failed with his own children, he hoped he could do better with his granddaughter, Tia.

Family and friends of Jack's were concerned for him. Jack had 'been to hell and back' in the last two years according to his elder brother, Tony. Everyone wanted him to start afresh, to leave Albion Park and start a new life. Jack loved animals and had always wanted to own a small property. Now was his opportunity, but the thought of leaving Tia with only Belinda worried him.

Anne Stanford had a sister, Lorraine, living just outside of Wagga Wagga, a town in western New South Wales about 380 kilometres from Albion Park. Lorraine and Jack knew each other well, being part of the extended family. Anne convinced Jack that he could make a new start in Wagga Wagga. Jack could buy himself the property he wanted and start up a new business in the area. Should anything happen to Tia, Wagga Wagga was only a four to five hour drive, so Jack could easily zip back to Wollongong. Jack accepted the plan.

Before he left for Wagga Wagga, Jack told his family and

friends he was going to change his will, leaving Tia his estate and disinheriting Belinda and Mark. Whether he told Belinda is unknown, but he certainly mentioned it to others. The new will would have meant that if Jack died early, the estate would be put in a trust till Tia was twenty-one, preventing Belinda from getting hold of it, because he feared 'she would blow it all on drugs'.

Friends and family feared for Jack long before any mention of contracts and convinced Jack to move away from Albion Park and start a new life, which initially he intended to do. Jack was going to allow Belinda to live in the house rent free, but had the phone disconnected, fearing an expensive phone bill. Belinda and Jack had their own mobiles which they'd use to keep in contact. He also cancelled his cable television subscription.

Jack left for Wagga Wagga on Saturday 12 August 2000. He arrived at Lorraine's place the same day. Anne and Peter were relieved for their friend, knowing he was out of harm's way. They did fear for Jack, given the comments made by Belinda to television news crews after the trial. They weren't sure how, but they thought, as did others, that Belinda would do something. Her relationship with Keith Schreiber only heightened their fears, as everyone knew how much Keith and Jack hated each other.

On Sunday 13 August, Jack became frustrated. He couldn't get any mobile service and couldn't contact Belinda to check on Tia. The situation was too unbearable for him, so he packed his bag and headed back to Albion Park. Jack left when Lorraine stepped out, to avoid being talked out of returning.

When Lorraine saw Jack had gone, she figured he would call Anne when he arrived, so Lorraine didn't worry. Jack returned on Sunday, but didn't contact anyone. All of Jack's family and friends thought he was still in Wagga Wagga.

On Monday 14 August, Elizabeth called at the house. She was unaware of Jack having been in Wagga Wagga. It was on this day she told Jack of Belinda's contract with Keith Schreiber. Jack took it seriously enough to report what his ex-wife had told him to Crown Solicitor Paul Stanley on the Tuesday. However, Jack didn't contact the police, as suggested by Mr Stanley.

During this time Anne believed Jack was safe in Wagga Wagga and Lorraine thought Jack was in Anne's care in Albion Park. The first Anne knew of Jack being back was when he called her on Wednesday 16 August. Anne couldn't believe he'd returned, especially after hearing about the contract on his life. Jack believed he was safe in his own home. He always kept the doors and windows locked, and if Keith did come for him, Jack was big enough to take him on. Despite the bravado, Anne and Peter were still concerned, but there was no way of changing Jack's mind. He was back to sort his life out, and then he'd return to Wagga Wagga and start afresh. He had to be sure Tia was being properly cared for.

What transpired between Belinda and Jack after he came back from Wagga Wagga is not certain, but they did have an argument. Jack told Anne he would tell Belinda his plans, making arrangements for her and Tia. Whether he told Belinda about his plans to change his will is speculation. The argument between Jack and Belinda resulted in Belinda telling Keith on

Thursday 17 August that her father had called him a ‘pissy little ant poofter’.

In the early hours of Friday 18 August, while Jack lay sleeping in his bed, Keith Schreiber climbed into the house and murdered his best friend’s father.

All Jack ever wanted was what was best for his kids, Mark and Belinda. He acknowledged they had lost their mother and did what he could to fill the void. Jack had lots of friends who knew him as a ‘real mate’. He never complained about his lot in life, was quick with a joke, had a ‘happy-go-lucky’ attitude, worked hard, and put his kids first.

Even after all Mark put Jack through during the trial, Jack still wanted to see his son free right up to the time of his death.

At the funeral Tony van Krevel summed up his younger brother’s popularity and his love of stubbies and T-shirts: ‘It wasn’t his clothes that drew people . . . it was what was inside.’

18-24 AUGUST 2000

17] I DONE IT ... HAPPY?

JUST BEFORE THE END OF MARK VALERA'S TRIAL, JOE Cassar was promoted from Detective Senior Constable to Detective Sergeant. The promotion meant he had to leave Homicide and take a posting with the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command. Ironically, Joe Cassar was seconded to join detectives as one of the team leaders at Warilla police station, the same station where'd he'd spent nearly four months involved in the investigation into the death of David O'Hearn back in 1998.

Joe didn't take up his post straight away. During his time in Homicide he had accumulated seven to eight weeks of leave. He decided to use the time to renovate his house before starting back at work. Joe was halfway into his leave when he got a call from a fellow detective at Warilla. It was six in the morning on 18 August and Joe thought it was a practical joke. The fellow officer assured him it wasn't, and to prove it, he put Detective Inspector Peter Woods on the phone. Joe's leave was put on hold. Inspector Woods was adamant he wanted Joe, and he wanted him 'now'. Jack van Krevel was dead, and Joe's knowledge of the victim and his family was needed.

In preparation for the trial against Valera, Russell Oxford

and Joe Cassar had built a rapport with Jack van Krevel. Both detectives helped prepare Jack, making him aware of what to expect. It's common practice for the investigating officers and persons from the Department of Public Prosecutions to assist witnesses prior to giving their evidence. The officers perform a supportive role, helping to ease nerves, answer questions and, more importantly, to make sure the witness turns up for court.

Likewise, Joe Cassar interviewed both Jack's daughter, Belinda, and Keith Schreiber soon after Valera's arrest. Joe was given the added responsibility, as he'd done with Jack, to build a relationship with Schreiber, preparing him as a witness for the prosecution. Joe found himself having to subdue Schreiber on occasion during the trial. His antics brought unfavourable attention from the court officials as he peered through the glass panel, waving and pulling faces at Valera. Joe kept a fine balance, keeping Schreiber on side as a witness for the prosecution, while also trying to keep him in line before the court ordered his removal.

In the time leading up to the trial, Joe and Russell had a good understanding of the dynamics surrounding the van Krevel family and Schreiber. They knew Jack blamed Schreiber for his son's predicament and that there was no love lost between the two men. Schreiber had already come to the attention of local police well before the death of David O'Hearn. To police, Schreiber was violent, unstable and capable of anything.

Joe Cassar hurriedly drove to Warilla police station. Uniformed and plain-clothes officers had already begun canvassing neighbours in search of information. Surrounding parks and vacant lands were also searched. Crime Scene officers

were in attendance at Jack van Krevel's home and had videoed the scene for the investigating detectives. Belinda was originally kept at Warilla, but as Inspector Woods gathered his team together, Belinda was transferred to Port Kembla police station for her official interview. There was no knowing what involvement, if any, Belinda had had in the murder of her father. As an incident room was being set up at Warilla, Peter Woods didn't want Belinda overhearing any 'corridor conversations'. It was better to keep her at a distance until the detectives assessed all their information, remembering the first twenty-four to forty-eight hours are the most vital in any homicide investigation.

Although Joe had a good idea who had killed Jack, he phoned Russell Oxford to discuss the matter. Without hesitation Russell agreed with Joe. It had to be one of two likely suspects, or both, the suspects being Belinda van Krevel and Keith Schreiber. Both were at the top of the list because of the known animosity between Schreiber and Jack, his closeness to Valera, and Belinda's public blame of and aggression towards her father after the trial. From the way Belinda and Schreiber behaved outside the court, it was also evident that the two shared a very close friendship, if not something more. During the first few days of the trial, the two appeared inseparable. Russell and Joe didn't think they needed to look any further but, as always, they had to keep an open mind. Still, Schreiber became Joe's priority target.

The investigation into the murder of Jack van Krevel had been given the Strike Force name Revin. With all the detectives assembled in the incident room at Warilla, they began viewing the video footage from the crime scene. The police cameraman

showed the exterior of the wooden house and the drive to the garage before swinging left to reveal the decking with its hanging foliage and various potted plants, a large barbecue, a couple of seemingly empty large buckets, and the sliding doors leading to the interior. Walking into the house, there was a small rumpus area, with a kitchen to the left. The bedrooms were lined up along the right side of the house as the cameraman faced the front. The rear bedroom was Tia's, formerly Valera's, then there was Belinda's, and then Jack's at the very front of the house. As the cameraman neared Jack's bedroom, the lounge room was on his left. He swung around to show the décor and the interior view facing the rear. The house was filled with heavy wooden furniture and thick piled carpet. A large bare brick chimney and pot-belly stove divided the living areas. Next to the stove was a holder for the shovel and poker, except the poker was missing.

Jack's house was incredibly tidy. There were no dirty dishes, no clean dishes waiting to be put away, no filled ashtrays, even though Jack and Belinda were smokers, all the cushions were placed on chairs or lounges. It was a very ordered home. The only things out of place were the bloodstains in the hallway, leading to and from Jack's room. A smudge was found on the doorjamb of Belinda's bedroom, at about shoulder height. A bloodied footprint was discovered on the bedcovers of Tia's bed facing an open window. It suggested to the detectives that that was how the offender left, but they had no clues as to how the killer gained entry.

Jack's room was heavily bloodstained. There were blood splatters along the back wall, above the bed rest, and over the

top of the quilt cover and pillows. Jack's body had been left kneeling, his head and arms resting on the bed. At the foot of the bed the murder weapons — the knife, axe and poker — were arranged side by side. While the attack appeared frenzied, the offender had obviously collected himself [or herself] enough to place the implements neatly together after the killing. The killer had also attempted to mutilate the body, possibly wanting to inflict pain by cutting the throat, the right leg, slicing the back down the length of the spine, and slashing the buttocks and around the anus. Police would find out after the post-mortem that these injuries were inflicted after death. Still, it might indicate the killer was in no hurry or fear of detection, despite other persons being in the house.

Viewing the video closely, detectives noticed a container of talcum powder on Jack's dresser. The container had a satanic symbol drawn on it. Speculation began about its relevance — was this a satanic murder? Joe Cassar reminded his fellow detectives who used to live at the address. Mark Valera would inscribe everything he owned with pentagrams, inverted crosses and the word 'satan'. Finding a similar symbol on a container of talc in his father's home would not be surprising.

The detectives discussed the crime scene at length, thinking of possible avenues of investigation. Even though they kept an open mind, they still came back to Keith Schreiber. He was an obvious choice. He was too strong a suspect. Inspector Peter Woods agreed, so finding Keith Schreiber became a priority, if only to eliminate him from their enquiries. Inspector Woods tasked various detectives with going to Schreiber's family home and other addresses where they thought he could be

living. While that was happening, the local patrols were told to keep an eye out for their suspect. Joe Cassar and the remaining detectives readied the incident room and were anxious to hear what Belinda had told police at Port Kembla.

On the morning of 18 August at Silverwater Correctional Complex in Sydney, a Department of Corrections officer went to Mark Valera's cell, where he was still awaiting his sentencing hearing. The officer woke Valera and told him his father had been murdered. The officer would later say that Valera showed no emotion and didn't appear overly concerned when given the news.

Later that afternoon, Russell Oxford interviewed Valera for the Warilla-led Strike Force Revin. Russell was an obvious choice, having been the primary investigator who interviewed Valera when he handed himself in. The meeting would try to establish if Valera had any involvement in the murder of his father, or knew who had committed the atrocity. After all, Valera had listed Jack as being one of his victims in the *A to Z Encyclopaedia of Serial Killers* book. He'd also told people he intended to kill Jack and threatened his father with being 'number three' about a week before he was charged.

Russell began asking questions, but Valera was more anxious to ask his own. At every opportunity, Valera would enquire about the details of Jack's death. He wanted to know what had been done, how it had been done, whether his father suffered, and how he died. He appeared to want to quench his thirst for blood. Russell didn't give Valera any satisfaction. He ignored

Valera's requests and stuck to the confines of his questioning. Valera became more agitated and angry as the interview wore on. The interview was concluded, and Valera was left not knowing any details of his father's murder. There was also no evidence given by Valera to link him to the murder.

Police went to each of the addresses they had for Schreiber, but he wasn't to be found. He had been living with his sister and her boyfriend, but Schreiber became too much for the couple and they asked him to leave. There was also the possibility, had Schreiber committed the murder, that he might have done a runner and left town. He could easily have caught a train north or south, and be well away from Wollongong and Albion Park. He may even have hitchhiked. And if Schreiber was still in the area, hopefully a patrol would spot him.

Meanwhile, Detective Inspector Peter Woods, Joe Cassar and the rest of the team listened to what Belinda had to say about the night. She'd told detectives at Port Kembla police station that she woke to strange noises coming from her father's bedroom. They were 'weird noises, like someone being murdered' and she hid under her covers, calming her daughter who'd also become alarmed at the sounds. Everything went quiet, and then the door to her room was opened slightly. Whoever was there didn't say anything and left after a short time. She waited for a while, giving the intruder time to leave. When she thought it was safe, she took Tia to her car and drove to Warilla police station.

Police were suspicious of her story. Like Jack's friends and relatives, they couldn't believe she didn't seek help from any of her neighbours, and that she hadn't tried to use her mobile

phone that was in her room at the time. Despite her saying she was scared for her and her daughter's life, her actions didn't ring true. She also claimed she didn't check on her father, and could not say whether he was still alive. When she accompanied police back to the house, she asked them if her father was dead. 'Something bad has happened, hasn't it?' she said.

When told her father had been killed, Belinda asked, 'Was he shot ... How did he die?'

The detectives thought it a strange question given she had heard the whole assault and would have known if a gun had been discharged. Regardless of their suspicions, police had no reason to further question or detain Belinda.

At around 5.30 pm, as detectives were planning their next moves in trying to locate Keith Schreiber, a call came in to say he'd been spotted on Albion Park railway station. Inspector Woods tasked a couple of detectives to make the arrest, and handed over the interviewing of Schreiber to Joe Cassar and Detective Senior Constable John Northfield. Northfield had also been involved in getting Belinda's statement earlier in the day.

Schreiber was a suspect in a murder and there was no knowing what weapons, if any, he would have on his person. As a matter of procedure, police approached Schreiber with extreme caution. They called his name, but Schreiber denied his identity, claiming to be someone else. The detectives knew who he was and ordered him to lie on the ground face down and put his hands behind his head. At that point Schreiber stopped his pretence. It was a controlled arrest, designed to protect the officers, the suspect and any bystanders. Schreiber

was cuffed, patted down, and his pockets were searched. He had no weapons. Police transported him to Port Kembla police station, the nearest station to the railway. During the arrest and in the back of the car, Schreiber denied doing anything criminal. He didn't know why he was being arrested. When told of Jack's murder, he strongly denied having any involvement in the killing. Even when police led him into the interview room to wait for Joe Cassar and John Northfield, he continued his denials.

Joe's previous dealings with Schreiber as a Crown witness would prove their worth. Unlike in some cop dramas on television, police actually find they get better results from treating people with respect rather than belittling them or whacking them over the head with a telephone book. When Joe Cassar and John Northfield first walked into the interview room they were greeted by a 'ghost white' Keith Schreiber. He was still denying having murdered Jack van Kregel. Joe let Schreiber talk. When he had finished, Joe calmly reminded Schreiber that he had been fair with him all the way through the trial, and all he was asking was for Schreiber to level with him now. He gave Schreiber a few seconds to absorb what he'd been told and then simply asked, 'Why did you do it?'

'I was angry,' came Schreiber's surprised reply. 'I done it ... happy?'

Joe Cassar wasn't expecting him to open up as quickly as that, but obviously he appreciated what Joe had said. Something Joe said struck a chord, or perhaps Schreiber realised he couldn't bluff his way out of the situation. Whatever the motivation, he decided to be straight with the detectives.

The colour began returning to Schreiber's face. He went on and gave a detailed account of how he killed Jack van Krevel. John Northfield led the questioning during the taped interview.

Schreiber admitted to feeling alone, angry and depressed for days leading up to the murder. He told the detectives he'd completed his stress and anger management course, but when the verdict was handed down against his best mate, Valera, he began spiralling downwards. He blamed Jack van Krevel. Schreiber acted because Jack had sexually abused Valera, Belinda and young Tia. He had thought of killing Jack for some time, but on the night he killed him, it was a 'spur of the moment' decision. When John Northfield pushed to find out how Schreiber knew of the sexual abuse, Schreiber could only say he knew because both Valera and Belinda 'had said so'. He first knew of the allegations when he read about them in the newspapers during the trial. He accepted the allegations Valera made, and Belinda had told him about Jack interfering with Tia later. He said Valera had told him Jack had beaten him when they were together at high school. Schreiber didn't accept that he had killed Jack van Krevel, but rather had 'delivered' him as revenge for his mate, Valera.

So, what drove Schreiber to murder Jack van Krevel that particular night? Apparently, as Schreiber told police, he'd had lunch with Belinda. They spent a couple of hours together at the Shellharbour Shopping Centre 'getting something to eat' and 'talking about this and that'. Belinda told Schreiber she'd had an argument with her father and that Jack had said, 'I really hope that pissy little ant poofter Keith fucking comes here and kills me ... tries to kill me.'

It was then that Schreiber decided to carry out his plan. What he'd been told by Belinda would 'spur him on'. He believed Jack 'got what he asked for'. He said he wanted to kill Jack quickly, and had become angry and frustrated with his victim's resilience. When he retrieved the fire-poker he decided he wanted Jack to suffer as, he believed, Jack had made Valera and Belinda suffer. 'I just seen red, he wouldn't die,' he told the detectives. Although Schreiber had intended to murder Jack, he confessed to the detectives that, at one time, he wished Jack had killed him. He explained, 'Because I fucking hate my life, if you could call it a life.'

After the murder, Schreiber felt 'sort of sad' and wanted to cry. He stared at the body for a while, '... thinking like, when I seen him go, before I left, seen him just laying, kneeling there, I felt like crying, sort of ... I felt someone else could have fucking done it.' He then wandered the streets of Albion Park and Shellharbour before he was arrested.

Joe Cassar and John Northfield were curious to know what involvement, if any, Mark Valera and Belinda might have had in the murder. Schreiber denied Valera knew anything about it or had solicited the killing. He made the same denial in regard to Belinda, but admitted he knew she 'wanted him done'. Belinda had suggested to Schreiber that he kill Jack at around the time Valera's trial started.

When John Northfield questioned whether Belinda had asked him, Schreiber answered, 'No ... I think so, she [said], "Would you do it?" "Yeah ... " I said, "No, don't know, not really ... " I don't know if she was serious or not ... Don't think so ... She might have been.' Schreiber did say he 'hoped' Belinda was glad about what he had done for her and Valera.

The relationship between Schreiber and Belinda had to be explored. Joe Cassar had already witnessed their closeness during Valera's trial, and while it appeared they might have been more than just friends supporting each other, John Northfield required confirmation. When he asked Schreiber if he had had an affair with Belinda, Schreiber replied that he felt it was 'irrelevant'. John Northfield then asked if it was correct. Schreiber shuffled in his seat, rubbed his chin and said, 'Sort of ... yeah.'

Schreiber told Joe Cassar and John Northfield that he had changed his clothes, but he still had on the boots he wore during the killing. The detectives took possession of Schreiber's boots for forensic testing. The cotton gloves, bought from Best & Less and subsequently used in the murder, had been discarded.

After the interview, Schreiber agreed to accompany the detectives on a video walk-through. Joe Cassar and John Northfield escorted Schreiber to the Centenary Street home a little before 1 am. He was dressed in a protective blue jump-suit, the type issued to forensic officers. The crime scene had not been 'released' and was still under examination. The police couldn't risk Schreiber contaminating the scene.

As in Valera's walk-through, the detectives' moves were shadowed closely by the media. Protecting Schreiber's identity, they began the walk-through in the garage, reading him the official caution and making sure he understood that anything he said or did might be used in evidence. The walk-through commenced at 1.02 am. Schreiber shifted his weight in an agitated fashion, lifting his cuffed hands at one point and placing a finger against his lips to quieten Crime Scene Detective

Sergeant Barry Doherty and Detective Sergeant Mick Ashwood from Homicide. He wanted everyone's attention while John Northfield was speaking to him.

With the hood of the jumpsuit over his head, the detectives led Schreiber to the backyard. He pointed to where he had jumped over the back fence, and to where the axe was hanging on the outside wall of the garage. Walking up the side of the house, he stopped at the bedroom window, which he identified as being Mark Valera's. At first the window seemed too high to reach, then Schreiber walked back to the decking and grabbed a bucket, showing how he used it to lever himself in.

Joe Cassar and John Northfield walked Schreiber into the house through the rear sliding doors. Schreiber was quick to show them how he made his way to Jack's bedroom where he began the assault. John Northfield stopped Schreiber and asked what he carried with him when he came into the house. Schreiber took a moment to think, swearing at himself for his vagueness. He hadn't shown them where he had obtained the knife. He went back down the hall to the kitchen.

Schreiber stood at a benchtop and began opening the drawers underneath. The first drawer had plastic containers and the next, plastic bags. Schreiber appeared confused, looking around as though he'd forgotten, and again swearing under his breath in frustration. Joe Cassar, standing beside the oven, pulled open a nearby drawer. The collection of knives and other cutlery could be heard to rattle. He motioned to Schreiber, asking if 'this was the drawer'.

'Yeah ... yeah,' Schreiber eagerly agreed.

Taking everyone back to the bedroom, Schreiber continued to describe the murder. At times he would become

annoyed with John Northfield's questions, feeling he'd already given his answers during the interview. Schreiber hated repeating himself.

At the conclusion of the walk-through, Schreiber took detectives to where he had disposed of the clothing he had worn. Oddly enough, despite Schreiber's apparent openness with police, he seemed to give them the run around in relation to the clothes. He was vague when saying what he had done with them. Joe Cassar calmly but firmly asked Schreiber to be honest with them. He then confessed where he'd thrown his clothes. Police searching a dumpster at a local park found the items.

When asked what he'd done with the cotton gloves, Schreiber said he couldn't remember, that he might just have tossed them away, again dragging detectives across the suburb to bushes, canals and other possible hiding places. Joe again appealed to Schreiber to 'play it straight'. Schreiber relented and took them back to the dumpster where a second search revealed the gloves. The police weren't looking for the black cotton gloves during the first search and had missed them. Why Schreiber wanted the police to play guessing games is still an unanswered question.

In a similar fashion, Schreiber had said he'd been living on the streets. He said he spent the nights sleeping under fig trees in a park at Shellharbour. When police were putting together their brief of evidence against Schreiber, they discovered he'd actually been living with a friend.

Even though there was no physical evidence or any admission from Schreiber linking Belinda to the murder of Jack van Krevel, police were still suspicious. They didn't believe Belinda's account of that night and felt Schreiber had 'danced

around' during his interview when answering questions relating to his 'girlfriend'. Schreiber appeared confused during the walk-through when trying to remember which drawer it was he had got the kitchen knife from. Belinda had denied having any sexual relationship with Schreiber, while he admitted that they had a 'sort of' affair. Police again had received information from people who knew them that the two were sexually involved. Strike Force Revin remained active and, under the leadership of Detectives John Northfield and Jamie Williams, investigations would continue into Belinda van Kregel.

Dressed in a pair of baggy blue pants and a T-shirt emblazoned with a picture of reggae musician the late Bob Marley, Keith Schreiber appeared before Wollongong Local Court on 19 and 21 August. The first appearance lasted a minute, with the charge being read and bail being refused. No plea was entered and the matter was adjourned.

On 21 August, Schreiber's Legal Aid solicitor told the court that his client had been suffering from migraines since his incarceration, and that he would require psychiatric treatment and medical care while in custody. Magistrate Paul Johnson accepted Schreiber's state of health and adjourned the matter to 21 September. No plea was entered and no bail granted. Police had also yet to give any details of the murder to the court.

On 24 August the Lakeside Crematorium Chapel at Dapto was packed with around one hundred and fifty friends and family, including Belinda, gathering to farewell Jack van Kregel. They

spoke about the 47-year-old carpenter they knew as a valued member of the community, a person who, despite any faults, loved his kids. Jack 'told it like it was'. He was a 'true blue Aussie' who loved his footy and meat pies.

Jack's elder brother Tony fought back his emotions as he delivered the eulogy, but the battle proved too taxing. 'I'm sorry, I can't do it.' Tony handed the eulogy over. Tony's words were read: 'Jack bore the tragedy of the last two years with fortitude, he always believed there were better days ahead ... he grew up with the strong belief that families stick together ... our memories of Jack will always be far above the evil deed that ended his life.'

Singer and songwriter John Williamson's 'True Blue' was played as a tribute to Jack, the tune and lyrics reflecting Jack's down-to-earth nature, and the love and loyalty he gave to his family and those he called friends.

Jack's sister Sue took the opportunity to speak out in defence of her brother. She told journalists after the service, 'Jack agreed to let them [Valera's defence counsel] ruin his good name, he threw himself on his sword, he perjured himself in the hope the plea of diminished responsibility would gain credibility. He never beat or threatened his son ... he was fanatical about their care ... he was the best father in the world, he would defend those kids against anything ... the truth will come out. Jack's at peace now, he can't be hurt anymore.'

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2000

18] THERE WAS NO LESSER SENTENCE

MARK MALA VALERA APPEARED BEFORE JUSTICE TIMOTHY Studdert on 1 September. Crown prosecutor Paul Conlon argued that Valera should be given life imprisonment. Mr Conlon described both murders as ‘brutal and merciless’ and in the ‘worst case’ category and warranted a life sentence. The murder of David O’Hearn, he said, had been carried out with an extreme level of brutality, was calculated and without remorse: ‘... conning his way into David O’Hearn’s premises with murder on his mind he embarks upon a brutal attack followed by calm mutilation of the body’.

Describing the attack on Frank Arkell, Mr Conlon told the court that Valera was so confident of his ability to kill that he didn’t think it necessary to take anything with him, using what was there. He repeated Valera’s account of how Frank Arkell struggled for his life, attempting to crawl away while being strangled. ‘Once again the attack was cold and calculated and once again there was a lack of remorse.’

Mr Conlon asked the court to reject Valera’s claims of

sexual abuse, as the jury had done, saying Valera had lied and there were ‘startling inconsistencies’ in his evidence. Valera’s account of events preceding the murders, the alleged sexual advances coming from his victims, as he’d relayed at the trial, could not be believed: ‘The court could not accept the accused’s version at trial as being anywhere near the truth and that therefore there is nothing in the material going to partial defence which could be said to in fact mitigate the seriousness of these crimes.’

Valera’s defence counsel John Nicholson SC was not ready to give a submission on sentencing to the court. Mr Nicholson said that Valera was suffering from ‘grief and disbelief’ at what had happened to his father. ‘Two weeks ago it was revealed the accused’s father was killed in circumstances that have caused a person known to him to be charged.’ Mr Nicholson requested more time to obtain proper instruction from his client.

Justice Studdert finally heard the defence’s submission on 6 October. At the hearing, Mr Nicholson reminded the court that Valera had surrendered to police because of a guilty conscience. Valera had said to his girlfriend after the murders ‘that he had done some really bad things’. When the police asked why he handed himself in he had replied, ‘It was the right thing to do and I had to get the shit off my chest.’

Mr Nicholson told the court that Valera’s work history — his employment for about a year in the kitchen at Planet Hollywood — and his healthy interest in tae kwon do were favourable indicators of his eventual rehabilitation. Mr Nicholson did not believe his client deserved a life sentence: ‘This would be the first person in the history of New South

Wales who, having committed a crime as a teenager, would be sentenced to life.'

Should the judge, however, deem the murders to be in the 'worst category of cases', then Mr Nicholson asked Justice Studdert to have regard for the subjective features of the case, namely Valera's abusive childhood and provocation by the victims, and to grant him a determinable sentence, meaning a sentence with a parole period included. Mr Nicholson said it was open for Justice Studdert to find Valera was mentally impaired at the time of the killings and had reacted to provocation, despite the jury's findings.

Justice Timothy Studdert accepted both the Crown and defence submissions. He adjourned the court to make his decision as to whether Mark Mala Valera would become, at twenty-one years of age, the youngest person in New South Wales to be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Justice Studdert would delay announcing his sentence decision till after a hearing in the Court of Criminal Appeals against the sentencing of a Matthew Harris. Matthew Harris was convicted of three counts of murder and one of armed robbery. On 7 April 2000, Harris was sentenced to forty years gaol on each count of murder, to be served concurrently, and given a non-parole period of 25 years. The Director of Public Prosecutions immediately lodged an appeal, believing the sentence to be too light and that the trial judge, Justice Bell, had 'got it wrong'. Justice Bell felt there were mitigating circumstances, or substantial features of Harris's case, which warranted a determinable sentence. Her Honour did not impose life, as she didn't believe she could include a non-parole period. As

part of the appeal, the prosecution argued Justice Bell's assumption that she couldn't impose a non-parole period in giving a life sentence was incorrect.

New South Wales has what is called 'truth in sentencing', which means that when a convicted person is given life, they must serve their incarceration for the term of their natural life. Logically, it was always thought, then, that a non-parole period could not be included as part of a life sentence. However, here was the Director of Public Prosecutions proposing that a non-parole period could be given in sentencing a person to life.

Justice Studdert needed to hear the outcome of the appeal before deciding Valera's fate. If, as the prosecution in the Harris case suggested, a non-parole period can be included in handing down a life sentence, then Justice Studdert would be allowed to make that inclusion should he decide Valera warranted such a harsh penalty. After all, it would mean Valera could face from sixty to seventy years in gaol. The appeal against Matthew Harris wasn't scheduled till early November, and a decision from the appeal judges could take another month or more, so Valera would have to wait to hear his fate. Soon after the murder of Jack van Krevel, Belinda left the Centenary Street home, putting it on the market, and moved to Warilla, sharing the home of her former fiancé, Dustin Barden. Not surprisingly given the circumstances, the house took a while to sell. It eventually went for around \$280 000. Police continued to investigate Belinda, speaking with known friends, associates and family members. They were building a background picture, trying to find out if

Belinda had had any involvement in the death of her father. Police were aware of the conversation Jack van Kreveld had had with Paul Stanley from the Director of Public Prosecutions, in which Jack relayed what his ex-wife had said about Belinda putting a contract out on him.

Elizabeth Carroll, Jack's ex-wife, proved to be a great source of information for the investigating detectives. She said that Belinda had told her on several occasions that she hated her father so much she would kill him herself or have someone do it for her. When Belinda told Elizabeth she had approached Schreiber to kill Jack, Belinda apparently explained the plan would be for Schreiber to cut her father up into pieces and throw the remains into the Kiama blowhole. Kiama is a small tourist town just south of Albion Park, known for its natural blowhole where the ocean rolls in and gushes upwards through a naturally formed hole in the rocks.

Elizabeth also confirmed Belinda and Schreiber's relationship. She claimed Belinda had told her Schreiber seduced her in her car 'after a few bonges'. The relationship had started with them sharing marijuana and continued throughout Valera's trial; they were together in their love for Valera and hatred of Jack. Belinda described Schreiber to her mother as being gentle and caring. Police were also curious about Belinda's visits to see Schreiber while he was in remand, and her request for a copy of the autopsy report on the murder of her father. However strange Belinda's behaviour was, police still didn't have any solid evidence to charge her. The investigation would need more.

On 29 November Keith Andrew Schreiber appeared

before Wollongong Local Court. This time the prosecution was ready to present its brief of evidence, which included a statement from Paul Stanley describing the alleged contract on Jack van Krevel's life. They also tendered the record of interview in which Schreiber admitted to the killing and gave details of the murder including the attempted mutilation of the body.

Schreiber pleaded not guilty, without admitting to a lesser charge or offering any reason to justify the non-guilty plea. The court heard that a psychiatrist had assessed Schreiber prior to the murder, but the doctor, while diagnosing him as having an anti-social personality disorder, did not think he was an immediate risk to himself or others. On the presentation of the facts, the magistrate committed Schreiber to stand trial in the Supreme Court at a date to be fixed.

Justice Timothy Studdert, after hearing the result of the matter involving the appeal of sentence against Matthew Harris, had come to a decision. The judgement was given on 21 December. In his 23-page-long sentencing address, Justice Studdert detailed the trial in all its complexities. He covered the extensive mutilations both victims suffered, the allegations raised by Valera to claim impairment of the mind and loss of self-control, and the accounts given by Jack van Krevel that he had physically abused his son from the age of seven. He examined the assessments conducted by Dr Hugh Jolly and Mr Taylor for the defence, and Dr Rod Milton for the Crown. Justice Studdert, while reviewing the assessments, commented on the fact that neither Dr Jolly nor Mr Taylor had viewed the police tapes,

while Dr Milton had. The judge felt this gave Dr Milton a significant advantage.

After lengthy dissection of all the evidence presented, Justice Studdert accepted Dr Milton's assessment over Dr Jolly and Mr Taylor's. He also believed that there was no evidence to support the allegations made by Valera that the victims incited him to lose control, or that Jack van Krevel had sexually abused him. Justice Studdert accepted the police tapes, the interview and walk-through as Valera's true account of what happened at the time of the murders. He also accepted that David O'Hearn was a random victim and Frank Arkell was chosen because Valera thought him to be a paedophile. The judge read several passages from the court transcripts and police interviews to highlight Valera's inconsistencies when addressing his allegations of being provoked by his victims and the sexual abuse from his father.

Justice Studdert found that the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell were 'gruesome in the extreme' and fell into the 'worst case category'. He believed that Valera could not be rehabilitated, and that the evidence presented showed Valera was at risk of reoffending.

In regard to a non-parole period within a life sentence, Justice Studdert referred to the Harris appeal, which found, after consultation with the New South Wales Attorney General's Department, that the legislation does not permit a non-parole period. Life means life. Within Australia, it is only New South Wales and the Northern Territory where the courts do not have the authority to set a non-parole period when handing down a life sentence.

Justice Studdert then addressed Valera as he stood in the dock. He told Valera he would be sentenced to life for the murder of David John O’Hearn. For the murder of Francis Neville Arkell, he would be sentenced to life. The judge added that he did not set a non-parole period for either sentence because it was not within his jurisdiction to do so, however, had he been able to, he would have. Mark Mala Valera, formerly van Krevel, had become the youngest person in New South Wales to be sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment.

After the sentencing, the *Illawarra Mercury* contacted Valera’s uncle, who was in Queensland with the rest of the van Krevel family. The sentence came as no surprise to the van Krevels. Tony van Krevel told the paper that he and his family would not expect to see or talk to his nephew again, and said Valera got what he deserved, that ‘there was no lesser sentence’. The family were pleased that the judge stated he could not find any evidence to support Valera’s allegations of Jack sexually abusing him. It offered them some comfort as Tony had often said his brother had ‘been to hell and back’ for two years since his son’s arrest, and that all the allegations were false. Jack’s family and friends all believed he perjured himself to try and save his son from gaol.

Valera’s grandmother also expressed her shame. According to the *Mercury* she’d been close to Valera, who, as a child, had helped her with her shopping and chores, but the murders and the accusations against Jack had distanced her from him. The last time she visited her grandson was at Silverwater Correctional Complex just before the trial. She’d gone there with Jack, but Valera refused to see him, so she went

in on her own. When she asked Valera why he killed the two men, he told her 'all would be revealed'.

Once sentenced, Valera was transported to Goulburn Correctional Centre in western New South Wales. He was classified a high security prisoner, as most new inmates are, and given a cell in a new complex known as 'Super Max'. It is a specially designed maximum-security wing, where prisoners are segregated from the general population and each other. Valera shares the complex with other murderers sentenced to life, such as the backpacker killer Ivan Milat and the granny killer John Wayne Glover. Apparently, the guards unofficially refer to Valera as 'evil van Krevel'.

On 18 February 2002, Valera's legal representatives from the Sydney Regional Aboriginal Corporation Legal Service made an application to appeal the severity of the sentence. Justices Meagher, Wood and Bell of the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal heard submissions for the application. Justice Meagher read the court's decision on 12 April, dismissing the appeal. Before announcing the decision, Justice Meagher said he was tempted to suggest, given the brutality and horrendous nature of the murders, that a punishment greater than life imprisonment could have been called for. Both Justice Wood and Bell agreed with the decision, but resisted the temptation to say that the crimes called for a greater sentence.

2001

19] HEY, BABE, IT'S FINISHED

IN THE SUPREME COURT ON 2 FEBRUARY 2001, KEITH Andrew Schreiber made a brief appearance in front of Justice Graham Barr. He maintained his plea of not guilty to the murder of Jack van Krevel. Any chance of a trial starting that day was postponed as there were fears for Schreiber's state of mind. It was decided that Schreiber should undergo psychiatric assessment. Justice Barr adjourned the matter till 2 March.

While Schreiber was in custody, he told his Legal Aid solicitor that he wanted to talk to Joe Cassar about the murder. He had information the police might be interested in. The detectives on Strike Force Revin became excited by the news, speculating about what Schreiber would tell them. Joe Cassar and John Northfield visited Schreiber, only to be informed by the solicitor that Schreiber had withdrawn his request. He had nothing more to say about Jack's murder. Schreiber would call the detectives on a couple of other occasions, each time refusing to talk to them when they arrived. It appeared Schreiber was still playing games with the police.

On 2 March Schreiber did a complete turnaround and, in

a soft voice just audible to the court, he pleaded guilty to murdering Jack van Krevel. The judge accepted the new plea and committed Schreiber to be sentenced on 11 May.

Meanwhile, John Northfield, Jamie Williams and other detectives involved in Strike Force Revin continued to gather evidence against Belinda van Krevel. Her association with Schreiber began to unfold. Police had discovered, since the sale of the Centenary Street home, that Belinda was sending money to Schreiber. She'd also attended court during one of Schreiber's appearances and had a Department of Corrections' officer deliver a message to him while he was in the holding cells. She asked the officer to tell Schreiber 'she loved him'. The officer reported the incident to police.

Detectives spoke to a former school friend of both Belinda and her brother. The school friend, Melissa Ross, related a conversation she had had with Belinda, her brother Mark and another friend when they were students at Albion Park High School five years earlier. The conversation took place in the home of the other friend. Belinda was fifteen at the time, a year after she had transformed from the plump daddy's girl into a thin gothic creature. Melissa was thirteen. Belinda allegedly had asked if anyone in the group would kill her father, saying she would pay \$2000 to whoever would do it. There doesn't appear to be a reason why Belinda hated her father during this time, other than to get hold of his money. Melissa heard Belinda ask other people, and remembered her mentioning it at the time of Valera's trial. Melissa told police Belinda had said she hated her father and 'couldn't wait till he died because then she would get all his money'.

The detectives working on Strike Force Revin believed greed and revenge were the motives behind Belinda's involvement in the murder. They knew from speaking to relatives and friends of Jack's that he had planned to change his will, making his granddaughter Tia sole beneficiary. It was speculated that if Belinda knew this, then she would have wanted Schreiber to kill her father before he could change the will. It could explain why Belinda told Schreiber that she'd had an argument with her father. Schreiber admitted to police that Jack's comments to Belinda had 'spurred' him on. As for the revenge element, Belinda never kept it a secret that she blamed her father for Valera being in gaol.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a feature on Belinda on Saturday 19 May in their lift-out magazine, 'Good Weekend'. The feature was written by Greg Bearup, who'd also covered some of Valera's trial for the paper. The story proved to be revealing. Greg described being driven around in Belinda's ex-highway patrol car, a VT Holden Commodore, with three-year-old Tia bawling her eyes out in the back seat. As reported in the feature, Belinda told Greg that she had no regrets or sorrow as she stared at the house where she grew up. There was, however, one regret — she wished she hadn't sold the house so cheaply. She repeated the stories of physical abuse at the hands of her 'bastard' father as recounted during Valera's trial, saying that her brother was angry and about to explode, which, to her, meant his killing spree was predictable. She admitted she had never cried for her father and that he 'deserved' to die.

As with her father, Belinda showed no remorse for either

of Valera's victims, believing they too 'deserved' what they got. To her, Frank Arkell was a paedophile and David O'Hearn shouldn't have tried to 'crack on to her brother'. The only time Greg reported Belinda as displaying any emotion was when she denied having had a sexual relationship with Keith Schreiber. According to the piece, she gave a forced laugh and claimed in all the years she'd known Schreiber, she had never been attracted to him.

What reaction the investigating detectives had to the feature is unknown, but some sources have suggested that what Belinda told the journalist was of great interest. It certainly verified the detectives' belief that Belinda had no feelings of remorse towards her late father, and that she was still trying to cover up her relationship with Schreiber.

By the time the feature appeared, police had already bugged Belinda's phone and kept surveillance on her movements. Whether police intentionally made themselves obvious to Belinda is unsure, but they would later state that she had been aware she was a suspect since 3 May. Belinda was interviewed by Joe Cassar and Jamie Williams around mid May. They revisited what had happened the night Jack died, and Belinda said that when she first heard the noises she felt scared for the intruder, thinking her father 'was killing someone who'd broken in'. Asked why she felt fearful for the other person and not her father, she said, 'I know what that bastard is capable of.' Explaining why she still visited Schreiber in prison, she told detectives she considered him 'a close friend' and he had done her and Tia 'a favour'.

Police received some more vital information. A former

boyfriend of Belinda's was interviewed. Scott Sunderland was serving gaol time for a minor offence. He told detectives he had met Belinda the previous November and that they had a short affair. While they were together she drove Sunderland to Nowra where her mother, Elizabeth Carroll, lived. Sunderland was shown the house and was allegedly told by Belinda that she wanted her mother 'killed'. Belinda blamed her mother for talking to the police and told Sunderland if she 'goes down' it'll be 'her mother who does it'. Sunderland agreed to do it, though he told police he only said it to 'big note' himself to Belinda.

Belinda allegedly admitted to Sunderland that she'd left the axe on the woodpile and a knife and torch laid out under the doona on Tia's bed for Schreiber to use. After Schreiber killed Jack, he apparently opened the door to her bedroom and said, 'Hey, babe, it's finished.' Sunderland said Belinda put a kid's video on for Tia to watch and fixed Schreiber a sandwich. She poured an orange juice into his mouth, so he wouldn't leave any prints or blood smears on the container. They apparently shared a cigarette, then Belinda offered to drive Schreiber home, but he refused because he didn't want to leave any evidence in her car.

According to Sunderland, Belinda fell pregnant to Schreiber, but aborted the pregnancy after the murder. She allegedly told Sunderland she didn't want to have 'a baby by her father's killer'. Belinda also threatened Sunderland, telling him, '... if you go to the police you won't be safe inside or out of gaol ... I will kill you, your brother and your Nan.'

Submissions into the sentencing of Keith Andrew Schreiber began on 11 May at the Supreme Court in front of Justice Peter Hidden. Paul Conlon, who prosecuted Valera, was now prosecuting Valera's best friend. Mr Conlon was now a Senior Counsel. He addressed the court with details of the slaying, explaining how Schreiber had 'chopped and stabbed' his victim a total of forty-one times and mutilated the leg, back, buttocks and anus. The police were anxious to have the extent of Schreiber's attack described, hoping to refute his claims that he wanted to kill Jack 'quickly'. Even though the mutilations occurred after death, police and the prosecution still felt it was evidence of Schreiber's intent to inflict suffering.

As at the hearing in the lower court, Mr Conlon SC submitted the police interview, along with the statements by solicitor Paul Stanley and Elizabeth Carroll, implicating Belinda van Krevel in the murder of Jack. Mr Conlon told the court, '... it appears that Belinda may well have been soliciting the accused to kill Jack van Krevel'.

The court also heard that Dr Bruce Westmore, the psychiatrist commissioned to assess Schreiber, was having difficulties reaching a diagnosis. He had prescribed Schreiber anti-psychotic medication and would require more time to complete his assessment. Justice Hidden adjourned the hearing to 15 June, granting Dr Westmore the time he needed.

Investigators on Strike Force Revin believed they'd collected enough evidence to arrest and charge Belinda by the end of May. It was decided police would take her into custody on 1 June, almost ten months after her father had been murdered. That day, surveillance police followed Belinda, who was now

driving a silver Honda sedan, from her home at Warilla to her solicitor's office in Wollongong. When she left her solicitor's she went to a bank in Warrawong, then filled her car with petrol, and went through the drive-through at a KFC before returning home. At 11.15 am Detective Senior Constable John Northfield and other detectives approached Belinda's unit. John Northfield spoke to Belinda through the door. She emerged soon after, wearing blue trousers and an oversized jacket that she used to cover her head as she was escorted into a police vehicle and taken to Warilla police station. Some police remained, conducting a search of Belinda's premises to collect evidence against her.

On the afternoon of 1 June, Belinda van Krevel, with her solicitor Jeff David, appeared in Wollongong Local Court and was charged with the murder of her father, Jack van Krevel. Prosecuting Sergeant Bob Tattersall read the statement of facts to the court. He told the court Belinda was motivated by greed and revenge. She had spent a substantial proportion of the money from her father's estate buying various motor vehicles, and allegedly spending up to '\$1,000 a week on ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines'. Parts of her original statement to police after the murder were read to the court, then refuted with fresh allegations from witnesses that said Belinda, on the night of the murder, had 'made Vegemite sandwiches' and offered her father's killer marijuana and a lift home, which he refused.

Police acknowledged that they feared for the safety of their witnesses and strenuously opposed Belinda being granted bail. 'She will cover her tracks in her involvement in this murder,' Sergeant Tattersall told the court. 'Electronic surveillance and

witness statements have identified the accused offering persons \$2000 and a car to have these witnesses, along with her mother, murdered or seriously injured in an attempt to withhold their knowledge of her involvement in her father's murder.' Bob Tattersall said that further evidence from phone taps would be made available to the court, adding further weight to Belinda's involvement in the murder.

Representing Belinda, Jeff David told Magistrate Paul Johnson that the 'suggestions in the fact sheet are demonstrably incorrect', and that his client denied a 'large portion' of the prosecution's allegations. Mr David also said that Belinda had not been told who the witnesses were, so questioned how she could have made death threats against them.

Paul Johnson refused bail, citing the seriousness of the charge and his acceptance of the prosecution claims that witnesses were at risk. He adjourned the matter to 13 June. Belinda was held in custody at Mulawa Detention Centre for women at Silverwater in Sydney, part of the Department of Correctional Services' larger complex incorporating the men's remand and correctional centre.

When Belinda reappeared in Wollongong Local Court almost two weeks later, the Director of Public Prosecutions was also presenting its case to the Supreme Court to have the assets of Jack van Krevel's estate frozen. Police believed, from information they'd gathered, that Jack might have drawn up another will, leaving his granddaughter as beneficiary. They needed time to try and locate the new will, if indeed it existed. Either way, Belinda was being charged with her father's murder, making the inheritance 'proceeds of a crime'. The Supreme

Court made an interim order to freeze the money, a total of \$294 000. The order would remain while Belinda was in custody and until the courts had dealt with the charge against her.

While the Public Trustee was ordered to freeze her money, Belinda, dressed as she was at her first appearance, sat in the dock of the Local Court. The prosecution told Magistrate Paul Johnson they were still waiting on transcripts from the electronic surveillance before completing their brief of evidence.

Jeff David was anxious for a committal hearing to commence so he could cross-examine Crown witnesses. He questioned the reliability of the evidence against Belinda and told the court he'd be making an official application for the start of committal proceedings, giving him the opportunity to cross-examine Crown witnesses. No bail was requested and Belinda was remanded in custody to reappear on 4 July.

Because Belinda's only form of income was now unavailable to her — the assets from her father's estate — she could no longer afford to be represented by her solicitor, Jeff David. This meant Belinda would have to apply to Legal Aid for representation, beginning her defence from scratch with a new solicitor.

Through her new solicitor, Justin Hutchinson, Belinda applied for bail. Mr Hutchinson argued that his client had the means, the funds from her father's estate, and the opportunity to have fled the area well before police arrested her. He said Belinda 'plans to meet this charge and test it'.

Prosecutor Kim Stanley, opposing bail, reminded the court that Belinda had been 'frittering away her inheritance and was spending up to \$1000 a week on ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines'. Ms Stanley added that Belinda had no

community ties, was estranged from her family, and posed a threat to Crown witnesses. Despite a male friend of Belinda's being willing to put his house up as surety for bail, Magistrate Paul Johnson again refused the application for the same reasons he had done earlier.

On Monday 9 July, Belinda stood in line during the prison's pill parade, during which inmates are given prescribed drugs. Belinda had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and agoraphobia. Agoraphobia is popularly thought to be a fear of 'open spaces', but according to the Mental Health Association of New South Wales, agoraphobia is more accurately defined as the onset of panic attacks in given situations, which result in an avoidance of those situations for fear of reliving the attack. Doctors prescribed a treatment of anti-depressant and anti-psychotic medications.

Soon after the pill parade at 7.15 pm, Belinda and another inmate were reported missing when they didn't attend the prison rollcall. Officers at Mulawa conducted a full-scale search, using sniffer dogs, and the pair were officially declared escapees at 10.15 pm. An inspection of the perimeter fence revealed no obvious breach, no holes or any indication of tampering. Security cameras showed no activity either, and officers even searched outside the detention centre down to Parramatta River, which runs at the rear of the centre.

At 11.20, just four hours after the initial report, a guard spotted the two girls running between the dumpsters in the industrial block area of the complex. Belinda and her accomplice were chased and eventually apprehended. They were cuffed, searched and given medical examinations. No charges

were laid against Belinda or the other girl, but Belinda was disciplined and placed in segregation.

After the attempted escape, Belinda repeatedly refused to respect or observe the rules of the detention centre. It was recorded that between November 2001 and May 2002, Belinda was reprimanded sixteen times by authorities for intimidation, damaging or destroying property, using insulting, abusive and threatening language, and disobeying directions. In fact, eight of the sixteen offences were for intimidation. Mulawa's High Risk Management Committee dealt with the offences and decided to keep Belinda in segregation, eventually moving her from Mulawa to Parklea Correctional Centre in Sydney's western suburbs. Parklea is a male prison, but Belinda was kept in isolation from other prisoners and given her own courtyard to exercise in.

Keith Schreiber appeared at the second pre-sentence hearing on 24 August 2001. Dr Bruce Westmore had completed his assessment, but told the court he could not make a specific diagnosis beyond his belief that Schreiber was 'an extremely troubled individual', vulnerable, with a fragile ego, and in need of long-term psychotherapy. Schreiber had said he was a victim of child sex abuse by a teacher when in primary school, and that Jack van Krevel had also 'sexually touched' him. The more Dr Westmore analysed the details provided by Schreiber in relation to Jack's alleged abuse, the more the doctor was convinced the incident was minor.

Schreiber told the doctor that Belinda had suggested to

him in ‘a roundabout way’, asking him ‘hypothetically’, if he would kill her father. Dr Westmore felt he was being ‘less than complete’ when recounting Belinda’s involvement in the murder. Although he denied having had a sexual relationship with Belinda, Schreiber admitted, ‘in a way she did sort of influence me ... she was pretty manipulative’.

Schreiber expressed remorse for the crime, but Dr Westmore believed it was done on behalf of the family and not the victim. Schreiber had said, ‘Jack didn’t need to die, he didn’t deserve to die like that, his family didn’t deserve it either.’ Schreiber claimed he only intended to hurt Jack and to ‘scare’ him into admitting he sexually abused Valera, and that the murder was unexpected. His parole and probation officer confirmed that Schreiber became disturbed, as though suffering ‘a very deep personal hurt’, over Jack’s denial that he had ever molested his son. The officer also stated that Schreiber had become ‘distressed and worried’ when his name was read out at the trial as part of Valera’s ‘hit list’.

Dr Westmore couldn’t give a prognosis, saying only that Schreiber’s future was ‘most uncertain’. He couldn’t be sure whether Schreiber would reoffend, though the potential was there, and he believed paedophiles were ‘potentially at risk’ as Schreiber believed child abuse to be worse than murder.

Schreiber’s family also made submissions to Justice Peter Hidden. The submissions told of Schreiber’s early childhood, when the young Keith was a carefree and happy kid, until the day his parents announced they were divorcing. Schreiber was twelve and he felt rejected, unwanted and unloved, blaming himself for the breakdown of his family. He developed low self-esteem and would often refer to himself as being stupid and a

loser. At the time of the sentencing hearing, Schreiber had not seen his parents for four years. Both parents had remarried, but Schreiber was not welcomed by either step-parent.

It was observed by his sister that Schreiber was increasingly dependent on Valera, and then Belinda. Schreiber's grandmother, aunt and sister all believed Valera and Belinda to be malign influences on him. Teachers from Albion Park High School apparently had warned them that Valera was a 'bad' influence, but despite being disciplined, Schreiber still maintained the friendship. The night before the murder, the court was told, Schreiber and his sister argued. She warned her brother to end his relationship with Belinda, but Schreiber just stormed off.

After hearing all the submissions, Justice Hidden was left to decide Schreiber's fate.

The committal hearing into the charge of murder against Belinda van Krevel began on 26 November. At the start of proceedings the prosecution added the charge of 'solicit a murder'. Belinda pleaded not guilty to murder, and did not enter a plea to soliciting.

Belinda's defence counsel, solicitor Brenda Duchon, had requested ten Crown witnesses be cross-examined. They included Belinda's mother Elizabeth Carroll, Scott Sunderland, former fiancé Dustin Barden, her former school friend Melissa Ross, and Schreiber's sister Annette.

Elizabeth Carroll repeated her claim that Belinda had told her she was going to have Schreiber kill her father, paying him \$2000. She said Belinda showed no remorse over her father's

death, and when she asked her why, Belinda replied, ‘... it’s a bit late now, the dumb cunt is six foot under’. According to Elizabeth, Belinda laughed loudly and said Jack ‘... deserved every bit of it ... every bit of what he copped’.

Scott Sunderland told the court what he claimed Belinda had told him about the night of her father’s murder, including her asking him to kill Elizabeth Carroll. Under cross-examination, Sunderland, who was serving time, assured the court he had not been given any inducement to appear for the Crown.

Dustin Barden claimed he was shown Jack’s bedroom soon after the murder saying he ‘saw a bloody hell of a lot of mess, with blood and shit all over the cupboard and walls’. When Tia asked what was happening to her ‘Poppy’, Barden claimed Belinda told him she had said to her daughter, ‘... he’s been fucking chopped up’.

Belinda’s former school friend Melissa Ross took the stand, telling the court of the occasions she had overheard Belinda request that someone kill her father for \$2000. Belinda, if nothing else, appeared to be consistent in the amount of money she offered. Melissa went on to say that after Jack’s death Belinda had boasted she’d inherited everything. Melissa had continued to be friends with Belinda till the two had a ‘punch up’ sometime after Jack’s murder, a fact brought to the court’s attention by Ms Duchen. In her statement to police, Melissa had said Belinda complained to her about Jack hitting her, but when Ms Duchen asked Melissa about this, the former friend said she had no recollection of the conversations. When shown the statement, Melissa replied it was ‘not correct’.

During the committal hearing the court heard about

Jack's desire to change his will, and the fact that Belinda had been sending money to Schreiber in gaol, and passing on messages of love and support to her father's killer. Belinda had even written a short letter to Schreiber while in prison herself, which read in part, 'I'm happy except for the fact that both you and Mark are in there. I miss you heaps, you Keith the thing I lose [sic] most is that no one really knows how much we trust and care about each other. I mean I've been so close to you for many years and no one could make up that they've done more for me than what you have. I'll always look up to you and no one will ever come anywhere near as close to me as you are'.

After hearing two days worth of evidence, Magistrate Paul Johnson found Belinda van Krevel had a case to answer, and that the prosecution had presented enough evidence to satisfy a jury beyond reasonable doubt that Belinda had committed the two offences of murder and soliciting a murder. The matter was referred to the Supreme Court for a trial date to be announced.

Justice Peter Hidden handed down his judgement of Keith Andrew Schreiber on 19 December 2001. After carefully considering all the submissions from both the prosecution and the defence, Justice Hidden acknowledged that Schreiber was in a 'disturbed mental state' at the time of the killing and strongly believed Jack had sexually interfered with both Valera and Belinda's daughter, Tia. He didn't accept Schreiber's claim to Dr Westmore that he didn't intend to kill Jack, but accepted Schreiber's statement to police that he went to the house motivated by hate and revenge.

Justice Hidden believed Schreiber's dependence on both Valera and Belinda, and his mental state at the time, were contributing factors to the murder. Aware that Belinda's trial had yet to be heard, the judge agreed Schreiber's actions were the result of her influence, though to what extent, the judge reserved, would be a matter to be decided based on evidence at her trial. Justice Hidden could only go on the evidence presented to him, and couldn't say precisely what her role in the murder had been.

Schreiber's work history and, until his arrest, his having met the obligations of his community service stood in favour with the judge. The statements submitted on behalf of his family also helped him. Justice Hidden felt, given Dr Westmore's comments, that Schreiber was not a continuing risk to society should he get the treatment needed while in prison, and then have the support of his extended family once released. The judge also took into account Schreiber's plea of guilty, which Paul Conlon SC agreed was made at the earliest possible time to save the court the expense of a trial.

With all these factors in Schreiber's favour, but not ignoring the severity of the crime, which was described as brutal and premeditated, Justice Hidden accepted that Schreiber would benefit from a lengthy non-parole period. The judge acknowledged the statement given to the court addressing the loss suffered by the van Krevel family, and expressed his deepest sympathy, agreeing the crime demanded a heavy sentence. He also added that, regardless of what he had said about Schreiber's motivations for committing the murder, nothing he said should be taken as an acceptance that Jack van Krevel had molested any of his children or granddaughter.

Had Schreiber allowed his case to go to trial, the judge warned he would have been looking at something in the order of twenty years, but given his early plea, Justice Hidden handed down a sentence of sixteen years. He included a non-parole period of twelve years, meaning Schreiber will be eligible for parole on 18 August 2012.

2002-03

20] THE END OF A BLOODY CHAPTER

ON MONDAY 22 JULY 2002, THE TRIAL AGAINST BELINDA Jean van Krevel began in the Supreme Court in Darlinghurst, an inner Sydney suburb. There were two charges, murder and soliciting a murder. Earlier, at Belinda's arraignment on 12 April, her defence counsel John Stratton spoke with Crown prosecutor Terry Thorpe. Mr Stratton told the prosecutor that Belinda would plead guilty to the lesser charge of soliciting if they didn't pursue the charge of murder. Mr Thorpe rejected the offer, believing the Crown had a compelling case against Belinda and would satisfy a jury that she had murdered her father.

With both sides unable to reach a compromise, a jury of eight women and four men was empanelled and Justice John Dowd called for the prosecution to make their opening address.

Terry Thorpe described to the jury the events the Crown believed occurred on the night of Jack van Krevel's murder, using Belinda's statement and the statements given by Scott

Sunderland and Dustin Barden, which implicated Belinda in assisting Schreiber to kill her father. As for Belinda's motivation, Mr Thorpe said, 'The murder was motivated firstly by hatred the accused had for her father and, secondly, it was based on the fact that she knew should he die, she would receive a substantial amount of money.'

The Crown based its case on the various witnesses who had come forward telling police that Belinda had asked people to kill her father. The main witnesses for the prosecution were Belinda's ex-boyfriend Scott Sunderland, who had admitted Belinda had tried to get him to kill her mother, Elizabeth Carroll, to stop her giving evidence. The other was former fiancé Dustin Barden, who'd been shown the bedroom after Jack was murdered and who also stated that Belinda had told him of her involvement, leaving the window open and the implements for Schreiber to use. It was suggested that the prosecution would call up to forty-four witnesses to prove their case.

Photos of the crime scene were handed to the jury. Terry Thorpe warned the jury that they would hear suggestions of 'satanism and other unsavoury practices' during proceedings. He asked the eight women and four men to 'put aside any feelings of sympathy, prejudice or feelings of upset or revulsion' and to make determinations in a 'cool, calm and unemotional way'. Mr Thorpe said the jury had two issues to consider when hearing the evidence. They would have to decide if Belinda and Schreiber had been party to a joint criminal enterprise, or whether Belinda had assisted, encouraged, persuaded and proposed to Schreiber to kill her father.

John Stratton told the jury that the van Krevel family was, 'to say the least, dysfunctional'. He told them of Mark Valera's incarceration for life after having killed David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, and his allegations of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of his father. Not wanting to disparage the reputation of Jack van Krevel, Mr Stratton did say it would be necessary for the jury to hear the allegations made against the deceased. He told the jury, 'It's important that you hear about this to understand what was going on in this little family.'

Mr Stratton argued that Schreiber was a 'very disturbed young man', and had his own reasons for killing Jack, particularly as he was a good friend of Valera's. In response to Elizabeth Carroll's statement that Belinda had told her she'd contracted Schreiber, Mr Stratton claimed that phone intercepts would show Elizabeth was motivated by her desire to secure her share of Jack van Krevel's estate. He pointed out that Elizabeth had been estranged from her children for almost twenty years and only appeared back on the scene when Valera was charged.

The phone intercept Mr Stratton referred to occurred when Elizabeth called Belinda to ask for money. Apparently, according to those who have heard the tape, Elizabeth begins the conversation in a friendly manner, asking after Belinda's wellbeing, and then she asks her daughter if she'd be happy to 'share' some of the inheritance. Belinda refuses and the two women launch into an argument.

Keith Schreiber, although unwilling, had been called by the prosecution to give evidence. As he waited in the holding cells under the court, Joe Cassar decided to pay him a visit. Joe

wanted to know what, if anything, Schreiber would say. Their meeting was brief. Schreiber told Joe, 'I ain't no dog.' Dog is slang for a prisoner who betrays the confidence of another inmate. Joe didn't attempt to ask anything further and left. It was obvious Schreiber would never give evidence against Belinda, should there be anything for him to tell.

When Schreiber was called to the witness box, he told the court he had nothing to say. Schreiber was excused. As he left the witness box, he glanced back towards Belinda. It had been agreed earlier by Terry Thorpe and John Stratton that Schreiber's video of his police interview and walk-through would be shown in place of him giving evidence. Schreiber appearing in the witness box was just a formality before introducing the video.

The jury heard everything Schreiber had to say about the murder, his depressed state of mind and his admission that Belinda had asked him to kill her father, but that he didn't think she was serious. They also heard Schreiber admit he hoped what he'd done — killing Jack — made Belinda and Valera happy.

At the start of the trial, John Stratton had subpoenaed the New South Wales Police Service to provide all background information related to the investigation and the witnesses. The Crown argued the subpoena was too broad, but John Stratton was adamant. By Wednesday 24 July, the Director of Public Prosecutions had received all the material requested by Belinda's counsel that was to be passed on. Reviewing the information the prosecution decided there was a problem with one of their witnesses. In fact, it was a 'key' witness in proving the charge of murder against Belinda.

On Wednesday 24 July, Jack van Krevel's family and friends were outside the court. Terry Thorpe approached Jack's sisters just before the recommencement of the trial. He had news for them, but it wasn't good news. According to Anne Stanford, Mr Thorpe hurriedly told the sisters that, because of information received, the trial was likely to be aborted. There was no time for discussions as he made his way back into the court. Everyone resumed their seats and Jack's family and friends waited anxiously to find out what had happened.

Mr Thorpe had previously told the judge that due to the material subpoenaed by the defence, the prosecution would not be calling a key witness to give evidence. At the recommencement of proceedings, Justice John Dowd informed the jury that a witness with 'fairly significant' evidence would not be called. Justice Dowd explained, 'The Crown has given consideration as to the propriety of calling that particular witness and has indicated he doesn't propose to call that witness.'

Because of this change, the judge decided to discharge the jury. The decision was taken because the prosecution had already outlined to the jury what the witness was to say against Belinda. The judge didn't think it fair to Belinda for the trial to continue with the current jury when that jury knew of evidence that would not be presented formally and could prejudice them in their deliberations.

As a result the trial was aborted. Justice Dowd ordered the Crown to pay the costs of Belinda's legal aid. The Director of Public Prosecutions then had to decide if they had enough evidence with their remaining witnesses to support the charge of murder against Belinda.

The witness who caused the trial to be aborted was Scott Sunderland. According to John Stratton the material subpoenaed revealed that Sunderland had attempted to blackmail Belinda, asking her for money in return for his silence prior to the trial. The conversation had been recorded by police phone taps. Friends of Jack's allege that they were told Sunderland had fabricated his evidence, that he was a 'chronic liar' and had been receiving counselling. Mr Stratton did say that both Scott Sunderland and Dustin Barden were inconsistent in what they were alleging Belinda had told them, and that their recollections varied from what they first told police. For Mr Stratton, the inconsistencies were too many to accept they would make credible witnesses.

Jack van Kreveld's family and friends hoped the prosecution would continue to fight the case against Belinda. As with Mark Valera, there was no love lost between Jack's sisters and brother and their niece. They wanted to see her punished for what she had done.

On 3 February 2003, a new trial began. Barrister Terry Thorpe again represented the Crown, and John Stratton appeared for Belinda. A new jury was empanelled, but the trial never began. There were several adjournments, and even before an opening address was heard, a deal was struck between the prosecution and defence. Much to the sadness of the van Kreveld family, the Director of Public Prosecutions decided they didn't have a strong enough case to prove a charge of murder, but they could prove the lesser charge of solicit a murder. They amended the indictment against Belinda to soliciting. Once the charge was changed on 10 February, Belinda immediately

pleaded guilty. Justice Barr dismissed the jury, and requested counsels to begin submissions for sentencing.

Soliciting means that a person has asked someone to commit a crime, but is in no way responsible for the other person's actions, and has not assisted with or taken part in the criminal act. In other words, despite voicing a desire to have someone murdered, it is beyond that person's control if the other person decides to kill. The offence is in asking for someone to be killed, and not in the killing of that person, should that eventuate. Once Belinda admitted she'd solicited Schreiber to kill her father, the Crown lost all hope of convicting her of murder, or being in any way responsible for the actual act of murder.

Unlike the O'Hearn family, who found the people from the Director of Public Prosecutions helpful and always available to explain the machinations of the judicial system, the van Krevel family had the opposite experience. Jack's sisters apparently felt 'left out' and 'in the dark' as decisions were made without any consultation or explanation. They felt they were being treated as spectators rather than as the family of the deceased. Belinda's aborted trial was a very bitter experience for both Jack's family and his friends.

Almost two and a half years after Jack van Krevel had been brutally murdered in his Albion Park home, his daughter Belinda faced the New South Wales Supreme Court for sentencing for soliciting a murder. Justice Graham Barr accepted Belinda's plea of guilty on Monday 10 February 2003, and began taking submissions to decide what sentence to impose.

Belinda was looking at a maximum of twenty-five years gaol for asking Keith Schreiber to murder her father.

Prosecuting barrister Terry Thorpe introduced evidence he had given during the earlier trial, explaining Belinda's motivations for soliciting Schreiber to kill her father. He even had the court view a video of an interview Belinda gave to a television news crew after her brother's jury verdict, blaming her father for 'driving' Valera to commit the murders. The autopsy report on the injuries suffered by Jack van Krevel was also tendered to show the court the ferocity and brutality of the attack, along with Schreiber's admissions to police after his arrest.

Justice Graham Barr adjourned the hearing, allowing Belinda to undergo psychiatric assessment.

On 21 March, John Stratton announced to the Supreme Court that the lead investigating officer in the case against Belinda had been accused of stealing earrings belonging to his client, Belinda van Krevel. The information had come to the notice of the defence from the material subpoenaed during the first trial. It was alleged by a female officer that John Northfield stole the earrings and gave them to her, for her to wear. At the time of the allegation, Belinda's earrings had been returned to the property room. The earrings were valued at around \$10, though it was alleged that John Northfield took the items as a 'trophy' during a search of Belinda's unit. Sergeant John Woods was assigned to investigate the matter and had the earrings DNA tested. The results found that the female officer making the complaint had worn the earrings. She also said her daughter had worn them, but there was no DNA evidence to

support the claim. John Northfield strenuously denied the allegation.

The Director of Public Prosecutions was notified and found there was no evidence to support a charge against Detective Northfield, but an internal police investigation into the allegation and the conduct of police involved in the case against Belinda van Krevel followed and is currently in progress.

John Stratton brought the matter to the attention of the court to cast doubt over the handling of exhibits in the case against Belinda. It should be said that whatever the outcome of the police internal enquiry, it will have no bearing on Belinda's admissions of guilt or her sentencing.

In addition John Stratton condemned the authorities of Mulawa Detention Centre for allowing his client to live in 'solitary confinement' for the last two years. He told the court that Belinda had no contact with anyone, except when she called over a high brick fence to other inmates. In the last year, Belinda had been moved from Mulawa to Parklea Correction Centre, where she was let out at 9.30 am and allowed to roam a five by three metre courtyard by herself till she was locked up again at 3 pm. Since Belinda's attempted breakout at Mulawa, and including her other disciplinary offences, she had been classified as an 'extreme high risk' prisoner. John Stratton explained how Belinda had gained 40 kilograms since being arrested, never had a mirror to view herself in the two years she was in 'solitary', and was put in chains whenever she had visitors, including when her five-year-old daughter, Tia, was taken to Parklea by her paternal grandmother.

The Deputy Governor of Mulawa, Patrick Aboud,

defended the conditions, explaining Belinda was in ‘segregation’ rather than solitary confinement. The difference, he told the court, was that Belinda had a television and was allowed visits from welfare workers, her legal team, and friends. Mr About told the court that Belinda’s segregation was of her own doing and if she were to improve her attitude and behaviour the High Risk Management Committee would allow her back into the general population. He emphasised that how Belinda spent her time in prison was dependent solely upon her own behaviour.

The court heard from psychiatrist Dr Nielsen, who assessed Belinda and referred to earlier assessments from two other psychiatrists who’d been seeing her since her arrest. Dr Nielsen concluded that Belinda did not have any psychotic illness, but he did believe her symptoms of severe anxiety were related to a depersonalisation as part of a post-traumatic stress disorder caused in part by abuse during childhood. While Belinda denied taking any illicit drugs to Dr Nielsen, he believed she wasn’t being totally honest with him or the other psychiatrists. One of her earlier assessments gave a history of extensive use of stimulants since the age of fourteen and ‘amphetamine-induced pseudo hallucinations’.

Belinda couldn’t understand why she was being kept isolated. She didn’t believe she had done anything to warrant such harsh conditions. Dr Nielsen thought Belinda’s confinement aggravated her mental state, along with her separation from Tia, Valera’s trial, and her grief at her father’s death. She told the psychiatrist she loved Jack and wished he were still alive. He admitted that, from their meeting, Belinda would distort the

facts and appeared to have no comprehension or self-awareness of her emotional state. Dr Nielszen thought Belinda would improve once she had a sense of knowing what her future was, and had participated in long-term therapy.

The admissions Jack van Krevel made in court during Valera's trial were used to describe the environment Belinda had grown up in. The court heard that Belinda had become a 'mother figure', tending to the housework, fixing meals and performing other domestic duties for her father and brother, while she had been without her own mother since she was two. It was stated that Belinda was beaten by her father, sometimes to the point where she would 'wet herself', and that Tia had told Belinda that Jack had sexually interfered with her. It was also claimed that Belinda's relationship with Schreiber was casual and that she didn't think he would kill her father.

At the close of the defence's submission, John Stratton asked Justice Barr, when determining the length of imprisonment, to consider the 'harsh' conditions his client had experienced through the years.

Justice Graham Barr handed down his judgement on 4 April 2003. He addressed each of the points made by the Crown prosecution on the severity of the murder, but rejected the evidence because, whether the murder happened or not, it had no bearing on the charge of soliciting. The charge didn't allow for Belinda to be found responsible whether Schreiber killed her father or not. While the murder was horrific, Justice Barr could not include the fact that it happened, or the details of it, in deciding Belinda's fate.

Schreiber's video of his police interview was viewed by the

judge, who felt Schreiber was being less than honest with the detectives when telling them whether he thought Belinda was serious or not. Justice Barr believed Schreiber was protecting Belinda. Likewise, the judge didn't accept all that Belinda had told the psychiatrists. He didn't believe Belinda would not have known, given Schreiber's fragile mental state, that he wouldn't commit the murder. The judge rejected her claims that her relationship with Schreiber wasn't serious, and didn't believe she had shown any remorse over her father's death. Justice Barr could find no evidence to prove the allegations that Jack van Krevel had sexually abused Tia or Valera, but that didn't mean Belinda did not believe the allegations to be true.

Justice Barr agreed with Dr Nielssen that Belinda's behaviour might improve and that she might be less dependent on the prescribed medication once a sentence was handed down, making it possible for her to attend counselling and increase her chances of rehabilitation.

Having reached his decision, Justice Graham Barr sentenced Belinda van Krevel to six years imprisonment with a non-parole period of four years. The sentence would commence at the time of her arrest, 1 June 2001, which meant Belinda would be eligible for parole on 31 May 2005. Belinda welcomed the sentence with a broad smile. John Stratton conceded it was a 'good result'.

To the van Krevel family and friends of Jack's the sentence appeared 'inadequate'. They were hoping for a harsher penalty, but Justice Barr gave Belinda a sentence that sat in the mid-range of other sentences for the same crime, soliciting a murder. From 1996 to 2002 fourteen sentences were handed down for

convictions on this offence. The sentence most imposed was six years, with only a small percentage of convictions receiving ten year maximums.

Jack van Krevel loved his kids greatly, and despite the way they treated him, he would defend them against anyone who criticised them. He always found excuses for their actions, blaming himself for his own shortcomings if need be. They had their reasons and they had their good side and Jack would be the first to point them out. He was quick to forgive and expected other people to do the same. He never wanted people to think badly of them.

Up to the time of his death, Jack always hoped Mark's sentence would be reduced and that he would one day be free. Those who knew Jack, however, feel he thought differently about Belinda. With her erratic behaviour, drug taking, and all that happened during Mark's trial, Jack had given up on his daughter a long time ago and was concerned about what influence Belinda would have on Tia. It was Jack's concern that was the reason he wanted to play a large part in his granddaughter's life. Would Jack be disappointed with Belinda's sentencing? According to friends, yes. Jack would prefer Tia be cared for by her parental grandparents, where she is now, than be returned to Belinda.

21] AFTERMATH

THERE'S A SAYING THAT GOES, 'TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS'. It may be true for most people, but for the O'Hearn, Arkell and van Krevel families, the events of June 1998 and August 2000 are as vivid as if they happened yesterday. At the time of writing, the O'Hearn family were preparing for the wedding of one of David's nieces. David was her godfather and they shared a close relationship. The day will be as festive as a wedding could be, but amongst the O'Hearn family there will be a sense of loss. David's brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews are still distressed and angry by what happened. Some have coped better than others. Christmases, birthdays and the anniversary of David's death are all emotional occasions, but each relative deals with their pain in their own way. No fuss is made. They try and get on with life as best they can, but they'll never forget.

Some things have changed. The corner store has been renovated into two units. Some family members still can't bring themselves to look at it as they drive past along Kanahooka Road. They still see David standing outside taking a break, and remember being able to drop in for a chat and a cuppa. They lock their screen doors, where once they were left unsecured,

and the family meets once every six weeks just to catch up and spend time with each other. David's sudden and tragic death has taught them that life is both precious and fragile. The O'Hearns were always a close family, but David's death has brought them even closer. While it is hard enough for them to accept David's death, the rumours and allegations made about David by the media and by Valera only add to their pain. In fact, it has made the healing process even more difficult. Years after, David's family still overhear people talking about David as though they knew him, reiterating the inaccuracies and falsehoods propagated by the media and Valera.

The Arkell and van Krevel families have become almost reclusive, attempting to put the events well behind them. The van Krevel family, according to Jack's friends, have disowned both Mark and Belinda. The Arkell family home where Frank lived for almost all his life has been bulldozed and developed into townhouses. Both families were contacted for this book, the Arkell family declining after long consideration, while the van Krevels didn't reply to requests. The responses weren't surprising. Nothing can bring back their loved ones and, like the O'Hearns, the Arkells' experience with the media affected them badly. Being a public figure, Frank left himself open to scrutiny and the family accepted that but it is one thing to be criticised as a politician, and quite another to be accused of child sex offences. No doubt, Frank being identified as witness for the Police Royal Commission and the subsequent allegations caused great grief to all his family. Where once his family lived in the shadow of his achievements, they now find themselves on the defensive. Then, after Frank's murder, the family

watched helplessly as certain members of the media lashed out and venomously smeared Frank's name, while others misreported the facts of his committal hearing and labelled him a paedophile, when in fact it had never been proved. It's no wonder the Arkells are media shy.

After the events, and despite their grief, the issues raised by relatives, friends, and even the investigating police, relate to the way the media portrayed the victims. Both television and newspapers ran stories of people claiming they were victims of David and Frank, and that the two men knew each other and were involved in a paedophile racket together. Certainly the police found these stories bothersome in that they would divert resources to investigate the claims only to find them untrue. Even now, there are people in Wollongong who believe they know the 'truth' of what happened, based solely on the reporting at the time. Suggestions of a conspiracy are also rife, that the investigation was orchestrated to cover a larger paedophile ring involving prominent members of Wollongong society. Unfortunately, some people will believe whatever they want, regardless of the facts.

Russell Oxford and Joe Cassar are particularly annoyed by what they feel was misleading post-trial reporting that reflected poorly on Jack van Krevel. 'After the trial they [the media] ran with the line, "after alleged abuse from his father" . . . I couldn't believe it . . . anyone with a susceptible mind would think it was true, even after a jury and the judge had dismissed the allegations,' Russell recalled. For Russell and Joe, Jack van Krevel's death was futile and senseless, as were the murders of David and Frank. Russell and Joe remember Jack as an ordinary bloke,

probably not the best parent by his own admissions, but not as bad as Valera's defence tried to suggest, and not someone who deserved to be portrayed the way he was by his son. Still, mud sticks and Belinda certainly used it to her advantage.

With regards to Strike Force Lincoln, Paul Mayger, Russell and Joe each have their own view of the investigation and what it meant to them. Paul, having commanded the operation, sees it as a breakthrough in how the separate investigations were coordinated through the use of information technology. He also applauds the achievements made by his team. Four murders, including a ten-year-old unsolved case, with three perpetrators charged and convicted. The results were quick, taking between six and eight months, while some homicides can take years to solve. As this book goes to print, there is another unsolved case, reopened during Lincoln's operation, that remains ongoing. Should a suspect be identified and brought to justice, Strike Force Lincoln will have achieved its fifth result. The only downside for the investigators was Valera handing himself in. Valera's action stole some of the thunder from the team, as few people realised how close detectives were to arresting him. In fact, many people still believe that Valera would not have been caught if he hadn't handed himself to police. Russell is forever the pragmatist. He views Lincoln as another homicide investigation, trying to find the perpetrator of a murder, irrespective of who the victim is or how they died. Elements of the operation, however, are used by Russell to instruct police in how to conduct a thorough investigation and build a solid brief of evidence. Lincoln's success was a result of good teamwork, communication and a methodical approach to

AFTERMATH

every piece of evidence. For Joe Cassar, who was relatively new to Homicide, Lincoln proved an invaluable learning exercise, particularly having the skills of Paul and Russell to draw from. He uses the experience gained from Lincoln in current investigations.

Although Strike Force Revin was successful in building a case against Keith Schreiber, Joe concedes that the brief of evidence against Belinda wasn't the strongest, which is why there was a lot of plea-bargaining that resulted in the charge of murder being dropped. It was a sad end to the whole saga, but then, police can only use what is available to them. Also, the allegation made against John Northfield was an unfortunate postscript to an otherwise professional investigation.

In respect to the perpetrators, the two that stand out for the investigating police are Mark Valera and Christopher Robinson. They stand out for reasons of their age and personalities. Both men, when teenagers, committed one of the greatest crimes against humanity, yet at a glance they couldn't be more different. Valera appeared deceptively average and well mannered, repeatedly apologising to police for any uncontrolled indiscretion. Robinson, on the other hand, has been described by detectives as a threatening, street-wise, little thug. Two people, poles apart in appearance, both young and both killing for the thrill.

There are no winners in this sad tale and no excuses to justify the actions of Valera, Schreiber and van Krevel — just three people who, motivated by little else than a perverse fascination, anger and selfishness, ruined their own lives.

APPENDIX

CONVICTIONS RESULTING FROM STRIKE FORCE LINCOLN:

Mark Mala Valera — Goulburn Correctional Centre (Super Max). Serving two life terms for the murders of David O’Hearn and Frank Arkell in 1998. At 21 years of age, the youngest offender to be given a life sentence. Never to be released.

Barrie Alan Hodge — John Morony Correctional Centre, Windsor. Sentenced to 15 years with a non-parole period of seven years for the murder of Leo Press in 1988. Eligible for parole on 11 July 2007.

Christopher Andrew Robinson — Goulburn Correctional Centre. Sentenced to 45 years with a non-parole period of 35 years for the murder of Trevor Parkin in 1997. Eligible for parole on 21 January 2034.

CONVICTIONS RESULTING FROM STRIKE FORCE REVIN:

Keith Andrew Schreiber — Lithgow Correctional Centre. Sentenced to 16 years with a non-parole period of 12 years. Eligible for parole on 18 August 2012.

Belinda Jean van Krevel — Mulawa Detention Centre, Silverwater Complex. Sentenced to six years with a non-parole period of four years for soliciting to murder. Eligible for parole on 31 May 2005.

CURRENT POSITION OF OFFICERS INVOLVED IN STRIKE FORCE LINCOLN AND LEMA:

Assistant Commissioner Clive Small — seconded to the New South Wales Premier's Department

Detective Chief Superintendent Rod Harvey — retired in 2002

Detective Superintendent Ron Smith — retired in 2003

Detective Inspector Paul Mayger — now acting Commander Homicide Squad

Detective Sergeant Russell Oxford — now Detective Inspector Homicide

Detective Sergeant Joe Cassar — returned to Homicide from Lake Illawarra LAC

Detective Sergeant David Laidlaw — now Detective Inspector at State Crime Command

Detective Sergeant Stuart Wilkins (now Detective Inspector) — Acting Superintendent of 'Vikings Unit' targeting illegal firearms

Detective Sergeant Wayne Hayes — now Detective Inspector Homicide

Detective Senior Constable Mal Lanyon (now Detective Sergeant Homicide) — Acting Inspector Homicide

Detective Senior Constable Pamela Young (now Detective Sergeant Homicide) — Acting Detective Inspector Child Protection and Sex Crimes Squad

Detective Senior Constable Peter Cotter — Detective Inspector Robbery and Serious Crime Squad

Detective Senior Constable Jeff Dickinson — formerly Warilla Detectives, no longer a serving police officer

Detective Senior Constable Neil Grey — formerly Bega Detectives, now holds the rank of Detective Sergeant

Detective Senior Constable Jeff Bennett — formerly with Batemans Bay Detectives, now attached to Nowra Detectives

Detective Senior Constable Steve Ashton — formerly from Cooma Detectives, now Detective Sergeant

Detective Senior Constable Jason Woods — formerly from Queanbeyan Detectives, now Detective Sergeant

Detective Senior Constable Chris Hindes — formerly from the Ulladulla Detectives, now Detective Sergeant

Detective Senior Constable Paul Johnstone — formerly from Nowra Detective, now Uniform Sergeant

Detective Senior Constable Audrey Pearson — still serving in the Wollongong area

Detective Senior Constable Steve Davies — still serving in the Wollongong area

Detective Senior Constable Janet Chadwick — still serving in the Wollongong area

Detective Senior Constable Mark Cracknell — still serving in the Wollongong area

Detective Senior Constable Adrian Beck — still serving in the Wollongong area

Detective Senior Constable Mark Robinson — now Detective Sergeant stationed at Byron Bay, north coast of New South Wales

Detective Senior Constable Sean Lynch — now Uniform Sergeant, Wollongong

Detective Sergeant Barry Doherty — still with Crime Scene Unit, Wollongong

Detective Senior Constable Ron De Bruin — still with Crime Scene Unit, Wollongong

Senior Constable Morrie Gallina (now Sergeant) — performed peace keeping duties in Bougainville and East Timor

Detective Senior Constable John Northfield — left police service, medically unfit

OFFICERS INVOLVED IN STRIKE FORCE REVIN:

Detective Sergeant Joe Cassar — then attaché to Warilla Detectives

Detective Senior Constable John Northfield

Detective Senior Constable Jamie Williams — Warilla Detectives

Detective Senior Constable Craig Fleuren — Warilla Detectives

NB: There were other police involved in the first 24 hours surrounding Schreiber's charging but the above listed officers contributed more to the investigations surrounding the conviction of Keith Schreiber and Belinda van Krevel.

ENDNOTES

In recreating the events in this book, a number of different sources have been used, including, but not limited to, over 500 newspaper articles, police statements, court transcripts, and 21 hours of recorded interviews with police, and friends and relatives of the victims.

The newspaper articles spanned the 1980s to 2003, sourced from News Limited and Fairfax publications: the *Australian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Sun Herald* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. Mention must be made of the *Sydney Morning Herald's Good Weekend* feature, 'Death Surrounds Her', by Greg Bearup, published on 19 May 2001. The article earned Greg Bearup one of journalism's highest accolades, the Walkley Award, for magazine feature writing.

Another source of information was witness statements taken by police during the investigations of the murders of David O'Hearn and Frank Arkell, as well as interviews with the primary investigators in both enquiries, and into the murder of Jack van Krevel.

Transcripts from the New South Wales Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeal were also sourced — Regina (R) vs. Hodge, R vs. Robinson, R vs. Valera, R vs. van Krevel, and R vs. Schreiber.

Interviews were also conducted between the author and the family of David O'Hearn and friends of Jack van Krevel.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

ILLUSTRATED SECTION

Page 1: David O'Hearn, courtesy of the O'Hearn family.

Page 2: Frank Arkell, courtesy of Fairfax; granny flat, courtesy of NSW Police.

Page 3: Russell Oxford, courtesy of Fairfax; envelope, courtesy of NSW Police.

Page 4: Book, courtesy NSW Police

Page 5: Surveillance photo and police photo, courtesy of NSW Police; birthday photo courtesy of the Stanford family.

Page 6: Gym bag, courtesy of NSW Police; Schreiber, courtesy of Fairfax.

Page 7: Jack van Krevel, courtesy of the Stanford family.

Page 8: Childhood photos of Belinda, courtesy of the Stanford family. Belinda at Mark's trial, courtesy of Fairfax.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to the O’Hearn family for their honesty and courage; to the New South Wales Police, especially Detective Inspector Paul Mayger, Detective Inspector Russell Oxford and Detective Sergeant Joe Cassar for their time, candidness, and frankness in discussing all the issues surrounding the different cases. Thanks also to forensic psychiatrist Rod Milton, the staff at Wollongong City Council, Department of Corrective Services, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Public Defenders Office, particularly John Stratton SC. To Anne and Peter Stanford, who lost a good mate, and to all the others who didn’t want to be named, but offered their stories and memories. Thank you to Jeff, for your skills with the keyboard and help in explaining things to me. And finally to Manisha, Selwa, Sue, Andrea, Jo and my family and friends for their support and patience.