

Murders in SYDNEY

Stuart Gustafson

America's International Travel Expert[®]

Early morning

Monday, 30 November

Throughout New South Wales, Australia

“Killer arrested!” exclaimed the street corner newspaper vendor. “Read the full details of the arrest for the killings in the Prince Albert, the Tooey Rocks, and on the Bridge. It’s exclusive only in the *Tribune!*” The hawker continued his routine of showing the headlines, taking the dollar coin, and then targeting some new customers. If a driver showed interest, the newsman would venture out into the traffic to make a sale, but he tended to stay mostly on the sidewalk near his dwindling stack of newspapers. It was a good day to be selling newspapers. Headlines always sold more papers, and sensational headlines sold them even faster.

The headlines on the morning’s *Sydney Tribune* shouted in celebration **Killer Arrested in 3 “Famous Sites” Murders!** The continuing front-page article was intended to be sensational, contain exclusive information, and deliver a sense of relief to the inhabitants of Sydney and the outlying areas of New South Wales. Whether the article achieved its intended results would remain unknown, but most newsstands sold out of all their copies before 0830 hours, even with more copies printed than on a normal Monday morning. But, then, this wasn’t a normal Monday morning.

The article continued,

In a televised press conference last evening, New South Wales Police Commissioner Colin Martin announced the arrest of Harold Steinberg, a 42-year old man from Landeen Bush, a small community in northwest New South Wales. Steinberg is being held without bond for the three “Famous Sites” murders as they’ve been called because of where the bodies were found: Prince Albert Winery, Tooey Rocks Nature Preserve, and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It’s not clear if Steinberg has

retained the services of a defence lawyer, and a motive has not yet been released.

Commissioner Martin was tight-lipped on details, but he did say that more information would be released following Steinberg's arraignment in NSW Supreme Court today. The Commissioner did say, "The fine residents of Sydney and all of New South Wales can sleep comfortably knowing that the perpetrator of these heinous crimes has been apprehended and is in custody."

Full accounts of the murders, previously well-publicized in all the media, were once again provided in case there was a reader who had not yet heard about them. The locals knew the details, as the murders had commanded front page news in the papers and they'd also been the lead-in reports on the radio and the television. The grisly details of the sinister crimes added to the appeal for many readers, and the reporters were more than willing to cater to that desire. This morning's newspaper also contained additional advertisements as the publisher knew that more copies would be sold, and he was certainly eager to cash in on the increased advertising revenues.

Foot traffic was expected to be extraordinarily busy around the Supreme Court offices later today between Philip and Macquarie Streets where Harold Steinberg would be arraigned. Although the three "Famous Sites" murder victims were complete unknowns and not famous in their own right, the crusty residents of Sydney were not appreciative of anyone misusing or desecrating places they considered sacred. And the locations of the three murders—the Prince Albert Winery, the Tooley Rocks Nature Preserve, and the Sydney Harbour Bridge—fit into the category of sacred sites.

As the sun climbed higher into the morning sky, the pleasant November day began to give way to a day filled with intrigue and drama. The projected high temperature for the downtown Sydney area was a picture-postcard 31° Celsius (86° Fahrenheit); Bondi Beach was to be a little warmer with mild onshore breezes. There was a high level of security already in place on Philip Street,

Macquarie Street, and all around Hyde Park to the south. Barricades had been set up the day before, and both uniformed and plain-clothes police officers were afoot on many blocks around the area. Bomb-sniffing dogs would surprise an occasional person as the dogs seemed to be attracted toward certain types of sandwiches that were inside the office workers' totes. The startled workers received a calming look from the K-9 officers as the "suspicious" item was revealed.

There were other articles on the inside pages of the newspaper that were essentially a re-hash of previous reports of the murder victims. A sidebar article based on information from published, as well as anonymous, sources chronicled USA Professor Alfred Dunningham's approach to solving the crime. The article was titled "By the Numbers," and it re-counted other investigations in which the eccentric math professor had been used by police forces around the world to help them solve mysterious crimes. There was even some mention of his international seminar series titled, "Detective Work Made Easier Through Mathematics"—free publicity, so it seemed. It appeared that the noted professor had once again been able to assist the police in solving the crime.

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Early morning

Two Weeks earlier—Monday, 16 November

Throughout New South Wales, Australia

Residents of Sydney and the outreaches of New South Wales woke to shocking headlines in the morning's *Sydney Tribune*, **Hanging in Famous Winery**. Fewer than one-fifth of Sydney's 1.2 million households actually took delivery of the paper, but many workers—from secretary to lawyer to labourer to corporate executive—would grab a copy on the way to work, either from an automated box, a street corner vendor, or from a newsstand that sold papers, magazines, and assorted food items. Some would get the paper before taking the train into the city, and others would wait until they exited the station on the way to the office.

“Can you believe the nerve to hang the bloke in the Prince Albert?” the newspaper vendor said as one of his regulars snatched up a copy of the *Tribune*. “I mean, right there in the middle of the grape fields,” he continued. “When do you think he could've done it?” The Prince Albert that the vendor referred to was the Prince Albert Winery, one of the most famous wineries in all of Australia that was started with vines hand-carried by the Prince himself in 1850 on his trip to commemorate the opening of the University of Sydney. The winery was originally royalty property, but it was sold off at auction 85 years ago to add money to the local coffers and because the royals really didn't know how to properly manage a winery. They knew how to drink the stuff, but they didn't know how to properly run it as a business, as if the royals were ever concerned about that part of any financial activity.

“Don't know, mate. I've got to read it first. Who was it?”

“The bloke's name was Rory Allen, but that's not a name I've ever heard, and I've lived here all my life.” The vendor always

wanted a lively conversation, and it appeared that he now had one going.

“So what do the Police have to say about it? Do they have any idea on why the chap was hanged? And how could they do it in the Prince Albert? Didn’t anybody see it?” The businessman was one of the few who would spend time to say more than just “G’day” to the vendor as they grabbed a morning paper on their way to work.

“They’re not saying much right now; they’re being a bit mum about it. Even the managers at the Prince Albert are confused on how it could’ve been done without being seen. The Police are hoping they’ve got something from their surveillance cameras.” The vendor was now in his element—he knew more about the story than did his customer, and that gave him a power that he reveled in. He would occasionally add a little more detail than what was actually in the paper; but he didn’t feel that there was any harm in that. After all, his customers expected him to be almost as knowledgeable as the newscasters on the telly because news was his business, along with a little gossip, and the occasional action on the ponies or the footy games.

“That is a bit of a frightful sight, isn’t it?” the customer asked, not really expecting an answer as he looked at the photograph of the hanged man. Fortunately, the newspaper had the decency to block out the victim’s face and other potentially identifying features. The picture was still a shocking sight—the body of a lifeless man strung up in the Prince Albert Winery. What was the killer trying to prove? “Any ideas on the motive or why in the Prince Albert?”

“Nothing yet,” the vendor replied. “It just happened yesterday, but I heard that the Police are jumping all over this one.”

“No doubt. What are you hearing?” the customer asked as he pointed to the vendor’s earpiece.

“They’re a bit tight-lipped on the details, although I’ve just heard a lot of traffic on the scanner. No one likes it when someone does something like that in one of our top spots.” The street vendor kept an earpiece in as he listened continuously on the police scanner; he liked being in the know, and especially if he knew it before anyone else.

“You’re dead set on that one, mate. I remember when some crazy fool tried to pour paint all over the top of the Opera House. They attacked that one like a swarm of bees on a new queenie. Gotta get to the office, now. See you tomorrow.”

“Right, mate.” The vendor immediately switched his attention and conversation to another regular who just arrived at his stand. “G’day, mate. Ya gotta see this,” he said as he handed the newspaper to the approaching customer. “Can you believe the nerve to hang the bloke in the Prince Albert?”

And the morning cycle continued in Australia’s largest city.

3

0900 hours

Monday, 16 November

Prince Albert Winery—Hunter Valley Wine Region,
north of Sydney

The police had returned to the scene of the crime at Prince Albert Winery while many Sydneysiders were still making their way to work. Detective Chief Inspector Graeme Farnsworth brought photos of the awful hanging with him since the man's body had been mercifully taken down and sent to the Regional Morgue. He wasn't sure who'd leaked that photo to the *Tribune* because he'd given strict orders that all photos had to be cleared through him before being released to the media. He swore he'd find out, even if it meant pressing hard on the publisher, something he didn't particularly like to do because he typically needed the paper's help more than they needed his.

"Good morning to you, sir," the winery manager offered as Farnsworth and his group left their cars and were walking toward the winery office. The rock pathway was a pleasant change from the dusty rows of the vineyard where they encountered the body strung up in a hangman's noose last evening. But they'd be back out there soon enough, a good reason for most of the police to not wear their best black shoes on this morning.

"G'day, Mr. Russell. I trust you were able to grab some restful sleep last night?"

"Not much of it, mate. I wanted to make sure I wrote down everything I could think of that might have any relevance to the murder." Lindsay Russell assumed the leadership reins of the Prince Albert Winery five years earlier and he took great pride in everything that took place there. That all changed yesterday, of course, as no one can be proud of a murder that takes place at your

establishment—especially when it is one of Eastern Australia’s famous sites. Queen Elizabeth II would even make a special point to visit the winery on her occasional trips to Australia. The murder was a horrific event, but it wouldn’t change Russell’s outlook and demeanour. The employees needed his resolute strength; so did the visitors to the winery.

“Is it okay for the boys to go back to the spot and poke around a bit?” As Detective Chief Inspector, Farnsworth knew he didn’t actually have to ask for permission. But he also knew that his courtesy would be repaid; maybe not on this investigation, but it wouldn’t be lost on the winery manager.

“Anything they want,” replied the manager.

“Thanks, mate,” Farnsworth said as he gestured for his men to go out into the vines and resume their investigation that had been cut short last night due to the darkness.

“No worries, sir. I’ll do anything I can to help find the bugger who desecrated these lands.” The winery manager turned to walk back toward the office. “Let me show you what I wrote down from what I could recall yesterday.” Farnsworth followed the winery manager to the office where the two men sat down and Lindsay Russell shared his collected notes with the police detective who was the most respected inspector on the New South Wales Police Force. The two men pored over paper after paper, detail by detail, while the other detectives were in the vineyard.

“I scanned through the tapes of all the vehicles entering the grounds, but the tapes run on a two-hour loop,” the manager said. “I pulled off all of the tapes as soon we saw the body. I didn’t see anything that looked out of the ordinary, but I might have overlooked something. You’re free to take them if you’d like.”

“Thanks, Lindsay,” the Chief Inspector replied on a more casual note now that they were separated from the others. “I’ll have one of my men gather them up, and I’ll let you know if we

see anything suspicious on them. By the way, when was the last time anyone was out there in that part of the land?”

“Friday at the latest,” the manager replied. “No one was working the vines on the weekend.”

“So we don’t know for sure that it was yesterday, do we?” Farnsworth asked.

“No we don’t.”

“I guess we’ll have to let the Medical Examiner tell us when he was strung up,” the Chief Inspector responded as he now realized that the crime could have been committed two days ago. “Well, it’s a good thing you don’t have any dingos or wild dogs out here, or we would’ve really had an ugly sight on our hands.”

“That’s if there’d been anything left of him. Pour you another tea, Chief?”

“Thanks, mate. No sugar as my wife thinks I’m adding a bit too much around the waist. I tell her that’s because she doesn’t allow me to play rugby anymore. And you know what she’s got the nerve to say? She says that even if I did play that I couldn’t run hard enough to work up a sweat. Women—what can you do?”

“Obviously I don’t know,” the manager replied in an attempt to be conversational yet wanting to change the subject back to the reason for the visit.

“I’m sorry; I forgot,” the detective said as he realized that Lindsay Russell and his wife divorced earlier in the year after she’d had an affair with a television newscaster.

“That’s okay, Chief. That chapter’s closed. Right now I consider myself married to the winery. Too bad it’s named after a man, because I think she’s about as fickle as any woman I’ve ever met.”

“You’ll find yourself a good sheila, Lindsay. You’re too good of a fellow to stay single for long.” Switching back to the matter at

hand, Farnsworth continued, “I’ll let you know if the Crime Lab turns up anything from the pole or the rope.”

“How could the fellow carry that much out there and get his victim there too?” The winery manager was beginning to think like a detective. The crime scene just didn’t make sense to him.

“That’s a good question that I hope the men in the field will be able to answer for me and for the Commissioner. He’s already pushing on me, and it’s been less than 24 hours since we found the body.”

The two men continued to review Lindsay Russell’s notes in the comfort his office. Nothing seemed especially outstanding, but neither man wanted to overlook any potential detail.

The day’s heat was beginning to increase its pressure on the detectives out in the rows of vines, but they’d all had worse assignments. At least this was a fairly clean crime scene; they could deal with the heat and the dry conditions. And there weren’t any body parts rotting in the sun, or scavenging animals or nuisance flies to deal with. A murder investigation—yes, it was; but at least it was a clean one. And the men and women in blue always appreciated that.

They took photographs of the area, including all the footprints. But with all the excitement that accompanied the finding of the body yesterday, the workers and the media trampled all through the area, forgetting that it was a crime scene that they were disturbing. By the time the coroner’s office arrived to retrieve the body, all possible evidence on the ground had probably been obliterated.

“Where’s the nearest access that doesn’t require going through the public areas?” Detective Inspector Langdon McBride asked.

“Back down this row about a kilometre,” a junior detective replied. “The Sergeant and I just went down there, and the tracks have already been brushed away.”

“They couldn’t have walked in from the city,” McBride continued. “What about tire tracks?”

“They’ve been brushed also, Inspector. All the way to the paved road, about a half a kilometre. The brush is gone, too; must’ve have taken it with him.”

“So we’ve got nothing to tell Farnsworth, do we?” McBride asked in frustration. “Dozens of footprints around the pole area, but probably none are the perpetrator’s because the area from the crime scene to the road has been brushed. Has anyone turned up anything else?”

Detective Chief Inspector Graeme Farnsworth’s right-hand man looked around to see a bunch of heads nodding sideways. “Chins up, lads. It’s not your fault we’re dealing with a smart one. Gather up your stuff and let’s go get some morning tea.”

The detectives’ faces suddenly perked up and their energy levels returned. They’d done their work. They certainly couldn’t find evidence if there was none to be found. “Do you think the Tasting Room is open?” asked one of the men.

“I’m sure it is,” McBride answered. “But they have a ‘No Uniforms’ rule. Sorry, mate.”

“I’ve got a change of clothes in the car, Inspector. Does that count?”

“I’m not even going to ask why you’ve got that change in the car, Larsen,” McBride answered good naturedly. All the other men chuckled as they knew that Larsen was quite the party man. “I think that tea will be fine for all of us,” the Inspector continued.

“Yes, Inspector,” Larsen quipped. “It’ll help dilute the rest of what’s in there.”

1330 hours

Monday, 16 November

New South Wales Regional Morgue

The drive back into Sydney along Route 2 was easier than the drive out to the winery because the morning traffic from the northern suburbs had already made its way into the city. Farnsworth and McBride were headed directly to the morgue; two of the other detectives were going to the Crime Lab and the others back to headquarters. Detective Inspector McBride usually drove the Chief Inspector's car, but this time Graeme Farnsworth wanted to drive—it actually helped him think when he was driving. McBride filled his chief in on the findings which, given that the men were out in the vines for several hours, were quite unsubstantial except for the apparent neatness of the killer. But both men knew that every crime scene had information left behind—there was no such thing as a “perfect crime.”

The cool temperature and low humidity of the morgue were a welcome relief from the warm musty fields of the Hunter Valley. Graeme Farnsworth didn't like to run the car's A/C unless it was really necessary—the cold air blowing on him was a distraction that he preferred to avoid. But he'd been inside the winery's office while Langdon McBride and the other men were out in the vineyard under the sun. McBride knew his place, and he'd learned to go along with Farnsworth's habits.

“Good Morning, Dr. Grantham,” Farnsworth offered as the two men were acknowledged by the Chief Medical Examiner as they entered her glass-walled office.

“G'day, Chief Inspector Farnsworth, Inspector McBride. How was your visit to the winery?” Alkira Grantham was a highly educated and detail-oriented medical examiner, but those weren't

the only reasons she was the Chief Medical Examiner. Of Aboriginal descent (Alkira meaning “the sky”), she had earned graduate degrees in archeology and anthropology before going to medical school for her M.D. degree. Having a female in such a visible position was always a good political move, but Alkira Grantham, B.S., M.S., PhD, and M.D., would have been most deserving of the role regardless of gender, race, or any other classification.

Knowing his position, and knowing that he would be called upon by his superior for the details, Langdon McBride waited for Detective Chief Inspector Graeme Farnsworth to respond. For now, McBride was enjoying the respite from the outside warmth and humidity.

“It’s always a lovely trip going to the Hunter Valley, but I’d rather do it on a weekend with my wife and some friends,” Farnsworth responded. “Besides, it was a bit early for the sampling, don’t you agree, Langdon?”

“I do, sir, but the boys were getting a bit warm in the field, and I think one or two of them might have enjoyed a sip just to cool down. I do like a nice red, but a chilled white would have tasted mighty nice.” Turning his attention, in more ways than one, to the attractive Medical Examiner, McBride continued, “How was your weekend, Dr. Grantham?”

“It was a good weekend until this young man showed up. Gents, is it okay if we dispense with the formalities whilst it’s just us?” Alkira Grantham’s rosy lips and white teeth were a perfect complement to her reddish-tanned skin. She preferred wearing earth tone colors that didn’t draw attention to her natural color, but the white lab coat and pants were standard items for her job. She was proud of her ancestry, but she wanted people to see her as Alkira Grantham, not as that woman of Aboriginal descent. Her

name already told people of her heritage; it was her personality and professional skills that she preferred to be seen.

“Certainly, Alkira.” It was Graeme who once again took the lead in responding. “Shall we take a look at the lad and you can tell us what you’ve found?”

“Of course; let’s go.”

Langdon McBride’s eyes stayed focused on the intellectual, attractive, and charming Chief Medical Examiner as she arose from her chair. She felt the attention, one of her natural instincts, and she looked at him and smiled. Was that a quick wink from her? He opened the door and dutifully followed her and Graeme out to the examining rooms.

“Why don’t you two put on a cap, gloves and a coat since the body is still considered evidence?” The M.E. was sounding like a detective now, but she had not yet completed her investigation, and so she didn’t want to have any of her findings tainted.

The two detectives knew the procedure; they had done it many times before. They each put on a hair cap, scrubbed their hands, and then helped each other with gloves and a coat. Alkira donned her items and led them into the cold room where the hanging victim’s body lay covered with a sheet. The extra items the men had put on helped to offset the effects of the examining room where it was just a few degrees above freezing.

Lifting the clipboard, the medical examiner began to read some of the details. “The victim’s name is Rory Allen, age 25, and the information from your men is that there was no attempt to hide his identification. He was fully clothed and the apparent cause of death is strangulation by hanging. I say ‘apparent cause of death’ because I would’ve expected to see some indication of a struggle, but I haven’t found any. Do you have anything yet from the Crime Lab on the rope or any other physical evidence?”

Farnsworth looked to McBride who took the cue from his boss. “Nothing conclusive yet,” Langdon began. “And the crime scene looked pretty clean, too. It appears that someone, most likely the killer, used some brush to wipe away all the footprints and the tire tracks from the dirtways. Even if the Lab could find fingerprints on the hanging pole, I’m betting right now that they aren’t the killer’s.”

“What else do you have for us, Alkira?” the Chief Inspector asked.

“The most noticeable thing,” she began as she pulled back the sheet to expose the head and upper torso, “is this tattoo.” She pulled a pen from her coat pocket and pointed at the left shoulder area. The tattoo was a triangle with the number 16 inside it. “I removed a small amount of the skin and tattoo and ran a few tests. The tattoo is recent, within one to three days. There aren’t any other tattoos or body piercings, so I don’t know right now if that tattoo is indicative of anything particular.”

“Who knows with kids these days,” Farnsworth said. “We’ll run it by the gang squad to see if they’ve seen this on the streets. What about toxicology?”

“We won’t have reports back until tomorrow or possibly Wednesday morning, but it appears that he may have been drunk. The quick-tox screens indicate alcohol, such as vodka. We’ll know more, including the actual blood-alcohol count, once we have the full toxicology report. Plus I’m having the tattooed area analysed. I’ll send you the full reports as soon as I have them.”

“Are there needle marks anywhere to indicate a drug user?” McBride asked.

“Not in the typical places, Langdon. He appears to be a fairly clean kid as you look at him. Most of the druggies we get in here look like they’ve had a rough life, things like dirty teeth, ragged

fingernails. But this kid doesn't look that way. Also his scalp was clean and his overall appearance was that of a good decent kid."

"What about time of death?" McBride continued.

"Inconclusive right now. The full reports will help me pin that down more. You see, the strangulation inhibited the blood flow, so the normal time-of-death indicators could give us a false-positive result. There could be up to a twelve-hour window, but the results of the blood work will help to narrow that. I was also hoping that your investigation would give me some leads for that timeframe."

Farnsworth started up before McBride could get the first word out of his opening mouth. "The winery manager was as helpful as he could be, but the video tapes showed nothing substantial as they're on a 2-hour loop. And the hanging took place in an area that's only visited during the week days. So our victim could've been strung up on Friday evening as far as we know. That's almost a 48-hour window for you, Alkira, but that's all the information we have."

"I understand, Graeme. My job is to tell you when and how he died, and yours is to find out who did it and why. Wouldn't it be nice if there were a note in the pocket saying who did it, why, how, and when?"

The three of them got a chuckle out of that. Alkira had a good sense of humor; she just didn't display it openly for fear of not being taken seriously.

"I don't know about you, Alkira, but I know that Langdon and I would be out of a job. So maybe it's a good thing our killer didn't give us all the answers."

"You're right, Graeme, but it does bother me to see young people like this killed. They've got a whole life in front of them, and then it's snuffed." That was the one part of Alkira's job that she didn't like; trying to make sense of what appeared to be a senseless killing. Of course, Graeme and Langdon also had a tough

part of their job when they had to talk with the parents who wanted to know “Why,” among other things. Alkira continued, “What if he had a special girl and they were planning a life together? It hurts her, too, and then there are the parents. What a shame.”

“Thanks, Alkira. Would you give Langdon a call when you have some more that you can share? I have a feeling I’ll be tied up with the Commissioner for a while. Do you have Langdon’s mobile number?”

Langdon took a quick look at Alkira whose face revealed a slight smile. “I’m sure I do,” she said. “Let me check,” she added as she pulled her phone from the coat pocket and scrolled through her Contacts list. She knew Langdon’s number was in there, and she had it memorized anyway, but she went through the effort to keep her professional demeanour. “Here it is,” she finally said. “I’ll call you later today,” she said to Langdon as she pulled the sheet back up to cover Rory Allen’s lifeless body.

“Okay, thanks,” Langdon replied and then added, “And I’ll let you know if we come up with anything else that might help with time of death or the cause.”

“Thanks. Anyone for a cup of tea to warm up?” Alkira asked as the three of them were leaving the chilled room.

“Sounds good to me,” replied the Detective Chief Inspector. “Do you have time, Langdon?” he continued.

“Sounds good, boss,” Langdon answered as they removed their examination room garments.

Following his boss and the Chief Medical Examiner down the hall to get some warm tea, Detective Inspector Langdon McBride already had a warm feeling as he thought about her calling him for a change. He looked forward to that phone call.

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