
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

CORONERS COURT

Nos 8316380
8316353
8316372
8316358
8316356

AN INQUEST INTO THE DEATHS OF
PATRICIA SLINN, LESLEY RAMSAY,
DAVID JAMES SENG, ADRIAN
MARTIN DURIN AND HELEN FULLER
AT AYERS ROCK ON 18 AUGUST 1983

MR T. HENCHLIFFE

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT ALICE SPRINGS ON TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1985

MR ROBERTS: I appear to assist the coroner in this matter.

THE CORONER: Yes, Mr Roberts?

MR ROBERTS: Your Worship, I'll give the court a brief resume of the facts. I propose to tender the transcript of the Supreme Court trial that was held in Darwin this year, that was the second trial, the retrial, at which Mr Crabbe was found guilty of five counts of murder. Your Worship, the resume I've prepared is taken from that transcript.

On 7 October 1985 a jury before the Supreme Court in Darwin, Mr Justice Rice presiding, found Mr Crabbe guilty of five counts of murder pursuant to section 162 of the Criminal Code following Mr Crabbe's retrial in Darwin which commenced on 30 September this year. The jury accepted the following facts; on the evening of 17 August 1983 Mr Crabbe had been seen to be drinking alcohol at the Red Sands Motel at Ayers Rock.

At approximately 11 pm that night he left the Red Sands Hotel and travelled in his prime mover, to which was attached two trailers, to the Inland Motel. There he consumed a further quantity of alcohol following which he became involved in a scuffle at the bar with the one of the barmen and a couple of patrons at the bar.

THE CORONER: That's at the Inland you're talking about?

MR ROBERTS: That's at the Inland Motel, yes, Your Worship. It appears from the evidence of the witnesses to the scuffle that Mr Crabbe was affected by his intake of alcohol and he became abusive to members of the staff and was demanding service. Following this scuffle he was asked to leave the bar which he did. On Mr Crabbe's evidence he then returned to his prime mover and drove to the Uluru Motel hoping to get another drink.

Apparently the roadway was such that a prime mover with two trailers attached would not be able to negotiate the particular access road and as such the rear trailer was removed near to the entrance access roadway to the Inland Motel. After disconnecting the rear trailer Mr Crabbe apparently fell from the driver's door of the prime mover thereby winding himself.

As a consequence he decided not to go and get another drink, but to go to sleep in the sleeping compartment of the prime mover. His next recollection is hearing the exhaust noise of the prime mover followed by his standing outside the Inland Motel surveying the general scene. It appears that was approximately one and a half to 2 hours after he left the bar.

However, the evidence of witnesses inside the Inland Motel on that night is that at approximately 1.35 am

the truck was seen to round the corner of the kitchen block, travel in a straight line down the side of the kitchen and then turn in a controlled left-hand arc into the bar of the Inland Motel. The prime mover, with its lights on, collided with the wall of the bar demolishing it and entering the body of the bar such that the bull bar of the truck came to rest against a rear wall of the bar.

The bar, which on estimates of the witnesses contained approximately 40 to 60 people, was demolished in the process. A number of persons were hit by either the truck or falling debris. The five persons who died were all killed as a result of the multiple injuries sustained at the time that the truck entered the bar.

Mr Crabbe at the retrial admitted that he was the driver of the truck. Following the initial impact the truck's engine was heard to rev for several seconds and Mr Crabbe was seen to leave the cab of the prime mover. He stepped across one of the witnesses to the incident, walked outside and spoke to another witness and apparently then walked off into the bush.

On Mr Crabbe's evidence again his next recollection is waking up draped over a bush and subsequently walking into the construction site of the Yulara village. There he was spoken to and subsequently taken into police custody. Your Worship, I tender the transcript.

THE CORONER: I might add that I have had the opportunity to look at the transcript.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit One....Transcript of Supreme Court proceedings

MR ROBERTS: Your Worship, I now call the coroner's constable in relation to the post-mortem reports.

THE CORONER: Yes, Constable Cantwell, please.

PAUL GERARD CANTWELL, sworn:

MR ROBERTS: Could you give the court your name, rank and current station?---My full name is Paul Gerard Cantwell. I'm a constable attached to the Alice Springs Police Station in the capacity as coroner's constable.

In that capacity have you received post-mortem reports in relation to the deceased of this inquest?---I have.

Looking at these photo-copies of the post-mortems - I believe, Your Worship, the originals are on your files.

THE CORONER: Yes.

MR ROBERTS: Could you indicate whether or not these are the post-mortem reports and to whom they relate?---The first one is a post-mortem report done by Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee

on Adrian Martin Durnin at the Alice Springs Hospital
on 19/8/1983.

Is that report signed by him?---Yes, it is.

I tender that one, Your Worship.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit 2....Post-mortem report
on Adrian Martin
Durnin

THE WITNESS: The second one is a post-mortem report of Kevin
Andrew Patrick Lee at the Alice Springs mortuary on
19/8/1983 on Helen Fuller which is also signed by Dr
Lee.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit 3....Post-mortem report
on Helen Fuller

THE WITNESS: This one is a post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew
Patrick Lee at the Alice Springs mortuary on 20/8/1983
on David James Seng, also signed by Dr Lee.

MR ROBERTS: I tender that, Your Worship.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit 4....Post-mortem report on
David James Seng

THE WITNESS: The next one is a post-mortem report of Kevin
Andrew Patrick Lee at the Alice Springs Hospital on
19/8/1983 on Lesley Robin Ramsay. That is signed
by Dr Lee.

MR ROBERTS: I tender that, Your Worship.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit 5....Post-mortem report on
Lesley Robin Ramsay

THE WITNESS: Post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee at
the Alice Springs Hospital on 20/8/1983 on Patricia
Audrey Slinn. That is also signed by Dr Lee.

MR ROBERTS: I tender that also.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit 6....Post-mortem report on
Patricia Audrey Slinn

MR ROBERTS: Your Worship, I have no further questions of this
witness.

(THE WITNESS WITHDREW)

MR ROBERTS: Your Worship, the only other documentary evidence
which should be before you are the certificates of
conviction which I understand are on your file.

THE CORONER: Yes, the certificates of conviction I think can be
exhibited together and they will be exhibit number 7.

EXHIBIT

Exhibit 7....Certificates of
conviction

MR ROBERTS: I have no further documentary evidence, Your Worship.

THE CORONER: As I've said, obviously I've had to read somewhat in relation to these matters and I have read the relevant material and I make the following findings; firstly in relation to Adrian Martin Durnin I find that on 18 August 1983 Adrian Martin Durnin, who was born in London, England, died from injuries he received when he was struck by a prime mover and falling debris in the bar of the Inland Motel, Ayers Rock, in the Northern Territory of Australia on the said date.

I find that the said prime mover was being driven at the time by Douglas John Edwin Crabbe. In accordance with the post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee, forensic pathologist, I find that the cause of death was blunt head injury. I'm satisfied by certificate of conviction dated 9 October 1985, that the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe on 7 October 1985 at Darwin, was convicted that on 18 August 1983 at Ayers Rock did murder Adrian Martin Durnin.

Upon such conviction the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe was sentenced on 7 October 1985 by the Supreme Court to be imprisoned with hard labour for life. In relation to the deceased David James Seng, I find that on 18 August 1983 David James Seng, who was born on 4 April 1959, died from injuries he received when he was struck by a prime mover and falling debris in the bar of the Inland Motel, Ayers Rock, in the Northern Territory of Australia, on 18 August 1983.

I find that the said prime mover was being driven at the time by Douglas John Edwin Crabbe. In accordance with the post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee, forensic pathologist, I find that death was due to multiple injuries. The injuries found were consistent with a very heavy crushing impact from the right side. I'm satisfied by certificate of conviction dated 9 October 1985, that the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe on 7 October 1985 at Darwin was convicted that on 18 August 1983 at Ayers Rock did murder David James Seng.

Upon such conviction the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe was sentenced on 7 October 1985 by the Supreme Court to be imprisoned with hard labour for life. In relation to the deceased Lesley Robin Ramsey I find that on 18 August 1983, Lesley Robin Ramsey who was born in Sydney, New South Wales, died at Alice Springs from injuries she received when she was struck on the said date by a prime mover and falling debris in the bar of the Inland Motel, Ayers Rock in the Northern Territory of Australia.

I find that the said prime mover was being driven at the time by Douglas John Edwin Crabbe. In accordance with the post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee, forensic pathologist, I find that death was due to multiple injuries. I'm satisfied by certificate of conviction dated 9 October 1985, that the said Douglas

John Edwin Crabbe on 7 October 1985 at Darwin was convicted that on 18 August 1983 did murder Lesley Robin Ramsey.

Upon such conviction the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe was sentenced on 7 October 1985 by the Supreme Court to be imprisoned with hard labour for life. In relation to the deceased Patricia Slinn, I find that on 18 August 1983 Patricia Audrey Slinn, who was born in Somerset, England on 24 February 1941, died from injuries she received when she was struck by a prime mover and falling debris in the bar of the Inland Motel, Ayers Rock in the Northern Territory of Australia on 18 August 1983.

I find that the said prime mover was being driven at the time by Douglas John Edwin Crabbe. In accordance with the post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee, forensic pathologist, I find that the cause of death was traumatic asphyxia and that the injuries found were consistent with a very heavy crushing impact.

I'm satisfied by certificate of conviction dated 9 October 1985 that the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe, on 7 October 1985 at Darwin was convicted that on 18 August 1983 at Ayers Rock did murder Patricia Audrey Slinn and upon such conviction the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe was sentenced on 7 October 1985 by the Supreme Court to be imprisoned with hard labour for life.

Finally in relation to the deceased Helen Fuller I find that on 18 August 1983 Helen Fuller, who was born in Taree, New South Wales, died from injuries she received when she was struck by a prime mover and falling debris in the bar of the Inland Motel, Ayers Rock in the Northern Territory of Australia on the said date.

I find that the said prime mover was being driven at the time by Douglas John Edwin Crabbe. In accordance with the post-mortem report of Kevin Andrew Patrick Lee, forensic pathologist, I find that the cause of death was blunt head injury. I'm satisfied by certificate of conviction, dated 9 October 1985, that the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe, on 7 October 1985 at Darwin was convicted that on 18 August 1983 at Ayers Rock did murder Helen Fuller.

Upon such conviction the said Douglas John Edwin Crabbe was sentenced on 7 October 1985 by the Supreme Court to be imprisoned with hard labour for life.