

**What's Going On?:  
A Critical Study of the Port Arthur  
Massacre**

Carl Wernerhoff



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Email: cwernerhoff@yahoo.com

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ideas contained in it are not attributed to any other author.

*This work-in-progress is dedicated to*

*Joe Vialls*

*Ian McNiven*

*Andrew MacGregor*

*Noel McDonald*

*Wendy Scurr*

*and the handful of other Australians  
interested in knowing the truth about  
what happened at Port Arthur*

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## **Preface**

Like most Australians, this author was deeply affected– and to some extent, emotionally scarred – by the tragedy at Port Arthur in 1996. Like most Australians, moreover, I accepted the word of the government, the police and the mass media that Martin Bryant of New Town, Hobart, Tasmania, had perpetrated the massacre.

My willingness to accept what I now know to have been a bundle of lies was bound up with my ability to effortlessly incorporate the incident into my mental framework. It seemed to me then that what had happened was really very simple: a generation of young people which had grown up in the shadow of that machine-gun toting icon of the 1980s, Rambo, had produced a couple of young men who craved nothing less than using high-powered weapons to inflict as much carnage as possible. Since there was no Vietnam war and therefore no Vietnamese peasants for them to destroy, the best alternative for these suburban Rambos was to go berserk in their own backyards. This they did at locations like Hoddle Street, Melbourne, where Julian Knight killed seven people in 1987, Queen Street, Melbourne, where Frank Vitkovic killed eight people four months later, Aramoana, New Zealand, where David Gray killed thirteen in 1990, and Strathfield Shopping Centre, Sydney, where Wade Frankum killed seven in 1991. Now, to prolong this series of young Antipodean Rambos, was the Broad Arrow Café, Port Arthur, Tasmania, with Martin Bryant playing the lead role.

My understanding of the massacre was naïve, to be sure, but it was consistent with a popular view according to which episodes of mass violence are triggered by images diffused throughout the mainstream culture. Whenever a figure like Rambo emerges as a culture hero, I reasoned, there would inexorably follow Julian Knights, Wade Frankums and Martin Bryants. The

meaning for the massacre for me was simply that society is biting off far more than it can chew when it sets up lethal characters like Rambo as its heroes and role models.

In another fit of naïvete that I now regret, I was also favourably impressed when John Howard of the Liberal party, Australia's newly-elected prime minister, acted decisively after the massacre to ram through stringent new gun laws of the sort I had long supported. To me, strict gun laws was a Labor party policy – and it was almost unthinkable to me that a Liberal leader would move on the issue. I was pleasantly surprised to see a Liberal party stalwart like Howard champion one of my pet causes. I really didn't think a conservative had it in him to do something that, in my opinion, was manifestly in the country's best interests.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, for all my naïvete, I cannot say that I was *entirely* satisfied by what I read in the newspapers and saw on television about the massacre. At the subconscious level, I felt uneasy about the fact that it had taken place only seven short weeks after Howard had become prime minister. I sensed that there had to be a connection somewhere. I was also disturbed by the fact that no satisfactory explanation was ever offered for the fact that the locking mechanism for a rear exit from the Broad Arrow Café had been damaged so as to render it unusable, thus preventing escape by that route. It seemed to me then, as it still seems to me now, that anyone who thinks that this defect was not connected to the massacre – as if it was a minor problem that had occurred but simply not been noticed before April 28 – has to be a complete fool.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-Australian readers should understand that the Liberal party is, despite its name, an arch-conservative party. Apart from its stand on the issue of guns in 1996, its policies are virtually identical to and as inimical to the public good as those of the American Republican party.



It is perhaps because a vein of suspicion lingered inside me that, as the years went by and the massacre wholly vanished from public discourse, I only found myself asking more questions about what had happened, not less.

What made me suspicious about the case was principally the fact that no sooner had Bryant been installed in Risdon prison than it vanished – and vanished completely - from public discourse. I could not understand why there never were interviews with key witnesses and participants. With the exception of Nubeena pharmacist Walter Mikacs, who was not himself a victim but rather the husband and father of three victims (his wife and two young daughters), no one associated with the events of April 28-29, 1996, maintained any sort of a public profile in the years that followed. Carleen Bryant – Martin's mother – was the only other individual in any way connected to the massacre who impinged on my consciousness. (I read in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that the grief-stricken woman spent her days travelling around Australia in campervan.) Where were people like Bryant's girlfriend, Petra Wilmott, who should have been able to shed light on Bryant's mental processes in the lead up to the massacre? Why did no one ever interview actual eyewitnesses of the shooting? It was almost as though all these people had fallen down a rabbit hole.

Their absence from my newspapers, magazines and televisions violated my sense of decorum. As one of the most traumatic events in Australian history, the sudden shutdown of discourse about Port Arthur presented an obscene challenge to my concept of closure, a fashionable term which, however glibly it is often used, implies a full and objective reckoning with the past. The Port Arthur massacre disappeared from the Australian media at precisely the time when the public should have found itself plumbing the darkest depths of Martin Bryant's mind, the world which had created him, and the

precise circumstances that had enabled him to acquire his lethal weapons. Port Arthur, it seemed to me, had slipped into a memory hole well before its time, and Bryant himself had become a non-person in the Orwellian sense. In a society devoted to smug self-adulation, I seemed to be the only person to preserve a live curiosity about the distressing events of 1996 – events which, presumably, had no place in Howard’s new, ‘relaxed and comfortable’ Australia.

Those unsatisfied feelings began to find an outlet in about 2001 when, thanks to the Internet, I came across writings about Port Arthur by independent researcher Joe Vials. Vials presented, at least *in nuce*, a more persuasive account of what had happened at Port Arthur than that which I had picked up from the Australian mass media.<sup>2</sup> But at this stage, the abundance of materials on bizarre events in recent American history like the political assassinations of the 1960s and the Oklahoma City bombing to which the Internet gave me access gripped my attention more. Then there was 9-11, an event which for several years preoccupied me nearly as much as the assassinations of my heroes the Kennedy brothers.

But finally, in 2004, I discovered on my computer a version of one of Vials’ writings about Port Arthur. This time, the subject stuck with me. I was in it for the long haul – anxious to discover whether, unsuspected by the mass public, a dark and disturbing event of the American kind had intruded into the history of a remote and hitherto peaceful continent. My ability to research this topic objectively was enhanced by the fact that, by 2004, I no longer held any illusions about John Howard. I had fully come to recognize that he was probably the dirtiest player in Australian political history. Like all thinking Australians, I

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<sup>2</sup> Many of the writings to which I am referring are now hosted at the following location:

[http://members.fortunecity.com/able\\_j/portarthur.html](http://members.fortunecity.com/able_j/portarthur.html)

realized by 2004 that he had lied about the Tampa affair for short-term political advantage, while his decision to commit Australian troops to the neoconservatives' war in Iraq demonstrated beyond all doubt that his ultimate loyalties were to the American military-industrial complex, not the citizens of the country that had elected him its leader. I realized that there was probably nothing that Howard would not do to stay in power long enough to fasten a conservative straitjacket on the country the way the Republicans had done in the United States. If Howard supported gun control in 1996, I decided, there very probably had to be a sinister reason.

What I learned, as I studied the details of the Port Arthur massacre, was that there was no evidence that Martin Bryant – alone and to the exclusion of all other young men with long blonde hair – had perpetrated the massacre. And, as my knowledge of the case deepened, I realized that Bryant *could not* have done it. The book you are about to read captures the key moments of my independent investigation, the stages by which I groped my way to a fuller understanding of that disturbing event.

A word about the Seascope siege is in order. Bryant was apprehended by police the day after the massacre while fleeing a burning building, Seascope Cottage, which was located about four kilometres north of Port Arthur. The public was led to believe that Bryant had been the man calling himself 'Jamie' who had kept police at bay during an overnight siege that lasted over 18 hours. By various means, the public was led to accept that the Seascope affair was connected with the massacre, and that the protagonist of the siege was the same individual as the Port Arthur shooter.

That Bryant was somehow implicated in the siege is incontrovertible. He admits arriving at Seascope, we know that his girlfriend (Petra Wilmott) was present there with him,

while, as is well known to most Australians, he was captured while fleeing from the burning building on the morning of April 29. Recognition of the fact that Bryant was involved does not mean that he was responsible for killing anyone, let alone that he was the main known only as ‘Jamie,’ who seems to have been in charge of the Seascope operation. In fact, Bryant was probably one of Jamie’s hostages.

While I believe that Bryant was the person Jamie referred to as Sgt. Terry McCarthy’s ‘main man’ – the reason why McCarthy could not allow the Seascope siege to get ‘blown’ – we have no means of establishing exactly what happened or why. While Bryant languishes in jail, effectively forbidden from discussing the case, the other individuals involved are either dead or unlikely to ever to re-emerge to discuss the affair (‘Jamie,’ Petra Wilmott). There are no independent witnesses to events, leaving us wholly dependent upon the mostly uninformative statements of police and Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel attending the siege.

I do not try to ascertain the truth about the bizarre Seascope siege, therefore. Whatever Bryant’s (and Wilmott’s) true role in the Seascope affair or the extent of our sympathy for its other victims (Noelene Martin, David Martin and Glenn Pears), what happened there is a relatively tame matter compared to the nightmarish scenes that transpired in the PAHS on April 28.<sup>3</sup> While it is always possible that Bryant deserves to spend the rest of his life in prison for his role in what happened at Seascope, we have no means of reconstructing a likely narrative of events, incriminating or otherwise. We are much better informed about what happened at Port Arthur – sufficiently

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<sup>3</sup> According to the charges against him, Bryant was accused of the murder of Noelene Joyce Martin. However, she is normally referred to as Sally, and this will be the practice throughout this book.

well-informed that it is possible to state with absolute certainty that Bryant was not involved.

Although I deal with several aspects of the Seascapes siege in this book, therefore, I do so only when doing so sheds light on what happened at Port Arthur and the question of whether Bryant was the Port Arthur gunman. This book is about what happened at Port Arthur in one of the darkest episodes in Australian history. For all its sophistication and its numerous unexplained dimensions, the Seascapes siege was at bottom a charade whose purpose was to make it look as though Martin Bryant had been the Port Arthur gunman. It was the Australian analogue of the murder of Officer Tippit in Dallas in 1963, which by a convoluted kind of logic led to the conclusion that a man captured in a cinema with a gun had to be the man who killed Tippit and the man who killed Tippit had to have been the man who had assassinated President Kennedy.

This book therefore labours to exonerate Bryant from the allegation that he was involved in the Port Arthur massacre. It mounts no particular case about the nature of his involvement in the Seascapes affair, although I lean towards the view that he was a captive rather than a co-conspirator.



## **Introduction**

Australians reacted with horror and outrage when, on a Sunday evening in 1996, they learned from their televisions that over 30 people had been murdered and many others injured in an orgy of violence in the Port Arthur Historical Site (PAHS), Tasmania, one the nation's most venerable historical sites, and adjacent locations. They were told that the atrocities had been perpetrated by a young Caucasian man with pale skin and long white hair brandishing a military rifle – a kind of quasi-albino Rambo – who apparently had a dislike of Japanese tourists.

In summary, the story delivered to the breathless world was that shortly before 1.30 p.m. that cloudless Sunday afternoon, the gunman had entered the Broad Arrow Café at the PAHS and picked off, with unfathomable callousness, one tourist after another. He killed a number of other individuals as he exited the PAHS and holed himself up in a nearby tourist guest house, the Seascope, in a siege that only ended when he burned the building down the following morning (an event that was seen shortly afterwards on television).

What made the crime so repugnant was first, the coldly methodical way in which the shooter set to the task of killing as many people as possible, and second, the fact that his pitilessness extended to even small children. To those deeply traumatized (like this writer) by the story of how the gunman had callously shot Walter and Nanette Mikac's two little daughters, three year-old Madeline and six year-old Alannah, whom he had hunted down from her hiding place behind a tree, no more sinister crime could be imagined.

The wave of revulsion unleashed across the country by the massacre - the second-largest body count in a single killing spree by one shooter anywhere in the world - can only be compared to that which swept the globe immediately after the

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9-11 terrorist attacks in New York in 2001. It led just as inevitably to the implementation of national legislation against semi-automatic weapons as the 9-11 attacks led in the United States to the passage of the Patriot Act. It was also so traumatizing an event that it left Australians entirely oblivious to the massive miscarriage of justice that followed when Martin Bryant, a 29 year-old man with an IQ of only 66 from Hobart, Tasmania, was declared guilty of the crime.<sup>4</sup> All it took to convince Australians that Bryant had been the killer, effectively, was the say-so of Tasmania Police and the mass media.

The 'evidence' against Bryant that the police and media presented to the Australian public consisted of four things:

- 1) a shocking narrative of the events of April 28-29 in which Bryant was asserted over and over again to have been the central protagonist;
- 2) a photograph of Bryant showing strange, 'psycho' eyes that was published in the Hobart *Mercury* on the morning of April 30, then published across the country by the afternoon of the same day;
- 3) a biography of Bryant disclosing a history of mental problems, as well as several disturbing episodes, such as his friendship (and rumoured sexual relationship) with an eccentric old woman, Helen Hervey, who died in a car crash in 1992, bequeathing him \$650,000; and
- 4) revelations that he owned numerous violent and pornographic videos, the most sensational item of which was *Child's Play 2*, a film in which an evil doll called Chucky has to kill a boy to become real.

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<sup>4</sup> To be entirely accurate, Bryant was nine days short of his 29<sup>th</sup> birthday.



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Considered together, these four things left Australians in no doubt whatsoever that Bryant was guilty. (As I show in Appendix I below, Bryant was no psycho, the most incriminating episodes in his biography are either lies or unsubstantiated allegations, and his video collection contained entirely standard fare.)

The outrage against Bryant lasted so long that when, on September 30, 1996, he pleaded not guilty to any of the 72 charges against him, no one was prepared to entertain the possibility that he might have done so because he was actually not guilty. Australians 'knew' that he was guilty, whatever he said to the contrary. The fact that he pleaded not guilty presented nothing for them to worry about, because his decision to plead not guilty for crimes the public thought he had 'obviously' committed was no more inexplicable than the crime itself, for which no real motive had ever been offered. The line of reasoning most people followed was that someone who was perverse enough to commit a massacre for no apparent reason could be expected to prove just as perverse in the courtroom.

By November 7, 1996, when suddenly and inexplicably Bryant pleaded guilty to all 72 charges against him, the massacre was no longer of interest to most Australians. All that mattered to them was that the monster who had committed the murders was going to be locked away for the rest of his life. No one cared about such matters as how, within a period of a few weeks, Bryant had been induced to shift from a 'not guilty' to a 'guilty' plea – thereby sparing the government a trial that would prove his guilt - and most people just felt sad for his mother, Carleen Bryant, when they learned that she remained unconvinced that her son had been responsible for the killing spree.

Once the fit of base passions unleashed by the massacre began to subside in about 1999, a few conscientious Australians began to

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express concerns that, during the process that led to Bryant's sentencing on November 22, 1996, major violations of the Australian criminal justice system had occurred, as well as shocking legal improprieties without precedent in the country's history. This is a shortlist of twelve of the violations and improprieties that were required to ensure that Martin Bryant was locked away for the rest of his life without ever being proven guilty:

1. The identity of the alleged offender was made public by the Hobart *Mercury* on the morning of April 29, 1996, when it was stated that he had been 'a 29 yearl old schizophrenic from the Hobart suburb of New Town' whose father had 'committed suicide 3 years ago.' The actual name of the alleged offender was made public by the same newspaper the following morning and by all major afternoon papers shortly afterwards - before his guilt had been proven in a court of law. Under Australian law, a person is considered innocent until proven guilty.

2. A photograph of the alleged offender was illegally published by the Hobart *Mercury* on the morning of April 30, 1996, and by all major afternoon papers shortly afterwards, including Sydney tabloid *The Daily Telegraph* (which is where I first saw it myself).

NB: The reason why it is illegal to publish photographs of suspects is that it influences witness statements, often making it impossible for them to remember what they actually saw. The wide circulation of photos of Bryant was clearly a major obstacle to identification when one of the most widely published photos was used as photo #5 in the May 14, 1996 police photoboard. At least two witnesses were honest enough to admit that their memories had been contaminated by their exposure to Bryant's image in the media.

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‘I have today viewed a folder containing thirty photographs of male persons, and I immediately recognised photo #5 as the person I believe to be the gunman, but I must be honest here with this identification, and say that I have definitely been influenced by media coverage of his photo in relation to an identification.’ – Eyewitness Lindsay Richards (May 29, 1996)

‘I have read an article in Time Magazine, and have viewed a photograph of Martin Bryant within this article ... so if I chose Bryant in a [police] photoboard, I would be very influenced by this article.’ – Eyewitness Brigid Cook (May 29, 1996)

**BELOW:** Media frenzy: the first picture the nation saw of the alleged perpetrator of the massacre, Martin Bryant



3. A Coronial Inquiry, although required by Tasmanian law when a person has died ‘a violent, unnatural or unexpected death, or as a result of injury or accident,’ was waived on purely sentimental grounds by the Prime Minister, John Howard. Not only did Howard have no power to overrule a Tasmanian law, it cannot be overruled by a Tasmanian government official or legal representative. Yet every move made by relatives of the deceased in calling for a Coronial Inquest has been

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subsequently denied by the Tasmanian Coroner, Ian Matterson, as well as by Tasmania's Attorney General, Ray Groom. The explanation was that an inquiry would only inflict more pain upon the already sufficiently traumatized survivors.

4. Bryant was illegally held in solitary confinement until he finally pleaded guilty in November 1996, a period of nearly seven months. During this period, he was allowed no access to the media, be it radio, television or print, and was therefore kept in the dark as to what Australia was saying about the massacre and his presumed role in it. Although he received a handful of visits from his mother Carleen Bryant and one from his girlfriend Petra Wilmott, these visits seem to have taken place in closely supervised (i.e., severely constrained) circumstances in which the case itself was not allowed to be discussed. As a result, Bryant was left in total ignorance for over two months of the fact that he was being held responsible for the Port Arthur massacre. This is contrary to the fundamental principle that accused persons have the right to know the nature of the charges against them.

5. Bryant's police interrogation of July 4, 1996, was illegally conducted without any legal counsel or guardian present. What's more, what has been released of the interrogation transcript shows that until July 4, 1996, Bryant was under the misapprehension the only charge against him was a single death. Again, this is contrary to the principle that accused persons have the right to know the nature of the charges against them.

6. Neither of Bryant's defence lawyers - David Gunson QC and Hobart-based barrister and solicitor John Avery - made any effort to defend him. They seem to have understood their role to involve persuading Bryant to plead guilty in order to avoid a trial. The problem with taking such a position is that Bryant denied carrying out the massacre at the PAHS on April 28,

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1996. Gunson and Avery therefore failed to fulfill their obligations to their client to mount a defence on his behalf.

7. Since the intellectually disadvantaged Bryant had been declared incompetent to manage his own affairs in a closed session of the Hobart Supreme Court on April 22, 1994, he was not legally able to enter a guilty plea.

8. The police have never properly verified Bryant's guilty pleas using standard police procedures. 'Standard procedure in these circumstances is to take the suspect out to the crime scene and ask for details of exactly how he committed the crime(s), i.e. where each victim was standing, what sex, how many bullets, where the weapon was reloaded, etc etc., all recorded on continuous (time-stamped) video,' explains conspiracy researcher Joe Vials. 'The Victorian Police Service observed this standard procedure meticulously in the case of Julian Knight at Hoddle Street during 1987, as did the New South Wales Police Service after a street shooting in Wollongong in 1998.' Vials adds the following, entirely appropriate conclusion: the 'Tasmanian Police Service has still not verified his guilt using this standard procedure, and its continued refusal to do so can realistically be taken as proof of Martin Bryant's innocence.'<sup>5</sup>

9. Prime Minister Howard called for the demolition of the Broad Arrow Café, again on sentimental grounds. However, the Café was part of the evidence that would be required for any

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<sup>5</sup> <http://members.iinet.net/~jenks/carleen.html> That this is what the police do in such cases can easily be verified by watching the episodes of the TV programme *Forensic Investigators* concerned with the 1998 Wollongong murders. They show abundant footage of the perpetrator, Mark Valera, taking police through every stage of the killings.

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future court case or inquest and should therefore have been preserved indefinitely.

NB: The hasty demolition of a crime scene – as that of the Murrah Federal Building at Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center in New York – is a classic feature of high-level cover ups.

10. Even today, no one outside Risdon prison - with the possible exception of his mother, although this remains unclear - is apparently allowed to speak with, or photograph, Martin Bryant. This is what the American constitution would define as 'cruel and unusual punishment,' but is apparently legal in Australia. However, it would certainly be illegal under various United Nations charters on human rights.

11. Bryant's estate was sequestered and his assets (which were estimated at \$900,000) turned over to the state. Since Bryant has never been proven guilty, this amounts to larceny on the part of the Tasmanian government.

12. Since there existed no legislation which would have entitled the Tasmanian government to help itself to Bryant's estate, special legislation had to be introduced into Parliament which applied retrospectively to the date at which it was introduced (which was on about November 15, 1996, a week before Bryant pled guilty). Retrospective legislation is always objectionable on moral grounds – in effect, it means entitling the state to penalize individuals for acts which were not illegal at the time they were performed - but this example must rank among the most dangerous precedents in Australian legal history.

That it has proven so easy for the authorities to leave Bryant languishing in prison without ever being proven guilty is largely due to the apathy of millions. Despite their civilized veneer, the Australians of 1996 reverted to a lynch mob mentality when

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confronted by crimes that exceeded their understanding. Who can doubt that Bryant would have been lynched at any time in 1996, if the opportunity had presented itself? Royal Hobart Hospital staff even received death threats for the crime of tending to the third-degree burns Bryant sustained in the Seascope fire and one of the walls of the Hospital soon carried a message implying that an attempt would be made to kill him (see photo on page 10). Even after ten years, I doubt whether many Australians would raise an eyebrow if, tomorrow, they read in their newspapers that Bryant had been murdered in Risdon prison by a fellow prisoner or by a prison officer.

The fact that there has been total silence on the part of the Australian legal establishment about Bryant's treatment amply demonstrates that it does not take such matters as the right to a fair trial at all seriously. The only high profile individual who has dared to express doubts as to Bryant's guilt is independent conservative politician Pauline Hanson, who is not highly regarded in many circles. Sadly, it is likely that Bryant's case will remain unexposed unless it is taken up by a more credible critic of the establishment like journalist David Marr or social commentator Richard Neville.

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**BELOW:** Graffiti on the wall of the Hobart hospital in which Bryant was recovering from burn wounds





**PART I:**  
**THERE IS NO CASE  
AGAINST MARTIN BRYANT**

### **1**

#### **Reasons to question the official story**

The unhappy fate of Martin Bryant is more than a matter of the flouting of the fundamental principles of the Australian criminal justice system. Since so many laws and legal norms were conspicuously ignored in the rush to lock Bryant away for good, the only reasonable conclusion to draw is that they were ignored precisely because they constituted an impediment to finding him guilty. Our first step, therefore, is to reexamine the case on the basis of a presumption of innocence. Our *modus operandi* consists of subjecting every incriminating aspect of the case to serious scrutiny: something that has scarcely ever been done before.

#### *Bryant's physical appearance*

Most Australians remain unaware that there are good reasons to doubt that Bryant perpetrated the massacre. Of the twenty-odd persons who survived the shootings inside the Broad Arrow Café, only a few provided physical descriptions of the gunman. In these, his estimated age is *twenty or less*. Karen Atkins of Sydney told *The Australian* (April 29, 1996) that, very soon after the shootings, she had spoken to a woman who had met the gunman in the Café. According to this woman, the gunman had been 'a young fellow, about 18 or 19, he looked like a surfer, he arrived in a Volkswagon and he walked into the cafeteria carrying a tennis bag.'

This description could be dismissed on the grounds that it is secondhand. However, it tallies with the description given by Carol Pearce. According to Pearce, the gunman, who she passed on her way into the Broad Arrow Café, was 'between 18-20 years of age, he had really blonde hair which was collar length, it was fairly straight with a bit of a wave in it. He was clean shaven, he was average in height and build.' Pearce's

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description is invaluable, as it was given on April 28, 1996, the very day of the massacre. Like the woman to whom Atkins spoke, therefore, Pearce could not have been influenced by the media campaign of vilification against Martin Bryant. No picture of him had as yet been published.<sup>6</sup>

The same age range is mentioned by former RAF officer Graham Collyer, who was shot in the throat inside the Café. In his witness statement taken on May 7, 1996, Collyer described the gunman thus: 'He seemed somewhere about 20, he had long blonde bedraggled hair, about 3" - 4" below the shoulder. He looked like he might have had a lot of acne, a pitted face. He had scraggly trousers, I don't remember what colour.'<sup>7</sup> On May 10, Jim Laycock told police that the man was in his 'low twenties.' Betty Daviess described him as a 'young male person.'<sup>8</sup>

Of the individuals who gave their statements to the police before the barrage of images of Martin Bryant appeared in the media, the oldest age estimates are given by Carmel Edwards, who held the door open for the gunman as he left the Café to eat his lunch on the balcony, and Justin Noble, a member of the New South Wales police force who says he saw the gunman

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<sup>6</sup> Of course, Pearce could have been the woman Atkins spoke to. If so, this proves that Atkins related her description accurately enough. However, Pearce does not say that she spoke with the gunman, suggesting that we are talking about two different witnesses.

<sup>7</sup> Noel McDonald, *A Presentation on the Port Arthur Incident*, 2001, p. 222. Collyer states that he had been 'sedated or sleeping since the shooting,' so had not yet had the opportunity to 'see anything in the media about the person who shot me.' Collyer's statement can be read online at:

<http://shootersnews.addr.com/snpacollyerfull.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.shootersnews.addr.com/snpadaviesstate.html>

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exiting the Café after the shooting. Edwards described him as '22-23 years old.' Noble described him 'as 20-25 years of age.' Another witness, Joyce Maloney, told the police he was 18-22.<sup>9</sup>

Thus no actual witness to the shootings at Port Arthur cites an age above 25. Most describe him as in his late teens or early twenties. (It also appears to be the case that the better look a witness got at the gunman, the younger the age he or she gave to the police.) *Yet at the time of the massacre, Bryant was 29 and could not reasonably have been mistaken for anyone under 26 or 27.*

This much is obvious from the photograph on the next page, which shows Bryant together with the woman we have been told was his girlfriend, Petra Wilmott. Since the pair reportedly only became romantically involved in February 1996, this photograph has to have been taken within three months of the massacre. Despite its poor quality, it shows Bryant's face unframed by hair, and so gives a very good idea of what he looked like at the time of the massacre.

The only witnesses who estimated the gunman's age in the upper 20s are witnesses like Yannis Kateros who only saw him from a considerable distance, most of whom gave statements to the police a week or more after the shooting when the matter of Bryant's age was already established in the media.<sup>10</sup> It is obvious that those who saw the gunman at close distance and who gave their descriptions before anything about Bryant's appearance had been made public are to be considered by far the most reliable.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.shootersnews.addr.com/snpastatemaloney.html>

<sup>10</sup> Kateros, who estimated the shooter's age as 28, gave his statement on May 10. See Noel McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

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But there were more than years separating Bryant and the Port Arthur gunman. Only one witness, Rebecca McKenna, got a good look at the man's face. (Most witnesses saw nothing on account of the long blonde hair.) Although there are problems with her statement (as well as those of her partner Michael Beekman), her description of his appearance – the only detailed description on record – makes disturbing reading for anyone who thinks that he could have been Bryant:

I would describe the male as follows: - Approximately 173 cm tall. Slim build. Blonde hair, past his ears, wavy with a part in the middle. Unshaven dirty looking. His eyes appeared to be blue. .... He appeared to be German looking. His eyebrows appeared to be blonde and bushy. He appeared “dopey” looking, his eyes appeared to be bloodshot. His facial skin appeared to be freckley and he was pale. His face seemed skinny and withdrawn. His ears were fairly large.<sup>11</sup>

It is interesting that while McKenna's account of the man's conversation was widely quoted – he talked about European wasps and Japanese tourists - her description of his face was

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.shootersnews.addr.com/snpastatemckenna.html>

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not. Perhaps this is because in no photo does Bryant seem to have bushy eyebrows or prominent ears (indeed, his ears seem on the small side). Bryant's most memorable facial characteristic is, in fact, a wide and slightly bulbous nose – a feature never mentioned by witnesses.

Although McKenna's description is uniquely detailed, it is to some extent corroborated by that of Graham Collyer who, as we saw, states that his complexion was acne-scarred. However, *Bryant's complexion is perfectly smooth*, at least so far as the available photographs show, while the colour versions of the photos allegedly taken by Petra Wilmott on April 25, 1996, show a healthy, ruddy face.

The biggest problem with McKenna's description is her statement that the man was unshaven. This conflicts with the statement of Carol Pearce, who described him as clean shaven.

Some doubt remains as to the length of the gunman's hair. Graham Collyer is one of a number of witnesses who reported that his hair extended a few inches below the shoulder, while Bryant's hair barely touched the shoulder, as can be seen from the photograph on the following page, which was one of a number (at least allegedly) taken by Wilmott only *three days* before the shootings.

Another striking difference concerns the waviness of Bryant's hair. This photo shows that it was wavy throughout, not 'fairly straight with a bit of a wave in it,' as Pearce states. Yet most witnesses state that the gunman's hair was straight, with a wave only at the bottom.

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**BELOW:** Martin Bryant photographed by Petra Wilmott at Richmond on April 25, 1996.<sup>12</sup>



The most serious problem is raised by the statement of Jim Laycock. Laycock, who was the co-owner of the Port Arthur Motor Inn at the entrance to the PAHS, is of outstanding importance in this case as he was *the one and only witness who observed the gunman in the act who actually knew Bryant*. In his police statement, Laycock said that 'he did not recognise the

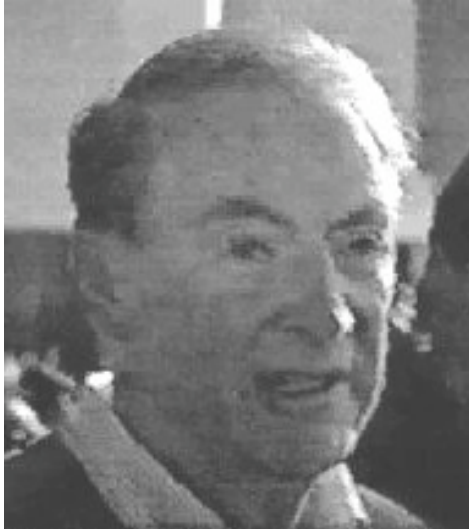
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<sup>12</sup> According to the photo section of Bingham, *op. cit.*

## ***What's Going On?***

male as Martin Bryant.' He states only that he saw 'a person with blond hair' shoot Zoe Hall and take Glenn Pears captive.<sup>13</sup>

**BELOW:** Jim Laycock



Another witness, Yannis Kateros, says he had never seen the gunman before. Yet Kateros had lived at Port Arthur since 1991, and Bryant had reportedly been an extremely regular visitor to the PAHS in 1991-92.

At least two other witnesses have also stated that Bryant was not the gunman. These are PAHS Information Centre employee Wendy Scurr, who, according to one report, saw him inside the Centre immediately prior to the attack, and Vietnam war veteran John Godfrey, who was waiting outside the Centre when the shooting commenced. Godfrey viewed the gunman twice. He saw him drive by and saw him put a bag into the boot

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<sup>13</sup> We will see in Appendix II below that there are reasons to question whether Bryant even had blond hair.



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of his car. 'In my opinion, the picture I saw in the newspapers, was not the same person,' he stated in his police witness statement taken on June 7, 1996.<sup>14</sup> Wendy Scurr has reportedly admitted changing her mind during the course of several public presentations she has given on the subject of the massacre. She no longer believes that Bryant was the man she saw.

*Bryant has never been positively ID'd as the gunman*

Most Australians, when confronted by the heretical idea that Bryant had not been the gunman, respond in brain-dead, knee-jerk fashion: 'Of course he did it!' they say. 'People saw him do it!' In fact, it has never been *proven* that he was the man they saw do it. It was the police and the media, not the eyewitnesses, who identified Bryant as the gunman. Unfortunately, numerous witnesses, to whom one young man with long blonde hair is pretty much the same as another, have inadvertently helped prop up the official determination.

The only witnesses who positively identified Bryant as the gunman were Linda White and Michael Wanders, both persons whose statements were taken a full month after the shooting, after they had been exposed to plenty of media coverage about the case. On May 27, 1996, White viewed the police photoboard and decided that 'Photograph no 5 in this folder [i.e., Bryant] is the male who shot us near Port Arthur.' However, her reason for selecting photo #5 seems to have been because of the fact that, in this photo, Bryant appeared to be wearing a top that was 'very similar' to that worn by the gunman. 'It could even be the same top,' she said.

Unfortunately, White's statement is of no value whatsoever. An identification can scarcely be based upon an item of clothing, which can obviously be worn by another person (indeed,

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<sup>14</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

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someone seeking to impersonate Bryant would have taken care to acquire an item of his clothing, or at least a very similar item). What's more, no other witness recalled the gunman wearing the same top as that worn by Bryant in photo #5. White was clearly basing her identification entirely upon a photo she had seen in the media.

As for Michael Wanders, in his statement taken the same day (May 27, 1996), Wanders picked Bryant out from the police photoboard as 'the person who shot at Linda and I on 28/4/96.' Unfortunately, Wanders' identification is also of no value. On April 28, 1996, he had told the police 'I would not be able to identify the person who shot at us.' In his statement a month later, he admits that he hadn't been able to 'get a good enough look at the male to see how old he was or what he was wearing.' His statement suggests that really all he had seen was a male with long blonde hair. Yet, somehow, this was enough for him to still pick Bryant out as the man who had shot at him. It is hard to credit the identification of a witness who *on the day of the attack itself* explicitly stated that he would not have been able to identify the gunman to someone who, a month later, felt able to oblige the police with a positive ID. White's and Wanders' statements prove one thing – that the laws prohibiting media organizations from publishing photos of accused persons are sensible ones which ought always to be rigorously enforced.

In view of the fact that no serious efforts were ever made to prevent the media from publishing photos of Bryant, the question has to be asked whether the police ever wanted the gunman properly identified. Certainly, they seem to have done their best to avoid placing Bryant together with eyewitnesses in the same room. Graham Collyer, who was on the same floor as Bryant in the Royal Hobart Hospital on the day his witness statement was taken, was never given the opportunity to look at

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him. On this occasion, a positive ID could have been made in a matter of minutes.

If you look at the dates on which most witness statements were taken – a week or more after the events themselves – it looks as though the police were deliberately refraining from interviewing eyewitnesses until they had had time to absorb the disinformation about Bryant that predominated in the Australian media during the week after the massacre.

In this regard, it is striking that none of the witnesses who showed a tendency not to identify Bryant as the gunman were given the opportunity to pick him out from the police identity board - not even N.S.W. police officer Justin Noble, who said that he thought he could identify the man, if shown a photo of him taken from the appropriate angle.<sup>15</sup> The fact that Noble was never asked to view the police photoboard implies that Tasmania Police anticipated a negative response.

It is only when one realizes that Bryant has never been positively identified as the PAHS shooter that one begins to understand why a court trial was never held. One of the problems that a trial presented to those seeking to incriminate him was that it would have placed actual witnesses in the same room with him. Under oath, they would have been required to identify Martin Bryant as the man they had seen shooting at the PAHS on April 28, 1996. That a trial was avoided means that no one was ever asked to identify him specifically as the killer.

### *Lack of Bryant's fingerprints or DNA at Port Arthur*

Martin Bryant is adamant that he never visited the PAHS on the day of the massacre. Most Australians – if they know of this denial at all - simply dismiss it as a lie. A fact that should deeply

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<sup>15</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

unsettle them is that neither Bryant's fingerprints nor his DNA have ever been found at the PAHS. This much has been admitted by Sergeant Gerard Dutton, officer in charge of the Ballistic Section of Tasmania Police, in an article he published about the case in the *Australian Police Journal* in December 1998.

There is no good reason why no evidence of this kind exists. An obvious source of fingerprints and DNA would have been the food tray (with a can of Solo soft drink, a plastic Schweppes cup and other food items, including eating utensils) that Rebecca McKenna saw the gunman eating from immediately prior to the shooting. We know that the tray was recovered by the police, because it is shown in a police training video that turned up in a secondhand shop in September 2004.<sup>16</sup> Although the tray would have contained fingerprints, thumb prints, palm prints, saliva, sweat, skin and possibly hair from the shooter, there is no evidence that it yielded anything that came from Martin Bryant. The only reason we have heard nothing about forensic evidence of this kind, surely, is that none of it incriminated him.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Balasko video hoax*

A further reason to doubt that Bryant was the Port Arthur shooter concerns the (presumably not coincidental) fact that all the images of the shooter which have been made public entirely lack facial detail. The best quality image, that reproduced below, which comes from a video allegedly made by 'American

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/Australia/portarthur6.htm>  
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/08/28/1093518144586.html>

<sup>17</sup> The absence of evidence against Bryant is dealt with more systematically in Chapter 5 below.

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tourist' James Balasko, looks strangely washed out in the facial area, as though it has been tampered with.

If this image is authentic, the question have to be asked how the Prince sports bag the man is carrying towards his vehicle got back into the Café, where it is shown next to the food tray in the footage from the police training video, and why the man is carrying it on his left shoulder when two witnesses, the Wilkinsons from Corio, Victoria, explicitly state that the gunman they watched leave the Café carried it on his right shoulder as he walked towards his vehicle. There is also no time indicated on the frame, which raises the possibility that the video was not taken at around 1.30 p.m. on April 28, 1996.

The actual circumstances in which the video came to light are highly suspicious and militate against its authenticity. Balasko does not mention having made the video in his interview with Tasmanian police on the evening of April 29, 1996, and the footage itself, which would have been of immense value to both the police and the media immediately after the shootings, was not seen by the Australian public until it was shown on national television shortly before Bryant's sentence hearing. It is, of course, highly implausible that Balasko would have videotaped the gunman when his priority would have been getting as far away from him as possible or that, if he had been so foolhardy, he would not have offered his historic recording to the police or the media at once.

Although other conclusions may be possible, my own is that the video was a fake. A possibility to be considered is that shortly the massacre the police performed and filmed (from Balasko's position) a reconstruction of the crime. A short sequence from the film would have been released to the media on the eve of Bryant's sentencing hearing as a means of reinforcing public belief in his guilt. The possibility that it depicts a recreation emerges clearly from a comparison of the Balasko frames with

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the Wilkinsons' video, whose authenticity I see no reason to doubt. The two videos seem to show different vehicles in the parking area.

**BELOW:** An alleged image of the gunman returning to his vehicle immediately after the massacre



### *The mysterious Prince sports bag*

Since several witnesses (including John Godfrey and Betty Daviess) saw the gunman put the sports bag in the boot of his car before driving off, its presence inside the Café after the shootings is a mystery that has yet to be solved. A distinct possibility is that there were two sports bags, one of which the shooter left inside the Café and the other which he took with him back to his car. (Daviess says it was green) Since the bag left behind in the Café allegedly contained a knife with the blood of Seascape owner David Martin on it, it is not hard to see in the mystery of the sports bag a complex intrigue for the purpose of framing Bryant by abandoning at the crime scene a bag that Bryant had handled in the recent past, perhaps during

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the course of the bizarre events that had unfolded that morning at Seascap Cottage (see Chapter 3 below).

According to Mark Bingham's *Suddenly One Sunday* (1996), Petra Wilmott, who was Bryant's girlfriend for two months immediately prior to the massacre, was present when Bryant bought the bag 'in a store.' He told her it was for Tai Chi.<sup>18</sup> However, when police showed Bryant the bag on July 4, 1996, he denied having seen it before. Inspector Ross Paine told Bryant that he believed that Bryant had bought it 'in Myers or Fitzgeralds or somewhere in town with a, a young woman earlier this year.' Bryant denied it, Paine responded that he believed that he had. End of subject.

**BELOW:** Petra Wilmott, Bryant's girlfriend in the two months prior to the massacre



This conversation shows that more than two months after the massacre the police still had not established where the bag came from - something that should have been easily done in a small town like Hobart (population 218,000) which has only a

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<sup>18</sup> Bingham, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

handful of stores that would stock an item of this kind. Somehow the problem was solved between July 4 and November 19, 1996, when Damien Bugg QC told the Supreme Court that Bryant had bought the bag in Myer's on April 15, 1996.

But, to my knowledge, no proof of the transaction has ever been provided. What's more, the name of the individual working in the store at the time – who claims to have had a whispered conversation with Bryant about the bag – has never been made public. Nor, so far as I am aware, has this unidentified individual ever furnished the police with a statement.

I suspect this individual does not even exist. If I am correct in drawing this conclusion, the case for Bryant's purchase of the bag rests entirely on the word of Petra Wilmott. However, there are reasons to deeply distrust Wilmott, a mysterious individual who 1) entered Bryant's life shortly before the massacre; 2) was involved with Bryant during the period in which he procured a new rifle; 3) was present with Bryant during the siege at Seascape Cottage; and 4) seems to have vanished into history since (to my knowledge, she has never been interviewed about Bryant or the case since the year in which it happened).<sup>19</sup> She could easily have had Bryant handle the bag in a store and then bought it herself afterwards. On the other hand, her story may be a complete fiction.

### *Bryant's gunmanship*

For many people, the most important reason to doubt that Bryant was the killer is on account of the latter's impressive gunmanship. The Broad Arrow Cafe shooter managed to kill the

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<sup>19</sup> I look forward to seeing whether she is trotted out by the media on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the massacre, which falls on April 28, 2006.



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first 19 out of 20 dead in the with single accurate shots to the head fired from his right hip. Some researchers maintain that Bryant, who was an amateur shooter with virtually no shooting experience whatsoever, would have entirely lacked the skills to carry out such a feat.

A powerful case has been made to this effect by Perth researcher Joe Vials, who points out that amateur shooters generally achieve a much lower KIR (kill to injured ratio) than did the Broad Arrow Café shooter. In an enclosed space like the Broad Arrow Café, targets have to be shot in a careful sequence with split-second timing to maximise kill rates. Yet the Broad Arrow Café gunman managed a kill rate well above that required of a fully trained soldier, an impossible task for a man with Bryant's mid-sixties IQ and his total lack of military training. Vials has concluded that the shooter was a military-trained marksman who would probably rank among the top ten or twenty shooters in the world.<sup>20</sup>

Brigadier Ted Serong, former head of Australian forces in Vietnam, was just as impressed. In 1999, Serong – who explained that his eyes had first been opened by the ‘astonishing proportion of killed to wounded’ - told Melbourne newspaper *The Age* that ‘There was an almost satanic accuracy to that shooting performance. Whoever did it is better than I am, and there are not too many people around here better than I am.’<sup>21</sup>

Most members of the general public have a greatly exaggerated idea of what amateur gunmen are able to do. Not only do they tend to injure many more persons than they kill, they are usually overpowered before they have completed their sinister

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<sup>20</sup> <http://vials.homestead.com/portarthur.html>

<sup>21</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

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work. By contrast, the Port Arthur gunman was a thorough professional who was at all times in perfect control:

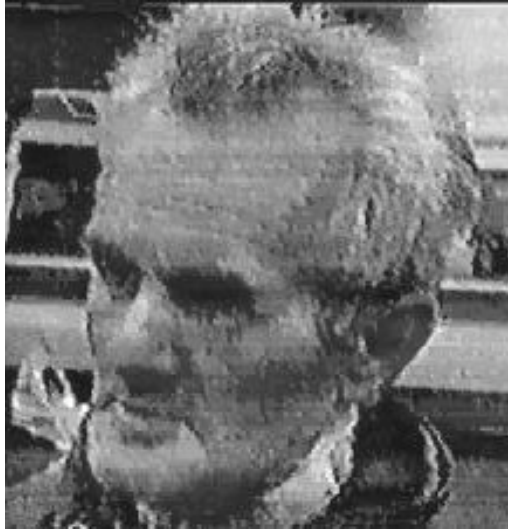
The shooter in the Broad Arrow Café at Port Arthur demonstrated all of the qualities of a trained counter-terrorist marksman but made no amateur mistakes. Always in motion and point shooting from the right hip with devastating accuracy, he killed twenty of the occupants with single shots to the head and wounded twelve more, firing a total of only 29 rounds. Using known techniques reported by witnesses, he ensured his own safety from attack by turning on the spot and staying outside grappling range. It was an awesome display of expertise, even by special forces standards.<sup>22</sup>

However, we don't have to take the word of people like Vialls and Serong who never saw the Port Arthur gunman shoot with their own eyes. According to eyewitness Neville Quin, 'He [the gunman] appeared to be the best trained army guy I've ever seen, his stance was unbelievable.'

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<sup>22</sup> [http://members.fortunecity.com/able\\_j/springfield.html](http://members.fortunecity.com/able_j/springfield.html)

**BELOW:** Neville Quin



Also important to consider is that, according to most witness, the Café shooter shot from his right hip. Not only is Bryant left-handed, he told police he had never fired a gun from his hip. It is doubtful that anyone except a highly-trained professional shooter could.

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**The police interrogation transcript**

On July 4, 1996, two police detectives who had been appointed by Superintendent Jack Johnston to handle the Port Arthur investigation, Inspectors Ross Paine and John Warren, interviewed Bryant about the case at some length. The interview was most unprofessionally conducted, with the equipment frequently malfunctioning. As a result, the conversation was constantly interrupted and the resulting quality of the videotape is said to be atrocious. Such adverse conditions had to have been deliberate. There was no necessity to conduct the interview on July 4 and it could have been - indeed, should have been - postponed to such a time as the equipment was working properly. After all, Port Arthur was the biggest murder case in Australian history.

On account of what seems to have been deliberately sloppy police work, it is not possible to be certain that anything attributed to Bryant in the printed record of the interrogation matches what he actually said. The transcript also omits a great deal of what he did say - at least a third of the conversation has been withheld. Even the transcription we do possess cannot be trusted in its entirety. Over and over again, Bryant's responses are rendered as 'mmmm' or 'inaudible.' Since there is a suspicious tendency for such responses to appear in the most crucial parts of the conversation, particularly those where Bryant's version of events contradicts that of his interrogators, we cannot be sure that he did not say something which has only been excised as a means of withholding important clues as to what really happened from the public.

Despite its great limitations, the police transcript is invaluable as a record of Martin Bryant's side of the story. To my knowledge, this is the only public record of anything he has said about Port Arthur (or any subject) since his arrest on April 29,

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1996. It is a great pity that Australians have condemned him without ever having listened to what he had to say on the one occasion on which his words have been allowed to enter the public record.<sup>23</sup>

Most Australians will be amazed to discover that in this interview Bryant not only denied carrying out the massacre but also related an entirely different narrative of the events of April 28, 1996, than that presented to him by his police interrogators. According to police, Bryant set his alarm clock for 6 a.m., left his house in Clare St., New Town, Hobart, at 9.47 a.m. precisely (they said that that was when he activated his house alarm), and drove to Seascope guest house, making stops at Midway Point (to buy a cigarette lighter), Sorell (to have a coffee), Forcett (to buy a bottle of tomato sauce), and Taranna (to buy petrol). When he arrived at Seascope, he murdered the owners, David Martin and his wife Sally, and loaded the building with firearms and ammunition that he had presumably brought with him in his car from Hobart. After chatting for five or ten minutes with a neighbour of the Martins, Roger Larner, Bryant then proceeded to the PAHS - stopping to buy a small amount of marijuana on the way - and, as they say, the rest is history.

Bryant, on the other hand, says he did not set his clock alarm in the morning, and that he rose at 7 or 8 a.m., left his house around 11 a.m. (without turning on his house alarm), and drove to Roaring Beach on the western side of the Tasman Peninsula, making only one stop along the way - at Sorell, where he had a cappuccino. (Even this minor episode does not conform to the police version of events. Bryant said he got his coffee from the Sorell Bakery, not the service station, although he admitted that

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<sup>23</sup> The transcript can be read at <http://home.overflow.net.au/~nedwood/transcript.html> or [http://members.fortunecity.com/able\\_j/transcript.html](http://members.fortunecity.com/able_j/transcript.html)

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he had bought coffee from the service station on earlier occasions.)

At Roaring Beach, he surfed for about twenty minutes, and noticed two other people bodysurfing in short wetsuits at the other end of the beach. After drying off in the sun, he went to Nubeena, where he stopped for coffee and a toasted sandwich. After this, he drove past the PAHS to visit the Martins at Seascape. He does not recall having spoken to Lerner at all that day, while the likelihood that he bought marijuana is drastically reduced by the fact that he smoked neither cigarettes nor marijuana.

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**BELOW:** Map of the area between Hobart and the Tasman Peninsula



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What the rest of Bryant's story proves beyond the shadow of a doubt is that as late as July 4, 1996, he still had not the faintest clue as to the extent of the atrocities he is supposed to have committed nine weeks earlier. He had obviously been told so little about the case that he had no alternative but to put the pieces together all by himself. The result is a sorry tale about stealing a car to take a joyride (and taking a hostage to prevent the incident from being reported to the police) that seems to have been the best that this man of extremely limited intellectual capacity could come up with to explain how it was that he found himself in prison on a murder charge.

Before we examine his responses to the charges against him, we need to explain how the police were able to place Bryant in a position from which only a much more intelligent individual would have been able to extricate himself. As we learned in the previous chapter, the case against Bryant suffers from a marked dearth of evidence. The key to the case against him is essentially the distinctiveness of his personal appearance and of his yellow Volvo. The police framing of Bryant therefore began by obtaining from him concessions as to the distinctiveness of his appearance and that of his Volvo. The matter of his appearance was raised spontaneously by Bryant himself, but was at once capitalized upon by Inspector Warren, who deviously connected it to 'Port Arthur':

*Warren:* Martin, getting back to that point about the hostage, you taking the hostage because you didn't want him telling the police. What didn't you want him telling the police?

*Bryant:* That I took his umm, car.

*Warren:* But I mean, if you'd have left him on the side of the road, he wouldn't have known where you could've driven.

*Bryant:* Yeah but he could've let them know that there was a chap with blonde hair, took me car, stole me car. So I sort of put him in the boot to be safe.

*Warren:* So you thought your looks that day were distinctive



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and if someone said they saw a chap with blonde hair.

*Bryant:* Mmm.

*Warren:* At Port Arthur on that particular day?

Second, the Volvo:

*Warren:* We have lots of people who are telling us that they saw you at Port Arthur and your car.

*Bryant:* Well it must've been another, there's other Volvos ...

*Warren:* With surfboards on the top? With someone with long blonde hair driving them or getting out of them?

*Bryant:* There's not many with surfboards on top.

As we will see below, these concessions left Bryant little wiggle room when police confronted him with a photograph of his vehicle at Port Arthur.

Where Bryant's account and that of the police converge is in the matter of a hijacked BMW. At the Fortescue Bay turnoff on the way to Seascope, his narrative takes a bizarre twist:

'unfortunately I held up a car, I took ahh, I saw this car I liked and got umm, held up the person in the car and kidnapped him.' The car was a BMW occupied by three people, a male, a female and a child. Bryant ordered the man inside the boot of the car and made the female and the child get inside his Volvo. Why did he take the man hostage? 'I was a bit worried that if he didn't go, he'd go off in my car.' After commandeering the BMW solely because he 'liked' it (he states that his intention was only to take it for a drive), Bryant sped off towards Seascope at 140 km.

What is striking about this story is that it combines elements from two different events, the PAHS gunman's hijacking of a gold-coloured BMW sedan belonging to Sidney and Mary Nixon and the subsequent taking of a hostage, Glenn Pears, who had been the driver of a different vehicle (a white Corolla). It is not

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hard to see that Bryant's version of the story, which is effectively the only point at which his account of his doings on April 28 intersects with that of the police, is a classic case of the mentally deficient person confessing to a crime that he believes he must have committed, even if he doesn't actually remember doing so or know why he would have done such a thing. (For two examples of this syndrome, that of Timothy Evans, who confessed to killing his wife, and that of Margaret Livesey, who confessed to the murder of her son, see Bob Woffinden's 1987 book *Miscarriages of Justice*.)

It is possible to reconstruct the laborious mental process that led the hapless Bryant to effectively connect his harmless activities with the police narrative of the PAHS gunman. When the interview began, Bryant knew no more than that he was being detained on a single charge of murder. But he had no idea what had happened, who had died or why he was being held responsible. Building an explanation on the basis of certain facts that must have been leaked to him about the case, presumably by one of the prison guards, he admitted to commandeering a BMW at gunpoint and forcing the male driver into the boot.

Although Bryant knew that the man had died, he did not admit having killed him intentionally. He stated that, as he was knocking at the door of Seascope, he heard the vehicle explode. His conclusion was that his hostage had died in the explosion. 'How do you feel about that Martin?' asks Inspector Warren. 'Pretty awful,' Bryant replied (a statement which in itself proves that Bryant is capable of remorse when it came to someone whose death he genuinely believed he had caused, however inadvertently).

Although Bryant did not recall having set the vehicle on fire and had certainly not intended to do so, he realized that the explosion had to have started somehow. After concluding that

only he could have started the fire, he tried to imagine what he would have done to have caused it. He decided that he must have transferred 'two or three' plastic drums of petrol from the Volvo to the BMW, tipped the petrol all over the car, and then lit it using a match (or a lighter) that he must have found inside his jacket pocket. Having decided that this is how he had set fire to the car, Bryant seized upon the fire as an explanation for his burns: 'I must've been in the car when it went up 'cos I got burnt.' He reasoned that the whole mess that had landed him in gaol had been the result of 'a bad thing,' by which he meant 'playing with fire,' as he had done when he was ten years old.<sup>24</sup>

Having worked out a rough scenario that would explain why he was being detained on a murder charge and why he had suffered serious burns to his body, Inspector Warren turned the tables on Bryant by suddenly revealing that the person he had been charged with murdering was not the male hostage but a female, Kate Scott. This information obviously came as a great shock to him. Not knowing that Scott had died inside the Broad Arrow Café (he still knew nothing about the massacre), Bryant drew the erroneous conclusion that she had been the woman in the BMW. Unable to understand how he could have been responsible for her death, he protested, 'I let the lady go into the Volvo, I didn't hurt her or anything. No, I don't register, it doesn't register.' Presumably because he did not yet want to discuss with Bryant what had happened in the Café, at this point Inspector Paine abruptly and pointlessly changed the subject to whether he had any favourite restaurants in Port

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<sup>24</sup> When Bryant was a child, he badly burned himself while playing with matches. Afterwards, he was seen by a Tavistock Institute psychiatrist, Dr Eric Cunningham-Dax, who some researchers suspect programmed Bryant as a patsy for future use. On the Tavistock Institute, see <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~noelmcd/lostlink/Martin-Bryant.htm>

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Arthur. 'Ohh Kelly's is pretty good, that's at, out, just it's not quite into Port Arthur. You turn off, that's actually in Stewart's Bay,' Bryant replied. Clearly, Inspector Paine did not want Bryant to say anything further about the matter.

As the above discussion shows, when his police interrogation began on July 4, 1996, Martin Bryant was still wholly in the dark as to his alleged involvement in the Port Arthur massacre. All that he knew by that stage of the game was that he was being detained on a single count of murder. Between his arrest on April 29 and his interrogation July 4, he seems to have performed mental gyrations to devise a scenario that would explain how this had come about. What is clear is that the scenario Bryant thought up is wholly imaginary, although the key elements (the BMW, the hostage, the explosion) had to have been suggested him by someone. But the idea that Bryant was responsible for setting the BMW alight can be dismissed entirely. For what Bryant did not know, but which we know now, is that the BMW was actually set on fire by Andrew Fogarty of the Special Operations Group (SOG), who was apparently the first police officer to arrive at Seascope.

If Bryant was capable of inventing for himself a scenario in which he had set the BMW alight, he was therefore also capable of imagining the situation in which he commandeered the BMW in the first place. What confirms this conclusion is that the scenario he describes only bears superficial similarities to the gunman's actual capture of Sidney and Mary Nixon's BMW, an event that was viewed by several witnesses, including Jim Laycock (who, as we have already seen, did not recognize the man as Bryant). Although the real gunman seized the vehicle near the PAHS toll booth, Bryant vacillated when asked to state where he had hijacked the BMW. His confession to having captured the vehicle and taken a hostage has to be dismissed as sheer fantasy.

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Apart from a few garbled facts about the hijacking of the Nixons' BMW, the only other significant thing that Bryant knew about the events of April 28 by the time his police interrogation began is that Seascapè guest house had been burned down and that a number of people had perished in the fire. He had obtained the information not from Inspectors Paine and Warren (who seem to have been surprised to learn that he knew this), but from the prison guards. What few Australians know is that Bryant was saddened to hear about Seascapè's destruction and that he felt sorry for the Martins' loss. 'Worked hard all their lives, renovating, took them years to build it, renovate it and to start it all up and it's just so sad to see, apparently it's burnt down, it's so sad to see it burnt down.'

Before confronting Bryant with accusations as to his responsibility for the murders at the PAHS, Inspectors Paine and Warren had to convince Bryant that he had been there that day. To do so, they drew upon the unreliable testimony of Aileen Kingston and her husband, Ian Kingston, the two persons who claim to have seen Bryant entering the PAHS between 1.10 and 1.25 p.m. Without supplying the names of any of the individuals who made the claims, Warren confronted Bryant with generalized references to eyewitness sightings of himself which he was ill-placed to contest, having already conceded the distinctiveness of his appearance and of his Volvo:

*Warren:* Well what would you say if I told you that you were seen going into Port Arthur and in fact you were at the toll gate?

*Bryant:* I couldn't've been.

*Warren:* And more than that, that you did complain about the price of admission.

*Bryant:* Umm, I don't remember going in, into Port Arthur or going through the toll gate at all.

*Warren:* Well as you said a minute ago, you, your description of the long blonde hair does make you umm, stand out from the crowd.

## ***What's Going On?***

*Bryant:* Mmm, exactly.

*Warren:* What about your yellow Volvo?

*Bryant:* That would, wouldn't it? That would stand out.

Later in the interview, Warren showed him a photograph of a vehicle that Bryant conceded looked like his own Volvo:

*Warren:* Martin, I want you to have a look at this photo. It's photo number zero one one two. In it is a car I believe to be yours and it's depicted adjacent to the toll booth.

*Bryant:* Couldn't be mine, where'd you get that. I don't remember being stationary [inaudible].

*Warren:* Do you agree that that could be a surfboard on the top?

*Bryant:* Yes I think it probably is.

*Warren:* And it's certainly similar to your ahh, your car.

*Bryant:* Mmm.

*Warren:* The registration number of this vehicle I think is CG two eight three five.

*Bryant:* I don't remember the registration.

*Warren:* Well that's your car. So that certainly suggests it because that's the exit road at the toll booth, that your car had been.

*Bryant:* How could the car be there when I didn't go, go there in the first place [inaudible].

*Warren:* As I said, sorry, as I've said, we have, there are lots of people saying that they saw you in the Port Arthur site and your car in the Port Arthur site.

*Bryant:* Mmm, I can't recall that.

## *A Critical Study of the Port Arthur Massacre*

**BELOW:** The yellow Volvo abandoned by the gunman at the tollbooth as he exited the PAHS



Finally, towards the end of the interrogation, Inspectors Warren and Paine broached the subject of the Port Arthur massacre itself. After again denying that he had been at Port Arthur on April 28, Bryant reacted as any reasonable person would when charged with the Broad Arrow Café shootings:

*Warren:* We believe you went into Port Arthur. Had a slight argument with the toll gate person about the price on entry. We believe you then went to park your car and an attendant or someone ...

*Bryant:* Park the car.

*Warren:* said you couldn't park in a certain spot, so you didn't and sometime later you did move your car to that spot. We believe you went to the Broad Arrow Café with that bag over there, containing some guns and your video camera. You purchased a meal, you went outside, sat down, and then went back into the Café. Took one.

*Bryant:* But you might've. That's like me saying to you, that you were down there.

## *What's Going On?*

*Warren:* But the difference is Martin, my car wasn't down there and I haven't been identified as being down there and I wasn't down there. And then you took one of the guns out of your bag and opened fire in the cafe.

*Bryant:* Why would I do that? I mean.

*Warren:* I don't know, you tell me.

*Bryant:* Why, why would anyone do a thing like that, what?

*Warren:* Well, you tell us.

*Bryant:* [inaudible]

*Warren:* That's what we want to know Martin, why.

*Bryant:* What, what, would, I wouldn't hurt a person in my life.

Inspector Warren then reminded Bryant that he had already admitted having done someone some harm that day:

*Warren:* Well you've already said you'd put the man in your boot of the car.

*Bryant:* Only, yes, yes.

*Warren:* Then you've set fire to the car and you thought that he was in the boot.

*Bryant:* [inaudible]

*Warren:* So how do you explain that?

*Bryant:* It was a bad thing. ... Well, I shouldn't've gone and kidnapped him and the BMW. It's the wrong thing. That and, that and in the, being caught with not having a driver's licence. So they're the two things I've done wrong. I don't know why I stole the BMW in the first place. I wish I'd [inaudible].

Bryant has been checkmated. By having him admit that he had done one bad deed that day, Inspector Warren effectively deprived him of a case for asserting that he would not be the kind of person who would murder 35 people! Although the taking of a hostage is clearly not a crime of the same magnitude as mass murder, most readers will feel that Bryant has been caught up in his own lies, and that the truth will unravel, inch by inch.



## *A Critical Study of the Port Arthur Massacre*

The problem with the case Inspectors Paine and Warren presented to Bryant, however, is that it relied entirely upon assertions, not evidence. Bryant was shown no evidence of a forensic kind, nor any photographs, not even stills from the Balasko video, with the exception only of a single image of his Volvo at Port Arthur. In other words, when it came to convincing Bryant that he had to have been responsible for the atrocity, the police had nothing to fall back on except his distinctive appearance and the presence of his car at the scene.

However, these are both things that could easily have been imitated by someone involved in a plot to set him up. Unfortunately, Bryant's intellectual limitations were such that he was unable to graduate to the complex idea that someone actually had set him up. His low IQ, in a nutshell, is the real reason why Bryant may very well spend the rest of his life in prison.

### **3 The 'Jamie' conversations**

The shooting inside the Broad Arrow Café ceased between 1.32 and 1.34 p.m. It had lasted at least five, and possibly as many as seven minutes, and had taken the lives of 20 people. By 1.43 p.m. the gunman had ditched the yellow Volvo in which he had arrived at the PAHS and departed the location in a gold-coloured BMW sedan which he had commandeered after shooting all the occupants dead. Then, between 1.43 and 1.45 p.m., he took a hostage, Glenn Pears, the driver of a white Corolla that was parked outside the Port Arthur General Store. After handcuffing Pears and ordering him into the boot of the stolen BMW, the gunman shot dead Pears's passenger, Zoe Hall, and drove off in the direction of Seascape guest house.

A few minutes later, at approximately 1.48 p.m., Constable Chris Iles of Sorrel Police Station arrived at the Port Arthur General Store in a marked police vehicle. He spoke briefly to two eyewitnesses of the Zoe Hall slaying - Jim Laycock and Kyle Spruce - and then sped off in hot pursuit of the gunman's BMW.

At approximately 1.52 p.m. eyewitness John Rooke saw the BMW park about a hundred metres short of the entrance to Seascape. The gunman then paused to shoot at passing traffic. He fired at six different vehicles. Two persons were wounded, Linda White and Carol Williams, while others received lesser injuries, mainly from broken glass.

The shootings outside Seascape inaugurated by far the most sensitive phase of the Port Arthur conspiracy. The events of the next hour or so are, in fact, impossible to reconstruct in clear chronological order. In particular, the period between 1.50 and 4 p.m. is cloaked in mystery. Interestingly, the Hobart *Mercury* (April 29, 1996) told a different story than that which is now

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generally accepted, according to which the gunman went straight to Seascope. According to a map of the dramatic events of the previous day published on p. 5, at 1.50 p.m. the gunman fired on vehicles 250 metres north of the Fox and Hounds Hotel and then disappeared ‘into thick bush.’ The gunman (and the assumption is, of course, that he is the same man as that who disappeared into the bush) resurfaced around 4 p.m. ‘holed up with hostage’ at Seascope.

Of course, the mystery is entirely intentional. As will gradually become clear to most readers, this period is difficult to make sense of precisely because it is here, where the narratives of the Port Arthur massacre and the Seascope siege are awkwardly stitched together, that we find first, the possibility that the gunman vanished forever at around 1.50 p.m., and, second, the clearest intimations of police complicity in the unfolding drama.

### **BELOW:** Seascope Cottage



By the time the gunman arrived at Seascope, Constable Andrew Mark Fogarty of the Bellerive Police Station on Hobart's eastern shore – an SOG team leader - was already on the scene.

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Fogarty's early presence at Seascope should definitely raise eyebrows and is probably sufficient in itself to justify an official investigation. Only by means of a helicopter could Fogarty have reached the entrance to Seascope just 20 minutes after the first report of the PAHS massacre had been phoned in to Hobart police headquarters. Even if he had left Bellerive Police Station the instant the call was received, there is simply no way that he could have driven from Hobart to Seascope in just 20 minutes. (In his own account, Fogarty states that his journey took 43 minutes. But as he was already at Seascope by 1.55 p.m. *at the very latest*, he would have to have left Hobart by about 1.10 p.m. or 17 minutes before the massacre in the Broad Arrow Café began, to really have gotten there by road.)

Very shortly after the gunman vacated the BMW, Fogarty fired a phosphorous grenade that caused it to erupt into flames. The first report that the vehicle was on fire came at 1.57 p.m., which means that Fogarty must have fired the grenade at around 1.55 p.m or so.

**BELOW:** The burned out BMW



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According to the official narrative of the Seascope drama, after the gunman exited the BMW, he dragged the hostage out of the boot and the pair entered the guest house together. However, there is no evidence that the gunman actually entered Seascope. It is entirely possible that, after alighting from the BMW, he made his escape into the bush. This would probably have been done with the assistance of one of the *four* policemen who had reached Seascope by this time. For in addition to Fogarty, three other policemen had arrived at Seascope by 2 p.m. These were Constable Chris Iles of Sorrel Police Station, Constable Paul Hyland of Nubeena Police Station and Constable Gary Whittle of Dunally Police Station. Any one of these individuals could have facilitated the gunman's escape and driven the BMW down to Seascope.

Although Constable Whittle's movements are the best accounted for - he was apparently holed up in a roadside ditch until rescued after dark - it cannot be taken for granted that he entered the ditch as soon as he arrived. As for Constable Iles, nothing is known about his activities after he set off from the Port Arthur General Store in pursuit of the fleeing gunman. Presumably, he tailed the BMW as far as the entrance to Seascope, but what he did after that (and for the rest of the day) remains a complete mystery.

Finally, Constable Hyland is not mentioned in Mark Bingham's narrative of the drama in *Suddenly One Sunday*, even though he is supposed to have arrived at Seascope not much later than Whittle.<sup>25</sup> If Hyland was holed up in the ditch together with Whittle, as most accounts maintain, it is suspicious that Bingham replaced Hyland's name with that of Constable Paul Allen, even though this is immediately contradicted. (In his next few lines, we learn from Bingham that Constable Allen,

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<sup>25</sup> Mike Bingham, *Suddenly One Sunday*, 2001, pp. 106-7.

## ***What's Going On?***

who arrived from Hobart with Constable Perry Caulfield in the same vehicle, spoke to an SOG member [i.e., Fogarty] as soon as he arrived. Fogarty promptly diverted Allen and Caulfield to the Fox and Hounds Hotel.) There has to be a reason why Bingham does not want to place Hyland at the Seascape guest house at the same time as Whittle.

**BELOW:** The Fox and Hounds Hotel,  
800 metres from Seascape



Unfortunately, we aren't told what time Constables Allen and Caulfield arrived at Seascape, so it is impossible to establish whether they left Hobart after news of the massacre arrived or whether, like Fogarty, they arrived so shortly afterwards that they must certainly have left Hobart before. The possibility that Allen and Caulfield were on the scene as early as 2 p.m. therefore increases the number of police who may have been involved in shenanigans at Seascape to no fewer than six. (Readers should bear in mind that not one police officer arrived

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at the PAHS until 4.26 p.m., when Detective Peter Hesman stayed just four minutes at the tollbooth.)

According to the official narrative of the Seascope drama, the siege at Seascope was the logical sequel to the horrendous tragedy at Port Arthur. But there is, in fact, no necessary continuity between the massacre and the drama that unfolded at Seascope. The case being laid out in this book, in fact, is that there was no continuity and that, after abandoning the BMW outside Seascope, the gunman was escorted to safety by one of our six policemen. A possibility is that he was helicoptered out by the same helicopter that brought Fogarty in.

The protagonist of the Seascope drama was a completely different individual, a man who only ever identified himself as 'Jamie.' It is not possible to say exactly how or when Jamie arrived at Seascope, for his existence was not signalled until he initiated a series of phone calls shortly after 3 p.m. Since we have no way of knowing for sure what went on at Seascope between 1.50 and 3 p.m., it is possible that Jamie was one of the policemen who vanishes from the official narrative around this time (i.e., Constable Iles or Constable Hyland). However, the fact that Jamie apparently knew nothing about the shootings at Port Arthur - this matter is discussed below - suggests the possibility that Jamie had arrived inside Seascope several hours before. He was presumably part of the terrorist team that had taken over the house between 10.30 and 11 a.m., when David Martin was murdered. He could have been in the dark about everything that had happened a few kilometres down the road.

Between 3 and approximately 9.30 p.m. Jamie made a number of phone calls whose content makes no sense at all, if one assumes that he is the Port Arthur gunman. He initiated most of the calls, the known exception being the one that was initiated by ABC reporter Alison Smith. What emerges clearly enough from a serious analysis of the calls - that is to say, an

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analysis that does not prejudice their content by assuming that Jamie is the Port Arthur gunman - is that Jamie was the central protagonist in a police counter-terrorist exercise. Jamie's role was to pose as a terrorist. But Jamie was not necessarily the only 'terrorist' at Seascapes that day. Since a shot can be heard on the phone call tapes at a time when Jamie was in mid-sentence, we know that he had at least one accomplice. The shooter was apparently the person Jamie referred to as Rick. But since there were moments when two men were shooting, we can be sure that both fired at least some shots.

The tapes of the Jamie conversations make abundantly clear one thing and that is that Jamie was NOT the Port Arthur gunman. If Jamie WAS the Port Arthur gunman, it made no sense for him to initiate and maintain contact with the police. Are we to believe that he seriously thought that he could negotiate his safe release? That the police would allow the greatest mass murderer in Australian history to get away to save the life of a single hostage? If Jamie was the Port Arthur gunman, the best he could hope for would be to die in a shootout. And if Jamie really had been the gunman, and the police had not been involved in a conspiracy together with the gunman, then that is certainly what would have happened, and the loss of Glenn Pears's life would have been discounted afterwards as unavoidable 'collateral damage.'

As the following exchange shows, Jamie actually knew nothing about the PAHS shootings until they were mentioned to him by his interlocutor, police negotiator Sergeant Terry McCarthy of the SOG. Momentarily abandoning his conduct of the Seascapes counter-terrorist exercise, he was concerned enough to ask whether anyone had been killed:

*Jamie:* Yeah what what went on at Port Arthur?

*McCarthy:* Well I was hoping that you might be able to tell me a little bit about what happened at Port Arthur you being down



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there.

*Jamie:* Was there anyone hurt?

*McCarthy:* Well, I understand there's been er er a number of people hurt at Port Arthur.

*Jamie:* Oh they weren't killed?

*McCarthy:* Well, I don't know what, I don't know the full details I know that er er somebody's been shooting at people down at Port Arthur and er in the mean time ah we've also encountered the problem that we have with you, you sort of er want a helicopter and all these things and we're trying to establish whether ...

*Jamie:* Em

*McCarthy:* that's er you know the same incidents are related in any way.

*Jamie:* No, no, they're not at all.

*McCarthy:* They're not.

If Jamie was the Port Arthur gunman, his questions would have been entirely superfluous. Furthermore, when asked by McCarthy whether the two incidents - i.e., the shootings at Port Arthur and the siege at Seascope - were 'related in any way,' Jamie averred that they were not. There is no reason for Jamie to have lied about such a matter. After all, if Jamie was not the fleeing gunman, who did he expect the police to think he was? Yet he does nothing to clarify to Sgt. McCarthy what he is doing at Seascope and why he has taken hostages - which surely suggests that McCarthy knew perfectly well who Jamie was and why he was there.

The explanation that makes most sense, therefore, is that the Seascope siege was a police counter-terrorist exercise organized around a hostage taking scenario. That Jamie knew nothing about the PAHS massacre suggests that the exercise was kept largely compartmentalized from the Port Arthur massacre. We are therefore looking at two different plots which intersected at only two points.

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First of all, Seascapc served, between about 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m., as the location at which the Port Arthur gunman made his preparations for the subsequent massacre. During this period, he would have used a knife that at some stage had been touched by Martin Bryant – it could, for example, have been provided by Petra Wilmott – to stab David Martin. The knife was then wrapped in a towel and taken inside a duplicate Prince sports bag with the gunman to the PAHS.

Second, a counter-terrorism exercise began at Seascapc sometime between 1.50 and 3 p.m. whose purpose was to provide a pretext for the capture of Martin Bryant, or even his death. Bryant was almost certainly already inside Seascapc by no later than 2pm; if he had been abducted at Nubeena shortly before (as I suspect), he would have been delivered to Seascapc around this time, quite probably in an unconscious or heavily drugged condition.

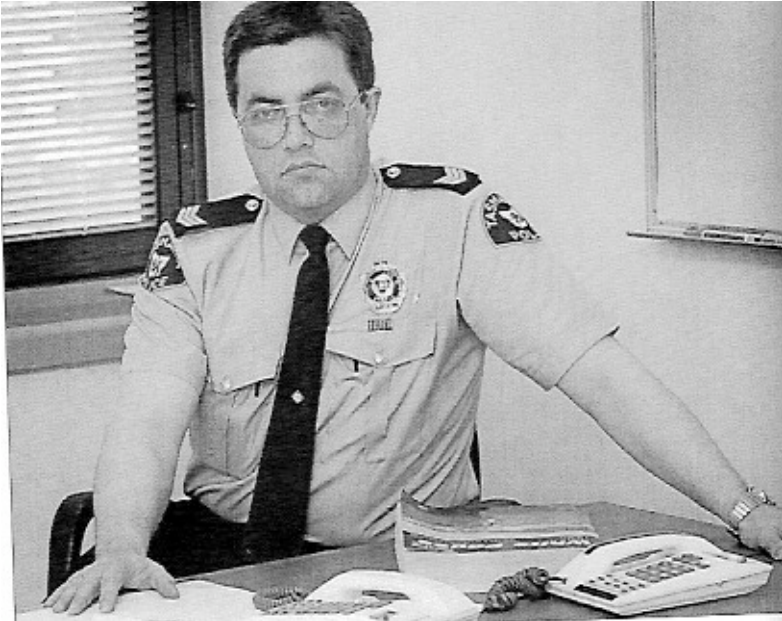
One of the coups of the Jamie/McCarthy conversations is McCarthy's impressive ability to avoid asking pertinent questions. Why did he not ask Jamie the obvious question, which is, why has he holed himself up in Seascapc, if he had had nothing to do with the PAHS shootings? Why on earth did he occupy the guest house, take three hostages, and start firing at police? It is by refraining from asking such obvious questions that a gaping hole was left that subsequently allowed police to make the Seascapc siege appear to be the logical conclusion of the massacre.

McCarthy's failure to press the gunman for his motives after he denied having had anything to do with the PAHS shootings is evidence that McCarthy knew exactly what the game plan was and was extremely clued in as to the questions he could afford to ask. And, in fact, there was no point pressing Jamie for his motives: both Jamie and McCarthy knew full well, I conjecture, that the Seascapc siege was an SOG counter-terrorism exercise

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which would subsequently be presented to the public as a genuine terrorist operation executed by bored, mentally unstable rich kid Martin Bryant. *But only McCarthy would have known that the siege was going to be connected to the 'incident' at the PAHS.*

**BELOW:** Sgt. Terry McCarthy



The first known conversation with Jamie allegedly began at around 3.08 p.m., when he rang the Nubeena Police Station residence. Constable Hyland's girlfriend, Merrin Craig, answered the phone. Since the call was not recorded we don't know what was said. Craig's notes of the conversation suggest that the call contained thinly-veiled threats against Constable Hyland; indeed, Craig is supposed to have drawn the conclusion that Jamie may have been holding her boyfriend hostage.

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However, the conversation could have been faked or it may never have taken place at all. Its sole purpose seems to have been to create suspicion that Jamie was conducting a vendetta against Hyland. This suggests that the original rationale for the Seascope siege was conflict between Jamie and Hyland, perhaps a love triangle scenario involving Hyland's girlfriend. This otherwise baffling phone call may therefore provide important insight to the original pretext for the Seascope counter-terrorist exercise, before it suddenly ceased being a mere exercise and became related to what had happened at Port Arthur.

Shortly after this conversation, ABC reporter Alison Smith, who was at Copping, en route to Port Arthur, called the Seascope number in the hope of obtaining information about the shootings. Based on Smith's account, the conversation went something like this:

*Smith:* Hullo, hullo.

*Jamie:* [laughs hysterically]

*Smith:* Hullo. Is this the right number for Seascope?

*Jamie:* [laughs] Yes.

*Smith:* Who am I talking to?

*Jamie:* [laughs] Well, you can call me Jamie.

*Smith:* It's the ABC calling. What's happening?

*Jamie:* What's happening? What's happening is I'm having lots of fun. ... But I really need a shower. ... If you try to call me again I'll shoot the hostage.

Then, at around 3.30 p.m., Jamie initiated contact with Terry McCarthy (one wonders how he knew which number to call). Over the next six hours, Jamie and McCarthy engaged in conversations totalling about two hours. Only fragments of the conversations have been allowed to enter the public record, suggesting that the rest would place a completely different complexion upon the nature of what had happened at Seascope.

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One of the first myths about the Seascapes siege that needs to be laid to rest is that Jamie was Martin Bryant. In these conversations, Jamie was strikingly different in demeanor, and even in voice, from Martin Bryant. According to one report, Bryant has 'a squeaky high pitched monotone voice,' which is certainly not an appropriate description of Jamie's voice. From the point of view of identifying Jamie, the biggest problem is that although Bryant's mother Carleen was taken to Hobart police headquarters between 8 and 8.30 p.m., she was never asked to listen to Jamie's voice or, if she recognized it as the voice of her son, to use her maternal influence to reason with him. The curious decision not to involve Carleen in the negotiations with the man police claim they believed was her son can only be interpreted one way: the police knew very well that Jamie was not Bryant.

Curiously, Jamie's voice has only ever positively identified as that of Martin Bryant by an individual whose name has not been made public but who, according to Carleen Bryant, 'hadn't spoken to Martin since he was twelve years old and would not know what his voice sounded like anyway.' It certainly seems suspicious that someone other than Carleen Bryant was chosen to identify Jamie's voice, and doubly suspicious that this person was someone who hadn't even spoken to Martin Bryant for 17 years!

The Jamie conversations offer a very strong clue that Jamie had been instructed to identify himself as a particular individual, although probably without knowing the actual reason. In one of the most bizarre exchanges, McCarthy tries to get Jamie to tell him his name:

*McCarthy:* Now if you don't want to tell me your name that's fine but how about giving me your passport number and we can do a check on that?

*Jamie:* I think it's H02 4967 if I can remember it cause I

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travelled quite a lot overseas and most of the travel agencies know me around town and around Hobart I should say so.

This is absolutely extraordinary! Not only does McCarthy seem to think that Jamie carries his passport number around with him inside his head - since most people use their passports only infrequently, this is not normally a number people are able to recall on the spur of the moment - he also thinks Jamie will be stupid enough to tell him exactly what it is! And lo and behold Jamie does remember his passport number and is perfectly willing to volunteer it. It is hard to see why Jamie didn't spare McCarthy the effort of running a check by just telling him straight out that he was Martin Bryant.

What is crystal clear from the above exchange is that Jamie had been instructed to give McCarthy Bryant's passport number - and to throw in allusions to Bryant's frequent overseas travels to cement the identification. Anyone who smells a rat will not be surprised to learn that a single form of ID was found inside a certain yellow Volvo when police searched it at the PAHS. Since Bryant did not have a driving license, there will be no prizes for readers who have guessed correctly what this document was. But anyone who correctly divines that it was his passport - as indeed it was - should ask themselves the question how often people drive around with their passports in their cars.<sup>26</sup> Tasmanians do not require a passport to go to Roaring Beach. Nor, for that matter, is an identity document required for entry to the PAHS. Yet Jamie obligingly connected himself with a passport that would subsequently be found in a car that either belonged to Bryant or was a near-perfect replica thereof.

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<sup>26</sup> We know this because 'on the afternoon of Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1996' Aileen Kingston was shown Martin Bryant's passport by Detective Peter Hesman. Hesman was the detective who searched the Volvo at 4.26 p.m. See McDonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-26.

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To conclude our review of the Jamie conversations, we need to look at perhaps the most revealing of them all, one which took place at night:

*McCarthy:* Jamie?

*Jamie:* Yes. Hello. How are you?

*McCarthy:* I'm very well thanks Jamie. Yourself?

*Jamie:* Well, I'm well up to now. The past few 20 seconds. What I've actually found out man, is that one of your boys is right outside, northeast I'd say, with an infrared scope.<sup>27</sup> Would you just ask him to move on?

*McCarthy:* Right, we'll do that, we'll do that now.

*Jamie:* Cause he's going to shoot, he's trying to shoot, he's going to shoot your main man.

*McCarthy:* No, I can guarantee.

*Jamie:* I'll blow this, umm this, you know, you know what's going to happen.

*McCarthy:* I don't want to see anyone hurt, alright?

*Jamie:* You just move him on.

*McCarthy:* Okay, I'm organising that now. I can also assure you that it's not our intention to hurt you or see anybody else hurt, okay.

*Jamie:* Really.

Anyone who still thinks Bryant was Jamie and that Bryant was a lone psycho killer needs to ask him- or herself the following questions. Why does Jamie used the term 'northeast' to state the location of the SOG man? (This is police jargon.) Who was the 'main man'? Why was the man McCarthy's 'main man' rather than Jamie's 'main man'? Why did Jamie threaten to 'blow' the operation unless the one of McCarthy's 'boys' moves on? Why does Jamie imply that he and McCarthy are working together in an operation that McCarthy wouldn't want blown? What did McCarthy 'know' was going to happen if the man with

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<sup>27</sup> This was presumably an SOG officer.

## ***What's Going On?***

the infrared scope did not move on? And why, if Jamie was the gunman who had already killed over 30 people that day, was he so solicitous about the life of the SOG man with the infrared device? Why did he not just shoot him? Are we seriously expected to believe that this monster who had already killed upwards of 30 people that day, including the little Mikac sisters, drew the line at shooting police officers?

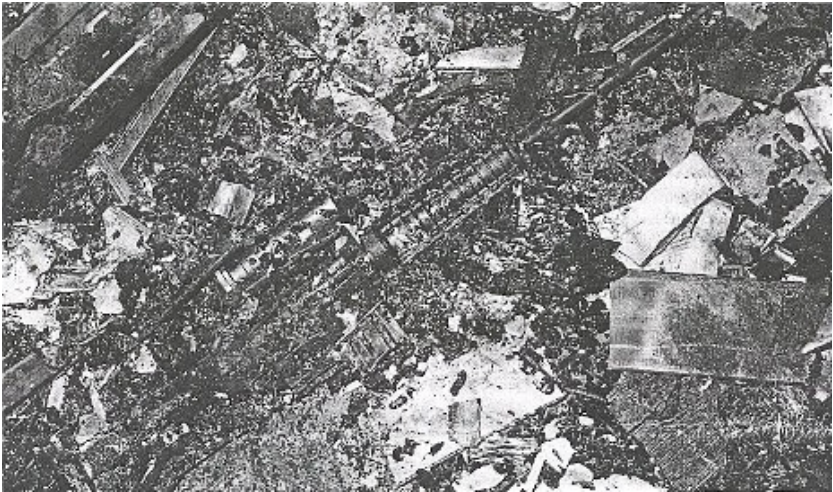


## 4

### **Guns and ammo**

A major problem with the case against Martin Bryant is that his ownership of the weapons used to perpetrate the Port Arthur massacre has never been proven. In a way this is not all that surprising, for a fact of which relatively few Australians are aware is that we do not know which weapons were used in the massacre. Graham Collyer, who was a veteran of the RAF with some firearms experience, was one of the few eyewitnesses to the massacre inside the Broad Arrow Café who noted which weapon the gunman was using. To Collyer, it 'looked like a standard SLR service semi automatic.' The day after the massacre, the *Examiner* reported that police had found a .223 mm Armalite M16 at Port Arthur. Then, on May 1, 1996, the *West Australian* told the public that the two weapons used had been a 5.56 mm Armalite AR-15 and a Chinese-made SKS .762 mm assault rifle.

**BELOW:** The Colt AR-15 as found in the ruins of Seascape guest house



## ***What's Going On?***

In contradiction to early reports and to eyewitness testimony, therefore, the prosecution case finally settled on the only two weapons which survived the Seascope fire relatively intact, a .223 mm Colt AR-15 and a Belgian .308 mm FN-FAL assault rifle. The possibility has to be considered that these two guns were settled on only because they were found largely intact in the ruins of Seascope guest house, thereby providing the needed link to patsy Martin Bryant. Indeed, Stewart Beattie, former gunsmith and author of *A Gunsmith's Notebook on Port Arthur*, concluded after two years' research that 'the two principle firearms claimed by the DPP as weapons used to murder the 32 people and wound 21 others were never used to that end at the Broad Arrow Café or indeed any of the other crime scenes.'

In this chapter, I reach the same conclusion via a different route. To do so, I start from the assumption that the two weapons involved were the Colt AR-15 and the Belgian FN-FLR. As we progress, it will become increasingly obvious that these weapons were not involved in the massacre, that Martin Bryant may have owned one of them but not the other, and that, since they weren't used at Port Arthur, it doesn't really matter whether he owned them anyway!

Bryant freely concedes that he owned three guns, two of which he bought in the months before the massacre, but only one of the three may have been used in the attack itself. Bryant owned three rifles, a .308 mm Colt AR-10 (serial number 001590), a .223 mm Colt AR-15, and a Daewoo 12 gauge combat shotgun. Bryant apparently bought these weapons because he liked the look of them. An aspiring gun collector rather than a shooter, he told police in his July 4, 1996, interrogation that he had fired his guns on only a few occasions, and only at targets. He had never even used them for hunting.

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Bryant's police interrogation began with the question of his firearms. At this stage he still had no idea that he was being held responsible for the Port Arthur shootings, and may not have known that the shootings had even taken place. Because he did not realize why the information about his guns was required - he was also naïve enough to allow the police to discuss his weapons with him without having his lawyer present - his answers were open and honest. However, as we will see, there are reasons to suspect that the transcript does not render the conversation accurately.

Inspectors Paine and Warren apparently showed Bryant five guns, two retrieved from the Seascope ruins (a Colt AR-15 and a Belgian FN-FAL), one from the boot of the Volvo abandoned at the PAHS (a Daewoo shotgun), one retrieved from Hobart gun dealer Terry Hill (a Colt AR-10), and a .223 mm self-loading rifle whose origin is unclear. (The police told Bryant they had recovered it from a gun dealer, but it was the AR-10 that they had actually recovered from the dealer in question.)

Presumably, police showed these weapons to Bryant because they thought they all belonged to him, although no words to this effect are found in the transcript. If the police did think that they all belonged to Bryant, they were apparently misinformed, for Bryant owned only three guns. He emphatically denied having ever seen two out of the five guns that the police showed him.

Since Bryant conceded ownership of three of the five guns, it would certainly make things nice'n'easy if the three happened to be the two used in the massacre plus the one that was found afterwards in the boot of the abandoned Volvo. Unfortunately, matters are not so simple, and while Bryant readily acknowledged ownership of the gun found in the boot of the Volvo, he admitted owning only one of the two guns that were (allegedly) used in the massacre. He emphatically denied ever

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having seen the other one, creating a problem of the gun's origins that remains unsolved. A complicating factor is that police sleight of hand may have been used to have him identify the Colt AR-15 as his own.

**BELOW:** Bryant's Daewoo shotgun



Let us deal now with the guns one by one. Bryant told police that he had bought the Daewoo shotgun from Hobart gun dealer Terry Hill for \$3000 about four months earlier (i.e., early March). He had never used it. 'It scared me the thought of it not working, and probably ricocheting out,' he told police. Bryant also said that he had bought his Colt AR-15 from Terry Hill for \$5000 about five months earlier (i.e., early February). The cost included \$500 for a special scope, a strap and 80-100 rounds of ammunition.

One of the unresolved mysteries of Bryant's case is that Hill is adamant that he never sold him any weapons, and no documentation has ever turned up to prove that he did. The police told Hill that they had evidence that he had sold guns to Bryant, but they never produced it. It seems that they were bluffing, for when Hill refused to admit having sold guns to

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Bryant, the case against him was suddenly dropped. The police apparently punished him for refusing to admit having sold guns to Bryant by withdrawing his dealer's license, which forced him to close his business. It is possible, therefore, that the transcript has been deliberately tampered with, and that Terry Hill's name was inserted to replace the name of the real individual who had sold Bryant the Daewoo shotgun and the Colt AR-15.

Although the origins of the shotgun may not seem important because it was not used at Port Arthur, it was found in the boot of the Volvo when it was searched by police after the massacre. Because it was not transferred by the Port Arthur gunman from the Volvo to the BMW, it escaped either being torched in the BMW fire or being taken inside Seascap, where it would have only perished in another fire. This suggests that care was taken to ensure that the shotgun survived the events of April 28-29 intact. We can assume that, like Bryant's passport, it was left inside the Volvo for the purpose of framing its owner.

The biggest mysteries in this case attend the gun alleged to have been the main weapon used at Port Arthur, a Colt AR-15. This gun is supposedly one of the two guns that were retrieved from the ruins of Seascap guest house. The gun retrieved from Seascap was a 5.56-mm Colt AR-15 (serial number SP128807). Because of a lack of clarity in the transcript, it is not possible to say whether Bryant admitted ownership of the specific AR-15 retrieved from Seascap or whether he only admitted ownership of a weapon he mistook for his own. The fact is that, not knowing anything about the Port Arthur massacre yet, he did not what was at stake. He probably took it for his own on the basis of little more than a casual glance.

Since there is some doubt as to whether the AR-15 recovered from Seascap was acknowledged by Bryant as his own - a subject that will be explored in more detail below - we turn now to the other weapon used in the massacre, a Belgian .308 mm

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(.762 mm) FN-FAL assault rifle (serial number G3434). Bryant admitted owning a .308 mm semi-automatic, which he said he had bought six or seven years earlier from an ad in the Hobart *Mercury*. However, Bryant stated emphatically that he had never seen this particular gun before:

*Bryant:* I've never seen that one before. Never. That's not one of mine.

*Paine:* You sure?

*Bryant:* No, definitely not, never seen that in my life. It's nice though.

Bryant muttered that his .308 was an AR-10, referring to the gun that he left with Terry Hill on March 27. Police then showed Bryant another weapon, a .223 mm self-loading rifle. Again, the same answer: 'I've never seen that one before.'

Clearly, a great mystery surrounds the guns used at Port Arthur. Two months after the massacre, the police had failed to establish precisely which guns Bryant owned and where they came from. Bryant's answers did little to clarify the situation. Of the five weapons police showed him, he acknowledged ownership of only three. Of the three, only two had anything to do with Port Arthur. Of the two, only one identification is unproblematic: that of the Daewoo shotgun which was not actually fired at Port Arthur, and whose sole function seems to have been to frame him.

To make things simple, it is best to avoid the subject of the three guns which were not used at Port Arthur and concentrate entirely on the two that were. As we saw, the AR-15 could have been Bryant's, but this remains unclear. Bryant says that he bought the AR-15 from Terry Hill, but Hill says that he had sold no guns to Bryant at all. What Hill does say is that on March 27 Bryant brought him an AR-10, which he retained and still had at his shop on the day of the massacre. Hill could be lying, and

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he may have sold Bryant the AR-15. But if that is the case, one has to wonder why the police have never been able to prove it.

**BELOW:** The Colt AR-15 after refurbishing



There is a possible explanation. As we saw, the AR-15, which originally belonged to Yea farmer Bill Drysdale, was handed in during a gun amnesty in 1993 and was supposed to have been destroyed in 1994. Instead, it - along with others, perhaps - could well have found its way from the police to Terry Hill's dealership. The police would therefore have an interest in not opening up a can of worms by doing anything that would expose the existence of a corrupt relationship between the police and Hill, while Hill may have preferred to reveal the relationship rather than endure the stigma of having illegally sold guns to the perpetrator of the Port Arthur massacre.

But if Hill is lying, and he did sell Bryant the AR-15, then what is striking is that it is not Bryant who is lying, since he freely concedes owning an AR-15. If Bryant was the Port Arthur gunman and he was determined to deny any connection to that atrocity, then he should have denied ownership of the AR-15 as

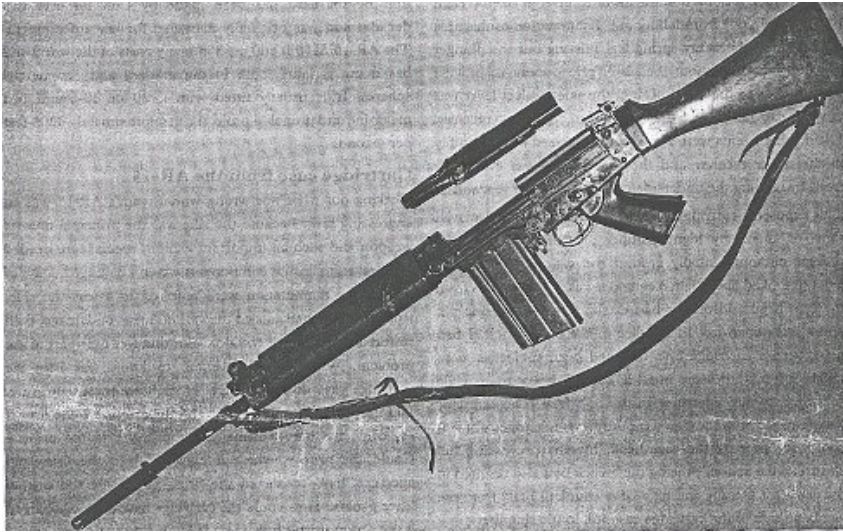
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well as of the Belgian FN-FAL. That Bryant conceded ownership of one gun but not the other is inexplicable as a means of denying involvement in the massacre. There are good grounds, therefore, to accept that Bryant was telling the truth. A second possibility is that the police dropped the case against Hill because, while they knew he had sold Bryant an AR-15, there was a danger of evidence coming to light that it was not the AR-15 used at Port Arthur. We will see below that this is almost certainly the case.

This leaves us with the unresolved problem of the FN-FAL. What seems to have happened here is that police were hoping that Bryant would identify it as his own .308 mm semi-automatic, the one he had bought six or seven years' previously. The fact that he did not acknowledge it as his own meant that the subject was dropped like a hot potato, and the police did not ask Bryant what type of .308 he owned exactly. It is apparent from the transcript that the .308 he owned was the AR-10. But if police believed that Bryant really was the Port Arthur gunman then they were obliged to prove that the FN-FAL was his. Yet, to my knowledge, no effort was ever made in this direction, which leads inescapably to the conclusion that this avenue of enquiry was not pursued precisely because the police knew that it had never belonged to Bryant. Although legitimate doubts therefore can be raised as to whether the AR-15 allegedly used in the massacre was Bryant's, there are no grounds whatsoever for stating that the FN-FAL belonged to him. If it had, the police would have found a way to prove it.



**BELOW:** The restored Belgian FN-FAL



The question that remains is whether Bryant owned the AR-15 that was used at Port Arthur. That question should probably be answered in the negative. This is because the AR-15 found in the Seascape ruins *could not have been* the weapon used at Port Arthur. Joe Vialls points out that the AR-15 recovered from Seascape was badly damaged, not as a result of the fire, but because pressure was deliberately applied to destroy it in precisely such a manner that it would be rendered useless for forensic purposes. (According to Vialls, a 'sizeable chunk of C3 plastic explosive' was 'strategically placed inside the breech of the artillery piece, then later detonated, destroying the breech and rendering the weapon useless.' According to Beattie, it was blown with what is called a 'hot load.') As a result of the damage, it was not possible to match the AR-15 with the bullets and cartridge cases found at Port Arthur.

If the AR-15 found in the ruins of Seascape had been used at Port Arthur, there was no reason to damage it so as to prevent it

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from being matched with bullets and shells recovered from the PAHS. The only logical reason why anyone would have done such a thing would be to prevent tests being made that would show that the Seascope AR-15 was not the weapon which had fired the bullets and shells found at the PAHS. In short, it doesn't matter whether or not the Seascope AR-15 was Bryant's, or whether it had been sold to him by Terry Hill, because it was in any case not the weapon used at Port Arthur. The best explanation for the Seascope AR-15, therefore, is that, while it was not a weapon used at Port Arthur, it did belong to Bryant, and it was planted there to frame him - duly damaged so that no one would be able to prove that it hadn't fired the shots at Port Arthur.

But while it has proven possible to unpick the AR-15 mystery, the Belgian FN-FAL presents intractable difficulties. Once again, the weapon recovered from Seascope was not a weapon fired at Port Arthur. The Seascope FN-FAL lacked a major component called the return spring tube assembly, which would have been at least six inches in length. Without this part, the weapon cannot be fired at all. The enduring mystery is why a weapon was used in the attacks that, unlike the AR-15, that could not be connected to Martin Bryant in any way. In this respect, it is worth noting that the police have failed to establish the provenance of the FN-FAL found at Seascope. While it would be interesting to know more about this particular weapon, it is not material to the Port Arthur case.

One of the most disturbing facts about the case is the mysterious disappearance of the Armalite M16 which police found at Port Arthur on the very day of the massacre. According to the *Examiner's* April 29 report, this was a very expensive, military-style weapon that was completely forbidden from import into Australia. This weapon, which undoubtedly had a great deal to do with the Port Arthur massacre, has obviously been 'disappeared' in favour of two weapons which can be

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connected, however tenuously, to Martin Bryant. There can be no greater proof that there was a conspiracy to frame Martin Bryant – and that the massacre was an inside job - than the fact that the gun actually used to perpetrate the massacre was one which an ordinary citizen like Bryant could not possibly have brought into the country.

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**Zilch: the evidence against Martin Bryant**

In chapters 2-4 above, I dealt with the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence for the official hypothesis that Martin Bryant was the perpetrator of the massacre in the Port Arthur Historical Site and adjacent locations. In this chapter, I deal with the so-called evidence in a more systematic fashion than before, while adding in extra details to reinforce certain points.

The aim is to show clearly and unambiguously that there is *no* evidence directly connecting Bryant to the massacre. If Bryant had been guilty we should see at least some conclusive evidence. If, for example, he had been a mind-controlled patsy, as some have claimed, he should at the very least have left his fingerprints and/or DNA behind at the crime scene. But, as in the case of Seascope, what we see is actually a pattern of evidence consistent with a plot to set Bryant up as a patsy.

*Part A: Forensic evidence*

In Part A, I divide the forensic evidence into three types. In the first section, I review what I call ‘primary’ evidence, that is to say, evidence stemming directly from Martin Bryant’s person (e.g., fingerprints, DNA, hairs, saliva, urine etc.). In the second section, I discuss ‘secondary’ evidence, by which I mean portable items allegedly belonging to Bryant that were subsequently found inside the PAHS. (Even if these items really had belonged to Bryant, it remains to be proven that they were introduced into the PAHS by Bryant himself.) Finally, in the third part, I review the ballistic evidence (firearms, ammunition).

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## *1. Primary evidence*

### *Fingerprints*

Bryant's fingerprints were never found in the Broad Arrow Café or any other location inside the PAHS or adjacent areas. Items that ought to have had his fingerprints on them – if he had been the Café killer – but apparently did not include a food tray left on the table inside the Café and the items on the tray (a can of Diet Solo, a plastic drinking cup, a knife and fork, and the remains of hot meal, whether fish or lasagna). If Bryant's fingerprints were found on any of these items, the fact has never been made public.

### *DNA*

Bryant's DNA was never found in the Broad Arrow Café or any other location inside the PAHS or adjacent areas. Items that ought to have had his DNA on them – if he had been the Café killer – are exactly the same as the items that ought to have yielded his fingerprints.

At a meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society held at Griffith University in Queensland in 2002, Ian McNiven raised the subject of the lack of forensic evidence incriminating Martin Bryant. The presenter, apparently Sergeant Gerard Dutton, the officer in charge of the Ballistic Section of Tasmania Police, grew angry, and had University security threaten McNiven and effectively evict him from the meeting. -  
<http://www.shootersnews.addr.com/snpadutton.htm>

## *2. Secondary evidence*

### *Fingerprints*

Bryant's fingerprints were never found on any of the items allegedly belonging to him which were subsequently found in the Broad Arrow Café, other locations inside the PAHS and adjacent areas. Items that ought to have had his fingerprints on them but which apparently did not include: a Prince sports bag left on the table inside the Cafe, clothing found inside the bag, a towel found inside the bag, a hunting knife that was supposedly found inside the towel, a two-foot length of white cord found inside the bag, a large video camera left on the table next to the bag, live ammunition that had been spilled on the Café floor, the yellow Volvo abandoned at the PAHS tollgate, and items found inside the vehicle (including a Daewoo shotgun and a passport). If Bryant's fingerprints were found on any of these items, the information has not been made public.

### *DNA*

‘A very refined test undertaken ... has disclosed that there was also a DNA sample which was unable to be identified initially but it has now been identified as being consistent with that of Martin Bryant.’<sup>28</sup>

With these words, Damien Bugg QC– who is discussing the contents of the Prince sports bag left by the shooter inside the Broad Arrow Café - gave the impression that a sample of Bryant's DNA was found on the knife that was found inside the Prince sports bag which allegedly yielded a blood stain from David Martin, the proprietor of Seascape Cottage, who Bryant allegedly killed at Seascape an hour or two before the Port Arthur massacre.

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<sup>28</sup> Court Document 76-77 (= McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 82)

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However, the terminology used by Bugg is devious in the extreme. The DNA, he tells us, is 'consistent' with that of Martin Bryant. However, DNA either *is* or *is not* a match. If the DNA matched Bryant's, Bugg should have said so. The phrase 'consistent with' is therefore a semantic sleight-of-hand designed to encourage the misperception among those who know nothing about DNA testing that the DNA had been Bryant's. In fact, the term 'consistent with' means nothing at all in this instance.

It is also striking that the public has never been told what the source of the DNA was, whether it was blood, for example, or some other substance. If it was Bryant's blood, then the possibility is that the same knife had been used to stab both Bryant and David Martin.

What's more, on the evening of April 28 'Jamie,' the chief protagonist of the Seascope siege told police interrogator Sgt. Terry McCarthy over the phone that he had with him a 15-inch long 'stainless steel combat knife' with a darkened blade.<sup>29</sup> This statement – whose detail only makes sense if the knife was intended to be used to incriminate Bryant – implies that the weapon was not inside the sports bag when it was left inside the Café. (This is also another clue suggesting that 'Jamie' really did not know what had happened at Port Arthur.)

Neither witness (Marlene Sharp, Michael Sargent) who looked inside the Prince sports bag after the shooter left the Café saw a hunting knife. Of course, this could be because the knife was wrapped inside the towel, as the police maintain, and therefore hidden from view. But in view of 'Jamie's' comments to McCarthy, it would seem that the knife was still at Seascope on the evening of the massacre and therefore not inside the sports bag. The claim that the knife was inside the towel inside the

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<sup>29</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

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sports bag could well have been made up afterwards as a means of connecting the Port Arthur shooter to the crimes at Seascope.

In any case, it is obvious that the presence of Bryant's DNA on the knife does nothing to prove that he was the Port Arthur shooter. Even if his DNA had been found on the knife, and we were so rash as to draw the conclusion that the presence of his DNA proved that he had killed David Martin (which of course it doesn't), this does not constitute evidence that Bryant was the Port Arthur shooter. The shooter could have been party to a conspiracy to frame Bryant. The same person could have stabbed both David Martin and Martin Bryant with the same knife, for instance. If so, the relevant question is whether anyone else's DNA was on the knife, in addition to that of David Martin and Martin Bryant.

The whole chain of events associated with the knife seems extremely suspicious. Since David Martin was killed by being shot twice rather than by being stabbed, the only point of stabbing him would have been to plant a sample of his blood on the knife. The only point of wrapping the knife in a towel and concealing it inside a sports bag which would subsequently be left behind at the Café would have been to provide a link between Martin Bryant and the murder of David Martin. It is very hard to see why Martin Bryant would have wanted to incriminate himself, however. Even if he were perverse enough to want to incriminate himself by taking the knife he had used to stab David Martin with him to the PAHS and leaving it there, it is hard to see why he would have subsequently denied murdering him.

Now to summarise the above points:

1. Just because Damien Bugg QC says a DNA sample 'was consistent with that of Martin Bryant,' it does not mean that the DNA was a match. Bugg's failure to say



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clearly and unambiguously that it was a match means that the matter should be regarded as inconclusive.

2. There is no evidence that there was a hunting knife inside the Prince sports bag abandoned by the shooter inside the Café. No witness saw a knife when they looked inside the bag, while later that same evening ‘Jamie’ told police he still had his hunting knife with him. The knife must therefore have found its way to the police by other means.

3. Even if there was a hunting knife with a sample of Bryant’s DNA on a knife wrapped inside the towel found inside the sports bag, it does not mean that Martin Bryant stabbed David Martin. Both men could have been stabbed with the same knife by a third person.

4. Even if Martin Bryant stabbed David Martin with the knife, it does not mean that Martin Bryant was the person who wrapped the knife in a towel, placed the towel inside the Prince sports bag and left the bag inside the Café. This behaviour is consistent with someone trying to frame Bryant. How else can we explain the fact that the shooter entered the Café with *two* Prince sports bags, leaving one behind (the one containing the items that allegedly incriminated Bryant) and taking the other one with him back to the car when he exited the Café?

5. The facts concerning the Prince sports bags, the hunting knife and the DNA it allegedly yielded are more consistent with an attempt to frame Bryant than with Bryant’s guilt. Why would Bryant have gone to such lengths to incriminate himself? Why, if he had wanted to incriminate himself, did he not leave fingerprints or DNA behind on items such as the can of Diet Solo

purchased from the Café that he had not brought with him to the Café that day?

*Ownership*

Surprisingly, there exists no evidence whatsoever that any of the portable items allegedly belonging to Martin Bryant which were found inside the PAHS (including the yellow Volvo abandoned at the tollgate) actually *did* belong to him.

The strongest case can be made for his ownership of one of the two Prince sports bags. According to Bryant's girlfriend, Petra Wilmott, Bryant bought the bag in a Hobart department store on April 15.<sup>30</sup> She says he took it home with him, but she never saw it again.

Yet Wilmott's story cannot be corroborated. According to Damien Bugg QC, Bryant bought the bag in Myers. However, no sales receipt has been produced to confirm that the sale had taken place, while the individual who allegedly sold the bag to Bryant remains unidentified. Despite the fact that Inspector Paine told Bryant that he believed that he had purchased the bag, he could not tell him exactly where he had bought it: 'I believe you bought that in Myers or Fitzgeralds or somewhere in town.'<sup>31</sup> If, as late as July 4, 1996, Paine still did not know where Bryant had bought the bag, then he could not have spoken as yet with the person who claims to have sold Bryant the bag or have seen a sales receipt for the purchase.

Paine's only grounds for telling Bryant that he believed that he had bought the bag, therefore, was the word of Petra Wilmott. It is hard to see why he should have believed her, if, after more

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<sup>30</sup> Sworn statements of April 28, April 30, and May 8, cited in McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

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than two months, evidence to support Bryant's purchase of the bag had still not emerged. (If you had been the salesperson who had sold Bryant the bag, would you not have come forward to declare the fact?) The fact that, even after the location of the purchase was narrowed down to Myers, Bugg declined to name the individual who claims to have sold Bryant the bag means that Wilmott's story effectively remains uncorroborated. The fact that information has never been made available to the public that would corroborate her story suggests that that the purchase Wilmott describes never took place.

What's more, as Noel McDonald points out, at the time Bryant allegedly bought the bag, his rifle was no longer in his possession (it was in the keeping of Hobart gun dealer Terry Hill). How would he have known what size bag to buy, if the gun was no longer in his possession? Also, when shown the bag, Bryant denied buying it. His spontaneous reaction ('Ugh ugh') also suggests that he found it ugly. This makes it all the less likely that he would have bought it. Finally, the above considerations concern one Prince sports bag. What about the other? We don't have sufficient evidence to connect Bryant with one Prince sports bag, let alone two.

Narratives of the Port Arthur massacre also contain mention of other items which allegedly belonged to Martin Bryant. These items consist of a video camera and a yellow Volvo left at the tollgate, together with items found inside it: a full 25 litre drum of petrol, a 10 litre drum of petrol containing 7 litres, a gray video camera bag, lengths of sash cord rope, and three packets of Little Lucifer fire starters. (Guns and ammunition are dealt with below.)

Of these many items, not one iota of proof has ever been provided proving that Bryant owned *any* of them. What's more, *no one is on record as having admitted to selling Bryant any of these items*. Although Bryant could easily have purchased

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Little Lucifer fire starters entirely inconspicuously, it is unlikely that he could have bought large drums of petrol without attracting attention.

The video camera is a particular mystery, as there is no doubt that the gunman brought one with him into the Broad Arrow Café. Rebecca McKenna said that he left it on the floor, next to the Prince sports bag. But what happened to it thereafter no one seems to know. Whatever its purpose, there is no evidence that it actually belong to Bryant. If it had belonged to Bryant, it is hard to see why it was never entered into evidence.

With regard to the yellow Volvo, there is no evidence that the yellow Volvo left at the PAHS tollgate was Bryant's own vehicle. The vehicle certainly *resembled* Bryant's Volvo, but this does not mean that it was the very same vehicle. For one thing, Bryant did not recognize the license plate number when it was read to him. This would seem unlikely in the case of a vehicle he had owned for some years.

What's more, Bryant reportedly did not possess a driving license. If this is true, it is hard to see how he would ever have been able to register the vehicle in his own name. Yet the police claim that they were able to identify the vehicle as Bryant's when his registration details came through at about 8.30 p.m. on April 28. How could Bryant have been able to register the vehicle without producing a driver's license, which he did not even possess? What's more, neither Bryant's fingerprints nor his DNA were recovered from the Volvo, a circumstance that seems impossible to explain.

Nonetheless, there is an explanation – and, understood in its true light, it amounts to evidence that the yellow Volvo used by the Port Arthur shooter was not Bryant's. A little known fact about the case is that the Volvo was left in the open air, at the tollgate, for the night of April 28-29. It was still there, at the tollgate, at 9 a.m., when Michael Copping saw it while on his

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way to collect Steven Howard from Port Arthur. With its rear passenger side window missing (the gunman - presumably - had removed it probably as a means of minimizing the noise/blast effect of shooting from the driver's seat), fingerprints and DNA inside the vehicle were vulnerable to the effects of night moisture.<sup>32</sup> In fact, according to police, the overnight moisture eliminated all traces of fingerprints and DNA.

The question inevitably has to be asked why the police did not take due care to ensure the preservation of whatever fingerprints and DNA inside the car. At this stage - and recall here that Bryant was not taken into custody until the morning of April 29 - fingerprints and DNA inside the car represented essential proof of the identity of the perpetrator of the massacre. As darkness descended on the Tasman Peninsula on April 28, the only reason to connect the massacre to Bryant was a passport found inside the Volvo at around 4.30 p.m. At this time, the fingerprints and DNA from the Volvo therefore represented the most reliable means of determining whether the greatest homicidal maniac in Australian history had really been Bryant (as the presence of the passport suggested) or someone else.

The fact that a major portion of the evidence required for this purpose vanished overnight invites only one sound conclusion: the police *wanted* the evidence to vanish. Unless the police had

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<sup>32</sup> Colleen Parker: 'He then ran back to his car, and he either punched or smashed the driver's window to his car, because I heard glass break.' (Cited in McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 227) However, Parker mistook which window was smashed. In his police statement, Colin Triffett states that the rear window, passenger side, had been smashed. McDonald adds the observation that 'Photographs of the Volvo clearly show the back passenger window to be missing.'

a reason to *not* want the massacre connected to Bryant (and I know of no evidence that would invite such a possibility), this result is only consistent with one conclusion: Tasmania Police did not want evidence to survive that would have proven that Bryant had not been the person using the car that afternoon. In short, the Port Arthur shooter has to have been someone other than Bryant whose identity the police were anxious to protect.

### *3. Ballistic evidence*

The prosecution claims that Bryant perpetrated the massacre using two firearms, a Colt AR-15 semi-automatic .223 rifle and a Belgian FN-FAL semi-automatic .308 SLR (self-loading rifle), both of which were recovered in a heavily damaged condition from Seascope Cottage outbuildings (not the main building) after it burned down on the morning of April 29, 1996.

However, the matter is complicated by the fact that the earliest newspaper reports do not mention a Colt AR-15. No eyewitness mentions it either. Graham Collyer, please recall, said that the weapon used by the gunman inside the Broad Arrow Café 'looked like a standard SLR service semi automatic.' This description is more consistent with the FN-FAL than the Colt AR-15 which we are now told was the weapon the gunman had used inside the Café.

The day after the massacre, the *Examiner* reported that police had found a .223 mm Armalite M16 at Port Arthur. Nothing has been heard since about the weapon that was found that day inside the PAHS. Then, on May 1, 1996, the *West Australian* told the public that the two weapons used had been a 5.56 mm Armalite AR-15 and a Chinese-made SKS .762 mm assault rifle. It is interesting that it took only two days for the Armalite M16 – the prohibited import – to disappear from the public record to be replaced by a weapon which could be legally bought and sold in Australia. From this point onwards, the SKS became the

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weapon most frequently referred to in the media as the weapon 'Bryant' had used. Then, finally, the SKS was dropped altogether and its place in narratives of the massacre was taken by the Belgian FN-FAL. To me, these intriguing shifts look like shifts from the real murder weapons to weapons that could be connected to Bryant, if only because they also emerged from the Seascope inferno. It would be interesting to hear Graham Collyer's opinion as to whether the weapon used to injure him had been a Colt AR-15.

### *Colt AR-15*

Bryant freely admits to owning a Colt AR-10 rifle, which he apparently bought through a newspaper advertisement in October or November 1995. At the time of the massacre, however, the Colt AR-10 – which was in a dreadful condition – was in the care of Hobart gun dealer Terry Hill, from whom the police reclaimed it afterwards.

There is a real mystery, though, as to whether Bryant owned an AR-15. According to Bryant, he bought an AR-15 from Hill shortly before the massacre, and Damien Bugg QC told the Supreme Court in November 1996 that Bryant had used this weapon to execute the carnage in the Broad Arrow Café. The problem here, as we saw in the previous chapter, is that Hill adamantly denies having sold Bryant an AR-15. Although the police claimed to possess evidence proving that Hill sold Bryant the weapon, they never produced it (which may mean that they were taking Bryant's word for it).

What's more, even if Bryant did buy an AR-15 from Hill, there is no evidence that this is the Colt AR-15 found at Seascope. The latter weapon has an extremely curious history. To reiterate: it was given to the Victoria police by a Yea farmer, Bill Drysdale, during a gun amnesty in February 1993. He was told that the gun would be sent overseas. Instead, it was retained for use by

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the SOG, the very organization which carried out the siege of Seascap! How this gun ended up on the periphery of Seascap Cottage – thereby ensuring that it would survive the subsequent fire in reasonable condition - is unknown, but there is no evidence that Bryant put it there.

However convoluted the path was by which it reached Seascap, the Colt AR-15 found there is of no forensic relevance to our investigation because it was not the weapon used inside the Broad Arrow Café. We have already seen that Graham Collyer says it was a standard SLR. That it was not an AR-15 is rendered all the more likely by the fact that, according to Joe Vials, an AR-15 is three inches too long to have been concealed inside the Prince sports bag taken by the killer inside the Café. Only a sawn-off AR-15 would have been small enough to have been successfully concealed inside the bag.<sup>33</sup> (Vials says that such weapons are only used by the Israeli *Mistaravim*.<sup>34</sup>)

Furthermore, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the Colt AR-15 had been disabled in such a fashion as to render it useless for forensic purposes. This can only have been done to prevent someone finding out that it had not been the weapon used at Port Arthur. If it had been the weapon used during the massacre, the desired link to Martin Bryant could only have been made by leaving it in a condition that would permit it to be matched to the live and spent ammunition at Port Arthur.

### *FN-FAL*

Around midday on April 29. Glenn Martin – the son of the deceased proprietors of Seascap – observed a gun lying in the

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<sup>33</sup> A possibility Vials does not consider is that the Prince sports bag was not an 'off the shelf' item but one that had specially been created to conceal a full-length weapon.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.vials.com/cowards/byebye2.html>



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gutter of an adjoining building. The weapon was subsequently identified as an FN-FAL, the weapon which the public were told had been the second of the two weapons used by the Port Arthur gunman. Whether or not Bryant was lying when he told Inspectors Warren and Paine that he had never seen the FN-FAL before is besides the point because, once again, it was not a weapon used at Port Arthur. The same point is valid in relation to the FN-FAL as with the AR-15: if it had been the weapon used during the massacre, the desired link to Martin Bryant could only have been made by leaving it in a condition that would have permitted ballistic matching to ammunition left behind at Port Arthur and in the bodies of the victims.

### *Ammunition*

In the act of taking one Prince sports bag out of the other, the Port Arthur shooter accidentally spilled 'heaps of live ammunition on the floor' of the Café.<sup>35</sup> As she left the Café, Coralee Lever saw 'a large bullet on the ground ... it was brass coloured, about two inches long.'<sup>36</sup> Further live ammunition was found inside the Volvo: a magazine for the Colt AR-15 contained 12 rounds, a magazine for the FN-FAL contained 17 rounds, a Daewoo shotgun contained 9 cartridges, and a cardboard box contained 439 cartridges for the FN-FAL. Despite finding a vast amount of ammunition in pristine condition, none of it has never been traced to Martin Bryant. In fact, it has never been traced to anyone at all. The same goes for the bullets that ended up in people's bodies. Not a single such item emerged in a condition suitable for ballistic testing. None of it, therefore, can be linked to Bryant.

Although Hobart gun dealer Terry Hill admits to having sold Bryant three boxes of Winchester XX 1 1/2 oz shotgun shells

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<sup>35</sup> Dennis Gabbedy, cited in McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

## ***What's Going On?***

(code number X12XC) on April 24, 1996 - four days before the massacre – this is not ammunition which was used at Port Arthur. What's more, Hill never sold Bryant any of the ammunition that was used at Port Arthur. If Hill- or anyone else – sold Bryant the ammunition that was recovered from the crime scene, then the Tasmanian police should have been able to prove it. The fact that they have never traced the origin of the ammunition (or, at least, have never revealed its origin to the public) surely means that it cannot be connected to Bryant. It is, after all, extremely hard to believe that Bryant, with his IQ of just 66, could have managed his purchases of guns, ammunition and everything else involved in the case so successfully that the police have utterly failed to establish the origin of so much as a single item. It is far easier to believe that the police do not want us to learn who procured these deadly items and how.

By way of concluding Part I of this book, it is worth pointing out that the case against Martin Bryant utterly lacks specificity. There is not a single element of the official narrative of the Port Arthur massacre which is backed up by solid evidence. Not one sales receipt has ever been offered for any of the items allegedly procured for the purpose of staging the massacre or for items that he allegedly bought while en route to the PAHS. Just as there is no sales docket for the Prince sports bag he allegedly bought in Myer's on April 15, 1996, there are no sales dockets for other items associated with the case such as the lighter 'Bryant' bought at Forcett, the bottle of tomato sauce he bought at Sorrel or his entry ticket for the PAHS. We should know exactly what time he ordered a meal at the Broad Arrow Café – as well as whether he ate lasagna (as one report states) or fish with cauliflower and carrots (Rebecca McKenna).

The lack of proof of any of Bryant's alleged purchases is only equalled by the inability of the Tasmanian Department of Public Prosecutions to provide precise dates and times for any

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of Bryant's alleged doings. These are always vague, even when the existence of contradictions should have led to serious efforts to determine the time more precisely. For example, a date has never been provided for the advertisement for a gardener which Bryant allegedly placed in the Hobart *Mercury* in January 1996 – and which is important because it allegedly led Bryant to meet Petra Wilmott. Would it have been all that hard for the DPP to state which day the advertisement appeared? (The same criticism concerns several other items pertinent to the case which Bryant allegedly purchased through ads in the *Mercury*.) In fact, the only timestamped evidence in the entire case is the video taken by McLeod, which shows the yellow Volvo at 1.37 p.m. on April 28, 1996 – but not the driver.

Even as late as July 4, 1996, the detectives interrogating Bryant about the case were unable to furnish him with proof to substantiate any of their outrageous allegations against him. They could not even tell him precisely when and where he had purchased the Prince sports bag, let alone when and where he had obtained the FN-FAL they said he used to kill some of his victims. There is, in fact, no major criminal case in history which is so conspicuously lacking in precise references to dates, times, purchases and other relevant details. Can there be any doubt that the case against Martin Bryant lacks all substance?

**APPENDIX I:  
Bryant's affair with a pig**

It is not my purpose in this book to provide a systematic analysis and critique of the campaign of character assassination waged against Martin Bryant by the police and the media after the Port Arthur massacre. What I would like to do, first of all, is remind readers that by far the most incriminating component of the anti-Bryant rhetoric - his alleged partiality for violent videos – turned out to be wholly unfounded. Bryant's video collection not only contained entirely standard fare, his tastes in movies was far from violent. According to Petra Wilmott, he even walked out of a movie that was too violent for his tastes. His tastes in videos seem to have been as anodyne as his taste in music, which included *The Lion King* and Cliff Richard.

But, second, it is important to realize that the nature of his collection was only one of a great many lines of defamation that were pursued by those who were determined to depict him as a monster. Most Australian readers will recall that Bryant is supposed to have threatened to kill a number of people, and to have given women the creeps. Mike Bingham's trashy book *Suddenly One Sunday* (1996; second edition 2001) is replete with (mostly unattributed) stories of Bryant's untoward behaviour to women, presumably in order to encourage disturbed female readers to draw the conclusion that the police must *definitely* have found the right mass murderer.

However, most Australians will probably have forgotten one of the most sensational 'revelations' the media diffused about Bryant – which was that he slept with a pig in his bed! According to Macer Hall (*The Star*, April 30, 1996) – who is now the political editor for the London tabloid *The Daily Star* - 'The psycho behind the Tasmanian massacre was a twisted loner who slept with a pig. ... Bryant was known to wander

around toting guns under cover of darkness - and snuggle up to his pet porker during the day.’<sup>37</sup>

Without wishing to impugn the journalistic integrity of a Macer Hall (who is a member of the British parliamentary press gallery, and therefore should possess at least a modicum of the stuff), I would suggest that this particular claim can be pretty much dismissed as an unsubstantiated allegation. If there was a pig in Bryant’s bed, Petra Wilmott seems not to have noticed it there, while Carleen Bryant, who regularly cleaned her son’s house for him, never mentions the pig droppings she must have been finding all over the place.

What’s more, the identity of the pig itself – and other pertinent facts, such as its sex, age and breed - have never been released by the Tasmania Police. Whether or not the police have obfuscated the truth about Martin Bryant by deliberately suppressing information about the pig is a matter that concerned readers should probably take up with the DPP rather than with this author, who is entirely unfamiliar with the appropriate forensic procedures for investigating intimate relationships between psycho killers and porcine bedmates.

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A question I would like to leave the reader with is whether such an extensive campaign of personal vilification as that which was waged after the massacre against Martin Bryant, however deviant or creepy he may have been, would have been necessary if there had been actual evidence?

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.geniac.net/portarthur/gunmad.htm>

**APPENDIX II:**

**What does Martin Bryant actually look like?**

Since Bryant was taken to Hobart Royal Hospital on the morning of April 29, 1996, no photographic image of the man held responsible for the Port Arthur massacre has ever been published. Although there is nothing necessarily sinister about the fact – as far as I am aware no photographs of current prison inmates are ever published – it presents a major obstacle to the correlation of witness statements with Bryant's physical appearance.

That there seems to be an attempt to obfuscate the facts about Bryant's appearance is follows from the fact that nowhere on record can one find Bryant's height specified. In the photo of Bryant with Wilmott reproduced below, for instance, Bryant is a good deal taller than his girlfriend. That may be because Wilmott is very short. But if Bryant is very tall, say over 6 feet, then it would be yet another argument against him having been the Broad Arrow Café shooter.

The biggest problems relate to Bryant's age and appearance. The photo of Bryant embracing Wilmott (below) has to be have been taken within three months of the massacre. Despite its poor quality, it is obvious that Bryant is aged in his late 20s.



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Yet all other photos show him look considerably younger, as for example in the photo allegedly taken by Wilmott at Richmond on April 25 ('PHOTO A'), and two others that were obviously taken on the same day ('PHOTO B' and 'PHOTO C' opposite).

What is striking about the Anzac Day photos, as I will refer to the group, is that in them Bryant obviously has a fuller face – by contrast, the man pictured embracing Wilmott looks gaunt, perhaps even ill. I remain unconvinced that the two men are one and the same individual or that they were taken within a few weeks of one another.

The possibility has to be considered that these photos are either of a much younger Bryant (which have been released to give the impression that he was a very young looking 29) or they are not photos of Bryant at all.

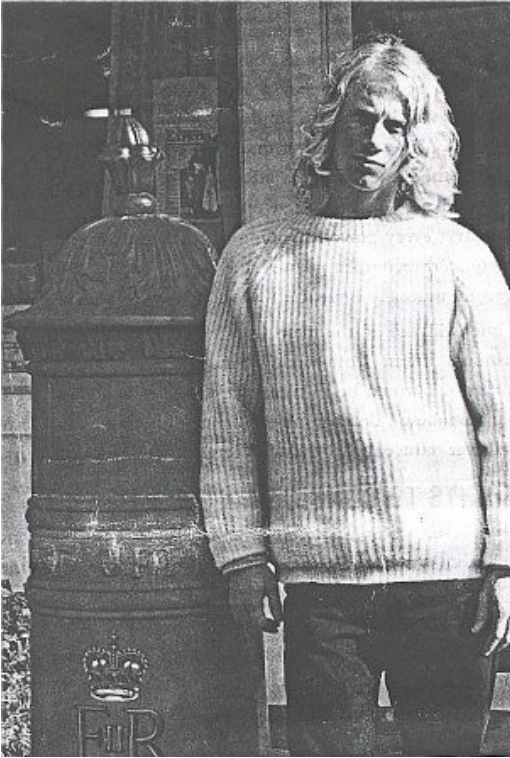
**PHOTO A**



**PHOTO B**



**PHOTO C**



The photo of Bryant embracing Wilmott also raises questions about his hair colour, which is generally referred to as 'white.'<sup>38</sup> In this photo, the only one showing his hair short or tied back (it is hard to tell), his hair seems to be dark on one side and light on the other! Certainly, he does not seem to possess the shock of white hair that is so prominent in most of the

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<sup>38</sup> "In Cold Blood," *The Age* (May 3, 1996): 'What Woods did remember was that Martin Bryant stood out with his white surfie hair and clothes. ... Woods noticed Bryant's white hair and his pale complexion and thought he was an albino.' WWW: [http://150.theage.com.au/view\\_bestofarticle.asp?straction=up&date&intype=1&intid=419](http://150.theage.com.au/view_bestofarticle.asp?straction=up&date&intype=1&intid=419)



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published photos. Here we can definitely see that there has been a major deception. In Photo B above, Bryant's hair is apparently brown *with blond highlights and streaks*. However, this fact is not apparent in black and white photos, but only in the original colour versions. (Anyone who doubts this should take a good look at the colour version of Photo B on the cover of *Who Weekly* magazine, November 2, 1996.)

Further doubts about the whiteness of Bryant's hair are raised by the footage showing Bryant arriving at the Hobart Royal Hospital. In frames from this video footage – the last photographic images of Bryant ever taken – it is apparent that he did *not* have white or blonde hair. His hair is actually quite dark. It is also not particularly long.

**BELOW:** Photo of Bryant arriving at Hobart Royal Hospital.



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On account of the distinctive profile, I have no doubt that the 'Bryant' who arrived at Hobart Royal Hospital is the same person who is shown embracing Wilmott in the picture above. I have serious doubts, however, as to whether this could be the same individual in the photos that were allegedly taken by Wilmott three days before the massacre.

In this regard, it would be interesting to know why Bryant's passport photo has never been made public. (His passport, please recall, was reportedly found by a police detective in the Volvo on the afternoon of the massacre.) This photo would show Bryant at the time he applied for his passport – and therefore could be used as a basis for more accurate generalizations about his appearance.

There is therefore a mystery about Bryant's appearance that only underlines the numerous arguments advanced in this book to the effect that the public is not being told as much as an ounce of truth about the Port Arthur massacre. We may be looking at a subterfuge involving two Bryants – or, more probably, the use of photos taken of Bryant when he was younger. In either case, we can now see why no one is allowed to interview or photograph Bryant today.

**APPENDIX III:**

**See no evil, hear no evil: Petra Wilmott**

I described Petra Wilmott above as a mystery woman – and, among mystery women, Wilmott, who so far as I am aware hasn't said a word about Bryant or the case since 1997, is about as mysterious as they come. The first piece of information that piqued my curiosity about her is that, at least according to the official account, she entered Bryant's life in January 1996 – a little over three months, apparently, before the massacre. According to her police statement of April 28, 1996, she met him through at an advertisement for a gardener he placed in the Hobart *Mercury*. But, as I pointed out above, no precise date has ever been given for the appearance of this ad, which rather leaves me wondering whether it ever existed.

According to her statement, Wilmott commenced a sexual relationship with Bryant about a week after she began working for him. This means that from about February 1996 until the day Bryant was captured, she was a constant presence in his life. During this period, Bryant allegedly evolved from a dapper young gentleman into a nuisance about town:

In the months leading up to the murders ... The young man who had always been so careful about his appearance and conscious of good clothes had begun to look scruffy. He had let his hair grow longer and he no longer dressed smartly. .... [also] Bryant, for some reason known only to himself, had begun to catch buses, and there were stories that he was annoying female passengers and had been put off by the drivers a couple of times.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Bingham, *op. cit.*, p. 147. However, this story seems to contradict another told by Bingham, to the effect that Bryant attracted some attention when he was staying in an expensive

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The following events allegedly also occurred in this period of Bryant's life:

1. He was refused permission by Perpetual Trustees, who managed his finances, to undertake an overseas trip.
2. He developed (or renewed) an interest in guns. Not only did he suddenly show an interest in his old AR-10 rifle (he took it to Terry Hill, and talked about getting it fixed to Hobart gun repairer Stewart Woods), he bought ammunition from Hill and began collecting gun magazines. He may have also bought an AR-15.
3. He allegedly bought a Prince sports bag at Myer's on April 15, 1996, which he carefully measured to make sure it would be large enough to conceal a firearm.

It is hard to know whether there is any substance to Bryant's alleged transformation. Petra Wilmott never noticed this transformation in personality and appearance and never saw any guns in his Clare Street house.<sup>40</sup> It would be most unusual, I think, for a man who has just acquired a new girlfriend to be running around town annoying women.

What's more, the one photograph which certainly dates from this period (since it shows the pair together) shows Bryant still dressed quite elegantly and with short hair! What this photo implies to me is either that no change took place at all (i.e., he dressed as usual and his hair remained short) or that Wilmott's influence brought about a change in his presentation and demeanour.

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hotel in Hereford, England because, 'his general appearance suggested he was in no way affluent.' (p. 51) So was Bryant into 'smart' clothes before 1996 or not?

<sup>40</sup> Of course she may simply have been unobservant. After all, the pig referred to in Appendix I apparently also escaped her attention.

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What I am suggesting is the possibility that she played a role setting him up by instigating the otherwise inexplicable changes associated with this period. But even if she was not responsible for them herself, at the very least, she should have had something to say about them. She can hardly have failed to notice it if he was really bothering other women, for example.

However, there is greater reason to believe that the story about Bryant's sudden transformation is wholly false. For a start, Bryant struck Stewart Wood as a 'yuppie' - a statement which is easier to reconcile with the old, dapper Bryant than the new. (A similar interpretation might be placed on the words of Don Hazell of Tigerline coaches, who wondered if Bryant was 'queer'.)

**BELOW:** Perhaps the only authentic image of Bryant in the months prior to the massacre.



However, the strongest reasons to conclude that Bryant's appearance and demeanour really had not changed at all are the photos allegedly taken by Wilmott on April 25, 1996. In the photos printed in Appendix II, Bryant looks a good younger (and healthier!) than in the indisputably authentic image printed immediately above. The Anzac Day photos, as I refer to

them, can hardly have been taken within weeks of the one shown above.

What I find curious about these photos is first, that they are of a much higher quality than you would expect from tourist pictures. According to Bingham, Bryant had them taken because he 'wanted to try out his camera.'<sup>41</sup> Yet these are by no means amateur shots. Photo B, in particular, is actually a high resolution portrait that seems to have been taken by a professional photographer, somewhere indoors, with perfect lighting that shows the considerable beauty of his flowing locks.

Second, none of the photos allegedly taken on that day show Bryant together with Wilmott. Since Bryant was apparently not reluctant to be photographed with her, it is odd that on this day trip together he did not ask anyone to take a picture of them together. In view of the major discrepancies between the Bryant shown in the Anzac Day photos and the Bryant in the photo indubitably taken in early 1996, the question has to be asked whether Wilmott was not in the Anzac Day photos because they were taken well before she entered his life. My own impression is that Bryant looks at least five years younger than he does in the photo with Wilmott, which would give them a date of about 1990 or 1991! The Bryant in the 1995 photo is clearly not 'baby faced.' In fact, he looks like he could well be dying, perhaps of cancer or of AIDS.

Wilmott says in her statement that she slept at Bryant's house on the four nights immediately prior to the massacre, i.e., April 23-27. It is hard to believe that, if Bryant had been planning a killing spree for the upcoming weekend, she didn't see a suspicious thing the entire time.

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<sup>41</sup> Bingham, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

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In short, Wilmott's statements in relation to Martin Bryant are almost as puzzling as those made over the years by Marina Oswald in relation to her husband, Lee Harvey. Wilmott does connect Bryant to the Prince sports bag and does state that he talked about wasps and Japanese tourists - which pearls of information must have been highly gratifying to the DPP - but in every other respect she has gone on record as declaring that Bryant was a gentle soul who would have been incapable of harming anyone.

**BELOW:** Petra Wilmott last public appearance.



Perhaps the answer to the mystery lies in the fact that she was apparently involved herself in the obscure goings on at Seascope. According to the policewoman who accompanied Bryant to the hospital after he was apprehended, he asked if Petra was OK. He told her that Petra had been, with him, in Seascope, that she was his girlfriend, and that the two of them always stuck together. This aspect of the story has, of course, been suppressed. Whatever the nature of her activities at Seascope, she has clearly been left in a position of being unable to tell the truth about what happened there.

**APPENDIX IV:  
Aileen and Ian Kingston**

Among the most important witnesses of the events of April 28, 1996, is a husband-and-wife couple who both worked at the PAHS that day, Aileen and Ian Kingston. They are, in fact, the most authoritative witnesses for the arrival of the gunman at the PAHS, and his subsequent identification as Martin Bryant. The problem, though, is that both seem to be lying in their sworn statements.

*Aileen Kingston*

According to Aileen Kingston's sworn statement of May 2, 1996, the yellow Volvo arrived at the entrance tollgate at between 1.10 and 1.15 p.m. on April 28. As the man driving the vehicle didn't look to her as if he had very much money, she anticipated an argument with him over the expensive entrance fee (\$13). Instead, he produced a \$50 note and paid without complaint, before driving off towards the site.<sup>42</sup> After this, she checked 'some monies that had been taken by a work mate during my lunch break. At about 1.25 p.m., I rang through to Steven Howard to tell him that the money appeared correct.'<sup>43</sup>

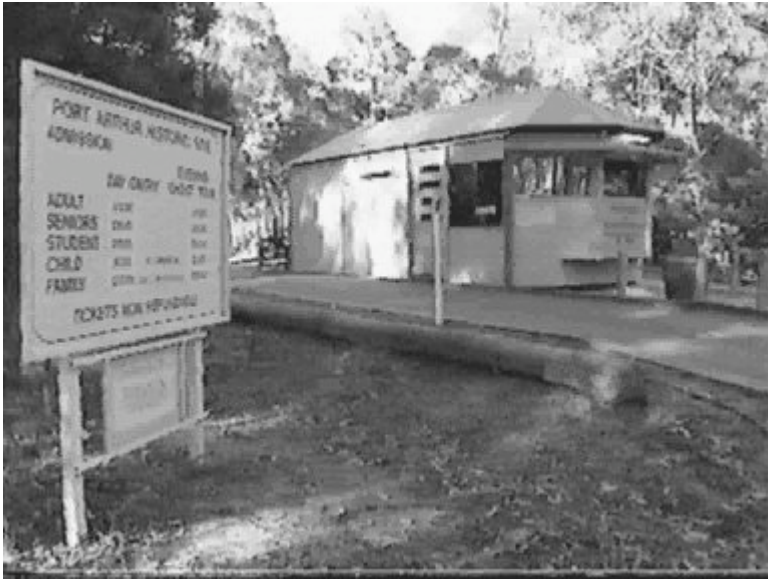
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<sup>42</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>43</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 74.



**BELOW:** The tollgate



There are three major problems with her statement, however. First, several witnesses place the gunman inside the Broad Arrow Café by this time. In fact, the earliest sighting of him in the car park in front of the Café occurred just before 1 p.m. So the gunman arrived at the PAHS at least 10-15 minutes before the time Kingston indicates in her statement.

Second, all visitors to the PAHS receive a receipt indicating their time of arrival.<sup>44</sup> The driver of the Volvo would also have been given one, meaning that it should have been possible for the police to determine his arrival time to the exact minute. Indeed, in his own sworn statement taken on April 28, 1996, Ian Kingston actually states that while speaking to the man in

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<sup>44</sup> Jason Cole: 'We arrived at the Port Arthur Toll Gate at 12.40 p.m., and paid an entry fee to the historic area. ... we have retained the receipt which shows the time we entered the area.' (Cited in McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 165)

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the Volvo he noticed his entrance ticket lying on the front seat next to him. Presumably, it was recovered when the vehicle was subsequently searched.

But the third problem, one that proves that Aileen Kingston is lying, concerns two major discrepancies between her police statement and that of her co-worker Steven Howard. According to Howard's sworn statement, taken on April 30, it was *he*, not Kingston, who served the driver of the Volvo. He says that this was because he was relieving her while she took her lunchbreak.

So we have two outright contradictions: Howard says he took the entrance fee from the driver of the yellow Volvo and that Kingston was on lunch at the time. Kingston, in a statement taken two days later, says that *she* took the entrance fee and implies that she had already had lunch before that, when she was relieved by an unnamed workmate. Although the workmate could have been someone other than Howard, the question has to be asked why, if he had not been Howard, she did not give his name. In any case, it is obvious that Howard has to have been the workmate: if he had not been the workmate relieving her while she was on her break, why would she have rung him at 1.25 p.m. to 'confirm that the balance had been correct'?

The only reliable fact that can be gleaned from the two statements, therefore, is that about about 1.25 p.m. Kingston rang Howard, who was working at the Information Centre. (Tour group leader Ashley Law vouches for Howard's presence in the Information Centre at the time of the call.)

These conflicts raise the question of whether one or both people are lying, and if so why. The most generous interpretation I can put on the evidence is that Kingston and Howard were either pressed to provide an account of the gunman's entry to the PAHS, at a time when the man was already inside the Broad

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Arrow Café, or their statements were tampered with to the same end.

If we accept the first scenario, both persons are implicated in the massacre to the degree that they were willing to provide false statements obscuring the facts about the gunman's real time of entry to the PAHS. However, it is unclear whether Kingston and Howard colluded with each other to do so. On the one hand, both their statements recall surprise that the man did not complain about the high entrance fee, which young people were apparently inclined to do. On the other hand, if the two had colluded to falsify their statements they would surely have worked out a story that did not entangle themselves in major contradictions.

### *Ian Kingston*

Aileen Kingston's husband, Ian Kingston, is another individual whose statements invite a certain scepticism. As is well known from books such as *Suddenly One Sunday*, Kingston avers that the yellow Volvo arrived in the parking area at about 1.25 p.m.<sup>45</sup> This is itself improbable, for if the Volvo arrived at the tollgate at between 1.10 and 1.15 p.m. it could not have taken ten (or more) minutes to travel a distance of 600 metres that normally takes two minutes. What's more, as we have already seen, witnesses saw the gunman inside the Broad Arrow Café as early as 1 p.m. Indeed, Karen Jones saw the yellow Volvo arrive in the parking area shortly before 1 p.m. By 1.25 p.m., in fact, he had already been observed inside the Café by numerous witnesses.

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<sup>45</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

**BELOW:** Ian Kingston



Further proof that Kingston's statement is false comes from his claim that the driver of the Volvo waited between ten and twenty minutes before entering the Café:

He seemed to sit in the car for probably about five to ten minutes, but next time I noticed, he had moved over to the water front and parked where the tourist buses park, right near the water. ... About five to ten minutes after he walked off from the vehicle, I heard a banging sound coming from the restaurant.<sup>46</sup>

If Kingston's statement were true, the shooting could not have begun before 1.35 p.m. at the very earliest – and virtually every fact about the case that can be determined from the sworn statements of other eyewitnesses would be wrong.

Clearly, Ian Kingston and Aileen Kingston (and perhaps also Steven Howard) were parties to an attempt to make it appear as if the gunman arrived considerably later (up to half an hour

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<sup>46</sup> McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

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later) than he really had. The easiest way to resolve the contradictions would be to suggest that there were two yellow Volvos driven by two extremely similar-looking young men. It would certainly be possible to claim that the Kingstons were accurately reporting the arrival of the second Volvo, but preserving silence about the arrival of the first. While such a scenario will seem far-fetched to many, it is one that I believe cannot be discounted. After all, if only one yellow Volvo arrived at the PAHS it is hard to see why the Kingstons' statements and that of Steven Howard did not agree perfectly. None of these three individuals would be at all compromised by the fact that the Volvo had arrived before 1 p.m. instead of ten or fifteen minutes later.

Since there are apparently bona fide members of the general public testifying to the presence of a yellow Volvo in the PAHS car park before 1 p.m. and the presence of the man believed to be the gunman inside the Broad Arrow Café well before 1.15 p.m., the arrival time of 1.10-15 p.m. simply has to be wrong. But what reinforces this conclusion are the blatant contradictions between Aileen Kingston's sworn statement and that of Steven Howard. If it was the witnesses reporting the earlier sightings who were wrong, then Aileen Kingston and Steven Howard should still have managed statements that were at least consistent with each other.

The only way I can find to resolve the testimony of the Kingstons and Steven Howard with those of other witnesses is to assume 1) a double arrival (i.e., two-Volvo) scenario and 2) that alterations have been made to the times given in the Kingstons' statements. I feel entitled to fiddle with the times given in the Kingstons' statements because they are inconsistent with all other witness statements, that is to say, those of Steven Howard as well as those of all other casual visitors to the PAHS, which harmonize fairly well together. Accordingly, it makes sense to alter the Kingstons' statements –

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which are the ones that don't fit - rather than those of all other witnesses. (That is precisely what I plan to do in Part II of this book where I offer a tentative reconstruction of the Port Arthur massacre.)

If the Kingstons' statements were in fact altered in respect of their times (to make two separate arrivals at the tollgate look like one event), and we made appropriate adjustments to them in order to harmonize them with evidence given by visitors, the sequence of events in the half hour prior to the massacre would have been along these lines:

12.55: At the tollgate, Aileen Kingston takes the \$13 entrance fee from the driver of Volvo #1, who pays with a \$50 note.

12.57: Karen Jones sees Volvo #1 arrive in the parking area. The driver asks the parking attendant, Ian Kingston, if he can park 'down near the buses.' Kingston tells him he cannot, but he does so anyway.

12.59: The driver enters the Broad Arrow Café.

1.00: The man joins the food queue. He is observed standing in the line by Ron Neander, who notices that he is lugging a heavy sports bag and a video camera. Steven Howard relieves Aileen Kingston at the tollgate while she takes a 15-minute lunchbreak.

1.09: Carmel Edwards holds the door open for the man as he leaves the crowded Café to eat lunch on the outside balcony.

1.10: On the balcony, the man sits at the table behind Michael Beekman and Rebecca McKenna. He puts the sports bag and video camera on the floor and his tray on the table. He chats first with an elderly couple then with McKenna, who notices that he is unshaven and that his eyes are bloodshot. He tells Beekman and McKenna about his altercation with Ian Kingston. Beekman notices that the man mumbles to himself a lot. McKenna

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notices that he seems anxious and distracted. He was 'constantly looking around in the direction of the car park and into the cafeteria area.' At about the same time, tourist James Dutton sees Volvo #2 approach the entrance to the PAHS.

1.12: Howard takes the \$13 entrance fee from the driver of Volvo #2.

1.13: The driver of Volvo #1, who has been waiting anxiously for the arrival of Volvo #2, notices the car pull into the car park. In response, he rises suddenly from the balcony table and goes back inside the Café.

1.15: Aileen Kingston returns to work at the tollgate. Howard returns to the Information Centre.

1.17: The driver of Volvo #2 parks his vehicle in the car park and briefly enters the Information Centre.

1.19: The driver of Volvo #2 leaves the Information Centre and enters the Café. He is observed entering by Faye Richards and Carol Pearce, who notices that he is clean shaven.

1.25: Aileen Kingston rings Howard to discuss the monies taken by Howard while she was on her break.

**Conclusion:** Aileen Kingston's and Steven Howard's lunch breaks seem to have been managed to that neither would notice the arrival of two almost identical Volvos with surfboards on top driven by similar young men with long blonde hair. Anyone who had been working the gate and seen two such vehicles arrive within half an hour of each other, would have considered the matter extremely suspicious indeed. Volvo #1 would therefore have been scheduled to arrive before Kingston took her 15-minute break, and Volvo #2 after. The man who arrived in Volvo #1, accordingly, would have been waiting anxiously for the arrival of Volvo #2. The latter's arrival seems to have been the signal for him to enter the Café.

**APPENDIX V:  
Wasps and Japs**

As was shown in Chapter 5 above, there is no forensic evidence linking Bryant to the Port Arthur massacre. Instead of evidence there is instead a network of indirect linkages that seems to implicate Bryant. The position taken in this book is quite straightforward: if Bryant had been the gunman, the police would have recovered his fingerprints and DNA from the Broad Arrow Café and the yellow Volvo he allegedly used in the course of committing that day's crimes.

Among the most suspicious of the linkages incriminating Bryant is that concerning the Port Arthur gunman's mutterings about 'European wasps' and 'Japanese tourists.' First, we have a curious statement from Petra Wilmott at 11.45 p.m. on the evening of the massacre in which she said that she had begun to suspect that Bryant was the gunman after she heard on the news that 'the person involved [in the massacre] had mentioned something about wasps and Japs. That is what Martin often says.' These are words that rather remind me how, after she had heard that President Kennedy was assassinated in Dealey Plaza, Ruth Paine said that she realized that the president's assassin might have been Lee Oswald (indeed, she famously greeted the Dallas police when they arrived at her house with the words 'Come in, I've been expecting you').

According to Gaye Lynde, Bryant

The first clue comes from the girls in the broken down car outside 'Seascape', when after purchasing \$50 of marijuana the gunman told the girls, "I'm going to the Isle of the dead to get rid of some wasps."

The Port Arthur gunman allegedly had a



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Finally, the man encountered by Rebecca McKenna on the Café balcony was muttering things about wasps  
Michael Beekman later confirmed her statement: ‘he was really mumbling to himself like when he asked us about the wasps he was definitely referring to European Wasps because there were heaps of them there. When he asked us about the Japanese tourists, he then mumbled to himself, but I was able to hear him say, oh there’s usually bus loads of em.’

So we have Bryant’s girlfriend affirming that these were things Bryant would say and three people who believe they saw the gunman who heard him mention wasps and Japs. By this means, the link was created between Martin Bryant (courtesy of Petra Wilmott), the Volvo driver headed towards the PAHS (---) and the Broad Arrow Café gunman (McKenna and Beekman).

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the real Martin Bryant was the least bit concerned about wasps. The following snippet of Bryant’s conversation with Inspector Warren shows that bees were a subject of greater significance to him:

*Warren:* Are you aware of a you know, seasonal problem with wasps at Port Arthur?

*Bryant:* Seasonal problems. Umm, not at all, not at all. Wasps?

*Warren:* Wasps, yeah.

*Bryant:* No.

*Warren:* Well have you got any other ...

*Bryant:* I’m allergic.

*Warren:* ... Understanding of the term wasps?

*Bryant:* No, but I know that I’m allergic to bees, I nearly died when I was eleven years old.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <http://home.overflow.net.au/~nedwood/trans4.html>

## ***What's Going On?***

It is hard not to suspect an operation to set Bryant up by asking the real gunman to mention wasps. But all the mention of wasps does to Bryant is remind him that he is allergic to bees!

**PART II:**

**RETHINKING THE PORT  
ARTHUR MASSACRE**

## ***What's Going On?***

## 6

### **Smoking guns**

Anyone who remains undecided as to whether there could have been a government conspiracy behind the Port Arthur massacre should now consider the following ten ‘smoking guns.’ Some of these are more incriminating than others, but considered together, they leave not the least doubt that an event causing large fatalities was scheduled to take place in Tasmania at the end of April 1996. This is because in the year preceding the massacre every imaginable step seems to have been taken to ensure its ‘success.’ There are also clear intimations that in the same period Bryant was being manipulated by at least one person in precisely the same way as the patsies of the American political assassinations of the 1960s, like Lee Harvey Oswald, James Earl Ray and Sirhan Sirhan were manipulated by their handlers (who were, respectively, ‘William Bishop’ – aka David Atlee Phillips of the CIA - ‘Raul,’ and ‘the girl in the polka dot dress’).

1. In February 1993, a Victorian gun collector, Bill Drysdale of Yea, handed in a Colt AR-15 rifle to police during an amnesty. He subsequently identified the rifle as the one recovered from the Seascope Cottage that had allegedly been used in the Broad Arrow Café massacre. In an interview with the Melbourne *Herald-Sun* on June 23, 1996, Drysdale said that he was virtually certain that the AR-15 was his, on account of its extreme rarity in Australia at the time, and because of the unique mark a gunsmith had made on the barrel of his rifle, which matched that on the massacre rifle. The serial numbers were almost identical, while ‘my rifle also had a collapsible stock and a Colt sight, just as the massacre weapon has,’ said Drysdale. The *Herald-Sun* noted, ‘One of Australia’s largest firearms importers told the [*Herald Sun*] that firearms matching the Port Arthur weapon were as scarce as hen’s teeth,’ and that the chances of two weapons of the same type, with

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almost-matching serial numbers, being imported into Australia, were 'next to nothing.' Police subsequently told Drysdale that the rifle had been destroyed at Sims Metal furnace on March 9, 1994. However, they later admitted that no records are kept of when individual guns are destroyed and that some guns had been sold to a Bendigo dealer for sale overseas. The history of this rifle, which was obviously retained by someone in Tasmania Police when it should have been destroyed, is the first clue to the existence of what Martin Bryant told his mother had been a 'police conspiracy.'

2. In June 1995, the state of Tasmania ordered a special refrigerated mortuary truck with a capacity of 22 bodies, almost exactly the number of persons killed at Port Arthur ten months later. It was used for the first and only time on the evening of the massacre and was placed on sale in September 1999. Who decided in 1995 that a state with an average murder rate of one every two months required a vehicle capable of transporting 22 bodies at once? No other state had any such vehicle.

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**BELOW:** A notice advertising the sale of the Port Arthur mortuary truck in 1999

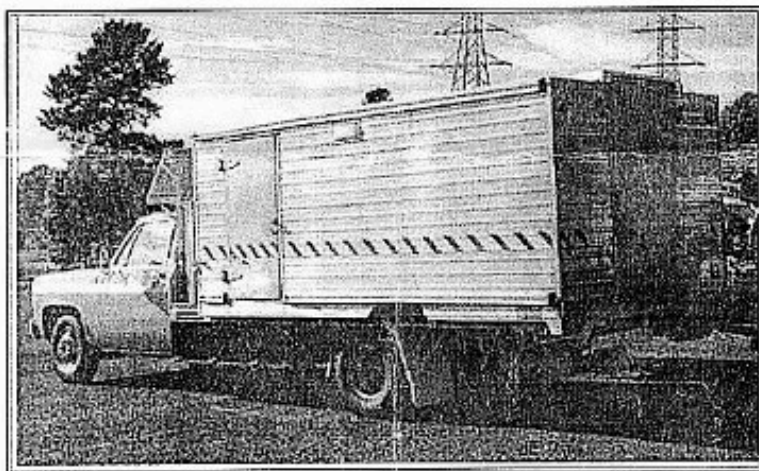


Vehicle for Sale.

Genuine Enquiries only.

Yellow Chevrolet 350 V8 truck with refrigerated body, holds 22 , this vehicle was primarily used as the disaster vehicle in the **Port Arthur Massacre**. This vehicle is currently for sale and all reasonable offers will be considered. The vehicle has value as not only a refrigerated unit for body removal, it is the only one of its kind in the entire country. The "memorabilia" value of it for anyone making a movie/series or writing a book on Port Arthur is limitless. Not only would the purchaser be getting the disaster vehicle but the whole Port Arthur Story would be given as well.

This vehicle is currently for sale and all REASONABLE OFFERS will be considered.  
Email [cwright@trump.net.au](mailto:cwright@trump.net.au)



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3. In November 1995, less than six months before the massacre, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was removed from the Workers Compensation Act in Tasmania, effectively removing any claim by any worker or volunteer for compensation to overcome this problem – a problem of the sort that would have affected a good many people in the wake of a massacre. Wasn't this development convenient for the Tasmanian government? Too convenient?

4. Also in November 1995, Roland Browne, spokesman for the Tasmanian branch of the Coalition for Gun Control, warned not only Tasmanians but all Australians, that if Tasmania did not enact tougher firearm laws then there would be a massacre in Tasmania of massive proportions. In March 1996, after the Dunblane massacre, he reiterated the same dire forecast on the national television show *A Current Affair with Ray Martin*. Since all the gun massacres in Australia had taken place in the two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, the chances of one taking place in quiet, sparsely-populated Tasmania would have been virtually nil. So what did Browne know and when did he know it?

5. On November 14, 1995, a new Coroner's Act received royal assent, superseding the 1957 Coroner's Act. Oddly, despite receiving royal assent, the legislation was planned to come into effect only towards the end of 1996, that is to say, after the massacre. Why was the legislation expressly designed not to be in force for almost another year after it was effectively made law?

6. Beginning in 1995, the quiet backwater of the Tasman Peninsula was used as the location for 'several' SAC-PAV (Standing Advisory Committee for Commonwealth/State Co-operation for the Protection Against Violence) emergency training exercises. According to Joe Paul, Executive Officer of the Tasmania State Disaster Committee, the exercises that



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began in 1995 were 'designed to assess the emergency services response capability to an event on the Tasman Peninsula, which includes Port Arthur.' Why was the Peninsula singled out for such special treatment? Was there really a higher chance of an emergency in the Peninsula than in any other part of Tasmania? What did these exercises consist of exactly? Was their purpose to mask the planning of the PAHS massacre, which would superficially look like planning for just another counter-terrorist exercise?

7. Beginning in 1995, there were several significant personnel shifts in areas that would prove relevant to the massacre. First, Constable Chris Iles, the sole policeman at Nubeena Police Station (the nearest police station to the PAHS) was suddenly transferred, after 15 years, to Sorell Police Station, and was replaced by Constable Paul Hyland. Second, Ian Kingston, manager of the Tasman Peninsula's State Emergency Service (SES) unit since 1984, took a part-time job as the PAHS security manager and parking attendant. Third, in March 1996, in an unprecedented development, the Premier of Tasmania, Ray Groom, stepped down, not to retire, but rather to take over a bunch of portfolios, including Attorney-General and Minister of Port Arthur, that would prove important in regard to the April massacre. Finally, the SOG got a new leader, Hank Timmermann, only ten days before the massacre. Were personnel 'in the know' being manoeuvred into position? Why did Ian Kingston suddenly need a part-time job? Does the SES pay that badly? Isn't the role of parking attendant a little lowly for an experienced manager? And how many days did Kingston actually work at the PAHS altogether?

8. In February 1996, Martin Bryant acquired a new girlfriend, Petra Wilmott. Not only is Wilmott the sole source of the police claim that Bryant bought a Prince sports bag in a Hobart store, she was his girlfriend at the time (March 1996) he bought a new rifle, the first he had bought for many years, suggesting a newly

awakened interest in guns. Was Wilmott part of a conspiracy to set him up? Was she responsible for Bryant's sudden interest in guns? Did she provide him with the firearms license gun dealer Terry Hill says Bryant showed him (see Smoking Gun #9 below)? Did she encourage him to pose for photographs that would make him look 'psycho'?

9. In the month immediately prior to the massacre, the quiet, sparsely-inhabited island of Tasmania was the location for a sudden wave of emergency training exercises and workshops predicated on terrorism/mass fatality scenarios. On the weekend of April 20-21, Emergency Services held a disaster exercise at Hobart Airport. The same weekend, the Police Academy held an aviation seminar. 'The seminar considered Tasmania's resource capability to cope with a domestic aircraft accident and identified the support available from other states.' Joe Paul explains, 'Other exercises were held to test anti terrorist arrangements. These exercises practised emergency service personnel and other organisations in responding and managing an event with multiple deaths and casualties.' In the week before the massacre, Royal Hobart Hospital finalized its new Emergency Disaster Plan ('Code Brown'), the final draft of which landed on the desk of Dr Rod Franks, staff specialist in emergency medicine, on April 26, 1996. Other key hospital personnel had already received copies by this time. Then, on the weekend of April 27-28, the Hospital held an Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST) workshop that was attended by 25 of the country's top specialists from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The workshop happened to conclude at about 1 p.m. on Sunday, conveniently making the specialist personnel available to assist in the aftermath of the massacre. Also on the same weekend, ambulance headquarters in Hobart held a training seminar for 18 volunteers. How often are staff work development seminars held on weekends, let alone Sundays? Why in April 1996, and specifically by the weekend of April 27-28, was Tasmania so extraordinarily well-

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prepared for emergencies of the sort leading to mass fatalities which had never occurred in the state's history, and which had only ever occurred in Sydney and Melbourne?

10. On March 27, about a month before the massacre, Martin Bryant took his Colt AR-10 .308 semi-automatic rifle to Hobart gun dealer Terry Hill for repairs. Hill claims that Bryant showed him a valid gunowner's license in the name of Martin RYAN, which was correctly endorsed for prohibited and fully automatic weapons. Over the following month, Bryant made several visits to Hill's store, purchasing items that Hill says did not require details of Bryant's license to be recorded. These purchases included several gun cases and finally, on April 24, 1996, four days before the massacre, three boxes of Winchester XX 1 1/2 oz shotgun shells, code number X12XC. However, at no time did Hill sell Bryant any weapons, or ammunition of .223 Remington or .308 Winchester calibres, that were used at Port Arthur. Since Bryant did not buy anything from Hill that was actually used in the massacre, someone appears to have given Bryant a license and encouraged him to buy goods from Hill as a means of setting him up after the massacre as the source of the Port Arthur gunman's weapons and ammunition. Whoever this person was, he was not only able to provide Bryant with a gun license, he also knew what purchases Bryant would be allowed to make that would not require a dealer to record his license details.

11. On the very day of the massacre, the top ten people at the PAHS were summoned to a seminar in Swansea that had only the airiest rationale ('managing change at Port Arthur'), no agenda, and which was timed to start at 1 p.m. Why was the PAHS staff seminar held at Swansea rather than at the PAHS? Why was the seminar held on a Sunday afternoon, of all conceivable times? Was this a pretext to deprive the PAHS of its security chiefs, with the exception of Ian Kingston?

**7**

**The wonderful world of psyops**

As the previous chapters have shown, a great many questions need be asked as to the true nature of the cruel hoax perpetrated on the Australian people in 1996. It is clear not only that Bryant was denied his right to a fair trial but also that 1) a trial was avoided because he was not guilty and 2) his decision finally to plead guilty to 72 charges was but the last stage in a twisted saga of police criminality and legal deviousness that has no precedent in Australian history. It is the trials and tribulations of Tim Anderson, who was falsely accused of the 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing, magnified a thousandfold.

Framing a mentally deficient person - a 'retard' in common parlance - is one of the oldest tricks in the book. It worked for the Nazis, when they blamed the Reichstag fire on Dutch halfwit Marinus Van der Lubbe, and it worked for the infamous individuals who decided, for reasons only known to themselves, that what Australia needed in 1996 was a jolly good bloodbath. It simply amazes me that only an insignificant number of Australians have stopped to ask questions about Martin Bryant's sudden and inexplicable transformation from 'village idiot' (IQ 66) to one of the most lethal gunmen in history.

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**BELOW:** Marinus Van der Lubbe,  
blamed by the Nazis for the Reichstag fire



It is true that a handful of Australians have dared to question the orthodox account of Port Arthur, most notably Joe Vials, Andrew MacGregor, and Noel McDonald. But because the massacre precipitated the passage of new gun control legislation, something that many Australian politicians had been working towards for at least ten years, those most sceptical of the police explanation of the massacre have emerged mostly from among the shooting lobby. They argue that the Australian government perpetrated the attacks as a means of pushing through gun control legislation.

But while it is a welcome thing when anyone takes up the cause of justice, the prominence of gun control opponents among the sceptics has inevitably allowed the case for Bryant's innocence to be dismissed as a 'rightwing conspiracy theory.' This is extremely unfortunate, for one does not have to belong to the gun lobby or the cantankerous right to recognize that the handling of Bryant's case represents the most serious breach of legal norms in Australian history. One does not even have to embrace this or any theory of the motives behind the massacre to recognize that Bryant is innocent. One simply has to scrutinize the preposterous official account of the massacre itself.

The key to understanding the massacre - how it was executed and how Bryant was set up as its perpetrator - is the ability to recognize the patterns of what those who study intelligence operations refer to as psychological operations ('psyops'). Psyops are the sinister twin of modern public relations techniques. Their purpose was originally to undermine the morale of the enemy, as occurred, for instance, in the CIA-backed invasion of Guatemala in 1954. On this occasion, radio broadcasts seriously inflated the figures for the number of soldiers making up the invasion force. With no intelligence of its own, the Arbenz regime decided to give up the struggle rather than fight a war it concluded it had no chance of winning.

Insofar as psyops are targeted at enemy populations, there is little that is secret about them. On the Internet, for example, you can read about the U.S. Army's 4th Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) Group at Fort Bragg. However, in the last forty years - and particularly during the 1990s - psyops have been extended to domestic populations, and their aim is now to deeply traumatize them, usually through the arousal and manipulation of their baser instincts. From the point of view of

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those who carry them out, they have the beneficial effect of creating public support for the extension of the powers of intelligence agencies like the CIA and ASIO and for the steady expansion of their budgets. By means of psyops, liberal democracies like the United States and Australia now devote extensive resources to agencies ostensibly protecting the country from foreign threats whose real purpose seems to be the subjugation of internal dissent. They also foster a siege mentality of the sort which provides fertile soil for the spread of hard right conservative ideology.

Those involved in domestic psyops are usually private contractors, many of whom are believed to be retired intelligence operatives. However, such operatives almost invariably work in tandem with sympathetic figures in government, the media, and law enforcement. Only a very few people will ever be privileged to know who actually ordered a particular psyop. As Joe Vialls writes, 'Because of their illegal nature, psyops are never formally ordered by governments, but are discreetly arranged through multinational corporations and others. Some psyops ordered during the last forty years are known to have been carried out by independent contractors hired from a small specialist group, staffed mostly by retired members of American and Israeli special forces.'

For forty years, until it was far exceeded in shock value by the 9-11 terror attacks in New York, the last word in domestic psyops was the public assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, in 1963. This operation did more than change the occupant of the White House. If getting rid of JFK was the conspirators' only purpose, they could have done that discreetly enough, the way they poisoned Roosevelt in 1945. But executing him in public had additional psychological value - it taught Americans that their wishes actually had nothing to do with how their country was governed. In the aftermath of the operation, trust in American public institutions eroded rapidly,

## ***What's Going On?***

creating the context for refurbished corporate power and, ultimately, the takeover of the U.S. government by the corporations.

It is a virtual certainty that the Port Arthur massacre was intended to create a favourable climate for the passage of new gun control legislation, as the shooting lobby contends. However, it may have been a psyop with a larger goal, a fundamental dislocation of the Australian psyche. It is no accident that the massacre occurred very shortly after John Howard became prime minister. Howard, who is a conservative of the American type suffering the misfortune of governing a country with a mentality closer to that of Canada, is a proponent of authoritarian policies and an opponent of everything that is genuinely liberal. (There can be no doubt that he would, for example, back the restoration of the death penalty, if there was a groundswell of public opinion in favour of such a step.)

**BELOW:** Australian prime minister John Howard with ideological buddy, President George W. Bush





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In this writer's opinion, the Port Arthur massacre was carried out less as a means of introducing new gun laws, although that certainly was the result, than to enhance the appeal of newly-elected prime minister, John Howard, to urban Australia, where fears of gun massacres were fanned by the series of suburban shootings that began in Hoddle St., Melbourne, in 1987.

Since he was first elected to office in February 1996, Howard has detached a significant percentage of urban voters from the Labour party by shamelessly stoking the politics of fear. The Port Arthur massacre was crucial in this respect. Prior to the massacre, very few people in Australia expected Howard and the Liberals to be in a position to tackle the gun issue. On account of the Liberals' political alliance with the National Party, the party of pro-gun rural voters, guns seemed a matter that was going to have to wait until the next Labour government.

However, the massacre conveniently enabled Howard to appropriate the issue from the Labour party. Many city dwellers were pleased, even delighted, that a conservative prime minister had the gumption to force the states to adopt fresh gun legislation. The massacre could therefore be seen as the product of a conservative political strategy for depriving Labour of a source of its popularity over the preceding decade.

I would also suggest that Port Arthur forms an integral part of a series of deeply traumatic events which occurred during President Clinton's period in office (1993 to 2001): the first World Trade Center attack, the massacre at Waco, the Oklahoma City bombing, the assassination of Princess Diana, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Jr., the Columbine school shootings, and the massacre at Dunblane. It is as if frequent spells of national trauma were a kind of bridge to the current 'war on terror.'

## ***What's Going On?***

In the final analysis, though, the motive behind the Port Arthur massacre must remain a matter for speculation. Whatever agenda one suspects lay behind it, it should not influence a decision as to whether Martin Bryant was the actual perpetrator. In the previous chapters I have shown that Bryant was set up to take the fall for a crime that would have required the talents of a great many people to plan and execute. Bryant was a patsy. That is a conclusion that rests independently of whether one believes that Howard and the Liberals had a motive for carrying out the massacre in Tasmania.

In short, you don't have to be a guntotin' rightwing fruitcake to believe that Bryant was framed. You just have to know how to tell when a narrative conceals a lie.

**BELOW:** Some post-massacre headlines from 1996



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