



COTTMAN INVESTIGATION SERVICES

Insurance, Commercial, Civil & Criminal Investigations

Licensed Inquiry Agents

06th June 2023

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Hon Peter Foster MLC

Chair

By email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Hon Foster MLC

Petition No. 091 – Murder of Stacey Robyn Thorne, 9 December 2007

I, Robyn COTTMAN, licensed Inquiry Agent and Private Investigator, have been engaged by the family of the deceased victim, Stacey Robyn THORNE, to investigate this now ‘unsolved’ homicide.

Stacey Robyn THORNE was a 34-year-old teacher’s aide, soon to be mother, living in a small town in Western Australia. Late on Sunday the 9th of December 2007 she was asleep in her bed when someone brutally stabbed her 21 times. She was just over 22 weeks pregnant and died as a result of the injuries received.

There were no signs of forced entry indicating the attack could not have been committed by an ‘unknown’ intruder and no lights on in her unit. The attacker left Stacey and her baby to die. She managed to struggle out of the unit to try and get help. But no-one came to her aid. Stacey and her unborn baby daughter died on the front verge of a neighbouring property 100metres from her unit. The last person to see her alive was the father of her unborn child and casual acquaintance.

After a police investigation, charges were laid, and the alleged offender appeared before a jury in 2009. He was found guilty and sentenced to 25 years in prison for ‘wilful murder’. The most serious of all offences and sentences due to the vulnerability of Stacey and the savageness of the attack.

The accused appealed the sentence on two occasions and in 2020 was granted a re-trial on the basis the defence alleged police had planted some of the key pieces of evidence. A documentary which aired a month before the Court of Appeal hearing and the media frenzy which followed leading up to the re-trial tainted the prosecution case. The jury at the re-trial could not conclude he was guilty ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ so was acquitted.

The case was closed with no answers or closure for Stacey's family. Calls to the Police Commissioner to re-open and re-investigate the case were made over several years. It has only been since this petition was tabled and the public release of the CCC report into the investigation of corruption and misconduct has this, and several other 'cold' cases, been reactivated.

After reviewing the evidence and transcripts several factors have become apparent which may assist in identifying the offender. WAPOL and the DPP could have negated the allegations of corruption and challenges to the strong circumstantial evidence, however they failed to step up. As a result, the accused was acquitted and will receive compensation. There are a significant number of exhibits which need to be tested and could possibly hold fresh, compelling evidence. We also strongly suggest an international knife wound expert be consulted to provide opinion on the weapon and the wounds. Pressure needs to be applied for WAPOL to conduct a thorough re-investigation of the case regardless of the costs.

The petition tabled on the 16th of May 2023 by Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, recommended the following:

1. WA Police to re-open and review the Stacey Thorne case.
2. Request WA Police re-examine and complete forensic testing on all exhibits.
3. Request WA Police obtain an internationally recognised knife wound expert to review the findings made by Dr Margolius.
4. Request a full coronial inquest.
5. Disclosure of any Corruption and Crime Commission findings in relation to this matter.

The following has thus far occurred:

- WA Police have offered a reward for new information into several cold cases, one of which is Stacey Thorne.
- The Corruption and Crime Commission Report 2023 was tabled in Parliament.

We continue to request a full coronial inquest, complete testing of exhibits, expert opinion and the CCC 2013 report made public.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Cottman

Principal Petitioner