

---

**JURISDICTION** : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
**ACT** : CORONERS ACT 1996  
**CORONER** : SARAH HELEN LINTON, DEPUTY STATE CORONER  
**HEARD** : 3 - 4 NOVEMBER 2022  
**DELIVERED** : 6 APRIL 2023  
**FILE NO/S** : CORC 830 of 2019  
**DECEASED** : CUTLER, JULIE LEANNE

---

*Catchwords:*

Nil

*Legislation:*

Nil

**Counsel Appearing:**

Mr J Tiller assisted the Coroner.  
Ms P Femia appeared for the WA Police Force.

**Case(s) referred to in decision(s):**

Nil

Coroners Act 1996  
(Section 26(1))

## RECORD OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEATH

*I, Sarah Helen Linton, Deputy State Coroner, having investigated the disappearance of **Julie Leanne CUTLER** with an inquest held at the Perth Coroner’s Court, Court 85, CLC Building, 501 Hay Street, Perth, on 3 and 4 November 2022, find that the death of **Julie Leanne CUTLER** has been established beyond all reasonable doubt and that the identity of the deceased person was **Julie Leanne CUTLER** and that death occurred on or about 20 June 1988 at Cottesloe Beach or elsewhere as a result of an unknown cause in the following circumstances:*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
BACKGROUND.....	5
JULIE’S RETURN TO PERTH 1987 - 1988.....	9
JULIE’S MENTAL STATE PRIOR TO HER DISAPPEARANCE .....	11
THE PARMELIA FUNCTION .....	16
MISSING PERSON REPORT.....	19
DISCOVERY OF JULIE’S CAR IN THE OCEAN.....	20
THE SEARCH.....	22
FORENSIC EXAMINATION OF JULIE’S CAR AND THE SCENE.....	23
INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION .....	26
POLICE REVIEW AUGUST 1998 – OPERATION DAMOCLES.....	28
RECENT POLICE REVIEW – OPERATION MALVAE.....	30
Anonymous phone calls .....	31
Other possible suspects .....	33
The Fiat.....	34
Julie’s possible plans .....	35
Entry point of the car to the water .....	35
The film ‘Nocturnes’ .....	37
Burglary at Fiona and Julie’s home .....	38
Clothing found at the Kebab Shop.....	39
Items found at the beach in 1996 .....	39
Conclusion of the Cold Case Review .....	41
VIEWS OF JULIE’S FAMILY AND FRIENDS .....	41
IS JULIE DECEASED? .....	45
CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH .....	46
Suicide.....	46
Homicide.....	47
Open Finding.....	48
CONCLUSION .....	49

## INTRODUCTION

1. Julie Cutler was last seen alive in the early hours of the morning on 20 June 1988. She left a work function at the Parmelia Hotel in the city, got into her Fiat sedan and drove away. Julie was seen turning onto Mounts Bay Road by a work colleague who was waiting for his ride home. Two days later, Julie's car was found in the ocean at Cottesloe Beach, approximately 50 metres from the shore. The car was empty. An extensive search was undertaken of the area, but Julie's body was never found.
2. From the outset, there was a strong suspicion that Julie was deceased (although the possibility that she was still alive could not be ruled out entirely). As to how she was thought to have died, it was unclear to police whether her suspected death involved an act of suicide or if another person or persons were involved.
3. Julie disappeared at a time when the small town of Perth had recently been rocked by the abductions and subsequent deaths of a number of young women at the hands of David and Catherine Birnie. A number of years after Julie's disappearance, three other young women also disappeared in suspicious circumstances, namely Sarah Spiers, Jane Rimmer and Ciara Glennon. The bodies of Ms Rimmer and Ms Glennon were subsequently found and they were later proven after trial to be the victims of the Claremont serial killer, Bradley Edwards. There remains a strong suspicion that this was also the tragic fate of Ms Spiers, although her body has never been found and no conviction has been recorded. At the time of Julie's disappearance, these latter cases had not occurred, but over time it was suggested that there could be a connection, given some similarities between those other three young women and Julie and the circumstances in which they first disappeared. However, evidence before me now suggests that there is unlikely to be any connection and this is consistent with her father, Mr Cutler's, understanding from police.<sup>1</sup>
4. Julie's disappearance has been the subject of extensive investigation by the WA Police for more than three decades. It has been the subject of much media attention and public interest, but no witness has ever come forward to say that they saw Julie or her car enter the ocean at Cottesloe Beach, or to provide specific information as to how or why Julie disappeared. Julie's family and friends have come to accept that she is no longer alive, but are still hopeful they might one day find out what happened to her.
5. In November 2017 the Cold Case Homicide Squad commenced a review of all the evidence already obtained by police, and then conducted extensive further investigations into Julie's disappearance and suspected death. Their investigations continued throughout 2018, with considerable efforts made by police to track down old witnesses and follow any new leads. When the investigation, codenamed Operation Malvae, was completed in February 2019, the investigators concluded there were two possible scenarios open in regard to what happened to Julie:
  - Julie was murdered between 20 and 22 June 1988 and the person or persons responsible ensured Julie's vehicle entered the water at Cottesloe Beach; or

---

<sup>1</sup> T 21.

- Julie took her own life between the early hours of 20 June and 22 June 1988, deliberately driving her vehicle into the ocean at Cottesloe Beach and drowning at or near that location.
6. A detailed investigation report was prepared and provided to the State Coroner in February 2019, setting out the reasons why the police suspect that Julie is deceased and the evidence that supports the two possible conclusions as to how she met her death, as set out above.
  7. On the basis of the information provided by the WA Police in relation to Julie's disappearance, Acting State Coroner King determined that pursuant to s 23 of the *Coroners Act 1996* (WA), there was reasonable cause to suspect that Julie Cutler had died and her death was a reportable death. He therefore made a direction that a coroner hold an inquest into the circumstances of the suspected death.<sup>2</sup>
  8. I held an inquest at the Perth Coroner's Court on 3 and 4 November 2022. The inquest consisted of the tendering of documentary evidence compiled during the police investigation conducted into Julie's disappearance, as well as hearing evidence from a senior police officer involved in the recent cold case investigation, some key witnesses who had contact with Julie prior to her disappearance and some of Julie's family members and friends.
  9. An inquest is a fact-finding exercise and not a method of apportioning guilt. In deciding the best way to conduct this inquest I considered the relevant evidence, issues and witnesses to be examined at the inquest hearing. Julie's family and the Western Australian community can have the utmost confidence the investigation has been given closely scrutinised, both by the WA Police and this Court. I have given close attention to all of the documentary evidence before me as well as the oral evidence given by the witnesses who were called. In particular, I was assisted by the evidence from Julie's family and friends as to the kind of person she was and whether they believed she might have made a choice to take her own life. They were all firm in their belief that Julie would not have committed suicide, but were not able to provide any evidence of any particular person who may have wished to harm Julie.
  10. The WA Police Cold Case Homicide Squad investigation compiled a list of 48 persons who were classified as suspects, using the lowest level of suspicion as a baseline. At the end of the investigation 44 of those nominated as suspects could not be eliminated in Julie's disappearance. Five of the nominated suspects had died prior to the 2018 investigation commencing and some other witnesses had died, as well as others not being in a state of health suitable for giving evidence.<sup>3</sup>
  11. I note in particular that the inquest did not hear evidence from Bradley Edwards, who is currently incarcerated for the murders of Ms Glennon and Ms Rimmer and other offences. I was advised by WA Police that he has not agreed to participate in interviews since his convictions, but in a previous conversation he denied any

---

<sup>2</sup> Section 23 *Coroners Act* Direction of Acting State Coroner King dated 24 June 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p.34.

knowledge of Julie Cutler. The investigating officers have concluded there is no compelling evidence to elevate him above the many other persons of possible interest. I note there has been a suggestion in some reporting that this inquest could have been an opportunity to call Mr Edwards and compel him to answer questions, contrary to his right to silence, on other matters unrelated to Julie's disappearance and suspected death. With respect, such a suggestion demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the powers of the coroner. I mention it only to ensure that the community is not left with the misapprehension that there was an opportunity lost for justice to be served for another family.

12. At the conclusion of the inquest, I indicated that I was satisfied on the available evidence that Julie is deceased, and she died on or about the time she disappeared on 20 June 1988. As for how Julie died, I am sadly compelled to leave her cause of death undetermined and to make an open finding as to her manner of death. I explain my reasons for those findings below.

### **BACKGROUND**

13. Julie was born on 27 July 1965 in Perth and was the first child of her father, Roger Cutler, and mother, Robyn Cutler. Julie's sister, Nicole Cutler, was born a year later. In the girls' early years the family lived in Wembley and Julie and Nicole attended Brigidine Catholic Primary School in Floreat. Unfortunately, Mrs Cutler developed cancer and passed away on 3 January 1976. Her early death obviously had a lasting impact on her two little girls. Nicole recalled that their mother's death came as a shock, as they had not been prepared for it, and both she and Julie were quite traumatised.<sup>4</sup> Julie's father recalled that Julie was "pretty well bereft"<sup>5</sup> at the time, and there was mention in the evidence of how deeply it affected Julie even as an adult.<sup>6</sup>
14. Mr Cutler remarried in 1977 and moved to a home in Dalkeith. Mr Cutler and his new wife had four more children, Rachael, Rebecca, Alexander and Jessica, so Julie and her sister Nicole had four younger siblings. Julie's father was away a lot for work and she did not develop a close relationship with her stepmother. She did have a very good relationship with her grandparents who lived in York, and visited them regularly.<sup>7</sup>
15. Mr Cutler described Julie as an easy child to parent. He remembered Julie as a "quiet, shy, reliable, introspective girl"<sup>8</sup> who was respectful of other people, reliable and sensible.<sup>9</sup>
16. Nicole described Julie as "a really lovely person who would help people in need. She was a good, kind person with a great sense of humour."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> T 26.

<sup>5</sup> T 12.

<sup>6</sup> T 13; Exhibit 1, Tab 4 and Tab 48.1.

<sup>7</sup> T 11 - 13; Exhibit 1, Tab 21 and Tab 48.1.

<sup>8</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21, [22].

<sup>9</sup> T 11.

<sup>10</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 48.1, [65].

17. Julie and Nicole became students at Iona Presentation College in Mosman Park, where Julie remained until her graduation from high school in 1982. Julie was a good student who was well-regarded at her school by her teachers and peers. She was a voracious reader, and was very creative and loved to write. After finishing school, Julie attended the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) in Bentley, which is now Curtin University. Julie majored in English Literature and also studied Theatre Arts and Creative Writing with a minor in Psychology. At some stage during her university studies, Julie moved out of the family home in Dalkeith and into a house in Victoria Park that was owned by her family.<sup>11</sup>
18. Nicole recalls they were quite different, despite being sisters. Julie was the more grounded of the two of them and the ‘good’ one. Nicole described Julie’s personality as having two polarities: she was often quite reserved but could also be quite extroverted and adventurous at times. Julie was also very funny, kind and extremely honest. Nicole noted that Julie was quite a private person, who liked to keep some things to herself and to keep the different parts of her life separate, so they did not share everything that was happening in their lives. However, they were still sisters and cared about each other.<sup>12</sup>
19. Julie loved visiting the Fremantle Markets, where she later found work, and going to Cottesloe Beach, where she would sit in her car and watch the ocean.<sup>13</sup>
20. Julie was completely independent from her father in terms of her living expenses at the time of her disappearance. She worked as a waitress and at a dress shop at the Fremantle Markets while studying. Julie had got the job at the dress shop in Fremantle after being a customer at the store.<sup>14</sup> She also received a student allowance and had a small inheritance from her mother.<sup>15</sup>
21. Julie had been working at the Parmelia Hilton Hotel in Mill Street, Perth, as a room service attendant while studying. A work colleague, Concetta Plati, recalled Julie was also working a part-time job at a bar at Perth Airport. Ms Plati remembered Julie as “a nice girl, very sweet”<sup>16</sup> although she also remembered Julie saying, “I’m not your typical Catholic.”<sup>17</sup> Ms Plati was aware Julie’s mother had died when she was quite young and that her father had remarried and had more children. Julie didn’t live with them or visit them often. Julie was close to her sister Nicole and was very fond of one of her half-sisters and spoke about her often.<sup>18</sup>
22. Julie had a close friend, Jennifer Marr,<sup>19</sup> who studied Theatre Arts with her at WAIT. Julie had first met Jennifer at a theatre arts workshop when they were 14 years old,

---

<sup>11</sup> T 14, 27; Exhibit 1, Tab 21 and Tab 48.1.

<sup>12</sup> T 24 – 25.

<sup>13</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

<sup>14</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 23.

<sup>15</sup> T 14; Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

<sup>16</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 29, [13].

<sup>17</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 29, [23].

<sup>18</sup> T 12; Exhibit 1, Tab 29.

<sup>19</sup> I refer to Jennifer Marr as Jennifer in this finding to avoid confusion with her sister, Fiona Marr, whom I also refer to later in this finding.

but they got to know each other better when they were studying at university together and became very good friends. Julie also became very close to Jennifer's family as a result of their friendship, and felt herself to be part of the Marr family. Julie and Jennifer studied together, worked on theatre and film productions together and would also socialise together. Jennifer recalled Julie rarely smoked and the only drug she ever used was cannabis, which was also rare. Jennifer recalled Julie would mostly drink white wine or champagne. Julie got drunk easily, and was usually happy and extroverted when she had been drinking, although on occasion she would experience bouts of depressive emotions when drinking. As well as spending time together, Julie and Jennifer would often go out with a large group of friends who were also studying Theatre Arts and working in the industry, including both girls and boys.<sup>20</sup>

23. Jennifer described Julie as “[v]ivacious, fun-loving, intelligent, creative, very extroverted at some times,”<sup>21</sup> but her external persona was also balanced by a more reflective, quiet inner person. Julie loved socialising and they spent many nights out together in Claremont in the pubs and nightclubs, as well as parties at home. Jennifer remembered that Julie enjoyed having a drink, but could also have a good time without drinking. She loved to dance and enjoy herself and Jennifer remembered Julie as generally happy, whether or not she was drinking. However, Jennifer also recalled that Julie was “known for moments of drama”<sup>22</sup> and she could take things to heart and blow things a bit out of proportion at time.<sup>23</sup>
24. As good friends, Jennifer and Julie would often confide in each other, and Jennifer was aware that Julie had been deeply affected by the loss of her mother but she also was very respectful of her remaining family and always spoke of her father, sister and other siblings affectionately.<sup>24</sup>
25. Julie was in a brief sexual relationship with another WAIT student, Peter Docker, who was dating her friend, Rebecca. Julie had known Mr Docker for a number of years and they were friends. He was aware that Julie also slept with other men, some of them strangers. Mr Docker described Julie as a “troubled girl who was quietly spoken but with a good sense of humour.”<sup>25</sup> She dressed quite conservatively and had excellent manners. She was also a very honest and loyal friend.<sup>26</sup>
26. Julie finished her studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in February, 1986.<sup>27</sup> Julie had saved up her money while studying and she went travelling overseas in mid-1986.<sup>28</sup> She travelled to Greece, France and the United Kingdom.<sup>29</sup> Julie and Jennifer kept in contact by letter while she was away and she was aware Julie found

---

<sup>20</sup> T 37, 39; Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

<sup>21</sup> T 37.

<sup>22</sup> T 38.

<sup>23</sup> T 38.

<sup>24</sup> T 39.

<sup>25</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 56 [50].

<sup>26</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 56.

<sup>27</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 22.

<sup>28</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 22.

<sup>29</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

work as a nanny au pair for a family and travelled with the family, and she also visited Jennifer's elder sister who was living in London at the time.<sup>30</sup>

27. Mr Cutler recalled Julie calling him from Greece and telling him that she had experienced a problem with a man and he had hurt her.<sup>31</sup> One of Julie's friends from WAIT, Rebecca McDonald (formerly Bateman), provided information in her statement to police that Julie had met a man in Greece and she had warned Julie to be careful as she was concerned "he may just be trying to rip her off."<sup>32</sup> Julie did not heed the warning. One night Julie rang Ms McDonald and was hysterical, asserting that the male had robbed her. It seems he did not, in the end, steal anything from her, although the relationship did end. Julie reacted badly and when Ms McDonald went to where Julie was staying, she found Julie had cut both her wrists and her room was full of blood. Julie had to be taken to hospital for treatment.<sup>33</sup>
28. In her travel diary, Julie referred to a man called 'Yoros' show she alleged drugged her drink with the intention of having sex with her.<sup>34</sup>
29. Ms McDonald later told police in her statement she had "always thought there was a blackness"<sup>35</sup> about Julie and she felt Julie "always appeared troubled in some way."<sup>36</sup>
30. Jennifer spoke to both Julie and Ms McDonald about the incident in Greece afterwards. Jennifer recalled it seemed to have been a very dramatic sort of incident that occurred when Julie had been drinking. It was not something that she had ever seen or heard Julie do or say before. Jennifer knew Julie to be someone who had been brought up with strong values and to try to hurt herself was not consistent with her family background or her values. Julie had never spoken of suicide and Jennifer gave evidence she was shocked when she was told about the incident in Greece, and she believed Julie and Ms McDonald were also shocked by it.<sup>37</sup>
31. Julie later wrote about the incident in Greece in her diary and its clear the relationship ended that night and she found the incident very distressing. After this incident, Julie left Greece and returned to the United Kingdom, where she apparently had another boyfriend. This relationship appears to have been a more stable one and the boyfriend came to Perth to help with the search for Julie after she disappeared.<sup>38</sup> There were the relationships with the male in Greece and a boyfriend called John in the United Kingdom, and also the brief interlude with Peter Docker, who was Ms McDonald's boyfriend and had been at university with Julie. Ms McDonald referred in her statement to having "cleared the air with ... Peter and Julie about what had

---

<sup>30</sup> T 40.

<sup>31</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

<sup>32</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [26].

<sup>33</sup> Exhibit 1, Tabs 21, 25 and 26.

<sup>34</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 41.

<sup>35</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25 [39].

<sup>36</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25 [39].

<sup>37</sup> T 41.

<sup>38</sup> Exhibit 1, Tabs 21, 25 and 26.



happened between them”<sup>39</sup> and it seems there was no relationship between Mr Docker and Julie after she had returned to Perth from her travels.<sup>40</sup>

### **JULIE’S RETURN TO PERTH 1987 - 1988**

32. When Julie returned home in late 1987, she lived for a short time in the house in Victoria Park again. Her sister Nicole was also living there by that time. Julie later moved out, around January 1988, and moved in with her friend Jennifer’s older sister, Fiona Marr. They lived together in a Unit 19/10 Stirling Street in Fremantle.<sup>41</sup>
33. Julie had owned a number of cars, the last one being the Fiat. She had bought the Fiat on her return to Perth following her overseas holiday. Mr Cutler remembered there was a problem with the front driver’s side door and it wouldn’t open, so Julie would have to enter the car from the passenger side. He couldn’t remember if the problem was only with opening the door from the outside and whether the door was able to be opened from the inside or not.<sup>42</sup>
34. Julie did not see her father regularly as he often worked overseas or in other parts of the country. She did write to him or call him occasionally. Mr Cutler believed Julie was closest to her maternal aunt, Annette Marwick, and her grandmothers on both sides. She was also close to her stepsister Rachael and a friend from school. He was not aware of the names of any of her boyfriends, although he assumed she had them and he was aware of the former boyfriend who came over from the United Kingdom to help search for Julie after she disappeared. There is evidence on the brief to indicate that boy was John Gilbert, who had met Julie in England and had moved back to Australia in the eastern states at the time Julie went missing. Julie’s father did not know of any current boyfriend or girlfriend at the time she went missing.<sup>43</sup>
35. Ms McDonald, who had studied with Julie and been with her in Greece, had reconnected with Julie on her return home to Perth. She told police she would socialise with Julie, together with other friends, regularly. Ms McDonald did not recall Julie having a permanent partner. She recalled that Julie was otherwise very private and would not usually talk about her boyfriends with her friends. Ms McDonald did recall Julie mentioned, about a month before she went missing, that she was gay or bisexual, but they did not discuss it further. Ms McDonald did understand Julie had been in a long term relationship with a female friend from school, which had ended prior to her starting university. However, Ms McDonald only ever saw Julie with men.<sup>44</sup>
36. Julie had also told her close friend, Jennifer, in early 1986 that she believed she was gay and that she had been in a relationship with a friend at school. Jennifer was aware that Julie had strong religious views as a result of attending a Catholic school, and felt Julie may have had difficulty coming out as gay given her background.

---

<sup>39</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [47].

<sup>40</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 56.

<sup>41</sup> T 29; Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

<sup>42</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

<sup>43</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37.

<sup>44</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25.

However, Ms Marr was also surprised by the information as she was aware Julie dated men and sometimes would engage in intercourse with them. Ms Marr was aware that Julie had dated Peter Docker briefly and also went out with another male named Martin, as well as having short lived interactions with other men she met.<sup>45</sup>

37. Julie's sister was aware that Julie had a close relationship with another student in high school, that was likely more than friendship, but she believes Julie and the friend drifted apart after Julie started university.<sup>46</sup> and there is no mention of her in later years. In the months they were living together in 1987, Julie did not bring anyone home to the house they shared.
38. Both Ms McDonald and Jennifer Marr were aware that Julie became pregnant in 1986, before she went overseas, and arranged to have a termination as she felt she was not in a position to care for a child at that early stage in her life. Ms McDonald recalled Julie was very upset at having the procedure, as did another friend, whereas Jennifer recalled Julie knew it was the right thing to do, given how young she was, and therefore was realistic about the decision. It does not appear that she spoke to anyone further about this decision after her return to Perth, so it does not seem to have continued to prey upon her mind.<sup>47</sup>
39. Jennifer said that Julie was generally level headed but she could be unpredictable and occasionally depressed. She told police that Julie was known to be a "drama queen" and sometimes this was fun, but it could also be excessive. Julie appeared to suffer from some "deep seated and persistently negative thoughts where minor incidents would cause her to react or go into her shell."<sup>48</sup> Her friends would often ignore these changes of mood as they thought she was attention seeking. Both Ms McDonald and Jennifer recall Julie appearing to engage in what they described as "promiscuous"<sup>49</sup> and "risk taking behaviour,"<sup>50</sup> where she would meet a man while out and have sex with him on the same evening.
40. On 31 December 1987, Jennifer recalled celebrating New Year's Eve with Julie in Fremantle. It was not long after Julie had returned home to Perth from her overseas trip. It seemed to Jennifer that Julie was having difficulty settling down at home after her travels and she believed Julie was a bit depressed about being home and returning to work as a waitress.<sup>51</sup> Jennifer, who appears to have been Julie's closest friend at this time, went overseas in March 1988 so she was not socialising with Julie in the months leading up to her disappearance.
41. Julie's sister had also felt Julie struggled to settle back into the routine of life in Perth after her travels.<sup>52</sup> Nicole was not in contact with Julie in the months leading up to her death. When they were living together in Victoria Park they had been getting on well but then they argued and Julie moved out at the start of 1988. The argument was

---

<sup>45</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

<sup>46</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 48.1.

<sup>47</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25 and Tab 30 and Tab 63.

<sup>48</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30, [48].

<sup>49</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25 [87].

<sup>50</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30 [35].

<sup>51</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

<sup>52</sup> T 28 - 29.

very sudden and Nicole could not recall what it was about, other than Julie called her 'selfish'. Nicole remembers Julie got really angry and stormed off to the service station, hired a trailer, then came back to the house and moved out immediately. Reflecting back on it now, Nicole thought it might have been because Nicole and her friend had moved into the house while Julie was overseas and Julie probably didn't want to be living with her sister after being away, and wanted more independence. They did not see each other again until shortly before Julie disappeared.<sup>53</sup>

### **JULIE'S MENTAL STATE PRIOR TO HER DISAPPEARANCE**

42. In 1988, Julie was working at the Parmelia Hotel in Mill Street, Perth, as a room service attendant and also at the dress shop at the Fremantle Markets. Ms Wilkes, who employed Julie at the dress shop, remembered Julie dressed conservatively and was a "good, nice, ordinary girl"<sup>54</sup> who was always smiling and happy and easy to get on with. Ms Wilkes was asked by police some years later about what handbag Julie had at the time she disappeared, and Ms Wilkes recalled drawing a brown natural leather bag for them.<sup>55</sup>
43. The last time Julie saw her father was at a family dinner at an Italian restaurant in Northbridge. At that time Mr Cutler, his wife and the younger children were moving to Kalgoorlie. Mr Cutler believes this was between three and six months before Julie disappeared. Julie seemed fine during the dinner and there was nothing out of the ordinary about the night.<sup>56</sup>
44. Julie called her father about a month before she disappeared and he recalled they discussed something that happened involving a car possibly following her on Stirling Highway on her way home from work, although he could not remember the details of the incident. Around this time, Julie also had a discussion with her father about coming to Kalgoorlie to visit. The plans were for Julie to go and visit sometime in late June or early July 1988, but she went missing a couple of weeks before this could occur. Julie had also rung her grandmother in York to ask if she could come and stay. Julie was always welcome there, but she did not make it to York either before she disappeared. Mr Cutler wondered later if Julie had been wanting to have a talk about something with him or her grandmother, but he wasn't aware of anything in particular concerning her.<sup>57</sup>
45. When Julie's flatmate Fiona reported her missing to police, she told them that Julie had been concerned about a language course she wanted to undertake at Milner International College of English to qualify for teaching English as a second language. Apparently, Julie had been told she could not keep her employment as a waitress as well as study and Julie was upset as she could not afford to do it. Fiona recalled the course was very intensive and Julie had been told she had to be there fulltime, 9 to 5, which she couldn't do at the same time as her job at the Hilton, which she needed to keep the money coming in. Fiona remembered Julie was downhearted about having

---

<sup>53</sup> T 29 - 30.

<sup>54</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 23, [25].

<sup>55</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 23.

<sup>56</sup> T 17; Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

<sup>57</sup> T 19 - 20; Exhibit 1, Tab 21.

to give up the course, but Julie was a private person and didn't confide much in Fiona.<sup>58</sup>

46. Ms Valma Granich, who was the Director of Teacher Training for Milner College at that time, told police that Julie had enrolled in a month long Intensive English course but she pulled out shortly before she was due to commence. Ms Granich explained that Julie had come to see her and they had spoken about Julie's circumstances and the intensive course she had enrolled in. Ms Granich recalled Julie was highly emotional and crying. She mentioned she had no support network and her mother had died. Julie also said she was a bit unsettled after recently coming back from travelling overseas. She was living with a friend and was financially strapped while working part-time.<sup>59</sup>
47. Ms Granich explained to Julie that due to the demanding nature of the course, working at all during this time would not be possible. Ms Granich suggested that Julie would do better to do a later course, and assured her that she had a definite place in their next course if she felt more settled financially and emotionally by that time. Ms Granich believed Julie felt better after their discussion. It was usually the College's policy to not completely refund money for courses if the candidate was unable to attend, but due to Julie's circumstances and the fact that another student filled her place, the College made an exception to the policy and decided to give her a full refund. A letter with the refund cheque was posted to Julie on or about 17 June 1988, so it seems she would not have received it before she disappeared and it is possible she was unaware she was getting the full amount she had paid refunded.<sup>60</sup>
48. However, a friend of Julie's, Gregory Cowan, who was aware that Julie was deliberating about doing the course and was concerned she could not afford it, recalled that she was not overly concerned about it before she went missing. He spoke to Julie at about midday on the Sunday, shortly before she disappeared, and at that time she told him that she couldn't go into the course because the place had been filled.<sup>61</sup>
49. Fiona Marr also told police Julie had not been in a stable relationship for six months.<sup>62</sup> Julie saw a doctor on 13 June 1988 at Fremantle Medical Centre. Information from the medical centre suggested it was a routine appointment and there was nothing of concern raised at the time. It seems she had recently come off the pill, which supports the other information that she was not in a steady relationship at the time.<sup>63</sup>
50. Information provided to the Missing Persons Team indicated Julie was in good health but there was some suggestion she may have been depressed at or around the time of her disappearance.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> T 50 - 51; Exhibit 1, Tab 4 and Tab 37.

<sup>59</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 33.

<sup>60</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 33.

<sup>61</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 38.1 and 38.2.

<sup>62</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

<sup>63</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 34.

<sup>64</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3.

51. Ms Wilkes recalled Julie worked at the shop the Friday night before she disappeared on the Sunday, and she did not remember anything out of the ordinary when she handed over to Julie at the start of her shift on the Friday afternoon. She recalled being shocked when she heard about Julie's disappearance and the discovery of her car in the ocean only a few days later.<sup>65</sup>
52. Julie's friend, Ms McDonald, recalled an incident about a month before Julie went missing. They were having drinks at Ms McDonald's parents' house in Peppermint Grove before they headed out to Club Bayview in Claremont. Julie apparently made reference to being gay or bisexual and reportedly made some strange comments, such as "I'm not for this life."<sup>66</sup> She was also seen to flirt with some men that night after she had been drinking. Ms McDonald recalled that Julie "could be quite crazy after drinking"<sup>67</sup> and when intoxicated she would sometimes be "promiscuous."<sup>68</sup> However, like Julie's father, Ms McDonald did not recall Julie being an illicit drug user.
53. Julie's work friend, Ms Plati, had left the Hilton by the time Julie returned to work there but they did meet up once to socialise before her disappearance. Ms Plati had dinner with Julie, Eveline and two other girls from the Hilton. The dinner was only a few weeks before Julie went missing. They went to Subiaco and Ms Plati remembered seeing Julie get out of her car, a Fiat, on the passenger side. Julie commented that it was a nice car except that she had to get out on the passenger side. Ms Plati remembered that during dinner Julie seemed fine and quite cheerful. She told stories about her holiday and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Ms Plati believed that Julie had mentioned having a boyfriend, but did not know any details other than she had the impression it was a long distance relationship.<sup>69</sup> After their dinner, Ms Plati did not have any further contact with Julie.
54. Julie had moved in with Fiona Marr in order to share living expenses. They had different social circles and worked at very different times, so they did not socialise much together. However, just from her experience of them living together, Fiona came to know Julie as someone who was a "dramatic person"<sup>70</sup> and also someone who was very private and "at times quite moody."<sup>71</sup> Fiona attributed this behaviour to Julie's early loss of her mother and troubled relationship with the rest of her immediate family. Fiona also remembered Julie as very witty and intelligent. Fiona was aware that Julie would drink to excess at times and she worried that, when intoxicated, Julie was placing herself at greater risk without much thought. She gave examples of Julie hitchhiking and associating with people she didn't know, including having one night stands or going to remote and isolated locations with a stranger. Julie would hint at having some of these experiences, but did not tell Fiona much detail.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 23.

<sup>66</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [61].

<sup>67</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [87].

<sup>68</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [87].

<sup>69</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 29.

<sup>70</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37, [19].

<sup>71</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37, [15].

<sup>72</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37.

55. Jennifer had left to travel to Japan in March 1988 and while they did not see each other from that time, Julie and Jennifer wrote letters and postcards to each other. About three weeks before Julie went missing, Jennifer received a postcard from Julie with a picture of Marilyn Monroe on the front. On the back of the card, Julie wrote, "I wish I could be sucked off the face of earth by a delicious dose of cancer."<sup>73</sup> Jennifer did not keep the card but she still recalled she was shocked at the statement as she knew Julie's mother had died from cancer and she thought what Julie had written on the card was "inappropriate, negative and dramatic"<sup>74</sup> and was disappointed with her for sending it.<sup>75</sup>
56. After Jennifer was informed by her sister Fiona that Julie was missing, Jennifer re-read all of Julie's letters to her and recalled that "[n]one of the letters were very uplifting and there was only one letter that was really positive."<sup>76</sup> Jennifer realised after re-reading them all that Julie was not in a good head space at that time when she wrote the letters. After Jennifer was informed that Julie was missing, she made a note in her travel journal on 28 June 1988 referring to the letters and acknowledging that in hindsight, they were probably a "cry for help"<sup>77</sup> that Jennifer had unwittingly ignored.
57. However, Jennifer had also spoken to Julie on the telephone on 13 June 1988 from Tokyo and there had been a different tone to the conversation. Jennifer had rung her sister Fiona to wish her a happy birthday, and spoke to Julie at the same time. Jennifer recalled the phone conversation was quite upbeat as Jennifer was excited about being in Tokyo and also because it was her sister's birthday, so she recalled it was a fun and lively conversation.<sup>78</sup> Fiona also remembered the conversation was upbeat between the three of them.<sup>79</sup>
58. Jennifer told police that she "did not believe that Julie was mindful of her safety before she went missing. She was not making wise decisions and [Jennifer] did not think she was 100 per cent happy within herself."<sup>80</sup> However, she had never heard Julie say anything about wanting to commit suicide.
59. Jennifer was aware in a letter sent to her by Julie that Julie had been in some kind of relationship with a man called 'Idris', or something like it. She recalled that Idris had wanted Julie to travel to Morocco with him and Julie had declined. Jennifer believed Julie had met Idris through work. Other than mention of him, Jennifer did not recall Julie mentioning being in a relationship with any other person prior to her disappearance.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30, [61].

<sup>74</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30, [62].

<sup>75</sup> 42.

<sup>76</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30, [64].

<sup>77</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30, [74].

<sup>78</sup> T 42 - 44; Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

<sup>79</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37.

<sup>80</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 30, [82].

<sup>81</sup> T 42 - 43.

60. Jennifer's sister, Fiona, also was aware of a man called Idris and another man called something like Hiams, but she did not have a strong recollection of Julie having any permanent partner while they were living together.<sup>82</sup>
61. Nicole had not spoken to Julie since she had moved out after the fight in January 1988. Nicole went to see Julie at her job at the Fremantle Markets sometime in June 1988 to try to reconnect with her. Nicole didn't have Julie's phone number, so she had gone to visit her in person to ask her if she would come and have a cup of tea and try to sort out their argument. They spoke briefly and Julie told Nicole she would call her to arrange to meet up. Nicole had felt good after their chat and had no reason to believe Julie wouldn't call. However, Julie had not called to arrange the meeting before she went missing.<sup>83</sup>
62. Of particular significance is a conversation Julie had with a work colleague, Carmela Fleming, on the night of Saturday, 18 June 1988, shortly before her disappearance. Ms Fleming was the Head Waitress of the Banquet at the time and Julie had been sent to assist her at a private function being held in the penthouse suite on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the hotel. Ms Fleming recalled that Julie kept opening the sliding doors to the balcony and stepping outside. From the balcony, you were able to look down to the carpark. Ms Fleming said she was getting angry as she wanted Julie to stay inside and help her with the function, but Julie continued to go outside and wouldn't tell her the reason. Ms Fleming also recalled that Julie seemed upset and said words to the effect, "I just want to jump, I just want to kill myself." Ms Fleming did not respond and simply asked Julie to come back inside to assist her with serving the guests.
63. At the end of the night, when they were cleaning up, Julie finally told Ms Fleming that she had broken up with her boyfriend and she wondered if his car would be in the basement, so she kept going outside to check.<sup>84</sup> Ms Fleming recalled that Julie became very upset and could not stop crying. Ms Fleming attempted to console Julie by telling her she was young and had lots of fun ahead of her, but did not ask any further questions. At the end of their shift they both walked to their cars. Ms Fleming recalled Julie seemed calmer by that time and she got a dress from her car and walked back inside the hotel while Ms Fleming drove away. Ms Fleming did not have any further contact with Julie after that night, although she did hear about Julie's car later being found in the ocean.<sup>85</sup>
64. Fiona saw Julie on the morning of Sunday, 19 June 1988. Fiona did not recall anything out of the ordinary in Julie's behaviour, although she acknowledged that Julie did not really confide in her. Julie was still at home when Fiona left the unit to go out with a friend. Julie was not at home when Fiona returned later that afternoon and it appeared she had gone to work. Fiona did not see Julie again.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> T 51.

<sup>83</sup> T 30 - 31; Exhibit 1, Tab 48.1.

<sup>84</sup> T 61.

<sup>85</sup> T 61 – 63; Exhibit 1, Tab 35.1.

<sup>86</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37.

65. Before she left for work on the Sunday, Julie had a phone call with Gregory Cowan at about midday. As well as discussing the English course, as detailed above, Mr Cowan recalled that he told Julie he might be in Fremantle on the coming Tuesday night and might come to see her. Julie told him she didn't know if she would be home or not, so he should ring her first. Mr Cowan also asked Julie if she wanted to go with him to the Subiaco markets that afternoon. Julie told him she was watching some old movies on the television and didn't want to go out. Mr Cowan told police he had known Julie to get depressed on a few occasions, but not for any particular reason. He remembered her as generally a "dramatic but happy person."<sup>87</sup> Julie and Mr Cowan had dated in the past and had remained friends after their relationship ended. He knew she had dated other men after their relationship ended, but they did not discuss it much and he wasn't aware of anyone Julie was dating at that time.<sup>88</sup>
66. Julie's aunt, Ms Marwick, also spoke to Julie on the Sunday, a little before lunchtime. She recalled Julie was cleaning out the cupboards and she mentioned she was going to work later and that there was going to be a party and presentation for the Parmelia staff that night. At that stage, Julie told her aunt she wasn't sure about going because she wasn't getting any award and she hadn't been there long. Ms Marwick recalled she encouraged Julie to go and meet new people. They also discussed what Julie might wear to the function. Julie mentioned a long black skirt and nice shirt that went with it as an option. Julie seemed fine and her usual self during the phone call. At the end of the call they made arrangements to catch up in a few weeks.<sup>89</sup>

### **THE PARMELIA FUNCTION**

67. The police investigation established Julie drove to the city in her Fiat sedan and parked in a Wilson carpark next door to the hotel. She commenced work at about 5.00 pm. Her shift was said to be uneventful, with Julie taking meals to ten rooms during the evening. Police have made inquiries with the persons listed as having received the meals Julie delivered and there is no suggestion of any of these people being involved in her disappearance.<sup>90</sup>
68. The Parmelia Hilton was hosting a staff function/awards presentation night that evening at Juliana's nightclub, which was located on the ground floor within the hotel complex. The nightclub was closed to the general public on Sunday nights, which was why the staff function was able to be held there.<sup>91</sup>
69. One of Julie's work colleagues, Consuelo (Connie) Harper, remembered changing in the female staff change room after finishing her shift early and Julie was also getting changed at the same time. Another female employee, Lilliana Colletti, was also there. Ms Harper was quite friendly with Julie and they had been out together a few times with other colleagues. She remembered Julie as a bubbly and friendly person.

---

<sup>87</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 38.2, [39].

<sup>88</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 38.1 and 38.2.

<sup>89</sup> T 70 – 71; Exhibit 1, Tab 39.

<sup>90</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 42.1.



Their friendship was based around working together, so they didn't talk about their private lives and Ms Harper didn't know Julie's family or friends.<sup>92</sup>

70. On this night, Ms Harper recalled Julie got changed out of her uniform into a black, high necked, long sleeve dress that had a gold button on the right shoulder. She thought Julie was also wearing black stockings and black shoes and holding a small wallet or purse. It was about 10.00 pm when they got changed. All three ladies then went to the function together.<sup>93</sup>
71. There were estimated to be approximately 180 guests at the function, the majority of whom were staff of the hotel or partners and friends of staff members. The function had commenced at 7.00 pm and awards were presented. Food and drinks were available and there was a DJ playing music.<sup>94</sup>
72. Upon entering Juliana's, Julie bought both Ms Harper and herself a champagne. After handing Ms Harper her drink, Julie began talking to other people. While Ms Harper continued to drink the same glass of champagne, she noticed Julie ordered three more glasses of champagne and drank them all quickly.<sup>95</sup> Julie was seen by other guests either talking with people, sitting at the bar having a drink or dancing on the dance floor.<sup>96</sup>
73. Towards the end of the function, Tadeusz Maciejewski introduced himself to Julie. They spoke for about 15 minutes before dancing together for about the same amount of time. Gregory Swiatek, a friend and flatmate of Mr Maciejewski, then joined them on the dance floor.<sup>97</sup> I note that another work colleague expressed the opinion later that the two men were "scumbags"<sup>98</sup> and he eventually got both of them sacked from the hotel because he didn't like them and had reported them for inappropriate behaviour before they were dismissed. The behaviour appeared to relate to eating food intended for guests and generally shirking work and not following direction rather than anything suggestive of inappropriate behaviour towards female staff.<sup>99</sup> On this night, they were both still hotel employees, the same as Julie, but it doesn't appear she had met them before.
74. Shortly after midnight on Sunday, 20 June 1988, Ms Harper went looking for Julie. She found Julie talking to the two men, Mr Maciejewski and Mr Swiatek, on the dance floor. Julie introduced her to them and the two men invited them back to their house to have a drink and watch a movie. Ms Harper declined and said she wanted to go home. Julie said, "Alright, if you want to go, I'll go too."<sup>100</sup> Ms Harper walked out of Juliana's, leaving Julie still talking to the two men. Julie followed shortly afterwards and they met up in the ladies change room. Julie said to Ms Harper, "Do I

---

<sup>92</sup> T 75.

<sup>93</sup> T 73; Exhibit 1, Tab 40.1.

<sup>94</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 40.1.

<sup>96</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>98</sup> T 67.

<sup>99</sup> T 68 – 69.

<sup>100</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 40.1, p. 2.

have to go with them or not?" Ms Harper replied, "It's up to you, but you had better go home. You are drunk." Julie replied, "Alright, I'll go home."<sup>101</sup>

75. I note that when Ms Harper spoke to the police again much later, she didn't recall this conversation, but did recall Julie pointing out a man and saying she had been invited to a party in Cottesloe with the man, but Ms Harper told Julie she was tired and wanted to go home.<sup>102</sup>
76. Either way, Ms Harper did recall that she and Julie left the nightclub together and collected their things from the ladies changeroom. Ms Harper recalled Julie had a big leather shoulder bag that was light tan in colour and she was carrying her uniform in a plastic bag. They walked out of the hotel through the rear staff entrance and walked to the nearby Wilson carpark. Ms Harper recalled that Julie still appeared drunk at that time. A number of other party guests were also leaving around the same time and spoke to Julie in the carpark.<sup>103</sup>
77. Ms Harper told a police officer in 1988 that as they reached the carpark, Julie told her that she was going to see a friend somewhere, but she wouldn't tell her who it was she was going to see. Ms Harper said, "Come on , you tell me who." Julie replied, "No, I can't tell you it's a secret. I can't tell."<sup>104</sup> When asked about this conversation many years later, Ms Harper did not recall it.<sup>105</sup> Detective Senior Constable Ronald Carey,<sup>106</sup> who had a key role in the 1988 investigations and took the original statement from Ms Harper, recognised his handwriting that recorded that information, but he did not have an independent recollection of the circumstances in which Ms Harper provided that information to him. He could only infer that she provided the information to him in 1988 around the time she provided the rest of her statement, noting he spoke to her a number of times and sometimes people remember more information over time.<sup>107</sup>
78. The two women walked to their vehicles. Ms Harper's car was parked in one row, and Julie's grey car was parked in the row behind. They separated and Ms Harper heard Julie speak to a man and woman and wish them a goodnight. Ms Harper did not see them but heard their voices. Ms Harper then said goodbye to Julie as she got into her car. Julie was standing by her open passenger side door, bending into the car fiddling with something at the time, and did not reply. Ms Harper then drove away, while Julie was still standing at the passenger side of her car.<sup>108</sup>
79. Other employees of the Parmelia Hilton recalled seeing Julie back at the nightclub after this time. The police concluded that Julie re-entered the hotel complex for a short time and went back into Juliana's nightclub. The function finished between

---

<sup>101</sup> T 74; Exhibit 1, Tab 40.1, pp. 2 – 3.

<sup>102</sup> T 76; .

<sup>103</sup> T 77; Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 40.1, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> T 77.

<sup>106</sup> Detective Carey was a Detective Senior Constable at the relevant time and was later promoted to Detective Sergeant. He worked for the WA Police before retiring in 2005, and was retired at the time of giving evidence. I refer to him for the rest of the find simply as Detective Carey for the sake of simplicity.

<sup>107</sup> T 86 - 87.

<sup>108</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 31, p. 8 and Tab 40.1, p. 3.

12.30 am and 1.00 am and Julie was one of the last four or five people to leave the function room. The doors to the nightclub were closed after Julie left. The Banqueting and Beverage Manager, John Comerford, recalled Julie leaving around 12.30 am walking out of the nightclub by herself. He went to the Wilson carpark shortly afterwards to collect his car and didn't see Julie in the carpark.<sup>109</sup> Julie said goodbye to another colleague, Kevin Williams, in the main lobby area of the hotel before walking out of the hotel via the main entrance and turning left onto Mill Street. It seems Julie then returned to the carpark, got into her car and drove out of the carpark.<sup>110</sup>

80. Another Parmelia Hilton employee, Geoffrey Pearce, left the nightclub function around midnight. He left the hotel and went to wait outside the Wilson Carpark for his girlfriend to collect him. Mr Pearce's girlfriend had been working at the casino and was running late. Mr Pearce recalls he was standing under a tree while he waited as it was raining and he was trying to keep dry. He was watching the cars coming out of the Wilson's carpark while he waited, and saw Julie drive out of the Wilson's carpark. She wound down her window and asked him if he was alright, and Mr Pearce said, "I'm fine, waiting for my girlfriend."<sup>111</sup> Mr Pearce remembered Julie stopped at the exit of the carpark, looked right and then drove off to the left, down Mounts Bay Road. He could not recall what car Julie was driving, but knew Julie as a work colleague and was positive it was Julie who stopped and spoke to him before driving off.<sup>112</sup> This appears to be the last known sighting of Julie Cutler.<sup>113</sup>

### **MISSING PERSON REPORT**

81. At the time of her disappearance, Julie still lived at the unit in Stirling Street, Fremantle, with Fiona Marr. Fiona had seen Julie before she left for work on the Sunday but Julie had been gone when Fiona came home on the Sunday afternoon and she did not see her that night. Fiona noticed Julie's car was not parked in the carport when Fiona left for work on the morning of Monday, 20 June 1988. Fiona wasn't sure whether Julie had returned home during the night whilst she was sleeping, but there was nothing to suggest Julie had been home and gone out again, which Fiona thought was odd. Fiona went to work on the Monday as usual. Fiona couldn't recall if she made any calls to locate Julie during the day, but she did recall that Julie was still not home when she returned from work. Fiona said she had a "creepy feeling that something wasn't right"<sup>114</sup> by that stage.<sup>115</sup>
82. Fiona gave evidence Julie was normally communicative about where she was, so her level of concern was increasing and she began to make enquiries as more time passed. Julie's aunt, Ms Marwick, received a call from Fiona on the Monday asking if she had seen or heard from her as Julie had not come home from work on the Sunday. Fiona asked Ms Marwick if she thought she should report Julie missing to

---

<sup>109</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 42.1.

<sup>110</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 1 and Tab 43.

<sup>111</sup> T 65.

<sup>112</sup> T 65 – 67; Exhibit 1, Tab 44.

<sup>113</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37, [57].

<sup>115</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3.

the police. Julie's aunt suggested she ring Julie's father first. Fiona did not have his number, so Ms Marwick offered to make the call.

83. By that time, Julie's father, Roger Cutler, was living in Kalgoorlie.<sup>116</sup> Mr Cutler apparently told Ms Marwick he would call Fiona. Mr Cutler spoke to Fiona and recalled that Fiona asked him if he thought she should call the police and he agreed. He said in his statement that at the time, he thought it was "more to teach her a lesson."<sup>117</sup> Mr Cutler explained at the inquest that this was simply because he didn't think anything had actually happened to his daughter at that time, and he thought having the police check up on her would remind her that she needed to keep people informed. It was only when Julie's car was found that he realised something was terribly wrong.<sup>118</sup>
84. Julie's aunt had rung her mother, Julie's grandmother, in York to make sure Julie hadn't gone there for a visit. Her mother had not heard from Julie.<sup>119</sup>
85. Fiona had become increasingly concerned, so at 10.00 am on 21 June 1988 she filed a formal missing person report with the WA Police at Fremantle Police Station. Fiona said she gave the police as much information as she knew at the time. Julie was noted to have never gone missing before and all items of her property, such as bankcards and clothes, appeared to still be at her home, other than her car. Fiona did not have any idea what might have happened to Julie at that time, she was just concerned as she had not returned home, which was out of character.<sup>120</sup>

### **DISCOVERY OF JULIE'S CAR IN THE OCEAN**

86. Mr John Mickle went down to Cottesloe Beach for a swim on the morning of Wednesday, 22 June 1988. He usually went swimming in the water directly opposite to the Cottesloe Life Saving Club's boat shed. Mr Mickle arrived at the beach at about 10.30 am and went for a walk up the coast. After the walk, he returned to the boat shed and entered the water for a swim at about 11.45 am. He had his diving goggles on and was swimming about half way between the boat shed and the groyne that was south of the boat shed. When Mr Mickle reached a water depth of about six feet, he noticed a car upside down and half buried in the sand. He looked at the doors and they appeared to be jammed shut because of the sand. Mr Mickle left the water and approached a Cottesloe Council lifeguard, Mr Craig Fowler, on the beach. He told the lifeguard about the car in the water.
87. Mr Fowler had started work at the beach at 5.00 am that morning and during an early patrol of the beach that morning he recalled locating a brown car seat washed up against the wall of the groyne. The weather that day was fine and relatively calm, but it had been very windy and stormy the previous days and the water had been lapping

---

<sup>116</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

<sup>117</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21, [44] and Tab 37.

<sup>118</sup> T 18.

<sup>119</sup> T 71.

<sup>120</sup> T 53 - 54; Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

up against the wall of the groyne. Mr Fowler recalled it had been too rough to swim and the water had been murky due to the stormy conditions.<sup>121</sup>

88. Mr Fowler's colleague, Stephen Graybrook, also recalled that he had found a pair of women's black high heeled shoes, a small pink woman's handbag, some paperwork and a car battery washed up in the area between the pylon and the Groyne wall, possibly on the Monday morning. He noted it had been very stormy and it wasn't unusual for items to wash up in such weather. Mr Graybrook recalled that he and Mr Fowler collected all the items and took them to the temporary rubbish depot, which was situated off Broome Street in Cottesloe. He later assisted police to recover those items from the rubbish depot, as they were easily identified. Mr Graybrook seemed to think all these events occurred on the one day, rather than some on Monday and some on Wednesday, so it's not entirely clear when the items washed up.<sup>122</sup>
89. Mr Mickle had recalled that he took Mr Fowler to where the car was located in the water, but Mr Fowler's colleague, Stephen Graybrook, recalled that Mr Fowler touched the car with his foot while they were both surfing and they recognised the smell of engine oil.<sup>123</sup>
90. Either way, Mr Fowler did locate the car on the Wednesday in the water. Mr Fowler could see the car was about 30 feet from the waterline, midway between the groyne and the Cottesloe Life Saving Club boat sheds in about six or seven feet of water. Mr Fowler went into the water on his paddleboard to have a look at the car. He noted it was very dirty in the water, so he couldn't see much, but he could see the car fully submerged in the ocean, in a natural hollow between the two reefs. Mr Fowler returned to shore and then swam out to the car to take a closer look. He could see the car was on its roof with the engine facing out towards the ocean. He noted the car was damaged and the roof was caved in. It was also semi-submerged in the sand. He could see the windows were either down or smashed.<sup>124</sup>
91. Mr Fowler swam down to look inside the car through a window. He noted the inside of the car "was a real mess but there was nothing in the car"<sup>125</sup> or at least nothing unusual. Mr Fowler later told police he did not recall seeing a concrete block in the car and did not remember ever hearing about one being found in the car.<sup>126</sup> Mr Fowler took one of the registration plates off the back of the car and brought it to shore so he could provide the information to police.<sup>127</sup>
92. Another ranger telephoned the police and told them what they had found. The police asked them to tie a buoy to the car, so Mr Fowler swam back out to the car and tied a buoy to it, so it could be seen from the shore.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.2 .

<sup>122</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 45.

<sup>123</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 45.

<sup>124</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.1 and 8.2.

<sup>125</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.2 [32].

<sup>126</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.2 [33].

<sup>127</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 7 and Tab 8.1 and 8.2.

<sup>128</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.1.

93. At approximately 12.40 pm detectives were called to the beachfront adjacent to the Cottesloe Beach groyne after receiving a report that surfers had seen an upturned motor vehicle in the ocean. Police officers from other sections also attended.<sup>129</sup>
94. Senior Sergeant Christopher Ruck was stationed at the Water Police and was working as a Police Diver back in 1988. He recalled attending Cottesloe Beach with other officers from Water Police. Senior Constable Ruck and another officer, Constable Wayne Pettit, went out into the water approximately 70 metres north of the Cottesloe Groyne in front of the Cottesloe Surf Club Service Road. Senior Sergeant Ruck recalled that approximately 50 metres from shore he saw the undercarriage of the Fiat and on diving down, he could see the car was resting on its roof on a small reef in approximately two metres of water. The roof was crushed into the cabin. The visibility was poor and Senior Sergeant Ruck couldn't see into the vehicle.<sup>130</sup>
95. Initially the police tow truck was brought in, but it became bogged, so arrangements were made to bring in a larger four-wheel drive truck and this was used to tow the car from the water.<sup>131</sup> Senior Sergeant Ruck attached a tow line to the car and it was pulled into the shallow water by the tow truck driver, Clinton Hodge of Swan Towing. Once the car was in the shallows, a spare tyre surfaced from the car's open boot. Senior Sergeant Ruck and Constable Pettit connected chains from the tow truck to the left side of the car's undercarriage at that stage, and the tow truck driver then winched the car onto its wheels and onto the beach. Once on the beach, the car was examined and identified as a Fiat 124 sedan, light brown in colour. It was noted to have substantial damage to the body panels and the bonnet and roof had been torn from the chassis. Inside the cabin, the rear seat and carpet was missing. The car keys, however, were in the ignition, and attached to them was Julie's house key.<sup>132</sup> The tow truck driver delivered the Fiat to the Maylands Police Complex for further examination.<sup>133</sup>
96. It was noted in a later report that the damaged vehicle was found to be unoccupied and devoid of personal property. Inquiries revealed that Julie was the owner of the vehicle and she had been reported as a missing person. Due to the unusual circumstances of the discovery of the car and the fact the owner was missing, officers of the CIB Major Crime Squad were called in to assist with the investigation.<sup>134</sup>

### **THE SEARCH**

97. Police conducted land, air and sea searches for several days after the discovery of Julie's car, looking for any sign of her.<sup>135</sup> Police divers searched the ocean floor as far as they could, but nothing was found.<sup>136</sup> Water police in boats searched an area from North Mole in Fremantle to Hillarys up to 2.5 kilometres from shore. Mounted

---

<sup>129</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3.

<sup>130</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 10.

<sup>131</sup> T 81 – 82.

<sup>132</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 5 and Tab 37.

<sup>133</sup> T 82; Exhibit 1, Tab 9.

<sup>134</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3.

<sup>135</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3 and Tab 31.

<sup>136</sup> T 82.

police patrolled the beach from North Mole up to an area as far they thought reasonable to the north. Cottesloe Council rangers in four wheel drives and police officers and volunteers on foot searched the coast from Scarborough to Fremantle. Some items of property were located, but when they were shown to Julie's family and friends none were identified as belonging to Julie.<sup>137</sup> Despite the intensive search efforts, no sign of Julie was found.

98. Julie's father had come to Perth and stayed with her sister Nicole. They were hoping Julie would come home, but sadly, she never did.<sup>138</sup> Julie's father and sister later provided DNA samples to police to assist with comparing any unidentified remains found to Julie's closest relatives, but no match has been found.

### **FORENSIC EXAMINATION OF JULIE'S CAR AND THE SCENE**

99. Luke Marsland was a First Class Constable working as a Forensic Investigator in June 1988. He was asked many years later, as part of the Cold Case Investigation, whether he could recall any forensic action he took in relation to Julie's disappearance. Constable Marsland located his old police notebook from the relevant period 26 March 1988 to 17 October 1988, which assisted him to identify the steps he had taken.

100. In his notebook, Constable Marsland had recorded that he took photographs of Julie's Fiat at Cottesloe Beach when it was pulled from the ocean by the tow truck.<sup>139</sup> Constable Marsland also attended Maylands Police Complex on 23 June 1988 to examine the Fiat along with two vehicle examiners and an officer from the Fingerprint Bureau. As a result of the examination, it was recorded that:<sup>140</sup>

- The ignition key was turned on;
- The lights were on;
- The gear was in neutral;
- The seat right forward was locked;
- The two rear doors were locked;
- The two front doors were unlocked;
- The driver's door window was wound down;
- All the other windows were up;
- The driver's door was open/ajar; and
- Located in the glove box was the vehicle licence papers with a handwritten note on the back – 'Mike 114 Walpole St up Albany Highway'. It was established that this was Julie's handwriting and was an address where two of her friends lived. There was, however, no 'Mike' known to live at the address.<sup>141</sup> Detective Carey gave evidence it was considered to have no relevance to Julie's disappearance.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> T 84; Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 6.

<sup>138</sup> T 32.

<sup>139</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 11 and Tab 12.

<sup>140</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 13 [32] and Tab 15.

<sup>141</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 8.

<sup>142</sup> T 83.

101. A more detailed report of the examination of the Fiat, prepared by Constable Marsland, indicated that the body work of the Fiat was in an extremely battered condition. The damage was consistent with the car being pounded by surf over a period of time. All window glass and front and rear windscreens had been smashed, with the exception of the left front door quarter glass window. The driver's door was unlocked and jammed open three inches. The window had been wound right down and the quarter glass window was closed and locked. The front left hand door was closed but unlocked with the window wound up. Both rear doors were closed and locked with the windows wound up. The boot lid was open and locked and the spare tyre and jack were inside. The ignition key was in the on position, indicating the motor would have been running, the gear shift was in neutral (but could have been knocked into that position as it was loose) and the handbrake was in the off position. The headlights and park lights were switched on. The driver's front bucket seat was locked in the full forward position and it had a two-piece seat cover on it from which hairs were recovered. The rear seat was found by the ranger, Mr Fowler, loose in the surf.<sup>143</sup>
102. After the examination, Constable Marsland submitted property items related to the matter to the Forensic Branch Exhibits Officer. These items were recorded into the Forensic Branch Exhibit Register, as follows:<sup>144</sup>
- Two wine glasses and tea towel;
  - One easybank card;
  - RAC membership card and folder with pamphlets,
  - motor vehicle licence for the Fiat with the handwritten note on the back,
  - BP service ariel key,
  - Two cigarette butts, three paperbook matches burnt;
  - Broken plastic fan blade;
  - Top half seat cover;
  - Bottom half seat cover; and
  - Assorted hairs from driver's seat cover.
103. A manager from the Parmelia Hilton was shown the wine glasses and tea towel uncovered from Julie's car some years later. He thought the glasses were of a similar style to glasses used at the hotel for champagne service back at that time but could not recall what kind of tea towels were generally used in the hotel in 1988.<sup>145</sup>
104. Constable Marsland later told the Cold Case Homicide investigators that he recalled helping to search Cottesloe Beach for any items that may have washed up on the shore that belonged to Julie and he did not recall locating any such items. He believes that if anything was located at that time, he would have taken photographs of the property and ensured the items were recorded at the Forensics Branch.
105. The items listed above, other than seat covers and associated hairs, were found in the ash tray and glove box of the vehicle. The ash tray contained the burnt matchbooks and cigarette butts. The glove box had two clear glass champagne flutes wrapped in a

---

<sup>143</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 14.

<sup>144</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 13 [36].

<sup>145</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 42.



green and white striped tea towel, along with the bank card and RAC car, vehicle licence paper for the Fiat in Julie's name and a BP service sheet.<sup>146</sup>

106. Other than the hairs in the car seat, no physical evidence such as clothing, bags, shoes, human tissue or blood were located in the vehicle.<sup>147</sup>
107. Constable Marsland also recorded in his notebook that on 23 June 1988 at 4.30 pm he collected approximately 10 to 12 pieces of flesh from the Water Police and delivered them to a forensic pathologist, Dr Hilton, at the State Mortuary and another sample to Frank Vlatko-Rule at Forensic Pathology for testing. Dr Hilton advised police that the substances were not human.<sup>148</sup>
108. Constable Marsland told police in 2018 that he did not recall seeing a battery belonging to the Fiat washing up on the beach (the battery was noted to be missing during the vehicle examination)<sup>149</sup> and he did not recall seeing a car seat from the car washed upon the beach. He did recall that the bonnet of the Fiat had been located separate from the car. He believed it became detached while the car was being retrieved from the ocean by the tow truck and was placed on the tow truck along with the car to be taken to Maylands Police Complex. Constable Marsland did not recall any large rock or piece of concrete being located in the Fiat.<sup>150</sup> In addition, Constable Marsland did not recall taking away from the Fiat any indicator globes and stated the policy was that any globes were tested *in situ*.<sup>151</sup>
109. Constable Marsland's report, prepared when he was a First Class Constable and directed to his superior, Sergeant Thomas, indicated that his examination of the rock groyne at Cottesloe Beach revealed no evidence that the car had been driven off it at any point and it appeared quite unlikely that a vehicle could be launched off the top of the groyne over the large rocks, which slope down to the ocean. Constable Marsland suggested that a more feasible way the vehicle could have got into the ocean was for it to have been driven down the service road at the change room building and launched off the flat concrete edged road into the water at high tide. Scrape marks and a chipped corner of the concrete edge were evident at this location. However, although the broken away section looked fresh, it could not be determined how long ago the damage may have occurred and it was noted no concrete debris could be located on the sand around this point. Constable Marsland commented that there was no other evidence in this area to indicate the vehicle entered the water at this point, but it was "the most logical."<sup>152</sup> However, an examination of the underside of the Fiat revealed no scrape marks consistent with the scrape marks and chipped concrete on the Cottesloe Beach service road. Minor scratches under the rear of the vehicle were noted, but they were consistent with the chains used to retrieve the vehicle by winch from the surf.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 14.

<sup>147</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 14.

<sup>148</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 32, p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 16.

<sup>150</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 13.

<sup>151</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 13.

<sup>152</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 14, p. 1.

<sup>153</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 14, p. 1.

110. Detective Carey was working in the Major Crime Squad in June 1988 and he attended Cottesloe Beach the day Julie's car was found as part of a team of investigators put together by Detective Senior Sergeant Katich. Detective Carey gave evidence at the inquest that the police believed with some certainty that Julie's car entered the ocean the night she went missing. Detective Carey gave evidence the damage to Julie's car was felt to have been caused by the car rocking back and forward on its roof in heavy seas for a couple of days, causing it eventually to be crushed. The detectives investigating the case also believed with some degree of certainty her car entered the water off the side road next to the historic Cottesloe beach building. The night she disappeared was a very stormy night and the tide was very high, with waves and the ocean coming over the limestone retaining wall, which would have allowed the car to be washed into the ocean. The lack of frontal damage ruled out entry to the water from the groyne.<sup>154</sup>
111. I note at this stage, there was never any evidence of a lump of concrete being found in Julie's care. Julie's father recalled being asked sometime later by a person he believed was a female police officer whether a concrete block had been found in the car by a police diver. He was surprised by the question as it was not information he had ever been told before and he thought it unlikely, given the car was found upside down with no roof.<sup>155</sup> Detective Carey confirmed at the inquest that there were no concrete blocks found in the recovered Fiat of any size.<sup>156</sup>

### **INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION**

112. On 23 June 1988 at about 4.10 pm, detectives spoke to the two men who had been seen talking to Julie on the dance floor at the nightclub and had invited her back to their flat, Mr Swiatek and Mr Maciejewski. Detectives thoroughly searched their flat and vehicle in Glendalough that day. The search had a negative result. Both men were interviewed and readily volunteered the information that they had been speaking with Julie and Connie Harper shortly before the conclusion of the Parmelia staff function, at approximately 12.15 am on Monday, 20 June 1988, but neither man could offer any more information that could be of assistance.<sup>157</sup>
113. Police officers interviewed various other Parmelia Hilton staff members who came forward to provide what information they could, but nothing of value was obtained.<sup>158</sup>
114. A gentleman by the name of Mokhtar Khir was working as the General Manager of the Merlin Hotel and investigations suggested that Julie had possibly been in a relationship with him at the time she disappeared. Mr Mokhtar was spoken to by police on 24 June 1988 and he said he had met Julie two weeks prior to her disappearance at the disco at the Merlin Hotel and he later escorted her to the casino, where they were together until about 4.00 am. They made plans to meet several days later but Julie did not keep the appointment. Mr Mokhtar told police he last spoke to

---

<sup>154</sup> T 84.

<sup>155</sup> T 22; Exhibit 1, Tab 50 [21].

<sup>156</sup> T 93.

<sup>157</sup> T 86; Exhibit 1, Tab 31, p. 8 and Tab 61 and Tab 62.

<sup>158</sup> Exhibit 2, Tab 31, p. 13.

Julie on 16 June 1988 when he rang her at the hotel. He invited her out to dinner, which she declined. Mr Mokhtar was married at the time and denied any sexual involvement with Julie. Detective Carey interviewed Mr Mokhtar and believed he had associated with Julie but there was no evidence to suggest he had any connection to Julie's disappearance.<sup>159</sup>

115. Police officers spoke to Leona Rich who lived in Victoria at the time and was in regular communication with Julie. Ms Rich advised police she had spoken to Julie on the telephone on the Wednesday, about a week before she disappeared and at that time Julie was very upset about her love life and spoke of an Asian gentleman at work. Another friend who lived in Victoria was spoken to and he told police he had spoken to Julie a couple of weeks before her disappearance and she had seemed okay at that time.<sup>160</sup>
116. At the conclusion of the initial police investigation into Julie's disappearance in December 1988, it was noted by Detective Carey that Julie's body had not been found despite a land, air and sea search of Cottesloe Beach and her disappearance remained "unresolved."<sup>161</sup> After speaking to a number of persons of interest, the 1988 investigation did not identify any formal suspects in relation to Julie's disappearance. The file remained open pending any further new information to prompt further lines of investigation.<sup>162</sup> Detective Carey, who had carriage of the investigation for some time, left Major Crime in 1993 and the investigation passed over to other detectives from that time.<sup>163</sup>
117. Detective Carey gave evidence at the inquest that the police officers involved in the initial investigation were very disappointed that they couldn't resolve the case and find the reason why Julie had disappeared. He had been involved in approximately 20 death-related inquiries while working at Major Crime Squad and Julie's case was one of only two that remained unresolved, despite being thoroughly investigated. Detective Carey had met with Roger Cutler multiple times, along with Detective Katich, and had found it very distressing that they could not offer Mr Cutler and the rest of Julie's family any answers. Detective Carey noted it was a very unusual case and he still lives in hope that one day someone will come forward and provide the key information that will help solve the case.<sup>164</sup>
118. Although he had no further personal involvement in the investigation after 1993, Detective Carey has had many years to consider the matter and was made aware of many of the more recent developments. At the inquest, Detective Carey said he believed Julie's car must have gone into the water before the sun came up on the Monday morning as there was always an inspector at the beach from 5.00 am and no one saw the car enter the water. If it had gone in any later, it would not have made it into the water as the water did not come up to the wall any other night. Further, he

---

<sup>159</sup> T 88; Exhibit 1, Tab 31.

<sup>160</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 31, p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p. 2.

<sup>162</sup> T 89.

<sup>163</sup> T 89 – 90.

<sup>164</sup> T 93.

was aware the back seat from her car (or possibly the battery) washed up on the Monday morning and was found by one of the Cottesloe beach inspectors.<sup>165</sup>

119. Detective Carey noted that the seat/battery washed up to shore but not Julie's body or her handbag or the plastic bag containing her uniform. While Detective Carey accepted that the oceanographers Detective Katich consulted as part of the initial investigation indicated there was nothing certain about how different objects will behave in the sea, and items could have been washed out to sea rather than on to the shore like the seat, the obvious other alternative is that Julie was not in the car when it went into the ocean. Testing at the time suggested the car could have entered the water while being driven by someone or while unoccupied, given it could have simply rolled down the hill and gathered up enough speed to launch over the wall. Detective Carey believes if Julie was not in the car when it entered the ocean, this would support the proposition that someone else was involved in her disappearance. However, Detective Carey also noted that the car went into the water at Julie's favourite beach, so the particular location raises its own questions.<sup>166</sup>

### **POLICE REVIEW AUGUST 1998 – OPERATION DAMOCLES**

120. In August 1998 a review of Julie's file was commenced by the Macro Task Force and given the name Operation Damocles. It had been noted that there were similarities between Julie and the disappearances of Sarah Spiers, Jane Rimmer and Ciara Glennon. Although Julie disappeared some eight or nine years before the other young women, it was noted that they all lived or grew up in the same area, had an association with Iona Presentation College, were of similar age when they went missing and were of similar descriptions.<sup>167</sup>
121. In addition, it had been ascertained that Mr Edwards had been studying at WAIT at the same time as Julie, with some overlap as they were both studying psychology. However, they did not appear to have been in the same classes/tutorials and there was no established contact between them.<sup>168</sup>
122. The timing of Julie's disappearance was much earlier than the later known abductions. Mr Edwards would only have been 19 years of age at the time Julie went missing, and his documented behaviours at that time were more focussed around a series of burglaries and other disturbing activities in the Huntingdale area rather than the western suburbs, although that does not mean he was not active in Claremont at that early stage. The manner in which Julie disappeared was also considered to be very different to the later known events.<sup>169</sup>
123. Ten years after Julie's disappearance, police officers received some information about a short film directed by Peter Grant in 1986 called '*Nocturnes*' that might have relevance to Julie's disappearance. Mr Grant had been a student at WAIT at the same time as Julie and he made the film between July and September 1986, a couple of

---

<sup>165</sup> T 90 – 92.

<sup>166</sup> T 90 – 92.

<sup>167</sup> T 108 – 109; Exhibit 1, Tab 11.

<sup>168</sup> T 115.

<sup>169</sup> T 116.

years before her disappearance. The film was about a male and female who both decide to commit suicide. The female commits suicide in a bath and the male commits suicide by driving his vehicle off a groyne into the ocean at night. The film itself does not make it clear that the car is driven off the Cottesloe groyne, although that is in fact where it was filmed. Peter Docker, who Julie had been seeing at the time and was described by some as her boyfriend, was the main actor and played the part of the male who ultimately drives his car off the groyne into the ocean, although Mr Docker did not film that actual scene.<sup>170</sup>

124. On Tuesday, 10 November 1998, two officers who were involved in Operation Damocles, Detective1/C Selby and First Class Constable Kinsella, went to the address of Peter Grant to talk to him about the film. Mr Grant told the police that he had thought it funny when he had heard a couple of years later that a car had been found in the ocean off Cottesloe Groyne, but had not thought more about it. He had not realised it was Julie Cutler's vehicle and he did not know Julie was a missing person, so it had not occurred to him to contact police at the time and advise them of his movie and its similarity to what had occurred in 1988. Mr Grant told police he knew Julie through her association with Mr Docker, although he said he did not know her well and she did not play a role in the short film<sup>171</sup>
125. A copy of the movie was eventually located, along with a copy of the script and it was confirmed that the movie *Nocturnes* does depict a vehicle being driven off the Cottesloe Groyne as an act of suicide.<sup>172</sup> It was established that the film had been screened at WAIT on a couple of occasions and was also screened at the WA Film and Video Festival Showcase in Fremantle in 1987, prior to Julie's disappearance. It seemed to the police to be too great a coincidence for Julie's car to be found in such circumstances after having a connection to the film made only a couple of years before for them to discount it as irrelevant.<sup>173</sup>
126. Mr Grant had lived in Cottesloe, possibly at the time of Julie's disappearance, and it was noted that there was a suggestion by that time that Julie may have been going to visit someone in Cottesloe after leaving the staff party. However, Mr Grant did not provide any evidence to suggest he was expecting to see, or indeed saw, Julie that night.
127. Operation Damocles concluded in 1999 after finding no direct links between Mr Williams and Julie. The coincidence of the *Nocturnes* film and Julie's indirect association with it was noted, but there was nothing to connect her disappearance to any of the people involved in the film, other than the fact Mr Grant was believed to live in Cottesloe at the time.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 20 and Tab 56.

<sup>171</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 20.

<sup>172</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 20.

<sup>173</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 20.

<sup>174</sup> T 109.

**RECENT POLICE REVIEW – OPERATION MALVAE**

128. In November 2017 the Cold Case Homicide Squad commenced Operation Malvae to review the investigation into Julie’s disappearance and pursue any further available investigative actions. I have reviewed the materials obtained by the investigators as part of Operation Malvae and the final report. The investigation was extremely thorough and the report and associated supporting evidence is very comprehensive. I was impressed by the obvious dedication of the police officers involved in trying to find answers for Julie’s family so many years after she disappeared. All efforts were made to track down potential witnesses, despite the lapse of years, and many witnesses were reinterviewed to ensure that nothing was missed the first time. The recent review had the benefit of all current police investigative tools.
129. Detective Inspector Gailene Hamilton was involved as the investigating officer in Operation Malvae and led the majority of inquiries in relation to this matter. She gave evidence at the inquest in relation to the final report, authored by the senior investigating officer Detective Senior Sergeant Fuderer and dated 19 February 2019, as well as the inquiries she personally conducted.
130. The review proceeded from the position that all options were open and Julie could still be alive. Therefore, police conducted standard ‘proof of life’ checks in 2018 with various government agencies such as Medicare and Centrelink, police and banking services, to ascertain whether Julie had accessed any government services or been in contact with police or immigration services since June 1988. There was no record of Julie using any services since her disappearance. Enquiries with family and friends confirmed that there had been no contact with Julie since her disappearance in June 1988, despite many family events that would have been expected to prompt her to make contact if she was still alive. In addition, any possible sightings in the community had all been pursued over the years and none had been established as confirmed sightings.<sup>175</sup>
131. The Cold Case investigators started back at the beginning, looking at Julie’s history/victimology. They profiled the kind of person she was, where she worked, where she usually socialised and then focussed on the particular events of the night before her disappearance, in terms of people she had been in contact with or whom had been nominated by witnesses. There were some challenges due to the age of the matter in terms of locating all of the relevant people and interviewing them, but considerable effort was made to track down all witnesses, even those who had moved overseas.<sup>176</sup>
132. Overall, the Operation Malvae investigators identified over 300 plus witnesses that they then spoke to, and they took over 100 statements during that inquiry.<sup>177</sup>
133. A public awareness campaign was also conducted, with a \$250,000 reward offered in June 2018 for information leading to the conviction of any person responsible for Julie’s death. No one came forward to offer key information or attempt to claim the

---

<sup>175</sup> T 111; Exhibit 1, Tab 2 and Tab 24.

<sup>176</sup> T 112.

<sup>177</sup> T 123.

reward and there were minimal calls received by Crime Stoppers as a result of the press conference.<sup>178</sup> Previously, in 1989, Julie's disappearance had also featured in an episode of the television series 'Australia's Most Wanted', that does not appear to have led to any significant new leads.

### Anonymous phone calls

134. Detective Inspector Hamilton gave evidence there were a number of low lying level suspects identified, none of whom were identified to be arrestable suspects under the *Criminal Investigation Act 2006* (WA).
135. Two of the suspects were some of the last two people that were believed to have seen Julie alive, namely Mr Maciejewski and Mr Swiatek. They were the two men who had been dancing with Julie at the nightclub and had invited her back to their flat. Although the flat had been searched in June 1988, Cold Case officers went back to the flat in Glendalough and conducted further searches at the premises, including moving the carpet and conducting a full forensic examination. Nothing of note was found.<sup>179</sup>
136. The police also attempted to track down both men. A very good friend of Mr Swiatek's was interviewed in 2018. He advised he had come to know Mr Swiatek through his brother, and then met Mr Maciejewski through Mr Swiatek. He became a good friend of Mr Maciejewski as well and recalled Mr Maciejewski spoke English, Polish and German and had migrated to Australia from Germany. The friend was aware both men worked at the Hilton and that both men enjoyed socialising. They had never mentioned anything to the friend about having any involvement in Julie Cutler's disappearance, but Mr Maciejewski did tell him that the police had interviewed them because they had been dancing with her the night before she disappeared. Mr Maciejewski said he had tried to pick up Julie after dancing with her but she didn't want to come with him, so he gave up.<sup>180</sup>
137. In later years, the friend became aware that Mr Maciejewski believed he was being followed and that people were watching him. His paranoia increased over time but there was nothing to suggest his concerns were real and police later confirmed he was not under surveillance. Mr Maciejewski apparently had a dental operation and his mental health then suffered a further significant decline in a short space of time. Eventually, his friends became sufficiently concerned about his mental state that they purchased a one way flight home for Mr Maciejewski. He flew home to Poland to be with his family on 15 January 1994. Police enquiries established he had not returned to Australia since that time and he was not able to be re-interviewed about this matter.<sup>181</sup>
138. Mr Swiatek still lived in Western Australia, so he was re-interviewed as part of the Cold Case review. He provided an account that was very similar to the information he provided to police in 1988. Mr Swiatek maintained his denial of any involvement

---

<sup>178</sup> T 116; Exhibit 1, Tab 2, pp. 38 - 39.

<sup>179</sup> T 112.

<sup>180</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 51.

<sup>181</sup> T 113 - 114; Exhibit 1, Tab 51.

in Julie's disappearance and indicated that he believed Mr Maciejewski was also not involved. The police concluded there was nothing to elevate his status above a person of interest, simply due to his contact with Julie prior to her disappearance.<sup>182</sup>

139. In the years after Julie's disappearance, a number of her relatives had received strange calls from an unidentified male caller with a European accent, possibly German, who asked about Julie's disappearance and suggested he had information, although no specific information was provided. Nicole received such a call in December 1993, as did her aunt, but the caller hung up on both occasions after a short time.<sup>183</sup> One of her stepsisters, Rachael, also answered such a call at her family home in Kalgoorlie on an unknown date and the person asked to speak to Julie's father. She went to get him, but by the time she returned with her father, the caller had hung up. She also remembered receiving other 'crank' calls over the years.<sup>184</sup> Mr Cutler said he would have been happy to talk to the person who was making the calls, but he never managed to speak to the caller personally and was unable to establish who they were or what they knew about Julie's disappearance. Attempts were made by the police to try and trace the calls, without success.<sup>185</sup>
140. Some of the people who received the phone calls were deceased by the time Operation Malvae commenced, but they had told other family members of the general text of the calls before they died. The substance of at least three of the calls appeared to be similar, using words to the effect:<sup>186</sup>
- If I die the next you will hear about Julie is from overseas;
  - I am the person they are looking for. Thought I would let you know; and
  - I am leaving WA/Australia for good. If you want to do something you need to do it soon.
141. Detective Inspector Hamilton gave evidence at the inquest that following the recent review, it was thought the phone calls were likely to have been made by Mr Maciejewski. This was due to the described accent and the fact that the timing of the calls fit the timeline of him becoming unwell and then, after he left the country, the phone calls stopped.<sup>187</sup>
142. There was one other relevant phone call, received much earlier in time. Ms Jacqueline Hunter was spoken to by police in 2018 as she had been providing support to Julie's paternal grandmother shortly after Julie's car was found and had received an unusual call. Ms Hunter recalled she had been at Julie's grandmother when she answered the phone and spoke to an unknown woman. The woman told Ms Hunter she lived in the units oppose the access road that goes down from Marine Parade to Cottesloe Beach beside the Indiana Teahouse and said she heard a female screaming on the night Julie went missing. Before Ms Hunter could take any details from the caller, Julie's grandmother took the phone and had a brief conversation with

---

<sup>182</sup> T 114 - 115.

<sup>183</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 47.2 and 48.2.

<sup>184</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 49.

<sup>185</sup> T 20 – 21, 34 – 35, 94; Exhibit 1, Tab 47.2 and 47.3; Tab 48.1 and 48.2; Tab 49; Tab 50.

<sup>186</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 46.

<sup>187</sup> T 114 - 115.



the caller before becoming upset and hanging up the phone. Ms Hunter later told Roger Cutler about the call, but there was no further calls from that unknown woman.<sup>188</sup>

### Other possible suspects

143. In addition to the abovementioned two men, some enquiries were made prior to the inquest to ascertain whether anything had changed in regard to Bradley Edwards, given convictions for the murders of Ms Rimmer and Ms Glennon. The enquiries established that police had not changed their position. Along with many other persons, Mr Edwards was considered a low-level suspect, but not an arrestable suspect. He was spoken to by the Cold Case investigators and declined to be interviewed, although he indicated at that time that he did not know who Julie Cutler was when asked. The detectives reviewed all statements, all intelligence and all physical material obtained and found nothing to give rise to Mr Edwards being any more of suspect than anybody else on the list.<sup>189</sup> It was considered very unlikely he would provide any further information to the inquest.
144. The Cold Case review gave consideration to a reported incident where a young woman was attacked as she got into her car in a carpark in the early hours of 27 May 1988 after leaving a nightclub at the Sheraton Hotel. She was dragged from her vehicle, assaulted and bound before being placed into the boot of another vehicle. She was driven around before eventually being removed from the boot and abandoned. The assailant was never identified. There were noted similarities to Mr Edwards' offending and another sexual offender who was active at that time, but no connection was established. Another young woman was also attacked by an unknown assailant while trying to get into her car after working at the Sheraton in February 1993. He attempted to push her into the passenger seat and drive her car away, but she managed to escape the car and return to the hotel and seek help. The similarities with Julie leaving a hotel nightclub in Perth in June 1988 were noted, but there was no other established link between these events.<sup>190</sup>
145. Mr Mokhtar, the married man people had suggested Julie had been seeing, was interviewed again many years later in October 2018. By that time, he was living in Malaysia, so he was interviewed in person by officers from the Royal Malaysia Police at the request of the Cold Case Homicide Squad. In that interview he provided very little information, other than indicating that he met Julie three or four times for dinner.<sup>191</sup>
146. Mr Mokhtar was then interviewed twice over the telephone by Detective Inspector Hamilton on 4 December 2018 and 9 January 2019. During these conversations, Mr Mokhtar admitted for the first time that he did have a sexual relationship with Julie. He admitted having sex with her on three or four occasions and he stated Julie was aware he was married at that time. Mr Mokhtar also admitted for the first time

---

<sup>188</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 67.

<sup>189</sup> T 115.

<sup>190</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 58 and Tab 60.

<sup>191</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 32.

that he had attended the nightclub function at the Parmelia Hilton on 19 June 1988 at Julie's invitation. Mr Mokhtar said he left the function alone after about two hours and made no further plans to meet Julie afterwards. His recollection was that Julie appeared good, natural and not upset at the time that he left the function.<sup>192</sup>

147. It was noted by police that no one at the awards function mentioned seeing Mr Mokhtar, nor described Julie being in company with a man matching his description.<sup>193</sup>

## **The Fiat**

148. Some other information came to light about Julie's Fiat during this later investigation. The lady who sold the Fiat to Julie for \$1,000 in February 1988 said there may have been a problem with the passenger seat door behind the driver's seat and the lock didn't work. She had apparently told her husband about it and wondered at the time whether it had any implications for Julie's disappearance, although she didn't remember the conversation years later. Julie's friend Ms McDonald also remembered there was a problem with a rear passenger door, but she recalled it was the window that wouldn't wind up, rather than a problem with the lock.<sup>194</sup>
149. Police followed up with the mechanic who had serviced Julie's car, as evidenced by the BP paperwork found in her glovebox. Mr Salvatore Blogna was the owner of the BP service station and he had serviced Julie's car no longer than three weeks before she disappeared. After reading a report about Julie's disappearance, Mr Blogna and his wife had contacted the police to provide what information they could. Mr Blogna recalled that Julie had noticed there was something wrong with her car and he had identified a problem with the gearbox, which he had repaired. Mr Blogna did not recall there being any problem with the car's doors or driver's seat and he believes he would have driven the car in the process of repairing it and would have noticed any such problems and brought them to Julie's attention and fixed them. Mr Blogna recalled Julie was happy to pay to repair the car, even though he had suggested to her that it might not be worth the expense as she would not recoup the cost.<sup>195</sup>
150. Police officers also spoke to one of the last people known to see Julie alive, Connie Harper, again in February 2018. Ms Harper had an opportunity to read her original statement given to police in in 1988 in order to refresh her memory before providing a second statement, and as noted above, Ms Harper did not recall all of the information she had told police at the relevant time. Ms Harper recalled being sober on the night, whereas Julie was quite drunk. When they were walking to their cars, Ms Harper said because Julie was drunk, she didn't really want to talk to her. Ms Harper said goodbye to Julie and last saw Julie bending into her car, fiddling with something that she assumed was her bags, before Ms Harper drove away leaving her there. Ms Harper did not see Julie leave the carpark, either on foot or in her car, before she left.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, pp. 16 – 17.

<sup>193</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, pp. 17.

<sup>194</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25 and Tab 27, p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27 and Tab 28.

<sup>196</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 40.2.

### **Julie's possible plans**

151. Ms Harper was asked by the police about the reference in her initial statement to Julie telling her that she was going to meet a friend but couldn't say who as it was a secret. As noted above, by March 2018 Ms Harper could not remember speaking with Julie in the carpark and did not remember reciting that conversation to Detective Carey, so she could not elaborate any further.<sup>197</sup>
152. Ms Harper did tell police in 2018 that she recalled that before they left the nightclub, Julie had pointed to a man at the bar, who was looking towards them at the time, and saying that they had been invited to a party in Cottesloe by the man. Ms Harper said she was tired and wanted to go home, but pointed out Julie had her own car so she could still go. Julie still wanted Ms Harper to go to the party, and suggested "they would have a good party"<sup>198</sup> but Ms Harper declined.
153. Another Parmelia Hilton employee, Paul Kenney, recalled speaking to Ms Harper not long after Julie disappeared. He recalled that Ms Harper told him that Julie had spoken to her in the parking lot after the staff party and Julie had told her "that she was on her way to meet friends at a party in Cottesloe."<sup>199</sup> She didn't say who Julie was meeting, although Mr Kenney got the impression it was other hotel staff. A few days later, Mr Kenney spoke to Ms Harper again, and she confirmed that Julie had said she was going to a party in Cottesloe.<sup>200</sup>

### **Entry point of the car to the water**

154. Mr Graybrook, who was the head beach inspector at Cottesloe Beach in June 1988 and was involved in locating Julie's car, told police when interviewed in March 1988 that he believed Julie's car had entered the water from the steep driveway next to the Indiana Beach Hotel. He could recall a similar incident whilst working at the beach, where a woman had parked her car at the top of the hill and forgot to put her handbrake on, and the car rolled down the hill and picked up enough speed to go over the concrete edge and land with all four wheels on the beach.<sup>201</sup>
155. Inspector Raymond Briggs, who was stationed at Cottesloe Police Station in June 1988, was involved in locating and recovering Julie's car on Wednesday, 22 June 1988. He recalled being told about it by Stephen Graybrook. At some stage Inspector Briggs had walked up to the groyne to check and see if it was possible for a car to have been driven off. He could see no sign of rocks having been moved or damaged that would indicate a car had driven off from the groyne. From his experience at Cottesloe Beach and knowledge of the surf conditions over the previous two days, Inspector Briggs formed the opinion it was more likely Julie's car "was driven or pushed down the ramp and off the promenade."<sup>202</sup> He noted the surf was surging up

---

<sup>197</sup>197 Exhibit 1, Tab 40.2 [55] – [56].

<sup>198</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 40.2 [39].

<sup>199</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 41, [47] – unsigned statement.

<sup>200</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 41 – unsigned statement.

<sup>201</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 45.

<sup>202</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 46, [44].

against the sea wall and it would have carried the car out the fifty metres to where it was located.

156. Mr Gary Jess is a Senior Investigations Officer in the Marine Safety division of the Department of Transport. Mr Jess was requested by officers from Operation Malvae to review the circumstances of Julie's Fiat being found in the ocean, to see if any additional information could be obtained about the circumstances in which it came to be there. The particular focus of his report was to assess the probability of hydrodynamic conditions being the cause of the damage to the Fiat and also the effect of hydrodynamic conditions on a body in the water at that location.<sup>203</sup>
157. Mr Jess noted that, based on known events, there was an approximate 59 hour period in which Julie's car could have come to enter the ocean from 12.30 am on 20 June 1988 and midday on 22 June 1988. The weather was stormy and the ocean conditions would have been extremely rough, particularly on the first day.<sup>204</sup>
158. Mr Jess noted that several routes had been identified from which the vehicle could have accessed the beach and water, but most can be largely discounted because of their spatial relationship to where the vehicle was found in the surf, a lack of physical evidence pertaining to their use and the difficulties of using these routes to reach the beach. Mr Jess' review agreed with the early conclusion of police that the most plausible scenario was that the Fiat went down the service road and entered the water from there after passing over the rock wall, making gouging marks as it passed over the wall. Mr Jess noted that this is supported somewhat by the hydrodynamic influences that were likely present.<sup>205</sup>
159. A scene assessment had established that the Fiat could have reached a potential speed of 30 kph rolling down the incline to the wall, which would have been sufficient to launch it about five metres onto the beach from the rock wall, and it would have travelled up to twice that distance if driven at a speed of up to 60 kph. The car was eventually found about 50 metres from the shore, near the Marine Parade access road, in about two metres of water. A Forensic Collision Report prepared by Senior Constable Paul Woolsey suggested the damage to Julie's car could have been caused by the vehicle rolling in the ocean as it moved to that location.<sup>206</sup> Mr Jess agreed that an analysis of wave energy, currents and comparison to vessels and vehicles that have been damaged by waves supports that conclusion. Mr Jess noted that, based on other known cases of cars becoming bogged in the ocean, it is not unusual to find them on their roofs due to the forces of the waves, even though they started upright, or Julie's car may have rolled as it left the wall.<sup>207</sup>
160. Mr Jess explained that there would have been a huge amount of force on the vehicle once it was in the water and it would have been moving up and down the beach until it hit the deeper water and ultimately ended up where it was found. While it was moving, things would have been falling out and depending on its density and how it

---

<sup>203</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 52.

<sup>204</sup> T 97; Exhibit 1, Tab 52.

<sup>205</sup> T 99; Exhibit 1, Tab 52, p. 9.

<sup>206</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 53.

<sup>207</sup> T 101; Exhibit 1, Tab 52, p. 10.

sat in the water column, some of those items would have ended up on the shore and some would have been taken off shore.<sup>208</sup>

161. In terms of items washed up to shore (in particular the bag and other items found south of the beach in 1996/7, Mr Jess gave evidence that in Western Australia objects tend to move in a northerly direction but it was possible if the object was subject to a north-westerly wind, for items to move the other way. If objects were washed onto the sand, Mr Jess indicated that it was possible for them to then slowly make their way back into the dunes due to the shifting of sands.<sup>209</sup>
162. If Julie had been in the car when it entered the water and did not swim to shore, Mr Jess noted that the same principles that were acting on the car would have influenced what happened to her body in the water, and in all likelihood her body would have been pulled away from the beach, based on what happened to the car and the known rips and currents usually found in the area. Based upon those rips and currents, it was also suggested her body would likely have been taken further from the shore than the car. Post mortem influences and possible predation would then have their own impact.<sup>210</sup>

### **The film ‘Nocturnes’**

163. The Cold Case investigators identified the people involved in the film and spoke to as many of those people as could be located. Mr Docker told police he was not certain if Julie was even aware of the film.<sup>211</sup> Jennifer Marr, who studied with Julie at WAIT and was a very close friend at the time, had never heard of the film until many years after Julie’s disappearance. She gave evidence that she was shocked when she did hear about it, and obviously raised a few questions. However, Julie had never discussed it with her.<sup>212</sup>
164. Mr Docker was interviewed in 2018 and he confirmed he was unsure if Julie was even in Perth when the film was made, as he thought she might already have commenced her travels overseas. Mr Docker told police he was not sure if Julie would have been aware of the movie’s existence.<sup>213</sup>
165. Mr Grant was also interviewed in 2018 and he told the police he was aware Julie was a student at WAIT while he was also studying there. He did not recall meeting her personally, although it was possible they had met at some stage and he had no recollection of it. Mr Grant did know Peter Docker, but did not know that Mr Docker knew Julie. Mr Grant told the police he had come up with the idea of the car going off the groyne at Cottesloe beach as he liked the Cottesloe Groyne and the storminess of it in winter. He grew up in Cottesloe and knew the beach well. Mr Grant was not, however, living in Cottesloe in 1988. At that time, he was sharing a house with a friend in Mosman Park.

---

<sup>208</sup> T 100.

<sup>209</sup> T 102 – 103.

<sup>210</sup> T 103 – 104; Exhibit 1, Tab 52.

<sup>211</sup> T 117.

<sup>212</sup> T 48.

<sup>213</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 56.

166. Mr Grant advised police that after the film was made in 1986, it was screened at WAIT and a film festival showcase in Fremantle, so it was possible Julie saw it at a later time. At the time of hearing about Julie's disappearance, he had been busy and had not thought there was any link with his film, and it only occurred to him later.<sup>214</sup>
167. A friend of Julie's from WAIT, Tracy-Jane Routledge, was interviewed by police in 1988 and recalled that after Julie disappeared she became aware that Rebecca McDonald had told people that Julie had a suicide fantasy of committing suicide by driving her car off the Cottesloe Beach Groyne, noting that Peter Docker starred in a student movie that featured a character committing suicide that way. This friend also recalled Ms McDonald mentioning Julie's suicide attempt in Greece. The friend had personally heard Julie mentioning suicide attempts while she was at high school, but that Julie had threatened suicide in her presence but she had not ever taken the threats seriously.<sup>215</sup>
168. Ms McDonald was interviewed by police after the statement was taken from Ms Routledge and provided a statement. She mentioned in the statement the suicide attempt in Greece and Julie speaking about suicide generally, but did not mention the alleged suicide fantasy about Cottesloe Beach Groyne. She also told police that even though Julie spoke about suicide, she felt it arose more from anger and confusion about her personal circumstances than a real desire to harm herself, and Ms McDonald thought it unlikely Julie would actually commit suicide. Contrary to what Ms Routledge recalled, Ms McDonald told police she did not believe Julie had a suicide fantasy and explained Ms Routledge's comments as a strange coincidence, possibly due to rumours that got confused as they were passed on, subsequent to Julie's disappearance.<sup>216</sup>
169. Ultimately, no new leads arose from this line of inquiry and the investigators were unable to establish a strong link between the film and Julie's disappearance, although it was clear there were a number of links between Julie, Cottesloe Beach and the Cottesloe Groyne.<sup>217</sup>

### **Burglary at Fiona and Julie's home**

170. It was noted that there was a burglary at the unit Fiona and Julie shared a few weeks before she disappeared. They both lost some personal items, including Julie's passport and some of her cards, and some cash was stolen. It appeared to be a straightforward opportunistic burglary, although Fiona was surprised to learn the front door had been left unlocked, which she found disturbing as it was unlike either herself or Julie not to long the front door. However, there was nothing about the offence or the items taken that suggested there was any motive other than ordinary theft.<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 57.

<sup>215</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 63.

<sup>216</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 41 and Tab 64.

<sup>217</sup> T 117.

<sup>218</sup> T 55 – 57.

171. The review considered whether this burglary had any significance to the later events. Fingerprints had been obtained, but there was no link back to any of the possible suspects and nothing to suggest that it was related to Julie's disappearance.<sup>219</sup>

### **Clothing found at the Kebab Shop**

172. Lorraine Corey (whose surname was Palmer at the time of Julie's disappearance) and Roger Palmer (now deceased) owned a kebab shop in the Centreways Arcade, Hay Street, Perth in 1988. The arcade was located approximately 400 metres walk from the Parmelia Hilton Hotel. After seeing a media article about Julie's disappearance, which showed an image of a uniform similar to what Julie would have worn, Mr Palmer contacted the police in June 1989 to advise that his then wife had found a plastic bag containing a similar uniform about 12 months prior at their store. They still had the blouse, which police seized and confirmed was a size 14 blouse and part of a Parmelia Hilton uniform. The size was consistent with what Julie might have worn.<sup>220</sup>
173. Ms Corey spoke to police in 2018 and told them that sometime in 1988 she was sweeping up the kebab store after the shop had closed and she noticed a white plastic bag beneath one of the tables. There was a uniform inside it, including black tights and a blouse. Ms Corey put the bag under the counter in case someone came to collect it and she believes her husband at the time might have later taken it home.<sup>221</sup> Ms Corey also advised that at the relevant time in 1988, the kebab shop closed at 1.00 pm on Saturday afternoons and did not open again until 7.30 am on Monday mornings.<sup>222</sup>
174. Detective Inspector Hamilton noted that they attempted to get forensic evidence from the clothing but were unable to obtain anything. In the end, it was established that the items were consistent with the uniform Julie wore at the Parmelia, and is consistent with the description of Julie putting her uniform in a plastic bag when she changed for the function. However, it could not be confirmed that the items belonged to Julie.<sup>223</sup>

### **Items found at the beach in 1996**

175. Calverley Stewart lived in Cottesloe in 1996. As an employee of the Department of Environmental Protection, Mr Stewart was very conscious of protecting the environment from litter and would often pick up litter when walking at the beach. On Saturday, 19 October 1996, Mr Stewart was walking south along the cycle pathway opposite Beach Street in Cottesloe at a location known as the Dutch Inn when he noticed a plastic bag in the scrub area on the left hand side of the pathway. He bent down to pick up the bag and noticed some objects sticking out of the sand. The items were weathered and consisted of:

---

<sup>219</sup> T 118.

<sup>220</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 9.

<sup>221</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 17.

<sup>222</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 9.

<sup>223</sup> T 119.

- Two pieces of what appeared to be the handle of a bag;
- A Collins 1988 diary;
- A ladies purse;
- A ladies wallet;
- A nail file;
- Half of a broken pen bearing the name Hawaii; and
- One grey Westpac Bank cheque book holder.

176. Mr Stewart got a plastic bag from his car and placed the items into it. On the Sunday, he wrote a letter to the local community newspaper and stated what he had found in the bag and suggested that if anyone had lost a bag in 1988 at Cottesloe they contact him to collect it. The letter was published in the local newspaper's 26 -27 October 1996 edition. No one made contact with Mr Stewart in response to the letter, but when he saw a newspaper article about Julie's disappearance in The West Australian newspaper on 29 January 1997 and the fact her handbag had never been located, Mr Stewart contacted the WA Police. He handed the articles he had found over to the police and showed them where he had found them.<sup>224</sup>
177. A map shows the items were buried in the sand approximately 1 km south of the Cottesloe Groyne and 1.33 km from where Julie's car was discovered. They were also quite a long way up from the beach, but I note Mr Jess' evidence that this on its own does not exclude them coming from Julie's car 10 years earlier. Further searches of that location found only the second half of the pen. It was known that Julie banked with Westpac and kept yearly diaries (some of which were in police possession). She did not use the same type of diary consistently and there was no 1988 diary, but she did tend to use a journal or notebook style diary, which was dissimilar to the Collins date to a page diary found.<sup>225</sup>
178. Julie's sister Nicole was shown some of the items found in 1997, but did not think they belonged to Julie.<sup>226</sup> Julie's aunt, Ms Marwick, recalled that Julie's handbag was a brown leather satchel with a long shoulder strap. Ms Marwick recalled that when she visited Julie's unit a week after she disappeared and looked in her room, the bag was not there and the bag was never found. However, the bag handles in the items collected by Mr Stewart did not match the kind of bag described by Ms Marwick.<sup>227</sup>
179. The items found by Mr Stewart appear to have been lost or misplaced in recent years and were not available for re-examination by the Cold Case officers, but they did have photographs of the items and they had been shown to witnesses in the past. The re-investigation was unable to establish if the items belonged to Julie or not.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 18 and Tab 19.

<sup>225</sup> T 121; Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 10.

<sup>226</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 48, p. 9.

<sup>227</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 39.

<sup>228</sup> T 120.



180. The Operation Malvae investigators excavated the dune area around where the items were located twice, just in case there was anything more to be found there, including Julie's body, but nothing was found.<sup>229</sup>

### **Conclusion of the Cold Case Review**

181. The report of Detective Senior Sergeant Fuderer concluded that investigators had exhausted all avenues of inquiry to locate Julie.<sup>230</sup> The view of the Operation Malvae investigators was that there was no doubt Julie had died. As to how she died, there remained two possible scenarios:

- Julie was murdered between 20 and 22 June 1988. The person or persons responsible ensured Julie's vehicle entered the water at Cottesloe Beach; or
- Julie took her own life between the early hours of 20 and 22 June 1988, driving her vehicle into the ocean at Cottesloe Beach and drowning near that location.<sup>231</sup>

182. Detective Inspector Hamilton was asked at the inquest whether anything had changed in terms of which was the more likely outcome. She indicated that convincing factors remained both to suggest that this could have been a case of homicide and to support the conclusion that Julie died as a result of suicide. Detective Inspector Hamilton gave evidence there was nothing to indicate that one manner of death was more likely on the evidence than the other, despite a very thorough investigation.<sup>232</sup>

183. The inquest did not identify any further unexplored areas of investigation that had not been considered by the investigators as part of Operation Malvae.

### **VIEWS OF JULIE'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

184. Julie's mother passed away many years before Julie's disappearance, but Julie's father, Roger Cutler is still with us and has lived all these years not knowing what happened to his daughter. At the inquest, Mr Cutler gave evidence that he had not initially felt concerned that Julie hadn't gone home, believing she might have simply stayed at someone's house and forgotten to tell her flatmate. However, when her car was discovered in the ocean, he immediately appreciated that something was very wrong. Mr Cutler said it was so far out of character for Julie not to contact her family in those circumstances, as she would never deliberately upset them, that he immediately believed she must be dead, even though he hoped it wasn't true.<sup>233</sup> In the years that have followed, Mr Cutler has never had any contact from Julie, even when family members died. Mr Cutler indicated this has reinforced his belief Julie died on or about the time of her disappearance.<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>229</sup> T 124.

<sup>230</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 39.

<sup>231</sup> T 120, 125; Exhibit 1, Tab 2, p. 47.

<sup>232</sup><sup>232</sup> T 125.

<sup>233</sup> T 20.

<sup>234</sup> T 20, 23.

185. In terms of her mental health, Mr Cutler gave evidence he was not aware that Julie had suffered from any mental health issues, although he acknowledged he had more limited contact with her in her older years. While Mr Cutler was aware Julie would sometimes get upset about different things, and at different people, he believed it was not something that lasted very long and was more of a passing mood than anything that might be said to be a history of depression.<sup>235</sup>
186. Mr Cutler was asked whether he believed Julie may have died as a result of suicide. Mr Cutler gave evidence that while he has experience with that occurring in the family, he feels very strongly that Julie did not take her own life. She had never seemed depressed for any lengthy period of time and he did not think she was prone to acting rashly, although I note there is some other evidence to suggest she would act in the heat of the moment, such as the incident in Greece and when she moved out of Victoria Park after arguing with Nicole. Mr Cutler has always believed someone killed Julie in June 1988, but he has not formed a view as to any particular person being responsible.<sup>236</sup>
187. Nicole gave evidence that Julie was moody at times, but no more so than many young women of that age. She remembered Julie as very theatrical and dramatic and agreed she liked to have a lot of attention, but there was nothing about her mood or behaviour in the time they were in contact between her return to Perth in late 1987 and their fight in early 1988 that seemed to suggest she was having significant mental health issues. They certainly never had a discussion about Julie being depressed.<sup>237</sup>
188. Like her father, Nicole gave evidence that she has never heard from Julie since she disappeared in June 1988, nor from anyone else who might have had contact with her since that time. Nicole is certain that Julie would have been in contact with her father if she was alive and well. Nicole described Julie as a very kind person, who would not have wanted her family to worry. She agreed with her father that she believes Julie is deceased, although she held out hope that Julie might be alive for some time after her car was discovered. Nicole remembered a conversation with her father, as he was leaving to return to Kalgoorlie after they had waited in vain for Julie to return, when he said to her, "I think we need to come to terms that we are never going to see her again."<sup>238</sup> It was around that time that Nicole came to accept that Julie had died.
189. Nicole stated that she believes Julie did not take her own life as it would have been very out of character for her to do so and not something she would have considered.<sup>239</sup>
190. Julie's friend, Ms McDonald, told police in 2018 that she did not believe Julie took her own life, even though she was aware that Julie spoke about suicide and had cut her wrists in Greece. Ms McDonald stated that she believed Julie was disturbed but

---

<sup>235</sup> T 20.

<sup>236</sup> T 21.

<sup>237</sup> T 32 – 33.

<sup>238</sup> T 34.

<sup>239</sup> T 35; Exhibit 1, Tab 48.1.

that this was “more about her anger surrounding her circumstances, her confusion about being gay and her complex family life.”<sup>240</sup> Ms McDonald also expressed the opinion that, knowing Julie, she believed that Julie would have left a note if she committed suicide.<sup>241</sup>

191. Jennifer Marr had been distraught when she was informed that Julie was missing and her car had been found in the ocean. She remembered feeling that it was very out of character for Julie not to come home or to let Fiona know if she was going to stay elsewhere, and she was very concerned for Julie’s safety and felt that they were all “living in a nightmare.”<sup>242</sup> Jennifer considered coming home to try to help with the search, but her family told her there was nothing she could do, so she remained overseas and did not return to Perth until December 1989. Like all the other witnesses, Jennifer never heard from Julie again.<sup>243</sup>
192. Jennifer gave evidence at the inquest that she understood Julie was a “secretive person,” so perhaps no one ever knew her fully in her entirety, but she is still confident the friend she knew would have been in contact. Like Ms McDonald, Jennifer also believed Julie was the kind of person who, if she was going to commit suicide, would have left a letter behind to tell her friends and family how she was feeling. She was a dramatic person and an expressive writer and very capable of writing about how she felt. Jennifer feels strongly that Julie would not have just disappeared without saying something. Taking her own life would have been very against her own self-values, and Jennifer believes, in those circumstances, Julie would have wanted to explain her actions and leave something behind.<sup>244</sup>
193. Jennifer believes Julie met with foul play at the hands of an unknown person . Having reflected on the matter over time, she believes Julie was not in the most positive headspace at the time and this may have influenced her to make some poor decisions. She was aware that Julie had engaged in risk-taking behaviours and been making decisions that were a bit out of character for her as she was “letting her hair down”<sup>245</sup> after living a quite conservative early life. Jennifer felt it was possible, in that context, that Julie had met someone and arranged to meet with them and then come to harm.<sup>246</sup>
194. Mr Blogna, who had very recently repaired Julie’s car before she disappeared, recalled saying to his wife at the time that he did not believe she would have committed suicide as she had spent a lot of money on the car and it seemed inconsistent to him with the mindset of someone who was planning to commit suicide.<sup>247</sup>
195. Ms Granich, who had spoken to Julie not long before she went missing about delaying her enrolment in the intensive English language course, found out in the

---

<sup>240</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [92].

<sup>241</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, [92].

<sup>242</sup> T 44; Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

<sup>243</sup> T 45.

<sup>244</sup> T 45 - 48; Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

<sup>245</sup> T 47.

<sup>246</sup> T 46 – 47.

<sup>247</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 28.

media about Julie's disappearance. She recalled Julie and how emotional she had been, and speculated with a colleague whether Julie may have been in a distressed state at the time and may have committed suicide.<sup>248</sup>

196. Fiona Marr, who was living with Julie at the time, told police in 2018 that she couldn't say if Julie was really capable of driving her car into the water at Cottesloe. She had heard that theory before and thought it was "bizarre."<sup>249</sup> Like the other witnesses, Fiona remembered Julie as a "lively, creative, vivacious person who at times could be a little bit moody."<sup>250</sup> They were not close friends, did not move in the same social circles and Fiona had not met Julie's family prior to her disappearance. However, she had come to know Julie well enough to understand that Julie was wrestling a little bit with life prior to her disappearance and was a little bit downhearted that her plans to do the English course and then travel overseas had not come to fruition. Fiona gave evidence Julie was a very private person, who didn't generally disclose personal things to her, so she didn't know about the other aspects of Julie's life. Fiona was aware, through Jennifer, that Julie might have been taking less personal care in her interactions with others and she did think it was possible Julie had been engaging in risk taking behaviour, but it was not something she ever personally discussed with Julie and she never saw Julie bringing anyone home to their unit.<sup>251</sup>
197. Julie's aunt, Ms Marwick, with whom Julie remained close and who spoke to Julie on the day she was last seen, told police she did not believe Julie would have harmed herself. She knew Julie as quiet and reserved, and accepted she didn't tell her everything, but still had a close relationship with her and had not noticed anything out of the ordinary in their conversation on the Sunday morning. Ms Marwick described Julie as a trusting and loyal person and she did not know her to ever be depressed.<sup>252</sup>
198. Julie's paternal uncle, Brian Cutler, told police in 2018 that he did not believe Julie would take her life. He was aware that Julie had been shortlisted for a job in Melbourne with a television station where she would be able to utilise her Theatre Arts degree. She received a great reference from a theatre in England where she had worked while travelling in 1987 and he recalled she was to be interviewed for the Melbourne job in the days or weeks after she disappeared.<sup>253</sup>
199. Julie had lived with a young woman called Leona Rich when she was overseas and they had become friends. Ms Rich was from Melbourne and she was the person who had helped to arrange the possible job for Julie in Melbourne, although it was with a newspaper not a television station. The two women had remained in contact after returning to Australia and Ms Rich knew that Julie was working at the hotel and wasn't enjoying it and wanted to become a journalist. Ms Rich had a friend who worked for a Melbourne newspaper and the friend was in a position to offer Julie an

---

<sup>248</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 33.

<sup>249</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 37, [126].

<sup>250</sup> T 49.

<sup>251</sup> T 50 – 52, 57.

<sup>252</sup> T 73; Exhibit 1, Tab 39, [56].

<sup>253</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 50.

interview as a cadet at the newspaper. Ms Rich last spoke to Julie in early June and the plan at that time was for Julie to come and stay with her in Melbourne when she had saved up enough money to get across the country. They spoke about Julie driving her Fiat from Perth to Melbourne and Julie seemed confident it would be okay, although Ms Rich was concerned about the plan. At the time of their conversation, which Ms Rich believed was within a week of Julie's disappearance, Julie had appeared to be in a positive frame of mind about the possible job opportunity and earning enough money to go to Melbourne. Ms Rich never heard from Julie again.<sup>254</sup>

200. A number of Julie's friends mentioned that she was known to pick up hitchhikers and was often overly trusting, particularly when she had been drinking. She had an idealised view of the world, which would sometimes mean she would place herself in situations that could be risky.<sup>255</sup>
201. A good friend of Julie's from high school, Tracy Wright Webster, was interviewed in 1988 and again twice more, including as part of the Cold Case review in 2018. She recalled that Julie had once said to her at Cottesloe Beach that she wanted to witness her own funeral. Ms Wright Webster was also with Julie when she engraved her initials, J.C. into the rocks at the very end of the Cottesloe Groyne in 1982. Ms Wright Webster told police she thought it would have been in character for Julie to have driven home through Claremont and then gone to park in the Cottesloe beach car park if she was not feeling like going straight home on the night she disappeared. Ms Wright Webster also told police that when she read the news about Julie's disappearance in 1988 and the circumstances, she thought again about what Julie had said at Cottesloe Beach about witnessing her own funeral and "had a haunting feeling."<sup>256</sup> They had not been in contact in the time leading up to her disappearance, so Ms Wright Webster could not add anything to Julie's mental state around that time, although she did wonder if Julie had anyone she could really confide in or trust at that time.

### **IS JULIE DECEASED?**

202. I indicated at the conclusion that I agree with the conclusion of the detectives involved in Operation Malvae and I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Julie is deceased. The evidence points to Julie dying on or about 20 June 1988, as that seems the most likely time her car entered the ocean at Cottesloe Beach. If Julie was alive, I am satisfied she would have made contact with her father, sister, aunt and good friend Jennifer and housemate Fiona, as she was a kind and considerate person and she would not have wanted them to worry. There was no reason suggested for Julie to want to deliberately disappear and cease all contact with her family and friends. The only reasonable explanation is that Julie died, preventing her from making that contact.

---

<sup>254</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 66.

<sup>255</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 63 and Tab 65 and Tab 66.

<sup>256</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 65 [52].

**CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH**

203. It is not possible for me to reach a conclusion as to Julie's cause of death or manner of death on the evidence before me. If Julie did choose to take her own life, then it is quite likely she died as a result of drowning, as suggested by the Operation Malvae investigators. If, on the other hand, Julie died as a result of the act of another person, there are multiple options as to what caused her death, with drowning being only one possibility.
204. Unfortunately, it is equally open on the evidence to find that Julie died as a result of suicide as it is to find that she died as a result of homicide. Detective Senior Sergeant Fuderer identified in his report a number of compelling factors that pointed to each conclusion. I set out some of those features below.

**Suicide**

205. Without going into the details to respect the privacy of Julie's extended family, there is some family history of suicide, one instance of which predated Julie's disappearance and was something Julie might have been aware of growing up. This doesn't mean she would take the same path, but it is the case that such knowledge could be a factor when considering what options were available to her if she was feeling unhappy. I should add that I don't put much weight on this as a factor pointing to Julie having committed suicide, but I don't disregard it entirely.
206. The more compelling evidence is the description of Julie as a person who had experienced trauma as a child as a result of the early death of her mother and her father's remarriage and was known as an adult to be troubled and to suffer from black moods and react melodramatically at times of personal crisis. She had spoken of suicide to various friends and had a history of harming herself in Greece after a relationship breakdown.
207. I have also read some of the diaries Julie wrote at various times in her life, although not in the last months prior to her disappearance. I won't provide any detail, to respect her privacy, but I note the diaries reflect some of the witness evidence about Julie's tendency to melodrama at times (openly acknowledged by Julie herself), her deep sadness at the loss of her mother when she was so young, her conflicted feelings about her childhood and some hopelessness about the path her life was taking. She acknowledged in her diaries that she did choose to take some risks in terms of sexual encounters, in part it seems to fill a void in her life.
208. Julie's correspondence with Jennifer Marr in the months leading up to her disappearance also reflects a troubled state of mind.
209. In addition, there is the evidence of Ms Granich and Ms Fleming, both of whom saw Julie in a very distressed and emotional state not long before her disappearance. Julie spoke of both money and relationship worries and a feeling that she lacked support. Ms Fleming's evidence, in particular, points to Julie's mental state as being quite fragile a very short time before she was last seen and using words that suggested she had at least fleeting thoughts of suicide. Obviously, her state of mind had improved

by the time she spoke to her aunt and other people the next day, and she appeared happy enough at the work function, but she had been drinking and it is well known that alcohol intoxication and the disinhibition it brings can sometimes lead to thoughts of self harm and suicide in people who are already going through a tough time.

210. The other significant factor pointing towards a finding of suicide is the fact that Julie's car was found at Cottesloe Beach, a place that held a lot of significance for Julie over the years, including Julie engraving her initials at the groyne. I note in her 1987 diary she made a reference to wishing, when she died, to 'fly across the oceans and soar like a gull'. There is also the strange coincidence of the film plot of the student film 'Nocturnes' and the connections between Julie and the film, although there is no proof that she definitely knew about it.
211. Finally, there was nothing about the finding of the car that appeared to rule out the possibility that Julie had been driving it and was in the car alone at the time it entered the water.

## **Homicide**

212. There are also a number of factors that work against a conclusion of suicide, and point instead to a person or persons being involved in Julie's death.
213. All of Julie's family and friends expressed the view that she would never have deliberately taken her own life. Even though many of them knew that she had bouts of depressed mood and had even mentioned suicide sometimes, none of them had ever felt that she had a real intention to kill herself and, rather, they believed strongly that it was very contrary to the kind of person she was and the values that she held.
214. The people who knew Julie best also pointed to the fact that Julie was a prolific writer, who kept journals and wrote long letters and prided herself on her ability to express herself in the written form. They all expressed the opinion it would very out of character for Julie not to leave any kind of note explaining her actions and describing her thoughts and emotions if she had, indeed, made a choice to take her life. No such note or diary was ever found, even though there was paperwork found in her car.
215. Witnesses pointed to the fact that Julie appeared to be in a good state of mind on the Sunday and, in particular, at the work function that evening. She seemed happy and there was nothing out of the ordinary in her behaviour. Julie was very close to her aunt, but when she spoke to her on the Sunday she made no mention of feeling depressed or upset. Julie had also been in contact with her father and her grandmother and was making plans to visit them both soon. In addition, Julie's friend and uncle believed she appeared future focussed and was making plans to go to Melbourne, either to be interviewed for a cadetship as a journalist or to have an interview for a television station. She seemed excited about these possibilities.
216. At the time Julie left the function, she still appeared to be in a good frame of mind and possibly spoke to Ms Harper about meeting someone afterwards or going to a party in Cottesloe. The two champagne glasses found in the glovebox are suggestive

of the first possibility, but I note that other witnesses recalled Ms Harper telling them very shortly after Julie's disappearance that Julie had said she was on her way to a party in Cottesloe to meet friends. Either way, it suggests Julie was going to meet someone, and yet no person has ever come forward to indicate they had plans to meet Julie after the staff function that night and she did not show up, or alternatively that they did meet up with her in the early hours of the morning. It also suggests Julie had a reason for going to Cottesloe unrelated to feeling despondent or suicidal.

217. The 1988 phone call answered by Ms Hunter at Julie's grandmother's house suggested a female living near Cottesloe Beach heard a woman screaming the night Julie disappeared, in the vicinity of the access road that police believe Julie's car went down before it entered the ocean. No more details are available, but it does raise the possibility that Julie may have met with foul play in that area that morning.
218. There are also the series of anonymous phone calls received by family members between 15 December 1993 and 3 January 1993, believed to be six phone calls all made by a man with a European accent and making reference to Julie and some suggestion they were involved in her disappearance. The investigators believe there is a possibility the calls were made by Mr Maciejewski as he spoke with a strong European accent and departed Australia on 15 January 1994. Mr Maciejewski was certainly considered a suspect by police at the time of her disappearance and in the later investigations, given his contact with Julie at the function. However, there is also evidence Mr Maciejewski had mental health issues at that time and other enquiries have not established that Mr Maciejewski was involved in her disappearance or ever made any admissions to that effect to his friends before he returned to Poland.
219. The finding of the bag of clothes in the kebab shop and the items down the beach doesn't really shed much light on the matter, although it also creates some scope for something else to have happened to Julie, noting her handbag and clothes were never found.
220. The evidence in relation to the activities of Bradley Edwards and some similarities between Julie and the other young women who were targeted by Mr Edwards, as well as the two attacks on other women getting into their cars in the CBD after being at the Sheraton hotel, also raises some questions as to whether Julie had the misfortune to be targeted by an opportunistic predator. However, I note that Mr Pearce saw her safely driving away from the carpark on the night, which is different factually to the two attacks on the women getting into their cars, and also the known circumstances of the abductions by Mr Edwards, where the young women were all on foot.

### **Open Finding**

221. In the end, having considered all of the evidence compiled by the numerous police officers investigating this matter for more than three decades, as well as the additional evidence heard at the inquest, I am unable to reach a conclusion as to how Julie died. Accordingly, I make an open finding as to the manner of death.



## CONCLUSION

222. Julie's family and friends have spent more than thirty years wondering what happened to her and hoping that someone will come forward to provide information to the police, who have been investigating her disappearance since June 1988. It is very rare in this State for a young woman to simply disappear, even more so with the strange circumstance of her empty car then being found in the ocean, and the Western Australian community has shared Julie's family's bafflement, concern and desire for answers. Losing a loved one prematurely is painful enough without having to suffer the hurt of having no body to bury and no idea where they are or what happened to them.
223. Unfortunately, despite a very thorough recent Cold Case investigation by the WA Police, including a public awareness campaign and offer of a substantial reward, no new information was uncovered that provides an explanation about why Julie has never been seen again.
224. Having now held a public inquest, which also received media coverage, no further information has been unearthed that sheds any light on what happened to Julie.
225. With regret, I am therefore unable to give Julie's family and friends the answers they seek. The only real conclusion I am able to give at this time is my finding that Julie died around the time she disappeared in June 1988. I understand her family had already come to terms with this conclusion, well before this inquest, but this finding provides a formal recognition of that fact.
226. I hope that Mr Cutler, Julie's sister Nicole and all of Julie's family and friends at least take comfort, after hearing the evidence at the inquest and reading this finding, that the WA Police have put extensive resources and effort into exploring all possible avenues of investigation. The investigation remains open, subject to any new information arising. However, depending on how Julie died, it is possible those answers may never be forthcoming. Nevertheless, for the sake of the Cutler family, I encourage anyone who believes they have further relevant information to make contact with the WA Police so that Julie's family can obtain some closure.

S H Linton  
Deputy State Coroner  
6 April 2023