

## [Transcript] Casefile True Crime / 308: Case 263: Kim Barry

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On Friday, February 6, 1981, married couple Brian and Beverly Barry left their home in the Wollongong suburb of Mount Pleasant. They were headed north on a six-and-a-half-hour drive to their holiday home in the coastal New South Wales town of Sortel. They weren't planning to stay away for long. Brian and Beverly had received a letter from the local council in Sortel informing them that their property's lawn was overgrown and they risked receiving a fine. So, the couple had decided to go up for a quick overnight visit to tidy the yard. Usually, Brian and Beverly's children would accompany them on trips to the holiday house, but not this time. Their son Wayne, who was 15, was preparing for an athletics competition and had a training session to attend. The couple's eldest child, 19-year-old Kim, worked at a local supermarket and had a shift she couldn't get out of. While Brian and Beverly were away, Kim would be in charge and responsible for looking after her little brother. After arriving at the Sortel property later that day, Brian and Beverly Barry set about gardening and mowing the long grass. The physical labour left the couple tired, and when they went to bed that night, Brian fell asleep quickly. Initially, Beverly slept well too, but in the middle of the night, she was suddenly woken by the sound of someone calling out to her. Beverly recognised the voice right away. It belonged to her daughter, Kim. Half asleep, Beverly sat up and looked towards the bedroom door. She expected to see Kim standing there, only to realise a split second later that wasn't possible. Beverly wasn't at home, she was more than 600 kilometres away, and Kim was back in Mount Pleasant. Telling herself that she must have been dreaming, Beverly lay down again to go back to sleep, the sound of her daughter's voice fading from her mind. The Barry's quick visit to Sortel had paid off. They left the property early the following morning, arriving back in Mount Pleasant at around 3pm. As Brian and Beverly walked through

the front door, they were surprised to find their son Wayne at home by himself. Wayne said he didn't know where his sister was. He'd returned after athletics training the previous afternoon to find Kim making dinner for them both. She'd explained that she was meeting a friend that night, but Wayne couldn't remember who. After the siblings finished eating, Kim tidied up the dishes, then went outside to call a taxi from a payphone in the street. The Barry's didn't have a landline at home and were reliant on the public payphone that sat about 150 metres from their house. After Kim left that evening, Wayne hadn't seen her again. Kim had been in trouble once before for staying out all night without warning. Ever since then, she'd always left a note explaining if she planned to stay with a friend. At this time, she hadn't left anything for her parents to surmise where she might be. Brian Barry wasn't concerned. He suspected Kim had gotten caught up having fun with friends and would be home soon enough. Beverly felt a hint of worry. She couldn't help but feel that something must be wrong. She headed out to the payphone and started calling Kim's friends, asking if they'd seen her daughter. Nobody she spoke to had seen Kim or had any idea where she might be. The Barry's expected Kim to reappear later that afternoon or into the evening, but she didn't. Brian remained confident that 19-year-old Kim would be home by the time the weekend ended, but Beverly's concern was growing. She tossed and turned that night, unable to sleep.

Sunday, February 8 passed with no word from Kim. On Monday, Brian and Beverly Barry headed off to their respective jobs. Later that morning, a call came through at the manufacturing firm where Beverly worked as a clerk. It was a friend of her daughter's named Donna Holland. Despite Kim and Donna only having known each other for a few months, the two were already close. Beverly had wanted to get in touch with Donna over the weekend to ask if she knew where Kim was, but she didn't have her number. Now, Donna was able to provide Beverly with key information regarding the Friday night Kim left home and didn't return.

That evening, 17-year-old Donna Holland had felt like she was coming down with the flu. She wasn't up for a big night, but she'd already made plans to see a movie with Kim Barry and felt she couldn't cancel. Kim, who was two years older than Donna, had called the day before, eager to catch up. Donna caught a bus to the Crown Central Shopping Complex in Wollongong where the girls had arranged to meet. Kim was travelling there by taxi. The meeting up at around 7.30pm, the friends grabbed a quick drink then caught a 7.45 screening of the comedy film *Flying High*. It was just after 10 when the movie ended and Donna was keen to go home. As well as feeling slightly unwell, she had an early start the following morning at a babysitting job. But Kim persuaded Donna to accompany her to a local nightclub for a dance. Kim loved dancing and even took lessons.

The pair walked to the nearby Crown Gardens Disco, stopping at a pharmacy to buy band-aids along the way. Kim said her shoes were hurting her feet and put one band-aid on each heel before continuing on. When they arrived at the disco, one of the bouncers asked Kim to save a dance for him later. She agreed.

Inside, the venue was packed. The girls had to navigate through a big crowd in order to find seats. Kim bought drinks for herself and Donna. The underage Donna had a lemonade while Kim chose the coffee liqueur Tia Maria. Kim proposed that they toast to something, and held up her glass and stated, May I soon get a steady boyfriend.

The girls clinked glasses, then sat drinking and chatting for a little while. Suddenly,

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Kim asked Donna if she would like to stay over at her place that night. Kim's parents were away and she said she was scared as there'd been a prowler lurking around her neighborhood. Donna said she couldn't. She had to get up at 5am for her babysitting job and needed to leave soon. She planned to catch a train home and had already arranged for her mother to pick her up from the station. Kim continued to beg Donna to stay. She seemed desperate not to be left alone. She suggested Donna stay until the nightclub closed at 3am and even offered to pay for Donna's taxi home. But Donna stood firm. It was nearly midnight and she had to go. Besides, she was certain that there was no prowler and Kim was just making up excuses so Donna would stay.

Before leaving, Donna lent Kim some money so she could buy a bottle of wine and checked that her friend had enough cash to get home. As she left, Donna said to Kim, Be careful and catch a taxi home. Give me a ring tomorrow afternoon.

But Saturday had passed with no call from Kim. Donna thought this was a little odd as the two spoke regularly and had talked about maybe catching up again over the weekend. Two days later on Monday morning, Donna Holland was listening to the radio when a news broadcast

caught her attention. A woman's body had been found at Jamburu Lookout, a scenic mountain spot about 40km southwest of Wollongong. What stood out to Donna was the description of the woman's feet. She had a bandaid plastered to each heel.

Donna hadn't heard from Kim Barry all weekend, which was strange but not necessarily concerning. Upon hearing the radio broadcast, Donna immediately started to worry. She remembered how Kim had

stopped to put band aids on her heels on Friday night.

Donna decided to call Kim's mother Beverly to make sure that Kim was alright. Upon learning that no one knew where Kim was, Donna quickly shared what she knew. She mentioned the band aids and told Beverly about the woman's body found in Jamburu.

But Beverly reassured Donna that the deceased woman couldn't be Kim. Beverly had read a local news article about the same discovery and it reported that the deceased woman found was visibly pregnant. Kim wasn't pregnant.

Scott Davies was a 19-year-old apprentice plumber who had driven out to visit friends on Sunday, February 8, 1981. As he wound his way around Jamburu Mountain, he decided to make an impromptu turn-off in search of car parts.

Nearby, the Jamburu lookout was a spot where thieves often dumped cars they had stolen. The vehicles were typically taken by teenage joyriders who stripped them for parts before leaving them in what was known as the car graveyard.

Scott Davies was aware of the dumping ground and decided to see if he could recover anything he might be able to use to upgrade his old hold in sedan.

Scott made his way to the lookout on foot and peered over the cliff edge. He could see a few rusted cars about 50 metres below. As he debated the best route to get to the vehicles, Scott's eyes were drawn to a nearby tree.

Beneath was what looked like a naked mannequin.

Realising that the mannequin was actually a woman's corpse, Scott went looking for help and flagged down a park ranger. Soon police officers arrived at the scene.

A sling was set up so they could be lowered down from the cliff edge to the spot where

the body lay.

Upon closer inspection, officers made the shocking discovery that the woman's head was missing. It had been cleanly cut off from her neck with a sharp instrument. The cut wasn't surgical or expert, but it had been made carefully post-mortem.

The woman's fingers were also missing, having been cut off at the first knuckle, likely with a hacksaw and also after her death.

A thin white nylon cord was tied around her right wrist and both ankles. Her blouse and bra were wrapped around both her arms.

The woman appeared to be pregnant, a key detail that was printed in one early article published in the Illawarra Mercury newspaper.

By Monday, February 9, Kim Barry had been missing for three days.

Beverly Barry arrived home that evening to find the place empty. She switched on the television to watch the six o'clock news.

A bulletin was broadcast about the body found at Jamburu Lookout the day before.

Footage showed police combing through the thick brush of the mountain, pausing on a detective standing by some soiled garments that had belonged to the woman. One of the items was a torn, bone-coloured blouse. The other was a bra with a green floral emblem in the middle.

Beverly felt frozen with shock as a newsreader described the clothing. They perfectly matched items that Kim owned.

Beverly raced to Kim's room and turned it upside down looking for the clothing. Then she checked the laundry. There was no sign of either the blouse or the bra that matched the ones shown on the television. Beverly struggled to breathe and began to cry as she felt a sense of total certainty that the woman found at Jamburu Lookout was her daughter.

When Brian arrived home, Beverly explained the situation and the couple rushed to Wollongong Police Station. There, they sat down with detectives and held hands as they described their missing daughter. Kim had a small birthmark just beneath her right breast and some scarring on her thighs from some bad sand fly bites she'd received five years earlier.

The detectives listened carefully. The woman they had found had band-aids on both her heels, like Kim. Beneath her right breast was a small birthmark that resembled a mole. There was also faint scarring on both her inner thighs.

Taking particular note of these identifying features that the buries had described, one of the detectives asked if the couple could look at some clothing found with the body.

He pulled out an evidence envelope and carefully removed the blouse and bra from inside. Both were immediately recognizable to Brian and Beverly, who'd seen them hanging on the washing line many times. After checking the size and brand of the blouse, all Beverly could say was, Yes, that's Kim's.

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One of her meals featured a side of cauliflower rice which Atavia says is the best she's ever had. Head to [factameels.com/casefile50](https://www.factameels.com/casefile50) and use code CASEFILLE50 to get 50% off.

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Thank you for listening to this episode's ads. By supporting our sponsors, you support case file to continue to deliver quality content. Exposure and decomposition had caused Kim's body to bloat, giving her the appearance of being pregnant. But testing would confirm that she wasn't. Somehow, the mistaken assumption was printed in initial press reports.

Photographs of the scene were taken along with swabs of blood and other bodily fluids. Kim's body was wrapped in a blanket, then placed on a stretcher and hoisted from the area.

On closer examination, it appeared that Kim had been moved several times after she died, as her remains showed no lewdity. Her right forearm was fractured, which had likely occurred when her body was thrown off the cliff. There was bruising on Kim's left shoulder and chest. No evidence was found of a sexual assault, nor could a cause of death be established.

The removal of Kim's head and fingers led to early speculation that the murder was related to organized crime. Gang members were known to remove these body parts to prevent a victim being identified by their face, dental records or fingerprints. Until Kim was identified, the leading theory was that the unknown woman was an informer who'd gotten into trouble with the drug dealers. But this theory fell apart after the barriers came forward. There was no evidence at all that their daughter Kim had any involvement or history with illicit drugs. After positively identifying the blouse and bra that had been found with Kim's body, Brian Barry was asked to identify her remains. He did so by checking the birthmark on her abdomen. This identification was also confirmed by matching Kim's palm print to one found in her bedroom.

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The Barry family were devastated by their loss. Kind and nurturing, Kim had dreamt of helping others by becoming a nurse. She'd studied to work as a nursing assistant and had received high marks but failed the entrance exam due to nerves. Kim had resolved to try again but took a break by working at a supermarket in the meantime. She also volunteered at a residence for disabled children so she could spend time caring for others in some capacity.

Brian Barry tried to remain stoic to support his wife and son but he struggled with rage in the wake of his daughter's murder. Beverly and Wayne cried together over the loss of Kim. Another family member Kim had been especially close to was her grandfather known as Pop. He lived in a small unit at the back of the family home and the two loved each other's company. They would sit and talk together for hours. As detailed in the book *The Stranger You Know* by John Sutter Linton, Pop often worried about Kim encountering dangerous men when she was out with friends. She would reassure him that she wasn't scared stating, nothing is going to happen to me.

The day after Kim's body was found, police officers returned to the scene to search for Kim's missing remains but nothing was recovered. Detectives took a detailed statement from Donna Holland, the friend Kim had been with on the night she was murdered. Donna hadn't noticed any suspicious individuals paying attention to Kim when they parted ways. Nor could she remember seeing anyone who she recognized as an acquaintance of Kim's. Before she left, Donna gave Kim some

money to buy a bottle of Libfrau Wein, a kind of sweet German white wine. Donna told investigators that Kim said she'd been scared of a prowler in her neighborhood but she'd dismissed Kim's claims as a ploy to have Donna stay with her. Detectives looked into the matter but found nothing suggesting

there had been a prowler in the area. They turned their attention to the Crown Gardens Disco where Kim had last been seen alive. Friday, February 6 had been a busy night at the club with an estimated 300 patrons in attendance. But bar staff at the venue remembered Kim and confirmed that she'd bought a bottle of Libfrau Wein. They kept records of every beverage sold and that was the only bottle of Libfrau Wein purchased that night.

The staff weren't able to provide any further information as to who Kim might have met while at the bar. A \$50,000 reward was offered for information leading to the arrest of Kim Barry's killer. Exactly one week after Kim was murdered, investigators dressed up a mannequin in the same blouse and pants she had been wearing and displayed it outside the Crown Gardens Disco. A wig similar to Kim's wavy dark hair was put on its head and a photograph of her face was stuck to the mannequin's face. Pinned up next to the mannequin was a sign that read, Did you see this girl last Friday night? A caravan that had been converted into a mobile police station was parked in a laneway by the nightclub and detectives milled about inside the club where patrons could see them. One by one nightclubbers started approaching the investigators with possible leads about Kim. The detectives would direct them to the mobile station to provide a formal statement. Two sisters came forward to say they'd been at the disco on the night in question. They'd had a few drinks with a friend named Glenn Potter who was celebrating his birthday. Glenn's older brother Graham was also there that night for his bucks night as he was getting married one week later on Valentine's Day. The two brothers had combined their respective special occasions into one celebration. The sisters had noticed Graham sitting on a couch with a girl. At about 12 30 a.m. Graham walked up to the table where they

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were seated and said he was leaving but would be back soon. He handed over his cardigan for safekeeping and to set a near empty bottle of wine on the table as he did so. When the detectives asked the sisters if they knew what kind of wine it was they both replied, Libfrauwein.

When detectives checked to see if Graham Potter had a criminal record they discovered two previous convictions of break, enter and steal dating back to 1976. Potter had been 18 at the time and was fined \$250. He also received a three-year good behavior bond. Now aged 23 years old Potter was employed as a coal miner. Sifting through other witness statements collected from Crown Gardens patrons detectives found further evidence that Kim Barry had been seen in Graham Potter's company.

One person saw them sitting on a lounge talking together. Another spotted them dancing and holding

hands. Some time after midnight the pair were seen walking hand in hand towards the exit.

It turned out that Kim had been somewhat acquainted with Potter prior to that night.

The pair had taken dance lessons together at the same school some years earlier. Kim had confided in her mother Beverly that she had a bit of a crush on Potter who was four years older than her.

But when Beverly asked Kim about the crush again a few years later Kim said she no longer liked Potter. He thought he was too much of a quote ladies man. Detectives needed to follow up with Graham Potter in person but there was a problem. A week earlier on Tuesday February 10 20-year-old

Cherie Jones had been excited about her upcoming wedding. Cherie was set to marry her fiance Graham

Potter in several days time on Valentine's Day. That evening Cherie and Graham were attending a dance class together to go over the bridal vaults. Cherie was surprised when Graham unexpectedly cancelled. He'd called her work that afternoon and left a message saying he couldn't see her but would talk to her later. Soon Cherie learned that Potter had also called his younger brother Glenn to say he was going away for a little while. Glenn suspected that his brother had gotten cold feet

and cancelled the wedding. He knew it was Graham's dream to travel around Australia before starting

a family. Upon hearing Glenn's news Cherie was destroyed. The truth was Graham had been acting strangely for days. He'd celebrated his box night a few days prior on Friday February 6

combining it with Glenn's birthday. At around one that night Graham had called Cherie's parents home

where she lived. He told Cherie he was having fun and had been dancing with a friend. He would come

over to her place that night to sleep and asked if she could leave the back door unlocked. Cherie did so and left a sleeping bag in the lounge room for Graham but when she woke the next morning the

bag was still rolled up and hadn't been slept in. Cherie called Graham's unit. He answered right away

explaining that he'd decided to go back there with his brother instead. They'd gotten home at about 2 30 a.m. The couple met up later that day and Cherie noticed that Graham was wearing a

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ready old t-shirt and shorts. He typically made an effort to dress well. He was also quieter than usual but discussed their wedding plans happily enough. Graham spent most of the weekend with Cherie at her home. On Monday Graham visited Cherie at home and suddenly blurted out an idea. What if they went traveling together around the country instead of getting married? Cherie told him she wanted to marry and settled down first which led to an argument. Cherie ultimately told Graham that there was no way she would go traveling with him. The couple made up and later ran some errands together. They stopped at a bank and Graham withdrew his entire savings \$2,950. He told Cherie that he would use the funds to open a joint bank account for them with some of the money going towards their honeymoon. Then he called his employer and said he was taking the rest of the week off sick.

The last time Cherie had seen her fiance was at lunchtime on Tuesday. He stopped by her work briefly before later calling to cancel their dance lesson that night. After asking if they could talk privately, Graham told Cherie, Don't do anything stupid if anything happens to me. We will get back together again.

Later that day, Graham left in his 1970 White Holden sedan for an unknown destination. None of his family or friends had seen him since.

The day he departed just happened to be the same day that Kim Barry was publicly identified as the headless victim found at Jamperoo Mountain Lookout. By the time detectives began to consider Graham

Potter a possible suspect on Saturday, February 14, they were already aware that he'd skipped town. An early tip they'd received in their investigation had been about a groom who abruptly disappeared after celebrating his Bucks night at the Crown Gardens Disco the same night that Kim Barry was there. At the time, they had nothing else linking Potter to Kim, but they added his name to their list of potential suspects.

Now unable to interview Graham Potter, detectives instead began to question those closest to him. Potter's parents seemed confused as to why police would want to speak to their son.

His fiancée Cherie was in a state of shock. The most valuable witness was Potter's younger brother Glenn, who had been with Potter at the Crown Gardens Disco. Glenn was hostile towards the detectives, telling them he had no idea where his brother was and hadn't spoken to him in days. Glenn said that they'd arrived at the Crown Gardens Disco at around midnight.

He'd seen a girl with dark hair approach his brother, and the pair had struck up a conversation. Although the girl's features were similar to Kim Barry's, Glenn claimed he couldn't be certain if it was her. At around 12.30am, Graham approached Glenn at the bar and said, I'm going out for a little while. Then he left with the girl he'd been chatting to.

A little over an hour later, Graham returned and Glenn asked him, how did you go? He was referring to the girl Graham left with, assuming his brother had wanted one last fling before getting married. Potter explained that he'd taken her back to his place, but she'd gotten cold feet at the front door and left. Potter had immediately caught a taxi back to the nightclub and even asked the cab driver to pick up a sailor he'd seen hitchhiking along the way. He didn't seem in any way anxious or concerned.

At about 2.45am, the two brothers had left the disco and gone to Graham Potter's home. With the Potter family's permission, investigators paid a visit to the unit.

There were few possessions there as Potter's family had taken them for safe keeping, worried the unit might have been burgled in his absence.



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The residence was totally immaculate. There was nothing visible to the naked eye that indicated anything untoward had happened there.

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Weeks later, on Saturday, February 28, 1981, a man named Dean Smith went for a scenic drive with his girlfriend and the couple's two dogs. It was around six on a warm summer evening, as Dean's car drove the twists and turns around to Jamburu Mountain Road.

Dean decided to pull over at a clearing, located at a part of the road where the bitumen was replaced by dirt. He and his girlfriend got out of the car for some fresh air, and Dean let the dogs jump out for a run. The animals raced off into some nearby scrub.

Roughly 15 minutes passed and the dogs hadn't returned.

Dean called them. One of the dogs reappeared and ran back to Dean, but there was no sign of the other.

Confused as his dogs were both typically obedient, Dean headed into the scrub to find his missing pet.

The vegetation was thick and Dean struggled through it before arriving at a creek bed.

His dog stood nearby, stuck still with one of its front paws lifted and its eyes fixated on a round object about five meters away. It was a human skull.

Two officers responded to the scene. Because the skull was located in the same area where Kim Barry's body had been found, it seemed likely it belonged to her. But it was missing all of its flesh and tear, which seemed like extremely rapid decomposition. When investigators discovered skeletal remains of small animals nearby, they realized that a larger predator such as a fox likely fed in the area. The skull had also been scavenged by a wild animal.

Dental records confirmed that it belonged to Kim Barry. There were significant wounds to the left side of the skull, indicating that Kim had been hit with a blunt heavy object.

Forensic investigators suspected the killer had used a spanner.

Extensive searches of the area recovered tufts of dark brown human hair and small bones which looked to be from fingers. These remains seemed to create a trail that led to a Lantana bush. Police found two plastic bags under a bush. They looked to have been ripped open by animals. Inside were two bloodstained bedsheets, one striped and the other with a floral pattern. There was also a filthy dressing gown. The gown had a depression in it that perfectly matched the recovered skull. Inside the depression were more clumps of hair as well as human tissue, bones and several fingers. They all belonged to Kim Barry.

The dressing gown and sheets were shown to Graham Potter's fiance, Shari Jones.

She said the gown looked like one he owned but she couldn't be sure as it was so dirty.

She didn't recognize the floral sheet, however the striped sheet was one she had previously seen in Potter's unit. Investigators had enough evidence to obtain a search warrant for Graham

Potter's unit. On the surface the residence was sparkling clean. There was no furniture inside. The walls were free from marks and the flooring was spotless with one exception. In the second bedroom the carpet had a stain in the middle which was a slightly darker color than the rest. There was another smaller stain in a corner of the room. Both of these stains tested positive for blood. After taking photos investigators pulled up the carpet. Blood had seeped through the fabric and onto the floorboards beneath leaving obvious stains. A nearby skirting board also had a small glob of dried blood on it. On closer inspection investigators found that a fresh coat of paint on one bedroom wall concealed some blood smears. Two dark hairs were stuck in the paint.

More matching hairs were later found in the carpet on a bottle of disinfectant and in the lint filter of the clothes dryer. A tap in the bathroom basin had a tiny red spot on it about the size of a match head. The stain tested positive for blood. More traces of blood were found in the plug hole that led to the basin's drain. There were several long fairly straight scratches in the bathtub.

Potter's parents also gave police permission to take some of his possessions they were holding for him. In some bags they found a blue dressing gown cord that matched the gown found in the bush,

a striped sheet and two blood stained blankets. Although DNA testing wasn't available to investigators at the time they had Kim's blood group. Some of the blood found on items belonging to Graham Potter was too degraded to be compared but a number of the stains proved to be a match.

On the same day that Kim Barrie's skull was found, police in the New South Wales city of Gulburn got in touch with their colleagues in Wollongong. A car had been left abandoned outside of their police station almost three weeks earlier on Tuesday, February 10.

The White Hold and sedan hadn't garnered any attention at first as it was parked close to the train station and people often left their cars there for days at a time.

But a check had revealed the car was registered to 20 year old Shari Jones who lived more than 150 kilometres northeast of Gulburn in Wollongong. Inside the car's glove box was a wallet and a bank card belonging to Graham Potter and a small knife. Stroom throughout the rest of the vehicle were some items of clothing including a bloodstained shirt and several other miscellaneous items.

On the dashboard was a notebook and inside was a handwritten letter. It read in part, Oh my sweet Shari, you don't know how much I regret my leaving you. Whatever is said as to why I'm leaving, please believe me. But if I stay, my life may be in danger. Please express to everybody my sorrow that I messed everyone's lives up. But if you only knew why, I think things would change. You're Graham. Gulburn sits near the Hume Highway which eventually leads to Melbourne.

The Wollongong detectives wondered if perhaps Graham Potter had planned to flee interstate to Victoria. Police in Victoria were asked to make inquiries as to Potter's possible whereabouts while the New South Wales Homicides Squad finally went public with their investigation.

They requested that Graham Potter come forward. They didn't say he was a suspect, merely stating they were keen to question him. They also asked anyone with information as to Potter's whereabouts to contact them. Photos of Graham Potter were broadcast on the news and published in papers showing a clean shaven young man with short, wavy dark hair. Kim Barry's family and Graham Potter's loved ones also issued public pleas for him to come forward.

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Detectives spoke to Potter's friends and acquaintances to build up a clearer picture of who he was. One friend said that when he and Potter were at school, he had once gone over to Potter's house while his parents were out. The friend claimed that Potter had inserted suppositories into one of his family's pet border collies for entertainment. The dog had later died. Police tried to verify this incident, believing the act of animal cruelty might indicate a predilection for violence, but they couldn't confirm it. Other friends of Graham Potter's thought it was impossible for him to be involved in Kim Barry's murder. The Graham they knew was an upstanding young man who loved

his family and his fiancee. They couldn't imagine him doing anything that brutal. Potter's parents were devastated by their son's abrupt disappearance and were desperate for him to come forward and

clear his name. They undertook their own searches for their son, but found no trace of him.

A number of tip-offs trickled in, but as weeks passed with no sign of Potter, investigators began to wonder if he had taken his own life. Then, on Friday April 10, a call came in from an acquaintance of Potter's who had been driving earlier that morning on the F6 expressway. The motorist claimed to have seen Potter hitchhiking. He was 38 kilometers north of Woollongong in the

outskirts of Sydney. Potter had been trying to catch a ride back in the direction of Woollongong.

It appeared that he was heading home.

Police descended on the area, but Potter was long gone. The following day, investigators received phone calls from Potter's fiancée Cherie and father Sonny. Graham had called them both. He'd insisted he was innocent, but kept the calls short for fear his loved ones' phones were being tapped. Neither Cherie or Sonny were able to provide any more information about where Potter had been or where he was now. On the evening of Monday April 13, Sonny Potter was at home when he heard someone open the back door of his residence. The Potters kept the rear door unlocked for friends and family who would visit. Sonny rushed to the door and saw a figure with red hair and a full beard standing there. Despite how different he looked, Sonny recognized the man right away as his son Graham. With his parents and siblings gathered around, Graham Potter shared his story for the first time. According to Potter, on the night he was at the Crown Gardens Disco celebrating his Bucks night, Kim Barrie had approached him. Potter was somewhat familiar with Kim from their time attending the same dance school, but he had no interest in her because he was besotted with his fiancée Cherie Jones. Potter said he wasn't that keen on talking with Kim, but she, quote, latched onto him and he didn't want to be rude, so he sat down with her for a chat. When Potter asked Kim how she'd been, she immediately blurted out, I've got to get out of here and I can't leave by myself.

Kim told Potter that two men had been in the disco looking for her earlier and she was afraid they might be waiting outside. She asked Potter if he would escort her out for safety.

Potter agreed and left his cardigan and Kim's bottle of wine on his brother's table, saying he'd be back soon. When Potter and Kim went outside, Potter glanced around but saw no sign of the two men. Kim appeared to be very nervous. Potter suggested she catch a taxi home and offered

to walk her to a nearby cab rank. While the two waited for a taxi, Kim asked if they could go back to Potter's unit so she could talk to him about the situation with the two men.

Potter agreed and they caught a cab back to his place.

## [Transcript] Casefile True Crime / 308: Case 263: Kim Barry

Kim sat down on a couch while Potter made them some coffee. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door.

Potter answered it and two men shoved past him, closing the door behind them.

Who are you? What do you want? Potter asked. The men told him they wanted to speak with Kim alone,

then added, so go upstairs and behave. Kim told Potter it was fine, so he headed upstairs, leaving the three to talk in the living room. Potter could only hear vague snippets of the trio's conversation. It seemed that Kim was in some kind of trouble for ripping the two men off. Potter got the impression the men were drug dealers. Their voices became raised and Potter heard some other strange noises. After a while, it grew quiet.

Unsure whether he should return downstairs, Potter waited a little longer. Finally, he headed back down.

Kim was lying on the floor. One of the men was kneeling beside her while the other was rifling through her handbag. A bloody rolling pin taken from his kitchen lay nearby.

Oh no, no, Potter cried out. One of the men grabbed him and pushed him up against a wall, stating, shut up and you won't be hurt. Potter began to cry as he felt certain the men would kill him too. He pleaded for them to let him live, saying he would do anything. One of the men replied, you can either end up as she is or keep your mouth shut and say nothing. If we're caught, we'll say you were in on it. From there, you'll go to prison with us and you won't be safe in there either. We'll get at you there too. Potter promised he wouldn't say anything and the men ordered him to leave while they took care of the situation. Potter left the unit and caught a taxi back to the Crown Gardens Disco. For some reason, he asked the taxi driver to pick up a sailor who was hitchhiking along the way. When Potter arrived back at the venue, he wasn't allowed in. Potter pleaded with the bouncers, explaining that his brother was inside and eventually they relented. Potter tried to act natural around his brother and friends, chatting until it was time to leave. Finally, Potter caught another taxi home with his brother Glenn. It was about 4am by the time they got there. There was no sign of the two men or Kim's body. Glenn fell asleep quickly. Potter crawled into his bed under the blankets and sobbed.

The next morning, Glenn headed back to his parents' place at around 7. Not long after, there was a knock at Graham Potter's front door. The two men from the previous night were back. They ordered Potter to walk upstairs and followed closely behind him.

They then shoved Potter into the upstairs bathroom before heading towards the spare bedroom.

When they reappeared at the bathroom door, they were carrying Kim's body.

Apparently, they had stashed it in the spare room instead of taking it with them.

The men placed Kim on the bathroom floor. Using a knife and a meat saw they had taken from Potter's kitchen, the two men cut off Kim's head and removed her fingers while Potter wept.

When the men were done, they ordered Potter to get rid of Kim's remains.

They threatened him once more before leaving the property.

Potter wrapped Kim's head and fingers in an old dressing gown and her body in some sheets.

Then he borrowed his fiance's car and placed Kim's remains in the boot.

He also stuffed Kim's purse, clothing, and the bloody rolling pin which looked to be the murder weapon, into a bag. But for some reason, he washed the knife the men had used and placed it back in his kitchen drawer. Potter drove out to Jamboree Mountain Lookout and dumped Kim there.

## [Transcript] Casefile True Crime / 308: Case 263: Kim Barry

As he drove back down the mountain, he suddenly remembered he still had the bag containing Kim's belongings and the murder weapon. He tossed it into the bush as well.

Over the next few days, Potter's panic grew. He felt like his knowledge of the men's crime was putting everyone he loved at risk. After Kim Barry's body was found, he decided to flee.

Potter used Sheree's car to drive to Gulben and from there he travelled to Melbourne, then the island state of Tasmania. He said he eventually made his way to New Zealand.

In 1981, a passport wasn't needed to travel between Australia and New Zealand.

Almost two months went by. Potter was tormented by being so far away from his family and Sheree.

In the second week of April, Potter met a girl who was from Wollongong.

She brought up the topic of Kim Barry's murder with Potter, saying a friend back in home had told her about it. Potter asked if the police knew who'd committed the crime.

When the girl answered no, Potter figured maybe it was safe to go home.

Graham Potter's family were overjoyed to have him home, but heartbroken to hear what he'd suffered.

When Potter's father asked if he was willing to assist Potter,

Potter readily agreed. He decided to have a bath to freshen up while his parents called investigators.

As he was lathering up, the bathroom door suddenly opened and two detectives marched inside, telling Potter that he was under arrest. The Potters were devastated by the abrupt interruption.

They had believed their son was only wanted as a witness and felt that the nature of his arrest was a betrayal. They would subsequently say that at least 10 officers had surrounded their home and entered with pistols drawn. New South Wales police insisted only two detectives attended and they hadn't drawn their weapons. Graham Potter was driven to the police station for questioning.

He refused to say anything other than confirm his name, address and date of birth.

The interview concluded within 15 minutes and Potter was then charged with the murder of Kim Barry.

Three months later in July 1981, Graham Potter's pre-trial hearing began.

Detectives and prosecutors had their own theory as to why Potter had killed Kim Barry.

They believed he had been looking to have one last fling before his wedding and invited Kim back to his home. Kim, who'd previously had a crush on Potter and was eager to find a boyfriend, accepted his invitation. But once the pair arrived at Potter's unit,

detectives believed Kim had changed her mind. Perhaps she'd seen something that made her realise Potter had a fiancé and wasn't single. Angry at being rejected, Potter lashed out at Kim and struck her in the head with a blunt object, killing her. He then left her body in his unit while he returned to the Crown Garden's disco. The next day he dismembered Kim and dumped

her remains. Perhaps he'd never expected them to be found due to the dense nature of the rainforest where he'd left them. But when Kim was discovered and the investigation began, Potter grew scared.

He must have known it was only a matter of time until police found out he'd been seen with Kim that night. So he went on the run, disguised his appearance and hid until he felt he couldn't any longer. At the pre-trial hearing, the police and prosecutors heard Graham Potter's defence for the first time. Potter's attorney explained to the court that while Kim Barry had been murdered in his client's home, Potter wasn't the culprit. Two drug dealers had done it. He wanted his client

to be given bail so he could work on his defence and help track down the true killers. His request was denied. Potter would remain on remand while awaiting his trial. Graham Potter's trial didn't begin until March the following year of 1982. Investigators had spent the previous eight months scrutinising his claims in preparation for their case. First of all, it appeared that small details in Potter's story changed depending on who he was talking to. The story he told his family differed slightly from the one he shared with his fiancée Cherie. A lengthier statement he provided to his legal team had even further discrepancies. Detectives tried to find out whether Kim Barry had any history of illicit drug use or connections to individuals in the drug trade. They hadn't been able to come up with anything. No one who knew Kim had ever known her to have any interest in recreational drugs or criminal activity. She enjoyed going out with friends and having a drink on occasion, but that was all. She was also focused on her job at the supermarket, her volunteer work at a children's home, and her long-term goal of becoming a nurse. Potter had said he wasn't interested in talking to Kim and didn't like her much, but those who had seen Kim talking with Potter noted that the two looked friendly. One person was certain that when they left the disco together they had been holding hands. Graham Potter had provided descriptions of the two men he claimed killed Kim, which were used to create suspect sketches. One man had a long, thin face with dark hair styled in a quiff. The other had a slightly wider face, big ears, and close cropped hair. No one else who'd been at the Crown Gardens that night could recall seeing anyone who matched the sketches. Witnesses who saw Kim at the disco said that she hadn't looked worried or fearful. However, the defense claimed that two women had seen Kim crying in the nightclub's bathroom, and that she'd told them she was, quote, marked. They weren't able to present these women a trial. One of the bar staff recalled she'd seen a woman crying in the bathroom, but didn't know if that woman was Kim. It had appeared that the woman was crying about a man as she repeated the words, oh, the bastard. Other issues that were addressed at trial included the blood evidence found at Potter's unit. Potter said that Kim was murdered in his living room, yet the amount of blood found in the spare bedroom led to the prosecution arguing she'd most likely been murdered there. Linear scratches in the bathtub and blood found in the drain pointed to that as the location of Kim's dismemberment. A lot of attention was paid to the mutilation of Kim's hands. Potter had claimed the culprits used a meat sore to sever Kim's fingers. Extensive testing by investigators led them to believe that a hacksaw and pliers were the tools used. The defense argued that if two different methods were used, that meant it was more likely that two different people were responsible. They also pointed out that the way Kim's head and fingers had been removed appeared consistent with the way organized criminals might dispose of a victim to prevent their identification. The defense claimed Potter had no motive to kill Kim Barry and said police hadn't been able to come up with one either. Graham Potter didn't take the stand. Instead, he provided a statement detailing his version of events. This meant he was able to avoid cross-examination by the prosecution. When the trial wrapped up roughly a month after it began, the jury left to consider their verdict. After deliberating for an hour and 10 minutes, they found Graham Potter guilty.

Graham Potter was sentenced to life in prison. His supporters were distraught, believing he was wrongly paying for other men's crimes. Potter's fiancée, Shari Jones, remained loyal to him and married him in a prison ceremony almost six months later. Potter was not entitled to conjugal visits and was unable to spend any time alone with Shari. Graham Potter continued to maintain his innocence and repeatedly appealed his conviction. By the mid-1980s, he'd exhausted all avenues for appeal. But he continued to find new advocates who believed his story. They kept looking for evidence that Potter had been wrongly convicted. A document from a real estate agent was uncovered, revealing that the scratches in Potter's bathtub had been there before he rented the property. His supporters felt this was important. While police had pointed to the bathtub scratches as evidence Potter had dismembered Kim there, Potter had always maintained that two men had mutilated Kim on the bathroom floor. Potter's supporters also tracked down a woman involved in Wollongong's drug trade, who claimed she'd overheard two male acquaintances talking about how they'd dealt with a girl. They said another man had been present for the crime, but was really, quote, good about it. When the woman asked who the men were talking about, they replied, have a guess. Armed with this new information, Graham Potter applied for a judicial inquiry into his conviction. He had access to a computer and used this to put his case together until it was confiscated during a crackdown on inmate's privileges. Potter felt that the only way he could finish his application was if he was on the outside. At 5.20pm on Saturday, June 30, 1990, Graham Potter and another inmate crawled through the roof of their prison's visitors' centre. They ran to the wall of the prison and managed to jump it, then caught a taxi. When the taxi driver later heard a news report about the prison break, he phoned police and told them where he'd dropped the men off. They were both captured within 22 hours of their escape and returned to their cells. Potter was charged with escape from lawful custody and intent to use a weapon to avoid arrest. Three years later, however, Potter's luck would turn. New sentencing legislation led to his sentence being reviewed and ultimately reduced with a minimum term of 12 years, eight months. In 1996, after he'd served 14 years for killing Kim Barry, Graham Potter was released on parole. He told the media that his plan now was to, quote, clear my name. Instead of clearing his name, Graham Potter moved to Tasmania with his wife Cherie and became involved in the illicit drug trade. In 2008, he was arrested as part of a sting operation by the Australian federal police for his involvement in helping import \$440 million worth of ecstasy and cocaine. Potter was extradited to Victoria for court proceedings and subsequently granted bail. Able to freely roam the streets of Melbourne, Potter was drawn into the city's notorious underworld after meeting a local mafia member behind bars. Potter's new friend allegedly hired him to kill two men. One of the targets was an associate of infamous gangland figure Mick Gatto and the murder was set to take place at Gatto's son's wedding. Before Potter carried out the hit, he was re-arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit murder. Once again, he was released on bail. In February 2010, Graham Potter failed to appear at the Melbourne Magistrates Court for a hearing. Detectives were unable to find him. Potter had gone on the run, just as he did almost 30 years earlier after killing Kim Barry in 1981, but this time he didn't re-emerge. Six months later on Saturday, August 28, 2010, police at the other end of the country in Tully, Queensland were conducting a routine vehicle intercept. It turned out that the person behind the wheel was Graham Potter. He bolted during the

## [Transcript] Casefile True Crime / 308: Case 263: Kim Barry

traffic stop and ran towards an area of rainforest. He disappeared amongst the trees and police were unable to find him, but they did discover a campsite where Potter had been living at the Tully Caravan Park. Potter had been staying there for about six weeks. Amongst his belongings were knives, fishing lines, stockpiles of food, newspapers with the job listings highlighted, a set of binoculars, and multiple pairs of eyeglasses. Investigators also found handwritten notes which detailed how Potter could disguise himself. Potter wrote that if anybody recognised him, he would kill them. Now that they had seized his equipment and survival supplies, police were confident that it wouldn't be long before Potter was forced to surface again. However, months then years went by with Potter remaining on the run.

Unconfirmed sightings came in from all over the country. Potter was spotted back in Victoria, in regional New South Wales, and even across the Bass Strait in Tasmania.

On one occasion, he befriended an elderly widow who unknowingly took him in as a lodger.

When one of the woman's friends recognised Potter, she confronted him.

He threatened to kill her if she called the police.

Potter was skilled at manual labour which allowed him to find cash in handwork from unsuspecting employers. Investigators knew he tended to lie low by sticking to rural areas or country towns. Sometimes he stayed at rental properties, but he was also comfortable camping and roughing it for months at a time. Sometimes, detectives obtained grainy CCTV footage of Potter at a general store or a pub, but it seemed like he was always several steps ahead of them.

By 2014, he was definitely known to be back in far north Queensland.

A publican in Ravenshoe, a town approximately two hours south of Cairns, realised that a customer who'd just bought a bottle of Jim Beam bourbon was Graham Potter.

The publican phoned the police, but by the time they arrived, Potter was long gone.

A \$100,000 reward was offered for information leading to Potter's capture,

but police warned the public they were not under any circumstances to approach the fugitive.

Potter's elusiveness led to the media dubbing him, Australia's most wanted man.

On Monday, February 21, 2022, police in far north Queensland headed to a dilapidated house in Ravenshoe. They were acting on a tip-off. Random pieces of timber and sheet metal were strewn outside and leaning up against the building. Numerous cats and kittens roamed around the property.

Inside, the old house was dark and filthy, with mattresses, cardboard boxes, and chicken coupes piled to the ceiling. The officers found a man by the name of Josh Lawson hiding in a room, attempting to clamber across some of the chicken coupes to evade capture.

They demanded he place his hands where they could see them and placed him under arrest.

Josh Lawson was Graham Potter, now 64 years old. It was one of many aliases he'd been using over the past 12 years. Other names Potter went by included John Page, Peter Adams, and Jim Henderson.

He had used various costumes to disguise himself, including fat suits, wigs, and glasses.

The house where he was arrested was less than a kilometre from the pub where he'd purchased the Jim

Beam eight years earlier. The same publican had served Potter since then, but had never recognised him again due to his elaborate disguises. Police believed Potter had likely spent the last decade in the same area.

Graham Potter was extradited back to Victoria to finally face his charges.



## [Transcript] Casefile True Crime / 308: Case 263: Kim Barry

As of late 2023, his case is still before the courts.

In the early 1990s, journalist John Souter Linton was working on a book about the Kim Barry case. His research into the crime was meticulous, and he even managed to uncover some information that the police had never found. One gap in the original investigation involved how Graham Potter and Kim Barry had travelled back to his unit. Potter said they'd caught a taxi, but no taxi driver had ever come forward, despite appeals from investigators.

12 years later, in 1993, an article about Potter's sentencing being reduced ran in the Illawarra Mercury. A local man who read the story came forward and told John Souter Linton something that he'd never spoken about before. He claimed that he was the taxi driver who'd picked up Potter and Kim that night. He'd given Kim lifts before, and though he didn't know her name, he remembered her home address. According to the driver, a second man had gotten into the taxi with Kim and Potter. He sat up the front and chatted cheerfully to the driver, while Kim and Potter sat quietly in the back. The driver didn't think Kim seemed scared, but she was a little quiet. He suspected she might have recognised him too and been embarrassed about going home with

a man instead of to her usual address. The driver went on holiday immediately after and so missed the initial media flurry about Kim's murder. He didn't realise the potential significance of the lift he'd given that night until Graham Potter's trial was well underway. It is not clear who the extra passenger in the taxi was, but John Souter Linton has noted Graham Potter was known to offer lifts to strangers. Not long after the driver came forward, John Souter Linton met with Graham Potter in prison. Although he found Potter polite and soft-spoken, as his supporters described, John also noted that Potter had a temper. He went on an angry defensive rant about the taxi driver who had recently come forward. He also liked to shock John and his parents by telling stories about gory accidents and the notorious criminals he was now acquainted with.

John Souter Linton thought it was interesting that Potter reveled in keeping company with such individuals, when he also blamed two such men for the crime he was convicted of.

John Souter Linton's book *The Stranger You Know* was published in 1997, 16 years after Kim Barry was murdered. John spent time with Kim's family and saw firsthand the devastation they were left to grapple with. Beverly Barry battled with anxiety, insomnia and complete despair. During Graham Potter's trial, her husband Brian shielded Beverly from some of the worst details of what had happened to Kim. Brian's personality and life experiences led to him repressing his own emotions. He believed he had to stay strong for his family, but the stress of knowing what his daughter suffered and having to identify her body ate away at him.

Kim's younger brother Wayne became an only child at a vulnerable age and struggled with the immense public attention his sister's case received. John Souter Linton wrote of Kim's loved ones, quote, *The Barry family, to their credit, do not hold any malice or hatred towards Graham Potter and his family. It may be true to say there is an emptiness, a disbelief that one person could take another's life. The victims of crime are not those who are killed, but those who are left to try and fill the emotional void someone else has thoughtlessly created.*