

I fear mum poisoned the Somerton Man

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Women claim they are relatives of mystery man found on an **Adelaide** beach in hunt for answers to solve a 65-year-old mysterious case

THE mysterious Somerton Man may have been killed by his nurse lover – an **Adelaide** woman and suspected Soviet spy with whom he fathered a child, it has been claimed.

And in another startling revelation two women, who believe they are related to the Somerton Man's son, want the unknown man's body exhumed in a bid to prove DNA links and answer a 65-year-old question as to his identity.

Tonight 60 Minutes reveals for the first time that the Somerton Man was romantically linked to Somerton Park nurse Jessica Thomson who lived in Moseley St, just metres from where the man's body was found slumped against a sea wall 65 years ago.

Her daughter, Kate Thomson, says she accepts her mother was a Soviet spy who may have had a hand in the murder of the Somerton Man, also a suspected Russian agent.

"She had a dark side, a very strong dark side," Kate, who is the daughter of Jessica and her husband Prosper Thomson, tells 60 Minutes .

"She said to me she, she knew who he was but she wasn't going to let that out of the bag. There's always that fear that I've thought that maybe she was responsible for his death." Police linked Jessica to the Somerton Man seven months after his corpse was found on December 1, 1948.

But Jessica denied any knowledge. Kate says her mother lied to police. "She told the police that she didn't know who he was and certainly I know nothing," Kate says. "She did (know) and she told me that it is a mystery that was only known to a level higher than the police force."

The Somerton Man is one of Australia's most enduring and baffling cold case mysteries.

According to 60 Minutes he was last seen knocking on the door of Jessica's house, but she was not home, and he walked in the direction of Somerton Beach where his body was later found resting against a sea wall.

Numerous items were found in his pockets, including a used bus ticket, and an unused rail ticket to Henley Beach. All labels to his clothes were cut off. His wallet was missing.

He died of unnatural causes, most probably poisoning.

Police later found a piece of paper with the words "Tamam Shud", meaning "it is finished", in a fob pocket sewn in the dead man's trouser pocket.

It was torn from a copy of the Persian book The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam – which was thrown into a doctor's car, parked outside his home at Somerton Beach, on the night of November 30.

The book had Jessica's unlisted phone number inside.

All police records relating to the case have been destroyed and Jessica is now dead.

Jessica had a son Robin and his wife, Roma Egan, and their daughter, Rachel, are now claiming that Robin

was the progeny of the mystery man.

They are backing a new bid by **Adelaide** University physicist and Somerton Man expert Professor **Derek Abbott** to exhume the man's body from his West Terrace Cemetery grave.

"It may be confronting, it may not be pleasant but I'd rather find out the truth," Rachel tells 60 Minutes. "Somerton Man is potentially my grandfather. So that to me is very important." Prof Abbott has lodged a new application with Attorney-General John Rau to have the body exhumed.

"The imperative to identify this unknown man is on par with the current practice of identifying unidentified WWI and WWII graves for bringing closure to their families," he wrote in a November 21 letter to Mr Rau.

"In terms of specific public interest, there is a potential descendant of the unknown man living in Australia and I am now able to verify a compelling likelihood of this based on both historical proximity and anatomical evidence." In July 2011, Mr Rau rejected a similar application stating that there needed to be "public interest reasons that go well beyond public curiosity or broad scientific interest".

WATCH THE FULL STORY ON 60 MINUTES, 7.30pm TONIGHT ON channel 9
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HIM

- An unknown man arrives in **Adelaide** on a one-way train ticket on November 30, 1948.
- He buys another one-way ticket to Henley Beach. He doesn't take the train, but instead takes a bus to Henley Beach.
- He's seen knocking on the door of Jessica Thomson's Moseley St, Somerton Park, home that afternoon. She does not answer and he walks towards Somerton Beach.
- His dead body is found propped up against a seawall at 6.45am on December 1. ■ A post-mortem reveals a fit man with broad shoulders, toned legs and a healthy heart. The pathologist suspects an exotic poison but no trace is found.
- On January 14, 1949, an unclaimed suitcase believed to be his — is found in **Adelaide** Railway Station's cloakroom. A coat found inside has a front gusset and stitching only used on garments made in the U.S.
- In April, 1949 police find a tiny piece of rolled-up paper with the words "Tamam Shud", meaning "it is finished" found in a fob pocket sewn within the dead man's trouser pocket.
- In June, 1949, a coronial inquest is unable to determine a cause of death and an open finding is delivered. The man is buried at West Tce Cemetery. ■

In July, 2011, Attorney-General John Rau denies a request for exhumation.

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