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The Advertiser

News



New twist in Somerton Man mystery as fresh claims emerge

- **by: RENATO CASTELLO**
- From: Sunday Mail (SA)
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The body of the Somerton Man, who has never been identified.

Source: Supplied

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 in turn 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 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 so to speak. There's always that fear that I've thought that maybe she was responsible for his death."

Police linked Jessica Thomson to the Somerton Man seven months after his well-dressed corpse was found on December 1, 1948.

But Jessica denied any knowledge when questioned by police. Kate says her mother lied to police.



The site at Somerton was the man's body was found leaning against a sea wall.

"She told the police that she didn't know who he was and certainly I know nothing," Kate tells *60 Minutes* .

"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 since his body was discovered on December 1, 1948.

According to 60 Minutes he was last seen knocking on the door of Jessica's house but she was not home.

He walked in the direction of Somerton Beach where his body was later found lying against a seawall.

Numerous items were found in his pockets (<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/is-british-seamans-identity-card-clue-to-solving-63-year-old-beach-body-mystery/story-e6frea6u-1226200076344>) , including a used bus ticket 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 due to poisoning.



Rachel Egan, left, is the daughter of Roma Egan, whose late husband, Robin, is believed to be the son of the Somerton Man and Jessica Thomson. Picture: 60 minutes, Nine Network

Police later found a piece of rolled-up paper with the words "Tamam Shud", meaning "it is finished", found deep in a fob pocket sewn within 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, 1948.

The book had Jessica's unlisted phone number inside.

All police records relating to the case have been destroyed and Jessica, the one tangible link to his identity, is dead.

Jessica also had a son, Robin, to another man.

Robin's wife Roma Egan and their daughter, Rachel, have now come forward claiming Robin was the progeny of the Somerton Man and Jessica Thomson.

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



The funeral of the Somerton Man at West Terrace in 1948. There are new moves to exhume his body to obtain DNA samples.

"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."

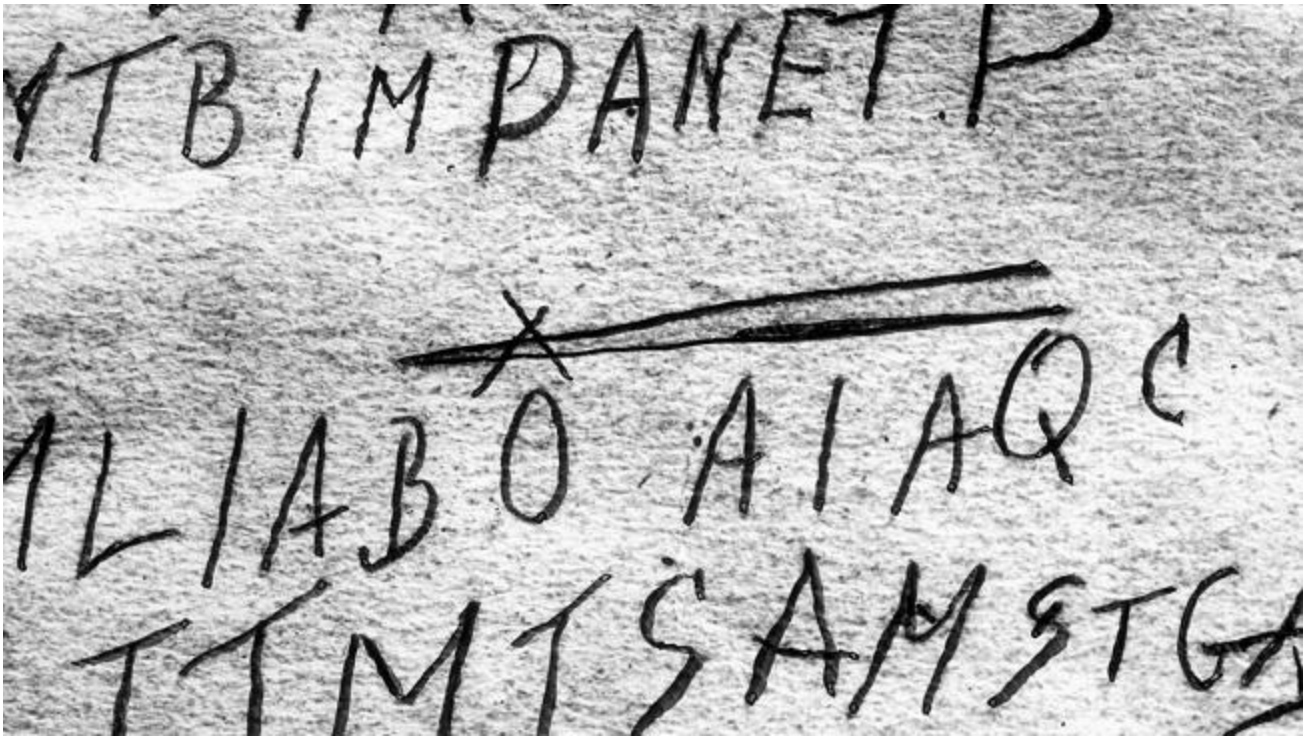
Prof Abbott has lodged a fresh application with Attorney-General John Rau to have the body exhumed.

"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, and there is a considerable general public interest in the case to do so," he wrote in the 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 October 2011, **Mr Rau rejected a similar application** (<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/rau-refuses-to-dig-up-the-unknown-man-found-dead-at-somerton-beach/story-e6frea6u-1226167499806>) stating that there needed to be "public interest reasons that go well beyond public curiosity or broad scientific interest".

THE SOMERTON MAN MYSTERY



The note found in a hidden pocket in the Somerton Man's trousers.

ON November 30, 1948 an unknown man arrives in Adelaide on a one-way train ticket.

He buys another one-way ticket to Henley Beach and leaves his suitcase at the Adelaide Railway Station.

He doesn't take the train, instead crosses North Terrace and takes a bus to Henley Beach.

He's seen knocking on the door of nurse 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.

In his pockets were a used bus ticket, an unused rail ticket from the city to Henley Beach, a narrow aluminium American comb, a half-empty packet of Juicy Fruit chewing gum, an Army Club cigarette packet containing Kensitas cigarettes, and a quarter-full box of Bryant & May matches.



Roma Egan wants the Somerton Man's body to be exhumed.

A half-smoked cigarette was balanced on his shirt collar.

A post-mortem revealed a fit man with broad shoulders, toned legs and a healthy heart. The pathologist suspected an exotic poison, but no trace was found.

On January 14, 1949 an unclaimed suitcase believed to be his - is found in Adelaide Railway Station's cloakroom.

Among items inside were a red checked dressing gown, slippers, underpants, pyjamas, shaving items, trousers, a screwdriver, knife and scissors. A coat had a front gusset and stitching only used on garments made in the US.

On 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. A doctor comes forward, saying it was torn from a copy of the book *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* - which was thrown into his car, parked at Somerton Beach, on the night of November 30.

This led to claims the man could have been a Soviet spy but supposed codes in the book were never able to be deciphered.

On June, 1949 a coronial inquest is unable to determine cause of death and an open finding is delivered. The man is buried at West Tce Cemetery.



Kate Thomson believes her mother, Jessica Thomson, was a Russian spy who had a relationship with the Somerton Man. Picture: 60 minutes, Nine Network

In October 2011, the South Australian Attorney-General, John Rau, denied a request for exhumation.

WATCH THE FULL STORY ON 60 MINUTES, 7.30pm TONIGHT ON NINE.



Rachel Egan wants the body of the Somerton Man exhumed in an attempt to prove if he was her grandfather. Picture: 60 minutes, Nine Network



The contents of a bag found with the Somerton Man's body.

Many try to solve beach mystery

In spite of telephone calls from as far away as Melbourne by people who believed they could identify the man whose body was found at Somerton on Wednesday, police still have no definite clue.

The body of the man, who is thought to be about 40, was found fully clothed on the beach. All name tags had been cut from his clothing.

Following publication in "The News" yesterday of a reconstructed picture, 10 people have been taken to view the body at the City Morgue.

Last night two men, who thought it was a friend of

Comments suggested stock explode, but (Mr. Arthur out later that film had a sa not highly would ignite slowly.

A box o quota of fil been left ne and was des apart from the display w most of the harmed.

Mr. Wons shop will be on Monday.

The adjoi of H. G. Ro damage by Detective O'Malley at port for the Damage

woman who read the story in a Melbourne newspaper, thought it might have been her son.

Capture of thief seen by television

A report from The News on the mystery of the Somerton Man's identity.

DEAD MAN FOUND LYING ON SOMERTON BEACH

The fully clothed body of a man was found on the beach at Somerton, opposite the Crippled Children's Home, at 6.30 a.m. today. Up to noon police had no clue to his identity.

The body had not been in the water.

The man was lying on his back against the sea wall. The legs were crossed, and death appeared to have occurred while the man was sleeping.

A thorough search of his pockets revealed no papers or anything that would give a clue to his name.

The man is thought to have been about 40. He was 5 ft. 11 in. in height, and well built. He was clean-shaven, with fair hair slightly grey over the temples, hazel eyes, and was wearing a grey and brown double-breasted coat, brown trousers, socks, and shoes, and a brown knitted woollen pull-over, white shirt and collar, and red-white-and-blue tie.

The discovery was made by Mr. John Lyons, jeweller, of Whyte road, Somerton, who called Constable Moss, of Brighton, and Det. Strangway.

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Another report from The News about the Somerton Man.

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Marilyn

May 17, 2014

Kensitas cigarettes were found in the British Mandate as well. Did he fly in from there? Solomonson???

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Marilyn

May 17, 2014

That looks like a book that belonged to Dr Mengele. One like that was used by children in his service. Codes in the book helped navigate the camp when running errands.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Kristin

Mar 10, 2014

What about digitalis? It can be administered slowly over a period of time and isn't traced easily unless one is looking for it. Its usually used in people to medicate heart defects but when given to someone with a healthy heart, it can cause heart block and bradycardia or tachycardia. Just a thought when this case popped up on a page i follow on twitter and i read about it. If he was seeing a nurse (for romantic reasons or not) I figure that she'd be familiar with it.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Kate

Feb 15, 2014

My name is Kate Thompson my mother was a registered nurse in Adelaide during the 40s and 50s I suggest you all tred very carefully with what you say think and annunciate. Nothing is what it appears to be

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Michael

Mar 10, 2014

@Kate I also come from an older Russian family (mothers side), I wouldn't worry to much about it..see when things become this public all sorta of crazy people start coming up with theories, so people tend not to take anything seriously. That's why governments love conspiracy theorists, once you make something a conspiracy people no longer look at it as real, it;s more entertainment..nothing is taken seriously and the people making the claims are call nutjobs,

Just be happy because in this day and age you can totally profit off of it, you are lucky for your families story to be so public. My families own story is simply known to us and 2nd hand from my great grand parents children (my Grandmother and great aunts). My great grand father died before I was born and back when my great grand mother was alive all she would say was "that was a long time ago I don't remember"...

A lot of people were sent over, most were poor so turned to crime or the mafia, mostly forgotten by those who sent them, some were used others became liability so needed to be taken care of as is likely the case here. I wouldn't worry to much about it, the people involved are all dead or so old they are no longer a danger.

so just have fun with it now, maybe go for a book or movie deal and cash in, that is what I

would do if my families story was more exciting and public. though it would be nice if a few other could post there stories as i am sure there are a lot of people out there who have strange things like this in their families past...be cool to here some new ones to since this kind of thing is still going on today...sadly they seem a lot less intelligent since they are always getting caught lol.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)**harry**

Nov 26, 2013

When I looked at all the facts, I believe that DNA testing of all the people and bodies involved should be done. With respect to the coded message and Jessica's home phone number written into the book, "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam", that was found on the seat of a local doctors parked car indicates a connection. (doctor/nurse/poison/ medical gear in his hotel room etc). I set up a VP2200 Fijitsu supercomputer to break the code with the book as a "one-time-pad" with other selected materials etc and after a lot of work I found out from the deciphered code that he was a spy. The question is for which country? He had American clothes, smoked English cigarettes, and had ships officer gear in his suit case. Clearly, the answer is with Jessica Thomson!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)**disgusted**

Nov 24, 2013

His clothing could have been purchased from a second hand clothing store. The T Keane would have been easy to trace. I think he bought anonymous second hand clothing to make himself harder to trace.

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)**James**

Nov 24, 2013

I am at a loss - where did T. Keane come from?

[Like](#) [Reply](#)**PETE**

Nov 24, 2013

It doesn't matter what the women find, DNA will not tell us who he is. But we already know who he is. He is T. KEANE. Because that was the name on his clothes.

and that is all we know .. but I'm looking.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)**Felix**

Dec 2, 2013

@PETE What if he used a false name on the label? Or if the clothes were borrowed or second hand?

[Like](#) [Reply](#)**JAFO**

Nov 24, 2013

I wonder whether the astute reporters will have noticed that the only fingerprints taken where from Somerrton Man? No fingerprints were taken from the suitcase, the tools including the blade of the knife, the handles, the glass dish, the lighter, the copy of the book (Jimmy Durham had already shown he knew

how to lift prints from paper the year previous) What about a forensic examination of the 'Code' page with all of its markings, miniature numbers and letters? What about the same for the 'Laundry' marked pocket? What about all the lead traces found in his hair sample? Finally what about the listening post supposedly set up by the Post Office in early 1949 just 500 metres from a certain persons home?

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Ian

Nov 24, 2013

I believe I may be Elvis's missing love child because our singing was very similar. Dig him up. DNA test, etc. Just more people wanting their fifteen minutes.

3 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



Peter

Nov 24, 2013

[@Ian](#) Ian brother Lord Have Mercy! me too we should get together and exhume Elvis

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



Ian

Nov 24, 2013

[@Peter](#) [@Ian](#) Chuckle..

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Bruce

Nov 24, 2013

Or the body was put there. There was nobody around in Adelaide after dark in those days. Nowhere for him to go at night. No pubs were open or anything else, especially on 30 November 1948. Tuesday evening ? Well dressed corpse ? Nowhere to go in Adelaide at night. Police records destroyed ? Is the State hiding something ?

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



Haydn

Nov 24, 2013

[@Bruce](#) I see not much has changed with Adelaide as this is still nothing to do at night.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Neil

Nov 23, 2013

Lets exhume the "Unknown Man's" body, do appropriate DNA testing & see if any of these women can substantiate their claims or come to terms with the fact they watch too much television, especially those current affair programs.

9 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



Close

Nov 24, 2013

Attorney General Rau says it isnt in the public interest. I thought unsolved deaths were possible crimes but i guess it shows he doesnt socialise with the general public or is just ignorant?

8  Like Reply**Will**

Nov 24, 2013

@Neil Yep, not long to go now, March 2014 and this lot will be gone, FOREVER I hope. you can bet they will all be working overtime over the Christmas break giving the shredding machine plenty of overtime too, lots to hide I'll bet. All Rau is interested in is himself and his developer mates. I'll bet you he's NOT on the invitation list to the Adelaide City Council Christmas Party.

6  Like Reply**disgusted**

Nov 24, 2013

@Neil to be correct they should exhume the body of Robin the alleged son. That would link the man more surely with DNA first to Robin. Then the daughter's mitochondrial could be examined.

1  Like Reply

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Chloe 'left with teenager' after mum disappeared drunk



SA POLICE left Chloe Valentine in the care of a teenage girl and a patrol when her paralytically drunk mother "wandered off" and couldn't be found, an inquest has heard.

Removing kids from druggies 'may cause more harm than good'



REMOVING children from parents who use hard drugs, including methamphetamine and heroin, can sometimes cause more harm than good, SA's education and child protection boss says.

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