

# *Manly Murders*

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# Manly Murders

A Mother Without a Child

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**Gunilla Haglundh:**

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To Australia with all my love. Despite the  
hardship you put me through.

Despite all my tears buried in my pillow.

Despite the horror and fear,

not even dare to breathe. Despite my  
endless loneliness and hunger for  
belonging.

Despite all my struggle for survival.

I still honour your land and worship your  
beaches. I do know of your culture and  
history.

I want to contribute to your future.

I truly respect those who went before me  
and

I have mercy for those coming after me.

Finally, I belong to you people.

Above all

I deeply love you

Australia.



# *Chapter 1*

## MONDAY MORNING, 4 WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

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It was one of those mornings when the whole family was running late for work and school because they were looking for misplaced belongings. Tiffany, year 10, was yelling loudly when her two year younger brother Mitchell snatched her iPhone and ran through the house screaming “I’ll read all your SMS’s to Perry and I’ll send him one too”. Tiffany ran after him shouting “I’ll get you, you little brat”. Eventually she did. Georgia loved her children dearly but some mornings she certainly loved them less.

Both Tiff and Mitch went to the Manly Selective School in North Curl Curl. She was grateful that both her children liked to study even though they complained an awful lot about their homework. Both of them had good friends that they had known since primary school.

“Ok, can the two of you take a break from mucking around and listen to me? That would be fantastic. Tiff remember you have swimming squad this afternoon and Nina will take you there. Mitch since you have nothing on today, can you kindly take Blackie for a long walk down to the beach in the afternoon? Thanks, and by the way, please try not to kill each other, I have enough of that at work,” Georgia said with a smile and they knew it was just a normal day.

Mitch muttered something about it being unfair that he had to take Blackie for a walk again, but really he did not

mind.

The black cocker spaniel had melted his heart a long time ago. Georgia quickly kissed her kids goodbye. Peter would be back tonight from his business trip to Europe. The kids always seemed a bit unsettled when their dad was not around, like a piece was missing. And yes, a big piece was missing in their quartet. Georgia deeply missed him too. She would ask her mother to come down from the Central Coast soon, not that the kids needed minding, but it was a good enough reason to get her mother down. Then she and Peter could go away to Leura in the beautiful Blue Mountains for a weekend or maybe go down south to Berrima. Peter had been working a lot lately and it could be good for just the two of them to find that special moment together.

Georgia and Peter had met at Sydney University more than 20 years ago when she studied Law and Peter studied Business and Finance. Peter had worked with several international finance companies over the years, but now he worked for the European Business Chamber. He loved his job even though his frequent travels were a bit hard on the family from time to time.

The family meant everything to Peter and Georgia. Peter grew up with a single mother in Newcastle. He had met his father once and apparently that was one time too many. Peter never talked about it and Georgia never asked.

Georgia had also spent her late teenage years with only her mother after her father passed away with an unexpected heart attack. So both of them knew what it was like to only have one parent. That was why they were so careful about each other in their family. They did not want their children to share their experiences. They saw several of their friends splitting up over the years, but they had decided to stay together no matter what and to ride out any storms – together. They both believed that if they worked together towards the same goal they could climb any mountain. That had worked for the last 20 years so they were both

convinced it would be the two of them for the rest of their lives.

Georgia had not practiced law in the traditional way; she had taken a short course with the police after her law degree and continued on to different positions within the police force. She never regretted her choice of occupation even though it was both mentally and emotionally draining at times, but she shared that burden with all of her colleagues.

Usually, Georgia just walked down to the police station in Manly, but today she was going to Surry Hills for training, so she would take the ferry from Manly wharf to Circular Quay. It was not often that happened. Something to look forward to Georgia thought. The ferry this morning was Collaroy. There were four ferries operating the “Quay route”, Collaroy, Freshwater, Narrabeen and Queenscliff. All named after different suburbs on the Northern Beaches. The ferries have three levels and can take up to 1,100 passengers each.

Northern Beaches is an informal term used for the northern coastal suburbs of Sydney. The councils of Manly, Warringah and Pittwater are usually referred to in that way. There are more than 40 suburbs included in the area and soon 250,000 people will be living there. On top of that there is a tourist influx from October to May and sometimes all year around. There are an estimated six million people visiting Manly every year. Manly is therefore one of Sydney’s most popular destinations. Full of attractions and exciting activities including Manly Beach and seventeen other beaches, Manly Sea Life, kayaking, swimming, tennis, golf, beach volleyball, roller blading, Manly Murders walking tours, art, parasailing, scuba diving, fishing and dining to mention a few.

Georgia left their house on Lauderdale Avenue. It took her less than ten minutes to get to the ferry, and it was a pleasant walk in the morning following the foreshore to the ferry. She could not help stopping for a second and looking

out over the beautiful calm water and all the moored boats. She should really walk here more often, but it was difficult to get the time to fit in all her activities or maybe the other way around. She was not even working full time. She was supposed to work only four days a week, but she could not remember the last time that happened. Maybe she did that in the winter and now it was summer.

It was only four weeks to Christmas. She had not even started to buy the presents yet. The children had written their wish lists a long time ago. Gone were the days when she could just walk into a store, look at something and think that it would suit. Today it was very important that it was the right brand or the right game. She tried hard to keep up with her children's latest gadgets, but she must admit it was difficult. They were no longer as sharing as they were when they were younger and just wanted her to look at everything they did. Back then she had not always had time to do so. She had so little time, but she would love to be more in their world. But it was probably just how it was supposed to be with teenagers today.

She could remember when she was a teenager herself and started closing her bedroom door. And how her mother would stand at the bedroom door knocking and saying, "Can I come in and talk? Sometimes she just wanted to scream, "NO!" but she never did. Her mother had been awfully lonely after her father passed away and she was looking for company. Of course she wanted to make sure that her daughter did not end up in the wrong crowd as well, not that Georgia had even been close to the "wrong" crowd.

Georgia just passed the sea shell. It is a sculpture outside the wharf – a meeting point. As usual the "Library-lady" was next to it with her library-pickup. People stopped and gave back books they had borrowed and got some new ones. A good way to spread literature – to be amongst the people. Manly of course has a proper library over three levels in Market Street. It's in the heart of Manly, another

of several cultural hubs.

Georgia bought her ticket, entered the ferry and sat by the window. She glanced over to Manly Sea Life, formerly Ocean World, where her family had been many times to see the sharks, giant stingrays, sea turtles and a myriad of marine life. She loved a day out with her family, but lately everyone seemed so busy doing their own thing. It was really scary how fast time flew. Tiff would be leaving high school in a couple of years and creating her own life. She was a beautiful girl with long blonde curly hair that she inherited from Georgia. She got her beautiful green eyes from Peter. She was not as tall as Georgia, but not many females were. Georgia was tall and lean, with long slim legs that she did not do much to hide. Many men probably considered her to be hot. Georgia had never paid much attention to her looks and she barely wore any makeup. A touch of lipstick had to do, especially on mornings like this.

The ferry filled up in no time at all. The long side, outside, were popular seats where many men sat with their cups of coffee. Maybe it made them feel closer to nature and their origin than the white collar life they lived now.

Georgia sipped the cappuccino she had bought at Bacino's café before she boarded the ferry. She browsed through the Manly Daily newspaper, while waiting for the ferry to pull out from the wharf. One of thousands of women travelling to work on the ferry every day.

Martin was whistling as he was walking to the ferry. He could not remember the last time he had a spring in his step. What a great day it was. He was meeting with his accountant this morning to inform him about the changes he was making to his empire. He would also call his solicitor today to book in a meeting later in the week. When all of their actions were done he would of course gather his family and inform them about all the changes to come. He had certainly already told his wife of 30 years what was going to happen. He already knew that the rest of his family would not be happy either, but he had made up his mind. For all

these years he had always been there for his family, sent his sons to costly private schools, given them expensive cars and supported his wife, Gail, in every way he could. Now, it was finally about time that he put himself first. For the first time in his life he was going to do what he wanted. He could hardly wait for all the changes to come through – to live a new life.

Georgia heard a scream outside on the deck. And then a voice:

“Someone is shooting at us! Help!”

“One guy is already dead.”

Georgia reacted in the blink of an eye, rushed out on the deck in a hunkered position. She made signs to everyone sitting on the benches to take protection behind the gunwale. She talked as loud as she could, but still kept her calm.

“Take cover behind the gunwale. My name is Georgia Show. I’m a police detective from Manly.”

Her first thought was that Australia had got the same type of madman – as Anders Breivik – which Norway had encountered not long ago and who had gunned down seventy seven young people.

There were screams, panic and fear in the passengers.

“I don’t want to die.”

“What is happening?”

“Is someone dead?”

Georgia had to use her strongest voice to try to calm everyone down.

“Put your head close to your lap and your arms over your head. NOW.”

Georgia had no idea where the shooting was coming from. She instantly approached the man who had been shot and started to give first aid. The white shirt, of a man in his early fifties, was covered in blood. The coffee cup that he must have had in his hand was rolling on the deck. His pants were covered in coffee, but it was too late for him to feel the heat.

People were shocked and cried when they looked out the window and saw the man with blood all over his shirt.

Georgia took off her pink scarf, unfolded it and put it over the victim's face, shoulders and chest.

Then she saw the young guy to the left of the dead man. He had his hand on his upper arm and blood was trickling between his fingers.

"I've been shot, I've been shot," he repeated.

"Let me look at that." Georgia could see that it was only a flesh wound.

"You're lucky. The bullet hasn't gone right through. It's just grazed the surface, but it's still bleeding a lot. Do you have another t-shirt or something?"

"Yes, in my backpack. In the outside pocket, there should be one."

Georgia got out a t-shirt, tore it apart and tied it around his arm.

"This will stop the bleeding. The paramedics will attend to you once we are back on shore. Are you ok?"

"I'm not sure. I was sitting here reading my book when that guy sounded funny, then his head started falling forward. At the same time I felt this huge pain in my arm. Australia is really dangerous. I'm just backpacking, I'm from Denmark. I've been here for three months and I'm actually on my way back."

Obviously he was in shock; he was talking a lot and went from one subject to the next.

"Are you flying out today, you mean?"

"No, not until tomorrow, I'm seeing some friends today."

"I think you will be fine to fly tomorrow."

"I hope so."

Georgia thought he was so lucky; the bullet lodged three centimetres from his shoulder. It would be good for the forensics to investigate further.

Georgia wanted everyone to be on the floor until it was safe to stand up. The Manly ferry carried on towards

Sydney. None of the decks men had heard anything. Georgia had her mobile in her bag inside the ferry but did not want to move and leave the people outside to a potential maniac.

The sliding door opened and a young guy in his early twenties came out.

“Hi, I’m David Couper and I’m a police student at Goulburn Campus, I heard something about a shooting. Can I help you?”

“David Couper, you are a godsend. Can you please show me your student identification first?”

David took out his i.d. from his wallet. It was all in good order.

“Yes two people have been shot. Come out here. I need to convince the captain to turn the ferry around and go back to Manly.”

“Listen everybody; this is David Couper he is in charge now. I will talk to the captain and meanwhile follow directions from David.”

Georgia rushed up the stairs to the third level where the captain was maneuvering the ferry.

She knocked on the door saying staff only. One of the deck hands opened the door.

“I’m Georgia Show, Detective Superintendent, from Manly police. The ferry has been hit. Someone has been shooting from a distance and hit two men, one is dead. We need to turn around and go back to Manly.”

“I heard no shot, are you sure? It’s just not that easy to turn her around. I also have to think about the 800 people thinking that they are on their way to work.”

“No, that’s not your first priority. Safety is. As the Detective Superintendent I’m ordering you to turn around. I’m happy for you to contact the Police Chief in Surry Hills to find out that my order is right. I have people down there in a panic who are fearful for their lives. I don’t even know if anyone else is dead.”

“How could this happen? We’ve never had anything like this onboard the Manly ferry,” he said a bit confused.

“We don’t have time to argue about this. While we are doing that, somebody else might be shot. It’s closer to go back to Manly than to Circular Quay. So please do as I say.”

“I hope you realise that I will follow this up with Sydney Ferries and get back to the police if we find that things haven’t been handled in the right way.”

“Be my guest. I know what I’m doing.”

“It’s not easy to turn her around. We need to do it out at North Head where it is open water.”

“Safety comes before speed. Can I use your notification system and send out a message to all the passengers?”

The captain just flicked the switch and a green light came on.

“This is your captain speaking. We have an important message to everybody. I will hand over to the police.”

Georgia introduced herself.

“Collaroy has been shot at from a distance and we have wounded people onboard. We need to go back to Manly wharf. I want all of you to remain calm. Stay away from the windows. Look around to see if you can identify anyone else who is hurt. In a minute, I will come down the stairs. Let me know then if anyone else is hurt. Thank you.”

Before she went downstairs, Georgia made a much needed call to her police colleagues and informed them of the incident on the ferry. They are used to the fact that anything can happen, but the fact that the Manly ferry had been involved in an incident such as this was a shock even for the police in Manly.

The captain was right, turning the ship around was no easy task, and it seemed like an eternity before the Manly ferry was on its way back to the wharf again. It is not a little speed boat that can turn around on a five cent coin.

The passengers were shocked to see the man with blood all over his shirt and the young guy sitting next to him with blood spots on a white t-shirt tied around his arm.

When Georgia walked down the stairs, she repeated herself and said that no one should sit next to the windows.

The floors were the best and for people who were not as flexible to stick to the middle of the ferry.

“What is happening? Is someone dead?”

“We have people wounded out there. They will all come in here and we need to share the space. Ok?”

“Sure, not a problem.”

“Is the gunman, here on the ferry?” someone asked.

Someone else was crying and somebody else was praying. Fear often brought out the religious side of people. Georgia had seen it so many times before, people praying who normally did not even own a bible. Something inherited from generations back. Something to get comfort from when nothing else existed.

“David, get everybody inside and on the floor. No one is to stay close to the windows.”

“Yes ma’am.”

All passengers on the outside deck on the eastern side were now either on the floor or bent down over their knees.

No more shots. Quiet.

Georgia thought that by the angle from where the victim had been killed, the shot must have come from one of the big, taller boats with a fly bridge so that the gunman could get the right angle.

She took a few steps while kneeling and opened the glass door leading into the ferry.

“I want all of you to get inside. Don’t stand up. Crawl if you have to.”

She waved her hand for everyone to follow and to get inside.

Everyone was bending down in their seats or lying on the floor. Georgia could hear people sobbing from several corners of the ferry.

The blast from the shot had shattered the windows behind the victim; luckily the seat on the other side was

empty. Georgia was grateful for that. Several more people could have been killed.

David made everyone get down on the floor.

“I need everyone to calm down. We’re on our way back to Manly where my police colleagues will meet us together with paramedics and the ambulance. Is anyone hurt or do you see anyone hurt around you?”

Voices came from all sides of the ship.

“We’re alright. We’re fine.”

There was only one other passenger who had been hurt, he had been sitting near the shattered window, he had received some cuts from the glass shards on his neck and face. Georgia was surprised to see all the glass slivers. It must be thick glass. For normal window glass the bullet would have just made a small hole and continued, unless the gunman had been shooting from close range. Georgia crawled over to the passenger to ask how he was.

“I’m alive and I think that’s the only thing that matters.”

“Do you feel dizzy? Do you have a headache or anything like that?”

“I have a pounding pain from one side of my head where most of the glass hit me.”

“How is your sight? Can you see alright?”

“I think my glasses saved me. My sight is fine.”

“The paramedics will soon look after you. Please don’t try to move. I know it’s awkward to be in the position you’re in, it won’t be for long. Can you manage?”

“Yeah, I can.”

“That’s good,” she said as she squeezed his arm.

“David, go up to the next level and make sure that everyone is staying away from the windows.”

“Yes, I will ma’am.”

“We will all be safe and fine,” she continued.

Georgia wanted everyone to relax so she kept talking. She knew from her training that a calming voice was the best in a crisis situation.

She could see that people held hands in their seats and on the floor. They most likely did not know each other but in fear of death people unite, people stretch out a hand to comfort or maybe to be comforted. Some people were already on their mobile phones calling their family members. Georgia would have preferred them to wait, but who could request silence in a situation like this.

“When we get back into Manly the paramedics will come onboard and look after everyone who needs attention. The police will start to talk to each and every one of you to ascertain what you have seen or heard,” she said.

When Georgia looked out the window she saw one of the police boats accompanying them.

Georgia and David had made sure that everyone on all sides of the deck was inside. When she looked out the window she could see her pink scarf waving in the wind from one corner. It barely covered the face of a man who had already gone where the rest of us cannot follow.

# *A taste of the next book, to be released Autumn 2013*



## **Prologue – A Lifesaver’s secret**

*There was an exciting day ahead of him. He had looked forward to it the whole week. He had prepared everything thoroughly. Dusted his office, cleaned the windows. Vacuumed the carpet. Everything needed to be perfect around him. It required a clean and pure room. He had prepared the ceremony. He had brought the black candles and a new binder for his press cuttings. Soon he was going to light the candles. He felt the familiar excitement spreading through his body. This was an achievement. Sunday gam was when he was going to start.*

*The first one had happened in 1975 at North Cronulla Beach, south of Sydney. In 1976 the circumstances had not been right so there was no one. He was happy when in 1977 he had two performances, one at Diamond Beach, north of Forster and the other one outside of Coffs Harbour on the NSW coast. In 1978 there was one outside Kiama, two hours drive south of Sydney. He was always careful to move around from beach to beach. As soon as he had performed the act, he moved on – at least three hours drive away.*

*The ritual filled up his life. He had never been interested in women or men. Never required any company. Some people were simply born with a reduced or no sexual drive. Sometimes he felt the urge from his genitals, but had learned to redirect that force to other areas of his life. These days he had that part of his body under control. Unfortunately, he had lately felt the signs of age from his body. Next year he would turn sixty.*

*He was born in Auckland, New Zealand. As soon as he could, he had left home, leaving behind his sisters and parents. He had never had any contact with any of them, apart from an occasional postcard from one of his sisters. He never wanted to see his father again. Both his parents had passed away long ago and left him with a small amount of money that he had invested in two apartments in Manly, Sydney's seaside paradise. Living in one and renting out the other. It gave him a small income. Together with the pension that he had been on all his life after the accident, it was enough for him to survive on. He did not have expensive habits.*

*Manly was his base to which he always returned. He had limited contact with his neighbours in the block, Pacific Heaven. If anyone asked about his life, he would simply tell them that he was travelling for work, but people seldom asked. Manly was the perfect place to live if you wanted to be unnoticed. There were plenty of people coming and going to Sydney's premier tourist site. He never had to worry that he would be recognised.*

*He lined them all up on the desk in order. Started with North Cronulla and finished with Salamander Bay, north of Newcastle where he had been only two weeks earlier. Usually, he stayed the night after the deed, so as to buy a paper in the morning to read about the event, then left the bed and breakfast place that he usually stayed at. He was pretty pleased with what he had achieved. Altogether, he had 18 clippings on his desk. They were going to go into his carefully selected black binder. Black, the colour of his rituals.*

*It must have been his father who had put him on to the feeling, at least that's what he believed. His father must have had the same sensation when he pushed Lester under the water and held him there until Lester was completely exhausted. Lester had taken it one step further – he never allowed his victims to come back up to the surface again. Sometimes, he let them come back up and breathe a couple of times so that he could extend the thrill and satisfaction of it all.*

*Lester began his ritual, lit the candles and opened the binder. Reverently, he took the first clippings into both his hands. He*

*honoured it to the black light and placed it in the binder.*

*Hi licked his thin lips. Still seventeen to go. Proudly, he looked over his desk. He starred at the headlines; “33 year old man drowned”, “Wollongong man drowned”, “Body found on the beach”, “Body floating in to the bay” etc. All his doing. All these men had been punished. Justice had been done. He had seen to it. And would continue to do so.*