

**Operation Alliance: 2002 Bali Bombings
Episode 2: Looking For Clues (Transcript)**

Voiceover: This podcast contains content that some listeners may find distressing. It contains depictions of real-life traumatic events, including commentary around significant injuries and death. It is not suitable for children and listener discretion is advised.

Ray Martin: Countering terrorism has been at the very core of the Australian Federal Police since the organisation was first established in 1979. But in 2002, an act of terrorism in Bali, right on Australia's doorstep, would prove to be a major turning point.

For the first time, Australians understood just how close and real the prospect of a terrorist attack was. For the AFP, they evolved overnight, forming critical alliances with police jurisdictions around the country and perhaps, most importantly, with the Indonesian National Police. In doing so, they began one of the most significant operations in AFP history.

I'm Ray Martin, and coming up, you'll hear first-hand accounts and untold stories from some courageous men and women within the AFP. Men and women involved in this history-defining operation, whether they were assisting the injured, leading the search for answers, or helping the families of the victims.

Some of what you're about to hear may be confronting, but these are stories that need to be told. They're stories of extraordinary teamwork. These are the stories of 'Operation Alliance'.

Ben McDevitt: Well I think one thing about the Bali bombings and people hear about it and hear about the main device at the Sari Club and they probably imagine a damaged building. When I got over to Bali, the first thing I did was went up in a helicopter and was taken over the, over the scene and what you don't realise is the enormity of the devastation. There were over 27 buildings lost their roofs.

Mick Travers: I'd come into Paddy's Pub and I was standing there with one of the forensic members basically explaining to me what they thought, how someone had walked in with a backpack on their front or on their back and that had detonated, and yeah, I argued with him. I argued with him long and strong. I just could not comprehend that someone would blow themselves up.

Linzi Wilson-Wilde: I knew that our DNA laboratory would have to provide some services. I didn't know the scale at that stage just the role that we would be playing. There was no playbook that I could pull off a shelf and say, right, step one is this, step two is this.

Nathan Green: This was a scene of devastation. Unless you've ever been to a bombing, it's hard to comprehend seeing it on TV. Finding a small amount of trace evidence in a crater is a very exciting thing for a forensic practitioner.

Ray Martin: The first 48 hours of any criminal investigation are the most critical when it comes to looking for clues and evidence.

But as dawn broke the morning after the deadly attacks in Kuta, a first inspection of the crime scenes revealed a daunting scenario for investigators.

Glen McEwen: In daylight, you could see this big crater. You could see that the crime scene, or the bombing sites we'll call them, were not cordoned off. They were unsecured. We had many, many people walking and contaminating what I now call the crime scenes. Now that's not a criticism. The enormity of the situation was immense. We had grieving Australians, we had grieving European, we had grieving people everywhere. We had people still drinking beer and drunk, you know, looking for their friends.

Ray Martin: Glen McEwen had been one of the first AFP members on the scene immediately after the explosions on Saturday night.

As a Senior Liaison Officer based in Indonesia at the time, Glen knew that cultural awareness would play a key role in this investigation if Australian and Indonesian authorities were to work together to locate the evidence they needed.

Glen McEwen: They had an understanding of the enormity of the blast and, you know, the actual tragedy before us. Now, cultural sensitivities, I'm very much aware of and particularly when you're dealing with Indonesia, there's certain things that you do and do not do. If we were ever going to be successful, we had to secure the crime scene.

James Robertson: This was not an AFP investigation. Might have been a joint AFP, Indonesian Police investigation, but at the end of the day, the people were going to be tried in Indonesia.

Ray Martin: James Robertson was the National Manager of the AFP's Forensic and Data Centres.

James Robertson: Remember Bali was non-Muslim, largely non-Muslim part, um... they had their own, you know, forensic laboratory. And again, this is not a criticism of them, but frankly, trying to contain this in a crime scene sense was lost from the very beginning. The reality was that the best they got was a bit of crime scene tape around a hole in the ground. That in itself was bad because the water main burst and, you know, the reality is a lot of the large vehicle component of the bomb stuff, you know, dissolves in water. So a lot of it would've been lost right from the beginning.

Ray Martin: Despite the setbacks at the crime scenes, James knew getting access to as much forensic information as early as possible would be critical to the success of the investigation. And sometimes, it helps to have a bit of luck.

James Robertson: One of the things that was very fortunate was that two of my kind of fairly senior staff were both on a plane. In fact, they were in Singapore when they first heard about this, on their way to Jakarta to run a capability program and they were diverted straight into Bali. So they were the first forensic people who were on the

ground and they were in either in the Sunday, or if not the Sunday, very early on in the Monday.

Karl Kent: We received information very quickly back at the scene in their first assessments of the scale. I would've said within 24 hours we had a sense that this was an unprecedented event from our perspective in Australia.

Ray Martin: Karl Kent was head of ACT Forensic Operations for the AFP.

Karl Kent: So very, very quickly there was advice to us that a large response would be required. I think also important in that was the existing strong relationship with Indonesia to the very senior levels of government. The PM included, the Prime Minister. And I think the AFP at our most senior level with Mick Keelty as our Commissioner, had a very strong relationship with his counterpart in Indonesia. That led to a very rapid agreement for Australia to be a part of the investigative and disaster victim identification process in country. That created a solid basis and legitimacy for the deployment of Australian specialists, both forensic specialists and disaster victim identification specialists and post-blast analysts, crime scene investigators, to work with our Indonesian counterparts to identify those who were deceased as a result of this attack and also, to support the investigative efforts that would be made in Indonesia in order to identify those responsible for the attack.

Ray Martin: Chris Lennard was another AFP member tapped to be a part of the response team. At the time, Chris was Manager of Forensic Operations Support.

Chris Lennard: I was put on notice that there was a lot of work to be done in Canberra to set up the support structures but also to arrange for the deployment of additional forensic personnel. That led to a number of AFP forensic staff being deployed to Bali on the 15th, 16th and 17th of October. So that included additional crime scene examiners, post blast analysts, members of the Australian Bomb Data Centre, and I believe also fingerprint experts and a forensic biologist. So that involved organising for a team of around 15 forensic staff being deployed to Bali, and that logistically required an operations centre being set up in Canberra to coordinate all of those activities.

Ray Martin: The forensic Major Incident Room, or MIR, was quickly established as the central hub for all forensic and victim identification data.

James Robertson: We were starting to bring people from all around the country from each of the states and territories into Canberra, because you really had two parts of the DVI process. You have what happens obviously in the field, but then you have to gather all of the information, the antemortem information, from the people who may have been killed so that you have that information and then you can go through eventually at the end of all of this and you have a reconciliation process where you bring together all the antemortem material with all the, you know, material in the field. So that kicked in very, very early on in the piece.

Ray Martin: One of the many early calls for expertise was made to the Australian Bomb Data Centre.



Shane Hamming: Technical intelligence, I guess, is what we were really involved in. And part of that was determining what was used in a bomb, an improvised explosive device. How was that IED triggered? How was it constructed? What explosives were used? Where were they obtained? Then we looked at the effects of explosives. What impact did it have on the environment? And that helps us build an understanding of explosive effects, to a point where you could start looking at a scene and based on that knowledge and experience, try to reverse engineer. To look at the scene and go, well, what happened here? What is the likely type and quantity of explosives that was used?

Ray Martin: Shane Hamming was an AFP Sergeant and team leader at the Australian Bomb Data Centre. Alongside another bomb tech, Kevin Cuthbertson, Shane was among the first AFP members to be deployed to Bali.

Their immediate priority was to determine what type of explosive was used in the attacks and how much. And that meant getting as close to the bomb sites as they were technically allowed to by Indonesian authorities.

Shane Hamming: We were to some extent, interlopers. Helpful interlopers we hope, but there was very strict parameters under which we were allowed to work. We had no real measuring equipment 'cause we weren't allowed to do it. We weren't allowed to actually get in too close to the scene. All we could do was walk up the street and we had a very tight corridor that we were allowed to walk and permitted to see.

Very early on, the media reporting was saying for whatever reason it was C4 explosive, which is a very powerful military explosive. And when Kev and I were looking at the news coverage and we started to hear some of the witness reports about what unfolded, what they saw, what they heard, what they smelt, all those sort of factors, we started to realise very quickly there's no way that this was a high grade military explosive, no way at all. So for us, when we got there, we looked at the crater as best as we could see the size of it. We looked as best we could at what was the peripheral damage around the crater? How far was the road cracked? Now, how deep was the crater, bearing in mind it was full of water. We then started looking at the radius of the bomb scene. What was the damage? And relatively quickly, Kev and I came to the conclusion that it was definitely a high explosive, but it was on the lower end of explosive power.

So we basically tried to reverse engineer. Well how far out do we see this explosive affects? And what are we seeing? And we relooked at videos of the scene, how there was obviously a significant fireball and all these other things going on. And we came to an assessment in our opinion that the net effective explosive quantity was somewhere I think off memory, we thought about 500 kilos, the net effective explosive power. Many months later, obviously we found out through a variety of means that I think it was just over one tonne of actual explosive was used.

Ray Martin: To get an idea of the full extent of the damage and what lay behind it, Shane's colleague, Kevin Cuthbertson, knew they needed a better view.



Kevin Cuthbertson: To get an assessment of possibly how much explosive was used and the force that it generated, I couldn't get it on the ground. Now I have calculations and tools that enable me to work pressure waves and distance and the only way I could do that, we didn't have drones in those days, was hire a chopper.

We got up over the site and directly opposite the Sari Club was a building, three, four storey, that was under construction. It had been burnt out. But the top floor, there was a timber structure up the top. We flew over and we had no communications with the guys on the ground, but we're a couple of hundred feet up. On top of that structure, I saw a part of, what we now know, was the bomb vehicle. It had been blown up onto the roof of that part of the building. I tied it in a note, wrapped it in the handkerchief, tied a spanner to it and tossed it down to the boys on the ground.

What we didn't know is every vehicle going into Bali gets a second VIN number. The importance of that cannot be stressed enough. We found the second VIN number. That was the result of hiring a chopper.

Ray Martin: AFP investigator Mick Travers says finding that vehicle part was a significant moment.

Mick Travers: Recovering parts of the van, the blast van, from off a roof, you know, some probably over a hundred metres from the blast site. At the time, you don't think about it, but we used our rescue squad skills to get to the elevated height and remove it and being told later that being able to recover that that's critical and helped with the investigation. You're looking at 20 years down the track, but I know there were those grab moments, I suppose I call them, that they sit with me and knowing that not just myself, but the other search and rescue members and the others that came with me, we were able to piece it together and lead to those prosecutions.

Ray Martin: In forensic investigations like the one being undertaken by Operation Alliance in Bali, the tiniest piece of evidence can make or break a case. A scrap of material, a fragment of wiring, or a DNA sample can be of tremendous importance.

David Royds was Team Leader of the forensic chemistry group within the AFP at the time of the bombings. David's job was to set up a forensic capability for post-blast scene examination and evidence recovery.

A mobile lab was flown to Bali and set up in a hotel bathroom, inside the Kartika Plaza - the AFP's local headquarters. While that was happening, David set about touring the three bomb sites: the Sari Club, Paddy's Bar, and the kerbside explosion near the US consulate.

David Royds: When we first arrived at Bali, the Indonesians told us that there was a scene at Renon where some firecrackers had gone off which they suspected was unrelated. So I jumped into a car, with two FBI agents actually, and ran up to this scene. It became apparent to us immediately that there was TNT at that scene, because there was shattered rocks on the side of the road. And that's a characteristic feature of TNT that you have this effect called brisance. Brisance is a sort of shattering effect and it converts things like, you know, a sandstone block or a cement block back



into beach sand. And you could see on the side of the road, this obvious crater where a TNT explosive had actually functioned. And we picked up enough material there to actually start getting us convinced that, that was actually a significant bombing event and it wasn't fireworks at all.

Ray Martin: Many Australians who survived the blasts in Kuta had jumped on the first available flight they could just to flee the country. Most were still wearing the exact same clothing they'd had on when the bombs went off... clothing that might have contained vital forensic evidence.

Dr Sarah Benson was a forensic chemist and part of a dedicated team working around the clock in the AFP forensics lab in Canberra.

Sarah Benson: We need to collect residues from the clothing and the possessions of the victims as they're coming back. Either medically evacuated or passengers that were fortunate to survive and transported back with limited sort of assistance. So there was a huge effort at the major airports as those first flights were coming in to collect that clothing at airports or at hospitals, and get that back to Canberra for initial analysis. And some of our initial results came from that clothing before official exhibits could get back here.

And I think on some of the clothing from memory we found TNT, which started to build a picture of what may have been used and noting there were three different blasts as part of that series. We then, you know, had to work obviously with the investigative team to work out well, where were those victims? Where did they come from? What's that telling us about those different scenes?

Ray Martin: One of those scenes was Paddy's Bar.

Now, in the early days of the investigation, the suicide bomber theory had yet to emerge. But on his first visit to Paddy's Bar, David Royds began to form a picture of what likely took place on that fateful night only a few days before.

David Royds: Our first foray into Paddy's Bar was just to theoretically take an appreciation of what's there. Now one of the principles of forensic science is a word called GIFT, which means "get it first time". Now although we weren't supposed to be collecting evidence in Paddy's Bar, we were just supposed to be just going in and having a look, that's when I actually saw spatter marks on the ceiling above the area, in front of the discotheque area. Interestingly, although the fire was a major feature throughout this whole scene, this area was completely un-fire damaged. So knowing that TNT leaves a sooty deposit, and I saw these spatter marks on the ceiling and I also saw grey soot up there, so I jumped up and took a few scrapings straight away. Jumped back down again and had a bit of a wander around. But in the process, I also saw just a couple of little links of mono core copper wire. Now, just about all electronics using fine copper wiring has multi strand copper wire because the multiple strands reduce a property called impedance, which is a problem in electronics. But detonators don't have that. Detonator leg wires are just one single core fine wire. And as soon as I saw these bits of wire, I grabbed them because, you know, evidence is ephemeral. If



you don't grab it first time, it would've just been lost because the floor of Paddy's Bar looked like what you'd expect to find in a mosh pit. There was just stuff everywhere - shoes, clothing, you name it. It was all there.

Those copper wires were particularly significant, because when I took them back to the laboratory, I put them under a microscope and I could see red, white and blue cotton fibres embedded in the molten insulation around the mono core wire. Following the theory that this could be part of the bomb, then that red, white and blue cotton was a significant observation at that time.

Sometime later we were invited by the Indonesians to enter Paddy's Bar for a second look. And of course they had it completely swept out and as clean as a restaurant, there was, everything was taken away. But there were piles of rubble around still. And also there were 44 gallon drums, which were welded around these concrete pillars inside to actually replicate palm tree trunks. They had artificial palm tree leaves sticking out the top to sort of give that sort of ambience of being in a tropical paradise. We got the rescue squad guys to cut these drums open and sure enough, debris that had flown away from that locus where the bomb had gone off, had flown through the air, hit the walls and fallen down inside these drums. So inside these drums we found little shattered fragments of tartan fabric. We decided that the most plausible explanation for it, in hindsight, was that it was actually the lining of a vest. And it turned out to be the lining of the suicide bombers vest that we were recovering.

And the reason why we put so much effort into it is that we found these little pieces of tartan fabric on opposite sides of where we suspected the suicide bomber had detonated himself. Explosions are very, very directional. If you have an explosion go off to your side, then you and everything else goes in one direction only. So if you have bits of material found around the epicentre of an explosion, then clearly it must have been part of the bomb. And what was also interesting about this is that all these little bits of fabric that we started to come across, and we came across wadding as well, had no blood on them. There's no blood soaking, and that would be consistent with being part of a suicide bomber's vest. It was projected away from the suicide bomber before he had time to bleed.

Ray Martin: Back in Canberra, Dr Sarah Benson was told she'd be deploying to Bali to assist the operation with the collection of forensic evidence. One of her first stops was Paddy's Bar with David Royds.

Sarah Benson: Very confronting. Most of the victims had been removed from the scene, but not all things. And just the extent of the devastation was so significant just given the infrastructure and it was just overwhelming because what do we do with this?

The concept of a suicide bomber to us in Australia was quite foreign. And for David to be able to come up perhaps with that as a theory was quite bold. Well, to me, trainee scientist, that's quite bold. But I remember standing in Paddy's Bar and standing right underneath that point and him pointing up to the ceiling and saying "Look at that. That's not normal." Like, that's not what we'd expect. And I remember trying to readjust these tables, David, trying to get on the tables and take samples. And I remember the

course of those samples through the temporary lab and then the source of the other samples back to Canberra. And then that started that search for, well, there's got to be other things around here and then finding those other bits of evidence.

There were samples that were taken from the mortuary or the morgues from body parts that were suspected to be from the suicide bomber and then returning, you know, positive results offshore as well. So that scene and that scenario and those samples were really critical to confirm that we're looking at a high explosive for this scene and it's a suicide bomber.

Ray Martin: For Mick Travers, the 'suicide bomber theory' was almost a bridge too far.

Mick Travers: Oh, there was disbelief. Well, especially from me. I'd come into Paddy's Pub, and I was standing there with one of the forensic members, basically explaining to me what they thought, how someone had walked in with a backpack on their front or on their back and that had detonated, and yeah, I argued with him. I argued with him long and strong. I just could not comprehend that someone would blow themselves up.

As gruesome it sounds, it's when you look up, you looked onto the roof and you see human remains smeared on the roof of, you know, of that ceiling, 12, 14 foot high and realise, "Yeah, that's what it is." Our forensic members were sampling that human remains, obviously, in an attempt to start that forensic process of identifying them, because, you know, if you can identify the offenders, then you're a long way down the track of identifying other offenders.

Ray Martin: Annie Lam was working as an AFP crime scene investigator based in Canberra when she got the call to deploy to Bali less than 24 hours after the explosions.

Annie recalls it was 'all systems go' from the moment she landed.

Annie Lam: The main priority and the first thing to do was to have a security briefing. However, at that briefing, I was tapped on the shoulder by my Team Leader Crime Scenes at the time, and he said, "I need you. We have a job." They found the motorbike, they found two helmets and they found a glove. So the information received at that point was the motorbike was driven by one of the suspects, so it was in the vicinity of Paddy's and Sari. So obviously, the helmet and gloves were also worn by them, so they need an examination of those.

So we're collecting evidence for trace DNA. What we do there is we collect it using tape lifts. Essentially, if you're thinking of a large piece of sticky tape and you're then pressing the sticky side of the tape against the inside of the helmet. So what we're trying to do is collect skin cells to get the DNA of the wearer.

The outside surface is shiny and smooth, so it's a good surface for fingerprints. However, the inside is material and padded, and that's where it's not a good surface for fingerprints. That's the surface that I collected trace DNA.



We obtained a DNA profile of one of the male suspects. I believe it was Ali Imron, had a full DNA profile of him on the helmet. The motorbike was actually examined at a later date.... um...what we try to do... if some surfaces are not good for fingerprint powder, what you can do is actually in the lab, we would normally treat it with super glue.

And that's the thing with the super glue, the sensitivity of it. Once it becomes a vapour, it will then stick on a surface that has the oils and the, yeah, the residue, fingerprint residue, but also any kind of, you know, sticky residue. So it turns it white. It's a very good technique to develop fingerprints.

So essentially what we did was we took the motorbike and we made a makeshift tent. So in the labs here we have super glue fuming tanks. We put the super glue in and it's quite a controlled environment where we say five minutes, then we look at it and there's fingerprints developed as a white, visible print. We were in Bali at this time. They didn't have super glue tanks. So to perform the same examination, myself and a fingerprint expert, with the translator, we went down to the hardware store, the shops where they took us. We bought plastic wraps, we bought, you know, sticks. We had super glue, Petri dishes, and we put a little heater in there and we made a super glue tent, and we found that to be successful. And we also did that with the van. So we built a bigger tent, put the van in there, and then developed fingerprints.

Ray: DNA testing and fingerprint analysis would become vital tools in the Bali investigation, where trace evidence would help identify not only the bombers, but the victims as well.

Linzi Wilson-Wilde was Team Leader of Biological Criminalistics at the AFP.

Linzi managed the DNA service provision within the forensic laboratory, and even before most samples came flooding in, she knew there was an issue.

Linzi Wilson-Wilde: So we knew we had different types of samples that had to be collected that would come from different locations. I knew we would have to get forms developed for people to consent to give samples under these particular circumstances and what they would be used for. I also knew that we didn't have the legislation that we needed.

Ray Martin: This was an unprecedented investigation, so in order for the forensic scientists and DVI to do their job, there had to be a change in Australian legislation.

Linzi Wilson-Wilde: So, we had a forensic procedures legislation that had very strict rules around what samples we could analyse, what indices on the database we could compare them to, and who we could release that information to. A cursory view of the legislation told me that we could accept the samples and we could analyse them, but we would have the restrictions on putting them on our database, and we certainly couldn't tell another country what those results were, that would be illegal. And so it became very evident, very early on that we would need some significant change to the legislation.



If we didn't have the legislation change, we couldn't have given any of the identifications that we made using DNA to the Indonesian reconciliation board and they couldn't have signed off on the identification. So the bodies wouldn't have been released, or if they had have been released, they may have been released without a DNA identification in place. And so if there weren't any fingerprints or dental information, because some of the bodies were in part, there's only a body part, you wouldn't have known who's part that belonged to. So it was vital that we get that information and that legislation change.

Ray Martin: Remarkably, it took just 10 days for the legislation to be drafted and enacted.

Up until this point, Australian investigators hadn't had much experience in victim identification, and certainly not on this scale. But they had learned lessons from a recent tragedy in Queensland - the Childers Backpackers' fire in June 2000 that claimed 15 lives.

Ken Rach was a member of the Queensland Police Service and the Disaster Victim Identification Squad that worked on the Childers investigation. Despite his years of experience, Ken was taken aback by the scenes that greeted him in Bali.

Ken Rach: Went round to the bomb site, had a quick tour of the bomb site, which was just horrendous. You know, we thought there would've been hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people killed with the damage that was done, especially in a crowded Bali nightclub and a crowded pub. Then we went over to the, to the mortuary. And it was something that was really totally different than anything we'd seen before. Nowhere near the standard where we're used to working, there was no air conditioning, no running water. And as we walked into the place, there were bodies everywhere, as far as you could see in every direction, down walkways, under tents, in the foyer, on the floor, in the mortuary and the autopsy room, and they only had four body fridges in there. There were bodies in those as well, so it was just everywhere. And at that stage, we really couldn't tell, we had no way of knowing how many bodies we'd had there, because most of the recovery was done by local volunteers. They just picked bodies up and there were bodies in body bags. There were bodies wrapped in plastic. Others were just blowing out in the open. It's very hard to describe the mortuary itself because like I said, it's nothing like we were ever used to having, they had concrete slab autopsy tables, and like I said no running water. So we couldn't wash bodies down or anything else. We had no drinking water. And later on, as we were bringing the bodies in to do autopsies, after a day or so, the local Red Cross would come in and cover the bodies in ice to preserve them, as before we had refrigerator containers in for storage and they'd cover the bodies in ice, and that would freeze them up. So, preserve them slowly, and then every night they'd scrape the ice off and replace the ice. And some of these were only young kids, you know, 10, 11 years old. And they were absolutely amazing, what they went through.

Ray: For most of us, the kind of resolve it takes to do this kind of work is almost unfathomable. Yet the dedication of those in the Disaster Victim Identification team to get it right was beyond reproach.



In 2002, Nathan Green was a young crime scene investigator with the AFP, based out of the Sydney office. His first deployment to Bali came in the weeks after the bombings.

Nathan Green: To say the learning curve was steep is an enormous understatement. Our training was along the, what everybody would think of forensics - paint the examination, fingerprints, DNA. There is nothing that can prepare you for going to a scene where 202 people lost their lives and then knowing that you have to get it right. Everything you do, you have to get right, not only for the victims and for the prosecutorial process, but an event like this is going to be picked over for years and years to come. I mean, here we are, we're talking about it two decades later. That's not something that you want to have on your conscience that you've messed up.

My primary role for all of the deployments I did was on the disaster victim identification side. So I was attached to the, what's called the reconciliation team. That team looks at the antemortem data provided by families, jewellery, photos of clothing that the victim might've been wearing, or photos taken on the day of the actual attack, dental records, DNA records, fingerprint records, scars, evidence of medical procedures, hip replacements that have unique serial numbers, all of that sort of information, and then trying to match it to post-mortem evidence that was recovered during the post-mortems of the victims.

Ray Martin: Hundreds of samples would be collected and sent back to Australia to continue the identification process.

James Robertson describes it as challenging.

James Robertson: I mean there's no sort of soft way of sort of telling this story. There were bodies, but there were a much larger number of samples that were bits of bodies, you know, almost 600 samples came back from that. In fact, there was over a thousand post-mortem samples. So, you know, a lot of people did not get whole bodies back and one of the processes that we had to decide early on was, what were people going to get back? And I remember going up for a meeting quite early on to meet all the coroners in Australia who had just happened to be having a conference in Sydney at the time and having that discussion with them, because that was important for the pathologists who were on the ground to know what samples would be identified and what samples would not. There was a strong demand that everything was identified, but I think at the end of the day, we did draw a line on, if you like to call it, morphologically or anatomically identifiable tissue.

The public had never in Australia, had no idea what DVI was about, and there was this very, very immediate demand, "Why can't we return bodies?" There was a lot of pressure put on by the media, "Well, why can't the person have them back?" And the reality is because visual identifications are unreliable.

Ray Martin: At the time of the bombings, Kate Fitzpatrick had been a member of the ACT Search and Rescue team before moving into victim identification. And those skills would prove invaluable in the days and weeks after October 12.

Kate Fitzpatrick: We needed to get our processes in place. We needed to get some systems up and running and start working towards what would be a proper DVI process. And that involves a lot of people, a lot of experts working on identifying body parts and victims. And then other areas working on who are the missing people. And then another area, eventually reconciling the remains, the missing people so that they can be repatriated to their family and friends.

I was stationed at the mortuary. So at the mortuary, it's about when the remains come into the mortuary, how are they numbered and how are they processed? How did they then go through that process of having the pathologist examine them? The odontologist examine teeth? The fingerprinting occur? And, and how does that all then feed back into that reconciliation at the end?

Ray Martin: As the DVI team got to work, it was a heart-breaking wait for those desperate for news about their loved ones.

To support the survivors, witnesses and families of the victims, the AFP introduced a family liaison program, which was based on a British model and utilised their expertise.

Jane Dickinson was a Federal Agent with the AFP, brought on to oversee the program.

Jane Dickinson: In the first instance, the investigators took on the role of liaising. I also recall that we had assistance from the other foreign law enforcement agencies that had more people on the ground. For example, I think the UK were more versed in responding to CT incidents than we were. And we certainly piggybacked off some of their resources. We did expressions of interest for people to deploy and as part of that, we advertised for people who were interested in becoming family liaison officers.

Ray Martin: It certainly wasn't a task for just anyone.

Jane Dickinson: A good family liaison officer is someone who can empathise with the family, has very professional in their dealings with the families and realise the importance. Rightfully so, any victim or next of kin has an insatiable appetite for information. Given the enormity of this particular incident, there are a lot of families to deal with, so it would be too much for the investigators. A person who understands the importance of being responsive to the family without becoming too involved.

Ray Martin: Mike Nicholas was the first family investigation liaison officer to be deployed.

Mike Nicholas: After educating ourselves of what the FILO role is, we also had to educate a lot of our own offices because there was this misconception that the role was designed for making cups of tea and providing warm hugs to families and being that almost like a welfare role. And we had to fight people within our organisation even as far as the hierarchy to say like, this is an investigative role that we perform. We are



about obtaining vital information. We are a conduit between the investigative team and the families. It's a two-way street that we communicate with. We provide forensic material statements for the investigators. And on the other way back, we provide the families with the information that we have up to date. So they don't get it from the newspapers or from media or social media. We give them the facts as they are. So that role, first, we've educated our own. And I think we've now progressed to getting very, very good in that space, which is unfortunate. I wish we weren't good at it because we would've had less victims.

Ray Martin: Mike met survivors and family members as they arrived in Perth, and it was an enormous task.

Mike Nicholas: By the time we collated all the information that we had and then had to pass it on to Bali, there was 202 victims, so it wasn't just five or six. They had a lot of victims to go through, and they were working as hard as they could. There was frustration from the families, they wanted their loved ones back as soon as they could. So managing that was the first challenge. After that came the return of the properties that the loved ones had. And each time I think that we did those things, it opened up new wounds for them. It was hard, it was quite challenging doing those. Every visit that we had with the family, with whatever it was opened up more emotions. So, we had to manage that.

Honestly, I've thought about it over the years and I can say our job was made so much easier by the families themselves. They understood we had a job to do. They understood we were doing all we could. Their response to us, the way they welcomed us into their homes, I will never forget. It made the job so much easier for us. And then having the support of our AFP colleagues as well. It was not just me at a family meeting. I had a partner, and we'd come back and we'd have debriefs. Although it was in its infancy, I think it was carried out well.

Ray Martin: Head of ACT Forensic Operations, Karl Kent, says it was critical to provide families with as much information as possible as the repatriation of victims began.

Karl Kent: And a key question, for example, in this that occupied the coroner's minds and, which we then needed to have a discussion and resolve a solution on, was in terms of the DVI process, it would identify deceased, and deceased remains in an ongoing basis. In a blast environment where a bombing has occurred, and you have body parts you won't reconcile all of those remains at the same time. And it was then a matter of engaging with families and understanding how those families would wish to have their loved ones returned. Would they prefer to wait until the end of the process, even though they'd been notified that loved ones had been identified, all of their remains would be returned at once, together, rather than at separate times.

So, they were the sorts of issues that needed to be discussed and agreed. That would then inform, within each coronial jurisdiction in Australia, coroners had grief counsellors and specialists who engage with families in Australia on these matters to explain to them the coronial process, to enable that process to occur. Those conversations are so



important to families who are suffering and seeking closure and trying to understand what's going to happen to their loved ones in these circumstances.

I think those of us that had to deal with that found that the most confronting. Feeling that loss first from the family members and then relating that to what we were doing, what was being done in the field. The role of the family liaison officers took a lot of that pressure away in many instances. But I think those of us that did have to straddle both from time to time found that difficult.

Ray Martin: The joint investigation into the 2002 Bali bombings represented a significant turning point for the AFP.

Out of this horrific tragedy, the organisation's capabilities, and resources in terms of forensic science, DVI, family liaison services, and cross-border law enforcement cooperation grew at a rate that no-one could ever have imagined, to the point where the AFP is today recognised internationally as world-leading in all of these areas.

And it all comes back to the people.

In episode three, we hear more about those people and the extraordinary team effort that would ultimately bring about results.

Andrew Colvin: So they were fantastic. They helped us at the airports. They helped us do interviews. They helped us track down survivors' families. And they helped us have the difficult conversations that we needed to have.

Annie Lam: You know, the scale of the Bali bombings for Op Alliance was, it needed to be a team effort. The cultural differences, we needed DFAT, we needed the linguists there. The vastness and the size of the scene, we needed the bomb scenes from VicPol to be there with us.

Mick Travers: I think the Indonesians realised it wasn't just Australia trying to, to push something on them. It was the rest of the world, especially of those who'd been impacted by the death of their citizens, who wanted to, you know, to help the INP and therefore the Balinese and Indonesians to get results and get the offenders.

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