

Search for Ciara



Inside the mind of a killer

The police are now openly speculating that the western suburbs are again in the grip of a serial killer.

If this turns out to be the case, it will be the third time it has happened in the past 35 years.

The Cooke and Birnie killings of the 1960s and 1980s traumatised the suburbs of Nedlands, Dalkeith, Claremont and Cottesloe.

Now three more young women are missing, one of them known to be murdered.

By Bret Christian

But what are serial killers, and why do they do it?

There are many kinds, but now much more is known about them than in the days when Eric Edgar Cooke roamed Nedlands and Cottesloe late at night with his knife and rifle in the 1960s.

So serious did the

problem become in the US after World War II that the FBI set up a special behavioural science unit to get inside the minds of the killers.

They did it by working backwards from known serial killings — psychologists locking themselves in the cells of 35 convicted mass killers for hours on end and asking thousands of detailed questions.

What emerged was

that, despite the differences, there are many chilling similarities among the species.

The best known is the terrible trio — three types of behaviour all possessed in childhood by a big number of men who become serial killers later in life.

As children, a remarkable number of them wet their beds, lit fires that damaged property and were seriously cruel to animals.

The other main common characteristics are sexual flaws in their make-up and a craving for power.

Researchers found that serial killers are a relatively modern phenomenon — virtually unknown in history until the middle of the last century.

The researchers believe that their emergence in western countries coincided with sexual repression that sprang from Christian religions of the era, its

effects lasting until today.

When he struck in London late last century, Jack the Ripper became the best known but not the first, and by no means the last.

Their adult lives of crime usually start in a relatively minor way, such as peeping Toms, progressing to assault and rape.

Amazed and delighted that they have got away with these crimes, the first victim is killed.

The killing satisfies the killers sexually, and they also realise that they hold the ultimate power — the power over life and death.

A common pattern is for the killer to feel disgust and self-hatred after the first murder, but as time passes and he is not caught, the need to kill begins building up again.

This process may at first take a matter of years.

• Please turn to page 12.

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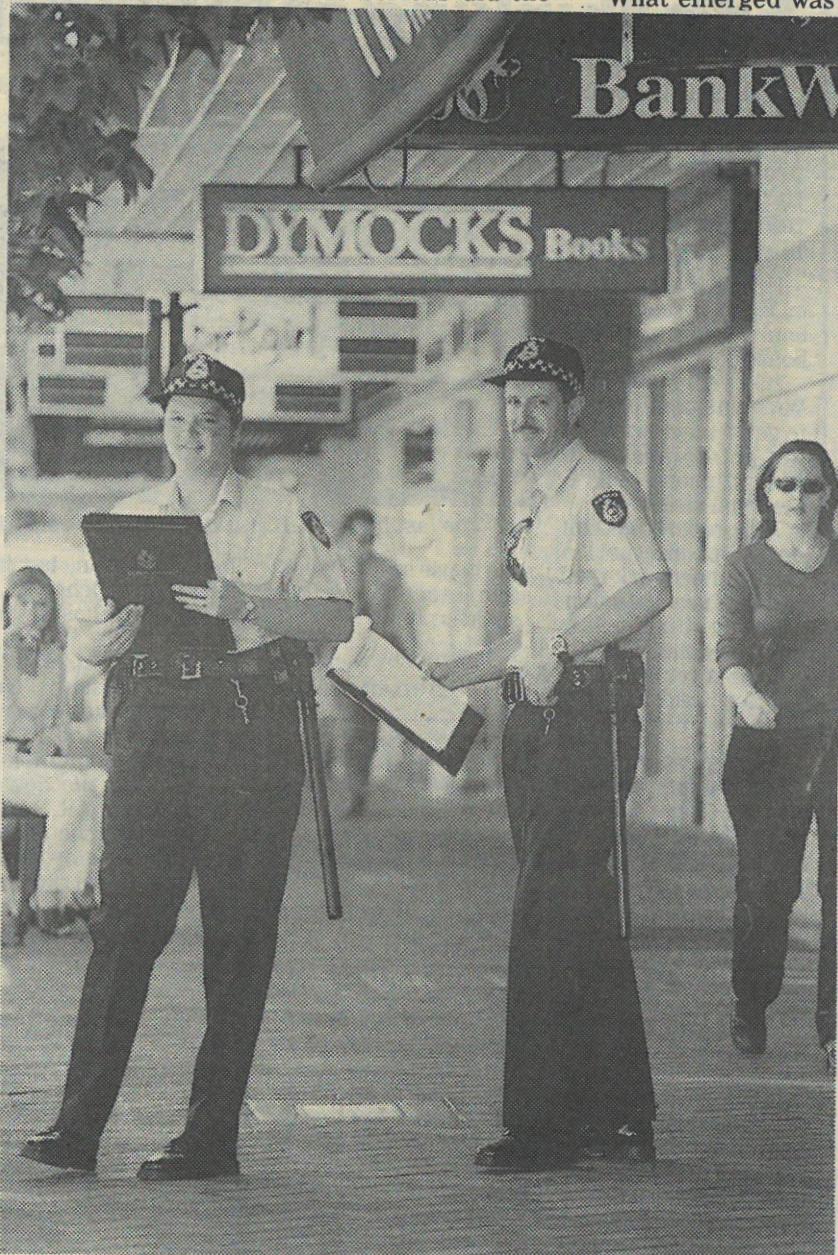
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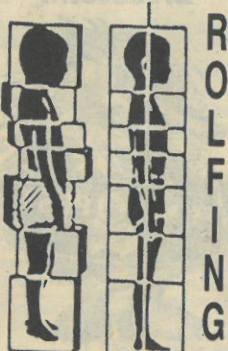
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Once again police are on the streets of Claremont asking people to help find a missing woman. More than 3000 items of information were collected last week.

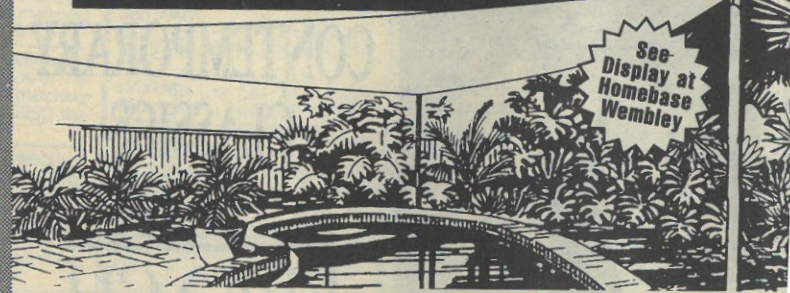
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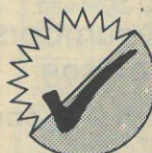
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