

True Crime Australia > Cold Cases

Criminal profiler Mike King delves into Australia's biggest murder mysteries for podcast series

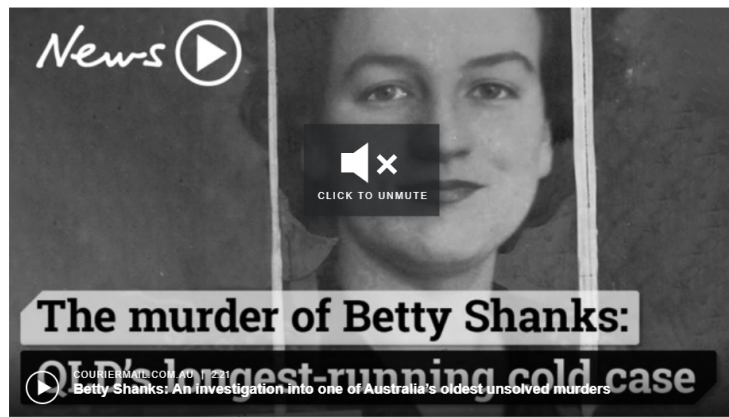
From Melbourne's Mr Cruel to Queensland's "highway of death", renowned criminal profiler Mike King's new podcast shines new light on some of Australia's oldest murder mysteries.

Kate Kyriacou

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Former criminal profiler Mike King shares theories about one of Queensland's longest-running cold cases.



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A renowned former criminal profiler and cold case investigator has delved into some of Australia's biggest murder mysteries - from Melbourne's Mr Cruel to Queensland's Betty Shanks - for a podcast series that launches today.

Mapping Evil uses Esri hi-tech geographic information software to help shed new light on old cases, along with Mike King's decades of experience catching serial killers.

Mr King explores Australian cases and compares them to investigations he's worked on in the US - like notorious highway serial killer Robert Rhoades, believed to be responsible for the torture and murder of between 50 and 500 women.



Former criminal profiler Mike King is launching a podcast where he delves into Australian cold case mysteries

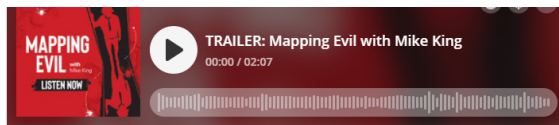
Its first episode, co-hosted by former award-winning News Corp journalist Tory Shepherd, looks at Queensland's Flinders Highway and the 12 murders and mystery disappearances associated with it between 1970 and 2018.

"Everything is geography. Everything is a point on the map," Mr King said.

"We have to say to ourselves, what is the probability this offender would pick this place over and over again?"

"Flinders Highway is the perfect example. Are people being dumped at this road because it's the same killer? Or just because it's one of the most remote, quiet places out there?"

"Geography really helps us understand, why is this person comfortable in this location?"



While delving into Australian cases, Mr King used technology that allowed him to “walk” the neighbourhoods of unsolved cold cases to help him understand what decisions killers and victims would have made at the time.

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The mapping technology helps him see what houses had been built, where street lights were positioned and the size and location of trees.

He did this with Betty Shanks, one of Queensland’s longest unsolved murder mysteries. The murder is featured in Mapping Evil’s second season.

Ms Shanks was murdered in 1952 after getting off a tram on Days Rd at Grange. Her badly beaten body was found in the garden of a house the following morning by a policeman who lived in the neighbourhood.

“(Would you) walk from that darkened tram down a dark street next to a huge vacant lot that had overgrown brush?” he said.

“Or could you cross the street to where a street light was? What would you do as a woman at 11 o’clock at night? So you see normal behaviour but you see how predators take advantage of that.”

Mr King said he had been looking at the Betty Shanks case for two years and believes he can shine new light on the long-running cold case.

“I have some really strong feelings about who Betty was as a person and what she did in the normal course of life,” he said.

“(The podcast will) shed a lot of light on some new theories that we have that will be backed up by some pretty compelling pieces of evidence.”



Betty Shanks, 23, murdered in Willston, Queensland in 1952. The long running investigation is still unsolved.



The Mackay sisters, Judith, 7, and Susan, 5, of Aitkenvale, Townsville, were murdered on August 26, 1970. Their bodies were found stabbed, raped and strangled at Antil Plains, near Townsville, two days later. Arthur Brown, 86, was charged with their murder 28 years later, but legal manoeuvres based on his mental health allowed him to escape prosecution. He died in 2002.

In its first season, Mapping Evil will explore Victoria’s “The Family” cult, which Mr King compares to his personal involvement in busting Utah’s Zion Society.

He also looks at Sydney’s “Granny Killer”, John Wayne Glover, Queensland’s unsolved Mima McKim-Hill murder, Melbourne’s Maria James murder and Adelaide’s Beaumont children disappearance.

He said both Betty Shanks and Melbourne’s Mr Cruel were the most compelling cases he delved into.

Mr Cruel is believed to have been responsible for attacking and raping three girls in the northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and is suspected of abducting and murdering a fourth girl, Karmein Chan.

He broke into homes, tied up the parents and raped - or abducted and raped - their young daughters.

“You really do come to know these people - even though you never knew them,” he said.

“(With Mr Cruel), his movement and his control of the victims and his sadistic way of punishing the parents as he committed each of those crimes.

“Those are things from a behavioural perspective that really kind of stick with you.

"These are the kind of guys you really want to get."

Mapping Evil's first episode, The route of all evil, is available on podcast platforms today.

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