

SE Lifestyle
HD **Zooming in on murder of Jamie Gao**
BY JANET FIFE-YEOMANS
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CCTV FOOTAGE WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ROGER ROGERSON'S TRIAL FOR MURDER,
WRITES JANET FIFE-YEOMANS

Dumb and dumber. Roger Rogerson and CCTV footage are no strangers to each other. It is allegedly security cameras that caught him out over the shooting murder of Jamie Gao, recording him walking into storage unit 803 with fellow ex-cop Glen McNamara and fledgling drug dealer Gao two weeks ago.

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Ten minutes later, the cameras allegedly recorded only Rogerson and McNamara walking out before they reversed their own station wagons up to the roller door of the Rent-A-Space unit and allegedly loaded the young university student's body into McNamara's car before dumping it at sea.

Wind back to 1985 and the National Australia Bank branch in Sydney's **Chinatown**. There, in a cream bomber jacket and jacquard sweater, Rogerson is clearly photographed as he walks away from the cashiers' counter on July 1.

It was the early days of CCTV but the pictures captured by the bank's security cameras are as clear as day.

Rogerson would later be charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice over opening two bank accounts under fictitious names and depositing \$110,000. In another twist, he was not caught on CCTV opening the accounts — but closing them.

Rogerson maintained that \$60,000 came from proceeds of the **sale** of a Bentley and the rest from a friend, Maurie Nowytarger's, proceeds of gambling.

"My friend, a clever blackjack player, had had a run of luck. We both wanted to keep the existence of the money private but mainly him," Rogerson later wrote in one of the books that kept money flowing in recent years.

He pleaded not guilty but was convicted — along with Nowytarger and another man, Nick Paltos — and jailed.

After nine months he was released after winning an appeal but spent a further three years behind bars from 1992 to 1995 after the Crown successfully re-appealed. His sentence had, however, been halved to three years and, as Rogerson said when he got to Berrima Jail, he joined another 16 former NSW cops who were already guests of the government.

He later joked he was so notorious that he might as well change his name by deed poll to "disgraced former detective Roger Caleb Rogerson" because that was how he was referred to in the media.

The highly-experienced former top detective's next starring role courtesy of CCTV footage would come on Tuesday, May 20 this year, it is alleged.

The manhunt would not begin until the next day at 4pm, when solicitor Jasmine Lau walked into Kogarah police station and reported her client Jamie Gao missing.

At about the same time, police received a call from concerned neighbours of Gao's parents' **million**-dollar Hurstville home. His parents were in **Hong Kong** visiting their only son's grandparents but there was a lot of activity around the house. It turned out to be five of his friends looking for him. Later that evening, two of Gao's cousins would also report him missing.

That was one side of Jamie Gao. A friendly, fun University of Technology business student who was loyal to his mates and in love with girlfriend Misaki Takebayashi.

There was also a dark side, it has since emerged. Two weeks before he went missing, Gao was before Downing Centre Local Court on kidnapping and assault charges, where he was represented by Ms Lau and the case adjourned.

One of his victims, Jaiweu Yi, 19, broke his silence last week to say he was kidnapped at a flat in Carlton, in Sydney's south, on January 9 by Gao and two teenage associates.

He said Gao had come to get revenge on his flatmate Alex Li, 18, on behalf of a female friend who had been dumped by Li. When Li wasn't there, the gang took Yi instead and bashed him.

More pertinent to the events leading to Gao's murder is that he has been exposed as a low-level drug dealer who has been using and selling drugs for about five years, since his high school days.

Police have said he went under their radar — until he was reported missing. Fearing he may have been abducted for ransom, the Serious Crime and Robbery Squad was called in. They found his sporty car, a white Nissan Silvia sedan, abandoned in Stuart St, Padstow.

In the car was his wallet and mobile phone — and one of the numbers on the phone allegedly belonged to Glen McNamara.

McNamara, 55, is a former Kings Cross detective and self-confessed corruption fighter who quit the force amid bitterness in 1990. When he set up his private detective investigation agency in February last year, it was under the **company** name Fuipsu Pty Ltd, believed to refer to "F..k You Internal Police Security Unit." Gao's friends allegedly told police that he had said he was going to see a man called "Glen" on the day he went missing.

Police will allege that McNamara had called Gao's mobile that morning from a Telstra payphone.

He was caught making the call on CCTV footage.

Strike Force Album had been formed to investigate the disappearance and detectives painstakingly worked backwards from Stuart St until they came to Mick's Meats on Arab Rd, Padstow — and Rent-A-Space on Davies Rd in the same suburb.

The CCTV camera at Mick's Meats allegedly shows Gao parking his Nissan. Inside he has two passengers, both **Hong Kong** nationals believed to be acquaintances.

The camera shows Gao getting out of the car carrying a bag containing 3.1kg of the drug ice, worth \$3 **million** on the streets, and meeting two men. One is McNamara — the other is a face that any serving or former police officer would recognise. It was allegedly Roger Rogerson, 73.

The two **Hong Kong** nationals stayed with the car as Gao allegedly drove off with McNamara and Rogerson.

Switch to the CCTV outside unit 803 at Rent-A-Space.

It allegedly shows McNamara, Rogerson and Gao walking inside. Police allege the floor of the unit was covered with plastic, probably a blue tarpaulin. Within the next 10 minutes, Gao was shot twice in the chest at point-blank range with a pistol.

The CCTV cameras show only McNamara and Rogerson walking out. They allegedly then carry Gao's body into the back of McNamara's car, wrapped in a surfboard cover and the blue tarpaulin.

McNamara was arrested on Sunday and when police searched his Cronulla home they allegedly seized a surfboard. They will allege there is evidence that his Quintrex 4.5m fishing boat had been recently used. On Monday, Gao's body was found floating about 2km off Cronulla, wrapped in a blue tarpaulin, ropes and chains.

The two **Hong Kong** men later told friends that they had waited for about an hour, and when Gao did not return they drove around in his car, leaving it in Stuart St. They have since fled back to **Hong Kong**.

Police are hunting them as eyewitnesses and possible suppliers of the drugs. "It seems as though they did not know what was going to happen (to Gao)," a police source said.

With Rogerson and McNamara in jail, bail refused, on murder and major drug supply charges, detectives are still working back — to find the gun, to find where the drugs came from, to find how Gao fits into the picture with McNamara and Rogerson, to find out why he was shot dead.

He may well have just been the go-between to take the drugs from the **Hong Kong** nationals to the two ex-cops. "Everything is recorded on this job from that moment but we now have to go back to the start," the police source said.

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