

# Lost Wagga Wagga

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Earlier last year I posted a Facebook status update after spotting Ita Buttrose in Wagga Wagga. It was early morning and I saw her getting into a car with an older man, near Knight's Meats. For a second I thought about approaching her, to thank her for her work as the national president of Alzheimer's Australia and for coming to Wagga to speak about aged care. There's always that moment when you weigh up whether to approach a celebrity—although to me the serendipity felt fated, I knew that once I'd acted I'd just become another random stranger fronting up to someone who would again need to slip into the role of public persona. So, instead, I just caught her eye and smiled, standing sentinel by the levee bank of the Murrumbidgee River (the one that had just held on in the 2012 floods). I was in Wagga to spend my sabbatical with my mother who is losing her memory, who often performs *in situ* this whole concept of a lost city, and that moment of unconsummated connection with Ita, the 2013 Australian of the Year, fleetingly aligned the national with the intensely local.

A few friends 'liked' my status update. My encounter with Ita then connected me with friends in other places: a gay man living with HIV in the Byron Bay hinterland (Ita's history with HIV/AIDS in the 1980s bodes well for her community activism around not only dementia but ageism more broadly); a lesbian friend in her 70s; and another friend whose sister was brutally murdered in Newcastle in 2008 (the relevance of which I only realised later). All of us were old enough to at least remember the allure of the sealed section, if not the nude centrefolds, in *Cleo* magazine and were partial to fleeting moments of historicist nostalgia. So I milked my moment with Ita, and got my fix in the 'approval-seeking' culture of social media. The iconophilia was broken, however, when a high school friend posted the following comment: 'she was editor of the newspaper that published the article titled "Wagga a town living in fear" Can you ask her about that for me please?'

In 1987, when I was seventeen, this friend's sister, Sally Ann Jones, was raped and murdered at Wiradjuri Reserve, a riverside meander bend just below the recently demolished Hampden Bridge. Sally's family's grief was compounded when, just over a year later, the *Sun Herald* ran a double-page spread 'Drugs, fraud and The Mob. A Town With Fear In Its Heart – who killed Sally Ann Jones?' seeking to tie Sally's then still unsolved murder to that of Donald Mackay in Griffith a decade earlier (the subject of the second series of *Underbelly* in 2009). The newsprint columns included the bold drop quotes 'Stabbed 20 times,' 'Just like Griffith,' and the article claimed that beneath the veneer of Wagga's exterior as a respectable regional city (and indeed 1987 'Tidy Town' winner) its citizens were living in fear: '. . . the town is afraid. What happened in Griffith in 1978 is all too real to neighbouring Wagga Wagga' (5). At the time it was surreal to see the tacky local nightclubs on Wagga's main street, Cococabana and Choices—where we'd all at various times been underage—suddenly make the national media as hotbeds of underworld activity. Sally, with her grey desert boots and football socks (as was the height of Wagga High girls' fashion at the time) had been Vice Captain in 1986 and, as far as I was aware, she was just a run-of-the-mill drinker and smoker like most 1980s teenagers with any street credibility.

Despite reporting that the detective heading the homicide investigation, Peter Long, ‘was not aware of any connection between the crime and “hard drugs” and that he ‘would be extremely surprised if “organised crime” was involved’ (4), *Sun Herald* journalist Wendy Bacon gave more credence to the testimony of an anonymous client of a sexual assault counselor named Ruth Christie. The source, later identified as Heather Shand (a local woman with a history of addiction and psychiatric illness), claimed that on the night of Sally’s murder she: ‘received a shot of “smack” and instructions to deliver a parcel of drugs. After she left home again at 2.15, she eventually visited a house where she found Sally Jones with two men’ (5). Shand goes on to detail the disposal of ‘Sally’s’ unconscious body at the river after earlier telling Christie of ‘an 18-year-old girl, who had wanted to get out, and had already “been done over”’ (5). Of course, even if Sally had been involved in drugs and prostitution, this would not have made an iota of difference to the crime of rape and murder, and Bacon does make it clear that her championing of Christie and her client was intended to support local women potentially being silenced and discredited by authorities. In effect, however, the article created the public impression that Sally was as good as responsible for her fate; that locals were afraid to talk and that the testimonies of any that did were falling on the deaf ears of corrupt police. Similar claims about organised crime had been made earlier on the front page of the *Wagga Daily Advertiser* by a local Uniting Church minister, The Reverend Alan Jackson, who had proffered his own amateur detective theories: ‘Why did the murderers make little effort to conceal the body so that it would never be found? Could their callous actions have been contrived as a warning?’ (Jackson, in Bacon 5). In this case both the left-wing and conservative commentators conspired, with the corruption claims aired in the national media leading to an inquest into the murder in 1988.

It wasn't until the ‘jogger’ Kenneth Barry Cannon, who had ‘found’ Sally’s body at the river in the early morning and alerted police (and whom police had always considered a suspect—at the inquest Cannon’s ex-wife indicated that she had never known Cannon ever to jog), sexually assaulted another local schoolgirl in 1990 that he was also convicted of Sally’s homicide, in one of the first cases of DNA use in NSW (McKay 56). Cannon was a sexual predator unknown to Sally and, perhaps not surprisingly, it turned out that there was no basis to the earlier Mafia claims—it was an opportunistic sexual assault and detectives believed it was likely that Sally was stabbed when she fought back and was left bloodied, but still alive, at the river. In the case of the *Sun Herald* article, the confluence of media sensationalism (driven by tabloid headlines to sell Sunday newspapers) and the journalist’s ‘public right to know’ agenda (Bacon won a Walkley Award in 1984 for her exposure of official corruption in NSW) backfired and could easily have caused a miscarriage of justice. Perhaps Bacon’s involvement with Sallie-Anne Huckstepp (whose corpse was co-incidentally discovered floating in a duck pond by a lone Centennial Park jogger) saw her too easily conflate the two Sally Anns.<sup>1</sup>

I am so far unable to trace any ties between Ita and the *Sun Herald* in 1988, and suspect that, instead, she was editor of the rival *Sunday Telegraph* at this time. Sally’s sister remembers a local petition addressed to Ita Buttrose, however, and in an article in the *Bulletin* in 1989: ‘How Sally’s Murder Changed a Town,’ Bruce Stannard mentions the Jones family being ‘beseiged by reporters and camera crews’ from the Sydney media (52). At the very least, in the *Sun Herald*’s case, it appears a flagrant breach of ethical guidelines around mental health and reporting, even when taking into consideration Bacon’s belief that ‘there remained an obligation to bring into the open information which I believed could otherwise be covered up’ (‘Bacon replies’ 9). As Dr Robert Tym, a Wagga psychiatrist who gave evidence at the inquest stated:

Heather Shand misperceived the situation thinking she was involved . . . When she first mentioned it, it could have been dealt with in a sober way. But it was latched on to and amplified out of all proportion to reality by the media in the total absence of any fact other than Shand's statement. As a result the police investigation was unnecessarily diverted into a fruitless dead-end and a great deal of pain and suffering has been created for the Jones family. In the process, Wagga has been portrayed, utterly falsely, as a town in the grip of the Mob. (Tym in Stannard 53)

I wonder if Ita remembered the image of Wagga the Sydney tabloids had propagated in the 1980s, as she and her gentleman friend, both impeccably attired, got into the car in a scene that looked, instead, more like a 1950s *Women's Weekly* country town special.

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During my stay in Wagga, while it was still unseasonably warm in early Autumn, I'd been taking mum down to sit on the riverbank at the Wiradjuri Reserve while I had a swim. It's a beautiful—if desolate—spot, lined with casuarina trees, huge river gums and willows (though the introduced willow trees are now being removed as part of a local TAFE Indigenous skills program). The cockatoos screech and freewheel in the afternoon sky and people come down on their horses to swim across the river bareback or bring their dogs to chase sticks. Being at 'the Raj' reminded me of days spent wagging school on the river flats, or finally arriving at the finish-line of the annual Lions Club 'gumi' race caked in flour and rotten eggs (the gumi race was a 14km makeshift rubber raft race down the Murrumbidgee River which peaked in popularity in the mid-1980s with over 1,000 craft assembled out of things such as rubber inner tubes and upturned trampolines). While I would usually expect the trope of returning to my hometown to produce extremes of both repudiation and nostalgia, this trip, however, was more about connecting with my mother in *her* everyday *milieux*. From the beginning I knew I would be entering a double-space (only fitting for a town named twice), though perhaps one where I would be haunted by the present more than the past, as many of my certainties, as well as hers, were in the process of being erased in real time.

As the American writer, historian and activist Rebecca Solnit writes in her book of essays, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*: ' . . . one does not get lost, but loses oneself, with the implication that it is a conscious choice, a chosen surrender, a psychic state achievable through geography' (6). Solnit's essays are a reminder that disorientation, even within familiar landscapes, can be transformative: 'I have lost myself though I know where I am' (12). I think of my mum, getting lost in Wagga's familiar suburban streets, and while it feels glib to turn to the metaphysical—as we both traffic into the unknown of the known, so literally and spatially—I am also conscious of how amongst all the loss, the coordinates of place and the past continue to produce unique re-generations in the present. Indeed, perhaps it is when we are lost that our senses are most heightened and we become more alert as we search for signposts. At the Wiradjuri Reserve I am similarly struck: 'I never did know where I was, even when I was home' (Solnit 13). It is now impossible for me to go to the Wiradjuri Reserve without having a sense of the past lurking in the present: noticing the tree beneath which Sally's partially submerged body was found, where, as Bruce Stannard writes, Sally's mother Judy went for four days after Sally's murder 'keening and crying out in that melancholy stillness' (48), and also now having even a cursory knowledge of what the name 'Wiradjuri Reserve' represents in terms of the history of local Indigenous people—something that hadn't really crossed my consciousness when I was a teenager.

The psychogeography of the Wiradjuri Reserve also makes me think of Australian writer and researcher Ross Gibson's *Seven Versions of an Australian Badland*, which—like an antipodean David Lynch road movie—focuses on narratives that emerge from a strip of highway between Rockhampton and Mackay in Central Queensland, known as 'The Horror Stretch.' As Gibson writes:

. . . it offers hard lessons about a society recovering from colonialism. It can be disturbing enough—and beautiful enough—to goad us into thinking more boldly about how the past produces the present. This remembering is something good we can do in response to the bad in our lands. (2)

In terms of our all of our childhood landscapes, hometowns or cities there are probably 'mythic' spaces that we corral off, that become a repository for repressed collective memories, shame or perhaps moral panic. The Wiradjuri Reserve's location on the outskirts of Wagga situates it as such a place, sequestered away downstream from the grassy banks and finer sand of the 'Wagga Beach' which is the more family-friendly swimming spot nearer the town centre. While, to some extent, since the opening of Oasis (Wagga's Aquatic Centre) the entire river is now seen as something of a 'badlands' by local parents wary of potential drownings, the Wiradjuri Reserve, with its CCTV warning sign at the beginning of the bumpy dirt track down to the river, still embodies a sense of emptiness (that sits with the original definition of a badland as 'a tract of country that would not succumb to colonial ambition' (Gibson 14).

While researching this essay I discovered that the Wiradjuri Reserve was only given the name 'Wiradjuri Reserve' in the 1980s, ironically as a way to assuage its earlier twentieth-century history as a predominantly white shanty town that had sprung up during the Depression and persisted until the 1950s. The site does, however, have a much longer history as an Indigenous meeting place and river crossing, associated with a 'traditional Wiradjuri story concerning a couple, Gobbagumbalin and Pomingalarna, who broke traditional law. According to the story, the sad chant of local frogs is a reminder of the death of the couple' (NSW Atlas). The Wiradjuri's ability to maintain traditional life was greatly diminished once Europeans began taking up large stations along the Murrumbidgee River in this area from 1831. The 'Wiradjuri Heritage Study,' commissioned by the Wagga City Council, makes reference to Indigenous people forced to live in bough shelters on the existing Wiradjuri Reserve as early as 1845, also the era of the Government 'blanket' hand out. After the 1861 Robertson Land Act, which saw the resulting closing off of the remaining back country in the area, greater numbers of dispossessed Indigenous people were forced to live as fringe-dwellers on the outskirts of colonial settlements on unwanted crown land in search of food and material goods (Kabaila, *Survival* 30). As Brad Montgomery writes:

Several newspaper articles from the 1860s describe Wiradjuri camps in Wagga Wagga, and attendant problems with non-indigenous men visiting the camps with bottles of alcohol. (21)

From this I take it that the Wiradjuri Reserve likely has a history of frontier sexual violence.

Included in the 'Wiradjuri Heritage Study' is a posed (and, I assume, culturally coerced) ethnographic photograph 'Bhoolidhoo— Queen of the Wagga Wagga Tribe' taken in 1897 by a Sydney photographer. As the report notes, the 'title of 'Queen'/'King' (was) often given to one of the supposed last few of a tribe' (Green 135) and thus this image represents a Wagga at

once captured and lost. The photograph was taken in the era of the so-called Aboriginal Protection Board, established in 1883, which saw the majority of Wagga's remaining Wiradjuri moved to reserves and missions in outer townships in the region. I was transfixed when I first saw the image of Bhoodhoo while reading the report at the local library—a testimony to the agency that these images retain in the present (while purporting to pass as historical documentation). This image of Wagga's blackness was a stark counterpoint to my experience of Wagga's whiteness in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the effects of past policies of relocation of Indigenous people in the region was still felt in the relatively small population of Indigenous locals—by 1965 Wagga's Aboriginal population was 'only a handful' (Kabaila, *Wiradjuri* 95). I can only wish that 'Queen' Bhoodhoo, her breasts exposed over her traditional possum skin, was actually treated as sovereign in her time.

In the Depression era, the Wiradjuri Reserve's location on a sandy meander bend, between a police paddock, the sewerage works and the old Wagga tip—and North of the Chinese camp in nearby Fitzmaurice Street—saw a settlement locally known as Tintown established. Jack Argus (b. 1920), a white resident who grew up at Tintown recounts:

There were hundreds of huts on both sides of the river, Aboriginal and white families. . . . It used to be known as Tent Town here, then it was Tintown and then later people called it the Bend. You didn't like to be known as coming from Tintown, so you called it The Flats, because people didn't know where that was. (Argus, in Kabalia 96)

The most recent reference I could find relating to bush camps on Wiradjuri Reserve was a podcast by a local Wiradjuri elder, Auntie Kathleen Withers, who grew up there in the 1950s in 'tent city,' her father working on sewerage trucks and her family gleaning from the tip, which, by the time I was in primary school in the 1970s, was rehabilitated as a local hockey field where I would play on frosty mornings. I met Kathleen at a local art exhibition opening, spoke to her briefly about her memories of living on the Wiradjuri Reserve, and found out that she is the mother of a boy I went to school with who was in Sally Jones' year. I have an instant image of him in footy shorts, with a rat's tail and a tiny stud in one ear. As far as I'm aware there aren't any physical remains of the shanty town at Wiradjuri Reserve—Tintown has been long cleared, 'washed out by numerous river floods, and forgotten by all but the oldest residents in Wagga Wagga' (Kabaila, *Wiradjuri* 98). I wonder if my dad, as he paddles his kayak 'The Bidgee Whaler' down to Wiradjuri Reserve and back up against the current to Wagga Beach in the late afternoons, realises that the real 'Murrumbidgee Whalers,' old-time swagmen who had been around since the earlier depression of the 1890s, had camped at Tintown as late as 1930 (Kabalia, *Wiradjuri* 95).

The 'Wiradjuri Heritage Study' also mentions that in January 1988, many Indigenous people camped at The Wiradjuri Reserve on their way to Bicentennial protests and to celebrate their survival of the British colonisation of Australia. I also like to think about the fact that this occurred in the year following Sally's murder. Ten years after Sally's murder, in 1997, Reconciliation Wagga Wagga also held a peaceful protest at Wiradjuri Reserve against the policies of the One Nation party (Green 37).

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The name Wagga Wagga is commonly thought to refer to 'the cry of a crow,' which in Wiradjuri language is written as 'Waagan.' The sound is literally a territorial cry and call to

connect with the country. One story has it that Wiradjuri people pointed to some crows flying over local squatter George Best's run in 1832 and uttered what was heard as Wagga Wagga, the name he then gave to his run near Flowerdale Lagoon (Green 127). The doubling of the word gives emphasis to Wagga as a place where crows assemble in large numbers. This definition of Wagga Wagga is also offered by Mary Gilmore, who engaged with local Wiradjuri camped at her parents' property on Houlaghan's Creek as a child in the 1870s: 'Wagga Wagga means the meeting-place of the crows. The locality was the breeding-ground of birds of all kinds' (Gilmore in Strauss 642). Contemporary Wiradjuri people, however, frequently refer to the name as meaning 'dancing' or, more colloquially, 'staggering like a drunken man' (Stan Grant and John Rudder in Green 129). The word 'waggawagga' was recorded as early as 1838 in relation to dancing and referred to Indigenous people who were just learning how to perform ceremonial dances, and thus still appeared to have two-left feet, so-to-speak, or to be stumbling as if drunk. It seems appropriate that even the name Wagga Wagga has a 'two-ways' meaning (Green 129), a multiplication that reminds me of the Wagga Wagga Writers Writers, at whose readings in the late 1980s I read my earliest poems over one hundred years after Mary Gilmore lived in the town, writing her poetic laments for the Wiradjuri: 'where their lost history buried sleeps' (302).

While waiting in a supermarket queue in Wagga in July 2013, I noticed a front page article in the *Daily Advertiser*, 'Memory of massacres "should be kept alive"'. Here was another indication that the Wagga *Daily Advertiser* of my youth wasn't completely lost in a time warp of denial—though I'm sure, like most newspapers, its editorial often still leaves a lot to be desired. Later that week I read another article in the *Daily Advertiser* quoting Wiradjuri woman Dr Jeanine Leane supporting local Aboriginal elders in arguing for the need for geographical names, such as nearby Narrandera's 'Massacre Island' on the Murrumbidgee and 'Poisoned Waterhole Creek' on the Sturt Highway, to be retained out of 'respect for lives lost.' Reading these articles I was also reminded of another essay that has subliminally influenced this one, Katrina Schlunke's 'Dumb Places,' about an Indigenous massacre and child rape by pastoralists on the upper reaches of the Gwydir River in central northern NSW, an area near Schlunke's childhood family farm and where she returns to research post-colonial memorials (such as the nearby Myall Creek Massacre Memorial). As Schlunke writes: 'This paper came from going there. This paper came from being dumbstruck' (75). The Wiradjuri Reserve is, for me, a 'dumb place' in the sense of its silence (and while there is no suggestion that it was the site of a specific massacre, it has instead multiple resonances as a site for local Indigenous camps, resistance and a place which since colonial times has been corralled off from the 'well-husbanded' rest of the immediate district). As a 'dumb place,' the Wiradjuri Reserve makes me acutely aware that I must sharpen my senses, as it is I who am dumb to history, a novice who is stumbling.

This idea of a 'dumb place' in relation to The Wiradjuri Reserve is something I wrote about in my poem 'aren't we' (which also quotes Schlunke):

aren't we:

me & the cows me & the utes me as a poet penning agrarian pop fantasies  
 up in my room with its vase of camellias to the toll of cathedral bells  
 downstairs the squattocracy are tanked as their polarity at the muddy duck  
 where they're not downing hybrid shandies to the tinkle of card machines  
 our sexed intensities followed the well-worn colonial paths of opening us up to the new in  
 the most dumb and weedy of places deriving my career path like donuts on

the river flats once covetous of a really good spike on a p-plater now the  
 naidoc flags de-territorialise the street unlike scant graffiti out on pylons  
 beneath the via duct i want ‘ashmont aces’ in felt letters on a t-shirt toranas  
 still pulling up at jubilee park and the trots (well below the picnic races in  
 social stature but higher than the dogs) in every year above me at school  
 there were girls that i’ve never seen surpassed for sheer nicotine style they  
 don’t dye hair like that any more i don’t eat ganmain pies but would walk  
 with you under the peppercorn trees over-riding all hesitancy so special so  
 special call it contingency or parapraxis depending on whose class you take  
 raconteur or racket aren’t we

‘moments in postcolonial community’—katrina schlunke  
 ‘brass in pocket’—the pretenders (68)

Evidently, this is not a traditional literary studies essay, though I am using a geo-critical methodology (with the Wiradjuri Reserve as its *mis en abyme*) to arrive at more of a spatial analysis of my own poetry. ‘aren’t we’ is from a sequence of poems called *Triggering Town* (after Richard Hugo) which I wrote after returning to Wagga in 2004 while doing my PhD (hence the idea of a career path, at that time, going in circles). While Hugo argues in ‘The Triggering Town’ that ‘The poem is always in your hometown, but you have a better chance at finding it in another’ (12)—the inference being that your hometown is at once too over-determined imaginatively, yet too complicated emotionally—he concludes his essay acknowledging that: ‘Finally, after a long time and a lot of writing, you may be able to go back armed to places of real personal significance’ (18). The poems in *Triggering Town* were written via a process of beta-testing the Wagga of my adolescence against contemporary Wagga (from my adult, hyper-educated perspective). In particular, ‘aren’t we’ tracks the changes in my consciousness around local Indigenous history (as well as synchronous civic changes). Contemporary Wagga is manifest in the NAIDOC flag visibility, underpinned by a sense of a ‘lost Wagga,’ located in my adolescent memory and coming from a somewhat unreconstructed sense of belonging. ‘aren’t we’ also has a reference to—if not Sally Jones—then girls of her ilk: ‘in every year above me at school there were girls that I’ve never seen surpassed for sheer nicotine style.’ Ultimately it becomes a poem about the intersection between local and cosmopolitan knowledges, about post-colonial narrative and silence: ‘raconteur or racket aren’t we.’

While Facebook ‘lost city’ pages are currently in vogue and creating on-line amateur archives and social networks, this essay transposes what is usually an urban trope to a regional city/country town—hopefully with more nuance than Bacon’s tabloid overlay of her metropolitan true crime narrative onto Wagga in the 1980s. While sites such as Lost Sydney tend to focus on the loss of buildings and architecture, and museum exhibitions display historical mug shots from Sydney’s mean streets of yesteryear, what of lost rural and regional Australia? While, at least to some extent, any engagement with the ‘country’ (as opposed to the ‘city’) tends to force us to confront the incommensurable trauma at the heart of post-colonial Australia, this is a reminder that (following Gibson) it is possible to view the whole of Australia as a badlands (a continental true crime site) and as Gibson writes in ‘Places Past Disappearance’: ‘what if these dumb portions could get some eloquence?’

In ‘My Lost City,’ Luc Sante writes about the New York of his youth, and I can relate to what he says, based on my own experience of growing up in Wagga Wagga:

All of us were in that stage of youth when your star may not yet have risen, but your moment is the only one on the clock . . . In our arrogance we were barely conscious of the much deeper past that lay all around.

It wasn't until my extended stay in Wagga in 2013 that I began to explore Wagga's history and what lay behind *Triggering Town's* poetic inspiration, beginning with reflections on Sally's murder which, via the Wiradjuri Reserve, led me to research Wagga's colonial past (replacing a national narrative with a more lived geographical, or site-specific, one). Of course most Indigenous people have known this history all along, and I remain wary of unconsciously co-opting both Bhoodo and Sally Ann Jones, as two female bodies who have come to stand in for the 'Lost Wagga Wagga' of my title, while, in the process, gaining a new sensitivity to place that perhaps my own trauma has now 'triggered.' At school in the 1980s, I made a choice that I've often come to regret, choosing 'Geography' over 'History'—a common Year 9 dilemma. I've since realised that this should never have been a choice in the first place, and indeed now find it impossible to separate the two.

Rebecca Solnit writes in her latest book *The Faraway Nearby*, which is partly a memoir about her mother's Alzheimer's:

Taking care of the elderly comes without the vast literature of advice and encouragement that accompanies other kinds of commitments, notably romantic love and childbearing. (8)

Having now read a number of memoirs about caring for parents, some with dementia, the body of literature is definitely growing. Initially, I was barely brave enough to turn the pages of Sue Pieters-Hawke and Hazel Flynn's *Hazel's Journey*, but now I've usually got a similarly themed book in a pile by my bed. In my mother's case, she currently lives with her partner Michael and leads an active life, with Michael acting like a flesh and blood GPS. They met in the local canoe club while they were both still married with families, discovered a mutual interest in science and astronomy and have now been together since my parents' divorce in the late 1980s; though they didn't live together until recently and have never re-married. Fittingly, in what seems to me a very Solnit-esque twist, I dropped them both at the Wagga airport just before I left to return to Newcastle. They were on their way to spend a month driving aimlessly around Newfoundland, a rustic and remote place that time seems to have forgotten, filled with economically depressed ex-clamfishing towns and tiny puffins.

On one afternoon while I was still in Wagga, after I dropped mum home after a swim at Wiradjuri Reserve, I told Michael (a retired carpenter) where we'd been and he said it was his favourite spot on the river, 'where all the tradies go after work.' It seems that in a similar way to Ross Gibson's tract of highway through the Queensland brigalow, the Wiradjuri Reserve continues to have multiple versions, resonances, and names; that to quote Solnit's *Field Guide* again: 'That thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you is usually what you need to find, and finding it is a matter of getting lost' (6).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Sallie-Anne Huckstepp was a sex-worker and heroin addict turned Federal Police informer following the shooting of her then partner Warren Lanfranchi by then Detective Sergeant Roger Rogerson in 1981. Wendy Bacon, who had written a number of earlier articles exposing Rogerson as corrupt, published an article 'The Murky case of Sallie-Ann' in *The National Times* immediately following Huckstepp's murder in 1986.

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