# Episode 19 - Behind the scenes of a murder investigation.mp3

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:00:05] Hello and welcome to Tasmania Police's podcast, This is Tas Police. I'm Inspector John Pratt and I'll be your host as we chat to a wide range of Tasmanian police officers about why they joined the job and why others should too. We're coming to you today from Lutrawita, Tasmania. And before we start our conversation, I'd like to respectfully acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land upon which we work and pay our respects to elders past and present. We recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing custodians of the rich cultural heritage of Lutrawita, Tasmania.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:00:49] My name is Detective Sergeant Leah Adams. I have been in Tasmania Police for 28 years. I'm so old! And the majority of that would be spent in criminal investigation. Currently I am working at Bellerive CIB. So it's Sunday night now and I have taken on the on call responsibilities for the week and I'm covering for one of my colleagues who finishes in our office tomorrow morning. So start proper fresh in the morning.

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:01:26] As you just heard, Detective Sergeant Leah Adams is an experienced investigator at Tas Police. In this episode, Leah is going to take us along with her as she investigates a suspicious death. We'll get to follow the case as it unfolds and go behind the scenes to find out what it's really like to investigate a crime. Let's see how Leah's day is going.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:01:45] It's 4 a.m. and I've just received a phone call from my colleague who I'm on call with saying that there has been a suspicious death that we need to attend to. So I will head into work. We're just trying to find out what is actually happened. All the information we've got at the moment is that someone has been injured, looks suspicious, and we are heading out that way. So we've just been into the station and grabbed all our accoutrements, bags, exhibit bags, notebooks and pretty much everything we need to carry with us to conduct an investigation. And myself and my offsider Bec are heading out and we will pick up another guy that lives out that way on the way. So it's a bit after 6 a.m. and this is the first opportunity I've had since arriving to actually record anything. We've arrived at the scene in uniform. We've had a male person in custody. We've just requested that he is transported back to the Hobart station. Usually when we arrive at a scene as detectives, we will obtain the who, what, where, when, how and why off the uniform officers and what they've seen and heard since they've arrived. And for us as detective, I suppose one of the most important things is our notebooks and making copious amounts of notes as to what you've been told, what you've observed, what time things have happened and things that you've picked up along the way.

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:03:23] As Leah just mentioned, they've been at the scene for a few hours now. Depending on the nature of the investigation and where the incident is, our detectives could be at a scene for some time. The role of a detective is varied. They investigate a range of crimes as well as apprehend, charge and give evidence against alleged criminals. They take reports and statements from victims and witnesses and take control of crime scenes, including coordinating staff, resources and specialist groups. It's an important job that ultimately brings criminals to account. Let's check in with Leah at the scene.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:03:58] So it's just before 1:00 pm and we are about to leave the scene. So for us, this has turned into a murder enquiry. So while we've been at the scene, pretty much we've put together what's happened with a number of other resources, including forensics, ambulance, and we've conducted a number of examinations, including plotting photographs, fingerprinting, that kind of thing. So really for us as detectives, it's a matter of trying to put a timeline together to establish what has actually happened. So this consists of us speaking to witnesses, obtaining phone information, obtaining movements, CCTV and anything else that we can find that'll help support what we believe has occurred or what we've been told has occurred by other people. So our job really is to find the evidence to prove that this has happened one way or another, or discount things that are coming up throughout the investigation. So we're heading back to our station to have a briefing with the rest of our office to let them know what we've done and what's happened at the scene. And we'll also find out some other information from them about what they've been doing while we've been at the scene and managing the scene and resources. We've had our briefing and we're nominated two people to go in and do the interview. Now I lose my voice sometimes when I'm stressed and tired, which is what is happening now. So I've stepped out of going to do the interview and we have two others going in, so we will monitor that video. Just to ascertain what the person is saying has happened.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:05:52] And then from what he is saying, we can communicate with our investigators in there to ask additional questions or clarify information or pick up on things that they might miss. And we can also do further inquiries while they're doing the interview. So we'll let you know how that goes. So it's about 10:30 p.m. The interview is still going and we are trying to work out what we're going to do next. So what we're talking about amongst this office at the moment is whether we're going to try and put our suspect in front of a court tonight or whether we're going to do some more enquiries with him tomorrow before we put him before a court. We have to justify everything that we do with a person in custody and how long we keep them in custody and justify everything that we do with that person, that it's reasonable and that we're not keeping them for any more time than is deemed reasonable. So these are things that we need to take into consideration when we're working out what to do next. So from our discussions, we're going to keep this person in custody overnight and then take them back to the scene tomorrow to show us what's happened in their version of events. So we will be knocking off at about midnight tonight after we've done some paperwork and got some things out of the way. So a long day and we'll be back bright and early in the morning later on.

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:07:30] The team have had a long day. And as you just heard, it is still early days in this investigation. Cases like this one can be protracted. It's not like the TV shows where it's all over and done within an hour. Hopefully Leah had some sleep overnight. Let's see what the next step is.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:07:45] It's Tuesday morning and I am heading back into work. Didn't sleep overly well, had lots of things going through my mind and thinking about what we have to do today. So I'm headed back into work to redo our task board, which is just a list of things that we have to do this morning. It's 830 and I'm on my way into town and this traffic is ridiculous. Trying to get into town. So I'm rushing. I'm trying to get over the bridge. Everyone knows what that is like. So we as investigators have sat around this morning and gone through the taskings for the day. I'm going to the autopsy.

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:08:30] In a homicide investigation. It's important for detectives to get information from the pathologist and forensics as quickly as possible so they can ascertain information about the victim's injuries. This can be very helpful for the investigation.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:08:44] So we had one where a investigator was in the autopsy at the same time as we were interviewing the offender and he was texting through things which were updates as the autopsy was going and results from the pathologist, which completely contradicted what the offender was saying. So it is worthwhile and very interesting at the same time.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:09:10] It is 1120 ish.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:09:14] On Tuesday and.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:09:16] (I'm) heading back to Bellerive Station to have another briefing to discuss what's happening. So others in the office have been doing further inquiries, taking statements and taking the suspect back up to the scene to do a walk through to describe what's happened. Yeah, so we'll go back and compare our findings and go from there.

**Detective Sergeant Leah Adams:** [00:09:38] So we've had another briefing, so the other guys have revisited the scene and taken the offender back out there for a walk through. So they are going back into interview him again. And at the conclusion of that, he will be charged with murder and detained for court. So we will do up the file this afternoon and have that ready to go first thing in the morning. It's a bit after 8 a.m. on Wednesday morning. We're just completing the file. So adding a few more facts in and it will be taken across so that the offender can appear in court this morning. He will be detained in custody, seeing as we've charged him with murder. This isn't the end for us, though. A murder investigation is ongoing. We still need to obtain statements from family, friends, put together forensic information. We have case conferences in relation to evidence that's been obtained and what testing needs to happen. We will do a re-enactment of the scene and there is a lot more work to still be done, even though he has appeared in court. It is ongoing and will be ongoing for a number of months. But this is the job and we will move on with other things as they come in as well. So we continue to do this investigation. However, we still have major crime come in. So anything else that comes in like robberies, cigarette burgs, home burgs, motor vehicle stealing, sexual assault, is still something that will come through and still something that we need to investigate.

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:11:15] It's been a successful few days for Leah and her colleagues as they found enough evidence to charge a suspect with murder. But as Leah said, that isn't the end of the investigation. There is a lot more work to be done before the matter is heard in court. The investigation process is very involved and there are long days and nights, but it's also very rewarding to get to the end of the process and be able to provide victims and their families with closure and to see a criminal convicted and brought to account. A common question we hear is what do you need to become a detective? The majority of our members work as general duties officers for at least two years before completing further training at the Tasmania Police Academy and continuing into specialist areas like criminal investigation. There's a range of specialist training options on offer and our people are well supported as they go through the accreditation and promotional processes. We're recruiting more than ever before right now, so there's never been a better time to apply to join Tasmania Police. Have a look at our website recruitment dot police dot tas dot gov dot au and start the process today.

**Inspector John Pratt (host):** [00:12:18] That's it for today's episode. I hope you've enjoyed it. So far on this is Tas Police we've chatted to our Commissioner, Donna Adams, our recruitment services team, some new recruits, and we've experienced a day in the life of a constable on the beat in Launceston. We've also heard from an investigator of a long term missing persons case and we've jumped aboard one of our police vessels and heard what it's like to work for marine and rescue services. There have been some interesting and inspiring conversations from people who have experienced everything Tas Police has to offer. In our next episode, we'll hear from two police officers who spend a lot of their time in the Tasmanian wilderness. As part of our search and rescue team, Kristy and Callum are both experienced officers who dedicate their specialist skills and knowledge to finding, helping and rescuing people in some of the state's most remote areas. They certainly have a story or two to share and we'll hear about how their careers at Tas Police have progressed to get them to where they are today.