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Outback Killer Dies, Leaving British Backpacker's Fate a Mystery

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Bradley John Murdoch, infamously known as the “Outback Killer,” has died in Australia without ever revealing what he did with the remains of Peter Falconio, the British backpacker he murdered nearly a quarter of a century ago. His death closes one grim chapter but leaves the Falconio family still searching for answers.

Murdoch, aged 67, died Tuesday night in the palliative care unit of Alice Springs Hospital, where he had been moved after being diagnosed with terminal throat cancer in 2019. According to officials, he was previously held at Alice Springs Correctional Centre. The Northern Territory Police Force stated investigators remain “committed to resolving this final piece of the investigation,” underscoring that the killer’s silence has robbed Falconio’s loved ones of long-awaited closure.

“It is deeply regrettable that Murdoch has died without, as far as we are aware, ever disclosing the location of Peter Falconio’s remains,” the police noted in a statement. Falconio’s father, Luciano Falconio, 83, was visibly shaken by the news, telling *News Corp Australia* from his home in the United Kingdom, “I wish he (Murdoch) left something for me to find him.”

Murdoch was convicted in 2005 for the 2001 murder of 28-year-old Falconio, who hailed from Huddersfield in Yorkshire, England, as well as the attempted kidnapping of Falconio’s girlfriend, Joanne Lees. The attack occurred on a desolate stretch of the Stuart Highway in Australia’s Northern Territory. The crime drew international attention and partly inspired *Wolf Creek*, a 2005 Australian horror film portraying a backpacker killer and a lone survivor. Due to concerns about prejudicing jurors, a court order blocked the film’s release in the Northern Territory during Murdoch’s trial.

Despite the evidence against him, Murdoch consistently claimed he was innocent and never cooperated in the search for Falconio’s body. Lee later detailed her ordeal in her memoir *No Turning Back*, criticising investigators for treating her as a suspect for years before Murdoch’s eventual arrest.

According to court testimony, on the night of July 14, 2001, Murdoch flagged down the couple’s campervan, claiming there was an issue with the exhaust pipe. As Falconio checked the vehicle, Lee heard a gunshot. She never saw her boyfriend again. Murdoch, who stood 6 feet 4 inches tall, restrained Lees with plastic cable ties, but she escaped and hid in the desert scrub while he searched for her with a flashlight and his dog. Eventually, she flagged down a passing truck driver who called the authorities.

At the time, Murdoch was working as an interstate drug courier, using amphetamines to stay awake on extended drives and cannabis to help him sleep. His criminal lifestyle and violent tendencies came under intense scrutiny during the investigation and trial, yet he was never convicted of any other murders.

While Murdoch's death brings an end to the prospect of further confessions, police have affirmed their commitment to uncovering the truth about Falconio's final resting place. For the Falconio family, the hope remains that someday, someone will step forward with the information that Murdoch refused to share.