Twitter Thread by Peter Cronau



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Beautiful eyes, snuffed out by an Indonesian military bullet. Nothing was done really to bring the shooter to justice.
An eyewitness I interviewed in 1995 described the shooter as having a goatee and wearing a blue scarf, an army provost.
Roger East, murdered but not forgotten.



Roger East was an Australian journalist, murdered 45 years ago today. Trying to report the truth of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. He took cover in a flat the day of the invasion but was grabbed when he went outside, with his camera and notepad, ready to report. ...

Taken to the small park opposite the Hotel Timor, he was tied to a tree. He wasn't immediately killed, suggesting some hesitation over killing an Australia journalist. After an hour or so a decision to murder him was made. Were orders forthcoming from General Benny Murdani? ...

Did the General reflect on the words of the Australian ambassador Richard Woolcott from their dinner two nights earlier where they discussed the imminent invasion? Murdani may have developed the confidence there would be no repercussions for killing an Australian journalist. ...

DFAT had already given the Indonesians a list of the Australians remaining in East Timor. This list of people needing safety, ultimately became a ‘death list’. So the Indonesians were looking for Roger East when they invaded, needing to remove this last remaining witness. ...

An order was given to kill the Australian reporter and eyewitnesses saw officers order the shooter to take Roger and he was marched struggling to the wharf. One shot to the forehead and Roger was gone. And Indonesia had removed another witness. ...

Roger’s wish, that the people of East Timor not be harmed and be allowed to choose their own future, came to fruition 24 years later. Another 180,000 Timorese died during the occupation from the fighting and a forced famine. ...

The shooter must be getting on in years now, and possibly enjoying a leisurely walk in the park or the laughter of his grandchildren. I wonder what tales of bravery this retired soldier tells them, or does he wrestle in his nightmares with the demons of his life? ...

I’d like to meet him. But I don’t think I could shake his hand. I’d like to hear his story. To ask if he had ever visited Australia. To offer if he ever made it to Sydney, I could take him to meet Roger’s sister. Perhaps he’d like to apologise to her.

The ABC agreed to memorialise Roger. A ceremony was held to launch the memorial for dead journos at the ABC head office in Ultimo, Sydney. I picked up Roger’s sister and drove her in to the ceremony. After 49 years, it was the first time a formal commemoration was held for him.

Here is the online version of the ABC’s memorial to Roger East. https://t.co/pFk0HHER6V