

# The facts about the murder of Douglas Scott

**Letty Scott, an inspirational Aboriginal woman, has fought for 20 years to prove her husband Doug was murdered in jail. Support her call for a new inquiry.**

Letty Scott is an inspiration and a role model. For the last twenty years, she's fought to prove that her husband, Douglas, did not commit suicide in Darwin's Berrimah prison but was murdered by prison officers. Letty has built support for her campaign for justice and patiently gathered evidence.

Earlier this year, she had Doug's body exhumed for a new autopsy. A Brazilian forensic expert, Dr Jorge Vanrell, found evidence that lesions on the body were consistent with torture. Another internationally respected forensic expert, Dr Tohru Oshima supported the findings. This evidence was part of a civil case in which Letty, and son Nathan, brought before the Northern Territory Supreme Court.

On June 16, Justice Angel ruled against Letty and Nathan's claim. He ruled in favour of three prison officers — Barry Medley, Michael Lawson and Harold Robertson — who Letty Scott holds accountable for the murder of Douglas 20 years ago. Angel ruled "the plaintiffs have not established to my satisfaction that the deceased was murdered by the defendant prison officers."

However Angel also said, "on the evidence before me I am unable to be satisfied that the deceased

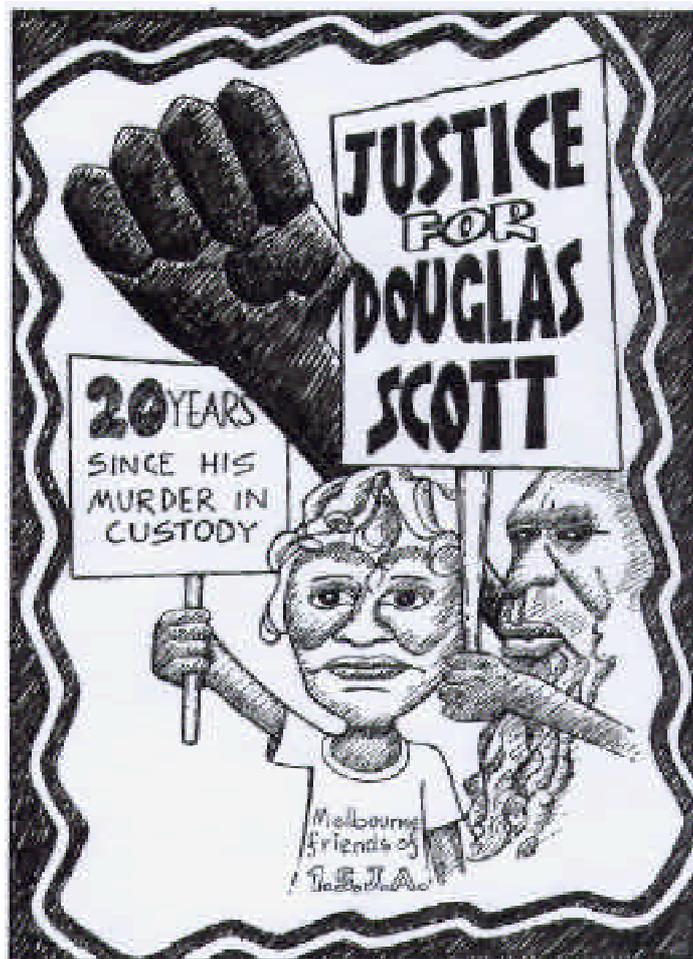
took his own life." He noted that the prison officers had "ample opportunity to murder the deceased in his cell in the manner alleged." He further ruled that "the evidence of witnesses Bindai and Percy cannot be dismissed out of hand." Geoffrey Bindai and Laurie Percy, two Indigenous prisoners

housed across from Douglas' prison cell, have given evidence that they witnessed four prison officers enter his cell. They heard Doug calling for help and the next morning Bindai and Perry, who were subjected to threats, had to clean the blood up in Scott's cell.

Angel criticised the police investigation as inadequate and said, "the crime scene was not adequately secured." He dismissed the claim, not because he was convinced by the suicide allegations but on the technical ground that Letty and Nathan had not met

the onerous burden of proof required.

Justice Angel's ruling — taking the new evidence presented into consideration — that he could not conclude that Douglas Scott took his own life, is a vital breakthrough. Both the original inquiry into his death and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody accepted the story of the prison officers.



Graphic by Peter Hannaford.

The campaign to find out the truth about how Douglas Scott died has a long history.

Doug was jailed after an argument with Letty in a Darwin pub in 1985. He was arrested and sentenced to 60 days in Berrimah Jail, even though Letty refused to press charges. He was incarcerated on May 31 and died on July 5.

There are many criticisms surrounding the investigations into the death. Dr Kevin Lee, who did the first autopsy, concealed matters. Researcher, Dr Meryl Nass exposed that Lee served in the racist Rhodesian government as a senior pathologist in the 1970s. Nass also exposed that Lee had misled the court with claims that he received his degree in Britain. He graduated in Rhodesia. These facts fueled charges that racism impacted the findings.

Ever since her husband's murder, Letty and her family have been continually harassed. For example, the local KKK from Katherine painted racist graffiti on her home.

In 1999 Letty reached out to the international community, and with the Indigenous Pequot Indians in the U.S., she was able to testify before the United Nations.

It took 20 years and \$20,000 raised by Letty to have Douglas' body exhumed for the re-autopsy this year. As Letty stated to Justice Angel in legal proceedings: " my son Daniel and I have had to carry this for 20 years alone, with no help from the Australian authorities or the Australian medical and legal fraternities."

Letty is an inspiration to all people fighting for justice and change for a better world. Her strength and determination to see this fight right to the end must be supported.

On 23 July 2005, Letty called for the inquiry into the death of her late husband, Douglas Bruce Scott to be re-opened. There are many questions that remain unanswered, justifying a new inquiry.

**Every action counts.** By signing and helping to circulate the Indigenous Social Justice

Association petition supporting Letty's call for a new inquiry, you are a part of the solution to the problem of injustice, not just for Indigenous people, but for all of us.

The petition — which can be signed by anyone in Australia or around the world — will be concluded on 10 December 2005, which is International Human Rights Day.

You can support the campaign for a new inquiry into the murder



Letty Scott is a tenacious fighter for justice.

of Douglas Scott by:

- signing the petition
- circulating the petition and asking others to sign
- publicising the campaign
- passing resolutions of support or sending personalised letters to Greg Cavanagh, Coroner for the Northern Territory (GPO Box, 1281, Darwin, NT, 0801 or fax: 08-8999-5128) and Clare Martin, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory (GPO Box 3146, Darwin, NT, 0801 or fax: 08-8901-4099)
- sending a donation for this campaign to the Indigenous Social Justice Association Melbourne Supporters Group

**Issued by the Indigenous Social Justice Association Melbourne Supporters Group  
with the support of Letty Scott.**

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