



Photo credit: © Peter Gray, 1971

This photo was taken in the light cast by the head lamp of a motor scooter on the night of Saturday, 24th July, 1971. It shows one of the many casualties after the police charged the demonstration outside the Tower Mill motel during the *State of Emergency* imposed by the Queensland State Government. The protesters were systematically attacked in what can only be described as an unfettered police riot.

Two days earlier, the South African Springbok rugby union team had arrived in Brisbane and were accommodated in the Tower Mill motel on Wickham Terrace. Approximately 1,500 demonstrators assembled to protest against racism and South Africa's apartheid laws. The protesters faced a similar number of police lined up in front of the Tower Mill. Police in plain clothes mingled with the demonstrators and acted as agent provocateurs.

Then the lines of uniformed police were ordered to march forward and they simply attacked the crowd repeating the catastrophe that had occurred two nights earlier. The demonstrators were forced down a steep hill through Wickham Park directly across the road from the Tower Mill. Not only was the park steeply sloping, but it also had very little lighting so many areas were veiled in darkness especially towards the bottom of the park.

The police followed on mass attacking with fists, batons and boots in the darkness. There were many reports of police lying in ambush hidden behind trees from which they sprang out and attacked protesters as they passed by. This unusual tactic suggests the ambush was pre-planned by the Queensland police force. Nearly all reports by victims and eye witnesses alike describe the use of excessive police violence and extreme brutality.

Where the southern edge of Wickham park borders with Albert Street, there is a steep cliff face which is quite high in places (up to 8 meters). Police unceremoniously pushed or forced demonstrators over this cliff onto the roadway below. Other demonstrators were left with little choice but to try and jump to safety, or scramble down this rough cliff face as best they could.

The protester seen in this photo was one of many people who were bashed and beaten that night. The demonstrator pictured, Luke Swann, is seen lying injured at the bottom of that cliff in Albert Street. He is surrounded by concerned friends and onlookers. He was deliberately thrown at a park bench by two burly policemen with the intent to maim and injure. Luke Swann suffered a badly damaged knee. He immediately sought treatment at a local hospital.

Soon after the incident, a legal observer recorded Luke Swann's deposition right there on the spot (as per the audio recording streaming under 1C in this section).....

"My name is Luke Swann. I was running down from the front row as I was running....as I came across I saw this khaki guy come up from behind me and he grabbed me and threw me down and another policeman came and held me - one of the blue ones - he held me down and the other one hit me again and then they threw me to my feet. One of those park benches, they threw me at it and I bloody banged my knee against it. They were on the other side of the bench, they threw me over it, I banked my knee against the bench twice..."