Dreamchaser and Fifth Season

present

**REVEALED:**

**DEATH CAP MURDERS**

**A three part Stan Original Documentary**

**EPISODE 1: THE CRIME**

**LOGLINE**

With exclusive access into one of the highest profile criminal cases in recent history, REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS unravels how a quiet family lunch in rural Victoria left three people dead, with chef and host, Erin Patterson, becoming the subject of global fascination, as the world wonders - why?

**SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Within days of attending a quiet family lunch in rural Victoria, three people are dead, one is fighting for life in ICU, and a fifth, Erin Patterson – the chef and host – becomes the subject of global fascination, as the world wonders not who, where, or how – but why?

Over the coming weeks, crime journalists Marta Pascual Juanola and John Silvester become key to piecing together a portrait of a community, a family, and a suspect. To learn ‘why,’ it’s vital to understand who Erin Patterson is, and the past events that led to this fateful meal.

A true crime event series, REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS tells the story from the inside – intimately, with rare and exclusive access to the press, friends, and former friends behind one of the highest profile criminal cases in recent history. Across episode one, the events of the fateful lunch unfold, and the dedication of Marta slowly but surely sheds light on facts and on possibilities, in parallel to police investigations.

Just when everything seems to have gone quiet, charges are laid. Three murders, and five attempted murders – some stretching back years.

**LONG SYNOPSIS**

Saturday morning, 5 August 2023. In a Victorian police interview room, officers ask a seemingly mild-mannered woman:

*‘One person has died, the other has had an organ transplant.* *We are trying to understand what has made them so ill? And why you’re ok...”*

That same morning, renowned crime journalist **JOHN FERGUSON** gets a tip off about the investigation. He calls the police – expecting confirmation of a clear accidental food poisoning – but within minutes has a statement that indicates there are many more questions than answers. Ferguson needs to file a story. Now.

The following morning, **MARTA PASCUAL JUANOLA,** new to the crime team at *The Age*, is dispatched to the small towns of Leongatha and neighbouring Korumburra, in Victoria’s Gippsland region. She learns that on July 29th, four elderly family members attended a luncheon in Leongatha, hosted by an in-law. The following morning, the four presented at a local hospital with food poisoning symptoms.

Five days later, Heather Wilkinson and her sister Gail Patterson are dead. Gail’s husband Don dies the following evening. Heather’s husband, Reverend Ian Wilkinson, is in ICU. The chef and host, Gail and Don’s 48-year-old daughter-in-law Erin Patterson, is questioned.

The police learn that Erin’s estranged husband, Simon Patterson, was invited to the lunch, but pulled out. Rumours swirl that custody of the children was being discussed. Erin had prepared a signature dish – Beef Wellington. Mushrooms are a key ingredient – and death cap mushrooms are suspected. If so, was this a terrible mistake?

The shift comes when Erin finally talks to the media. It’s a strange encounter, outside her home. She weeps on camera, admitting it’s a tragedy, and that ‘they never did anything wrong to me.’ But questions about where the mushrooms came from go unanswered, before Erin disappears inside the house.

In the days that follow, the story explodes. Were the tears genuine? Marta can’t keep count of how many times she’s watched that clip. Trying to make sense of it. Marta explains that when Erin started talking to the media, the police reacted.

To uncover the facts, Marta must find out who Erin Patterson is. Little shows up online. Phone calls lead nowhere. Erin seems one dimensional, but slowly, a portrait emerges.

As a child, Erin was placed in accelerated education programs. She became an accountant, then an air traffic controller. Only two percent of the population have the requisite skills – to read a situation and deftly react. A coworker felt that Erin wanted to belong, but she always seemed prepared that it might all fall apart. Erin starts leaving before her shifts end, and is fired when caught lying about it.

After securing a job at Monash City Council, Erin meets Simon Patterson. A former basketball player, for whom family and faith come first. Simon is generous and encouraging; Erin is usually the smartest person in the room and wants you to know it.

Erin seems drawn to Simon’s intelligence and gregariousness, and engineers a situation to meet his family. Soon, they marry.

At his parents’ funeral, Simon pays tribute to their connection to their community – they made a difference in peoples’ lives – and “…until there’s closure, the heartache goes on.”

Reverend Ian Wilkinson is discharged from hospital. The sole survivor. What will he be able to confirm?

Death cap mushrooms are common to the South Gippsland region. Locals know to be extremely cautious when foraging. Suspicions grow when the police uncover a food dehydrator Erin dumped at the local tip. She admits she dumped it, but out of panic, not guilt.

Marta, and those eagerly following the story across the world, hear nothing for weeks. Then out of nowhere, at 7am on 2nd November 2023, Marta gets a tip off. Police, en masse, are raiding Erin’s house.

That night, Erin Patterson is charged. Three counts of murder. One count of attempted murder. And shockingly, four attempted murder charges for her husband Simon, spanning years…

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**OVERVIEW**

With exclusive access into one of the highest profile criminal cases in recent memory, the Stan Original Documentary series REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS follows *The Age* journalists John Silvester and Marta Pascual Juanola as they cover the story of how a seemingly ordinary family lunch in rural Victoria left three people dead and became a global phenomenon.

Directed by Gil Marsden, the true crime event series REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS is a co-production between Dreamchaser, Den of Martians and FIFTH SEASON. Major production investment from Screen Australia and VicScreen. Global distribution is handled by FIFTH SEASON.

Marsden began following the unfolding events just nine days after the fateful lunch.

“It was the Monday after the story first came to light – the 7th of August” he recalls. “We had an internal meeting at Dreamchaser in Sydney, and everyone was talking about it – but it was when we spoke the next day with our US partners at Fifth Season, and they asked us about it – that we realized there was immediate global interest in it.”

Gil drove down to Leongatha the following day, to see if there was more to the story than the newsworthiness.

“I was instantly struck by the setting – the road winding its way through the mist, the haunting empty streets of a town struck by tragedy,” he says. “The warm welcome even in spite of it all clued me in that there was something meaningful here.”

By being at ‘ground zero’ so soon after the key events, Gil and his team were the first documentary crew following the story. The camera press were news outlets, so Dreamchaser was months ahead.

Over the coming weeks and months, they gained exclusive insight into Erin Patterson’s past – through on and off the record conversations with defence attorneys, friends and former friends – to craft a definitive telling of the story – a premium executed version, and the first multi-episode series about the case.

REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS tells the story of a single, cataclysmic event, but which has had so many versions written over two years. Episode 1 delves into the version of the truth known when the crime was committed. As the trial starts, Episode 2 tells the prosecution’s version of events, while Episode 3 reveals Erin’s version of the story as she takes the stand in her own defence. The core consideration is: ‘Is there an absolute truth when it comes to the court process?’

“The depth of relationships Gil built up over the past two years were vital,” says Dreamchaser COO Sara Horn. “We are offering audiences much, much more than what they know from news reporting. Likely no individual reporter that has been at more court appearances that Gil has, or has explored his depth of reporting and investigation.”

Gil knew immediately that knowing the people, including the press, would be key to telling the most compelling story. Veteran crime reporter John Ferguson, and up and coming crime reporter Marta Pascual Juanola signed exclusively to take part in REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS.

“I met Marta in a shop in Korumburra that first trip down, the week after the event,” Gil recalls. “I was immediately struck by her empathy and humanity while watching her engage with one of the local sources she’d been speaking to over the week. We spoke briefly but it was clear she had a unique insight into the impact the story was having in this small town.”

Marta would tenaciously ‘do the rounds’ – door knock, speaking to whoever would talk. As the town closed ranks, Marta would appeal to them: “I don’t necessarily want to be doing this either, but the story keeps going. I believe I have more compassion for you than another journalist.”

Gil started with a fairly critical view of the media and their intrusion into Korumburra.

“But then I came to realise that not only are they just trying to do their jobs, but the town itself is actively trying to manage its reputation – and for good reason,” he explains. “The historical precedents with Snowtown, Moe, and other small Australian towns are there – so you end up realising there is a very natural opposition that gets built up over time, but no one is at fault.”

Dreamchaser wanted to make sure they had a unique take on what was coming, but also leapt at the chance to follow a ‘trial of the century’ as it unfolded.

Part of the public fascination behind the story, as the title of the series suggests, is the diminutive but deadly fungus.

Death cap mushrooms grow easily in the fertile soil of South Gippsland. They are the most poisonous mushroom known to humans. Locals know to avoid toadstool structures – death caps look similar to other mushrooms that are considered safe. But there are up to 10 million species of fungi on the planet, the vast majority of which are unknown to us. The burning question ‘Was this just a terrible mistake?’ is at the core of the series.

During her investigations, even Marta’s 91-year-old grandmother in Spain called her to say she’d seen the headlines. True crime is a serious and timeless obsession.

Stan came on board REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS about a year out from Erin Patterson’s trial, and supported the team with funding for preliminary filming while they waited for the case to work its way through the legal system.

Gil adds: “We saw a lot of outlets drop in and out of this story over time, and that’s the nature of the news and media landscape, but we were really lucky to have the support of such incredible partners like Stan, that allowed us to be persistently with this story from the very beginning.”

Filming for two years brings challenges – theories can compound, there are mountains of footage to assess – but the team held firm with their true dedication to the story.

“It was a rollercoaster from the very beginning,” admits Gil. “The moment you come into the story, you try your best to resist forming opinions and just bear witness – but it's inevitable that certain interactions and theories lodge in your brain.”

“But, in the end, the fact that we built great and deep relationships both in the community and within the press and legal teams, has meant that REVEALED: DEATH CAP MURDERS is the definitive telling of the story.”

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**BIOGRAPHIES - PARTICIPANTS**

**MARTA PASCUAL JUANOLA**

Marta Pascual Juanola is a crime reporter at *The Age* newspaper in Melbourne, Australia.

Born and raised in Catalonia, she relocated to Australia in 2015, where she started her reporting and photojournalism career in community newspapers in Perth.

Following a brief hiatus to travel across Asia overland, a journey that took her across Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iraq, she returned to Western Australia to take up a role at *WAtoday* in 2019, covering everything from Indigenous stories to development and local politics.

She joined *The Age* newsroom as a breaking news reporter in 2021, before moving across to the crime desk full-time in 2022, where she has been part of the team leading the newspaper’s unrivalled coverage on Melbourne’s tobacco wars and gangland murders.

**JOHN SILVESTER**

John Silvester is Australia's longest-serving crime reporter, covering the beat since 1978.

He has won four Walkley Awards, the Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year Award, nine Melbourne Press Club Quills, nine Victorian Law Foundation Awards, a Ned Kelly Award for true crime writing, a Ned Kelly lifetime achievement award, an ASEAN Fellowship to study crime and corruption in South East Asia, and has been elevated to The Australian Media Hall of Fame.

John narrated and co-wrote true crime documentaries produced and directed by Terry Carlyon, including the Logie-winning ABC documentary, CONVICTION, on the murder of Jill Meagher. He has written or co-authored over 30 books including the *Chopper* and *Underbelly* series, later adapted to film and television.

John appeared in one UNDERBELLY movie as himself, but was asked to quietly remove himself from the set for overacting.

He writes the award-winning 'Naked City' column for *The Age*, presents the true crime podcast of the same name, and appears weekly on the top-rating 3AW breakfast program as 'Sly of the Underworld'.

John fought world champion Barry Michael to a draw in a charity boxing match which many experts still refer to as 'The Bloodbath of Blackburn'.

**BIOGRAPHIES - KEY CREATIVES**

**GIL MARSDEN - Director and Producer**

Gil is an Emmy-nominated documentary director, producer and showrunner. He is a proud member of the DGA, PGA, ADG and AACTA.   
  
Living equally between the United States and Australia, Gil started his career as a producer, assistant director, and production manager across independent feature films, commercials and music videos. His debut as director came with documentary series THE GYMKHANA FILES, which launched globally on Amazon Prime in 2018 and was Emmy nominated for directing, cinematography and sound design.   
  
His acclaimed sophomore series, MAKING THEIR MARK, was the biggest sports docuseries in Australian history. Releasing in 2021, the series chronicled the coronavirus pandemic from the inside of the biggest sporting code in Australia.

Other recent documentaries include 2021’s HEAD ABOVE WATER, which follows four Australian swimmers approaching the 2021 Tokyo Olympics and 2022’s KICK LIKE TAYLA, which chronicles the public and personal challenges that AFLW player and professional boxer Tayla Harris has faced in her career.

2024 saw the arrival of UNITED STATES OF SCANDAL WITH JAKE TAPPER, a six-part series executive produced by Gil which featured the CNN anchor and chief Washington correspondent individuals at the center of political scandals. The series was produced by The Intellectual Property Corporation and premiered in 2024, with a second season following in 2025.

Recent projects include the Olympic special BOILING POINT for Channel Nine, and the true crime event series REVEALED: DEATH CAP for Stan.   
  
Gil is thrilled to bring his production label Den of Martians into an exclusive partnership with Dreamchaser to create more best-in-class documentaries for Australia, the United States and globally.

**SCOT EDWARDS - Lead Editor**

Scot Edwards has attached himself to documentaries like a face hugger from the Alien movies - directing, editing and producing some ripping doco series and films. Some of his best include CRAIG BELLAMY: INSIDE THE STORM, BOILING POINT: SWIMMING’S GREATEST RIVALRY, THE TEST seasons 2 & 3, MAKING THEIR MARK, HEAD ABOVE WATER and SHOW ME THE MONEY. You can still see these on Stan, Amazon Prime and Nine. Other highlights from his life are hitting a half court buzzer beater in basketball, beating *The Melvins* in bowling and being called ‘rude’ on national TV by a drunk John Polson at Tropfest.

**CARL ALLISON ACS - Director of Photography**

Carl Allison ACS is an award-winning cinematographer, who works across narrative, documentary and commercials, embracing and enjoying the challenges that each new project brings. With over 15 years experience working across Australia, New Zealand, Asia & America. His bold and distinctive style can be seen across hundreds of music videos and commercials.

**SIMON WALBROOK - Composer**

Simon Walbrook is an AACTA award winning film and TV composer, and a Billboard #1 charting producer and songwriter.

Both classically trained and deeply immersed in the world of electronic music, Simon has created soundtracks for over 50 films, feature documentaries and television shows, from festival favourites NEVER GET BUSTED, THAT SUGAR FILM, TANNA and THESE FINAL HOURS, to TV drama and doco, including FIREPROOF: RENEE GRACIE REVEALED, CLOUDSTREET, BARRUMBI KIDS and MAVERIX.

In addition to his screen work he is a frequent songwriter and producer for major pop and hip hop acts including Post Malone, The Kid Laroi, Lil Uzi Vert, Dr Octagon, Queen, Darren Middleton, Missy Higgins, Kid Loco and Passion Pit.