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Death riddle of a man with no name
GREAT MYSTERIES

By: *SHANE MAGUIRE*

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A book, a **body**, a jumble of letters, mixed with an ancient poem and a Cold War paranoia created one of South Australia's most enduring mysteries as SHANE MAGUIRE reports in the third of a series.

NEARLY 57 years on, nobody has been able to give a name, birthplace or age to the man found dead on **Somerton Beach** on December 1, 1948.

It is not known positively if the man was murdered or committed suicide, though traces of poison were found in his **body** at autopsy.

The dead man was found during the Cold War when tensions between the Soviet Union and the West were at trigger point and spies were as common as beach-goers at Glenelg.

Police at the time thought the dead man may have arrived in Adelaide on the Overland train from Melbourne, early on November 30, 1948.

Investigations showed the day before the man was found, he had bought a rail ticket at Adelaide Railway Station for the run to Henley Beach. but, oddly, he placed half of the ticket stub in his bag with the other half never found. He caught the 11.15am bus to Glenelg and **Somerton Beach**. Witnesses told police they saw the man lying in the sand at the top of the beach. He appeared to be smoking. Next morning he was found dead, with a half-smoked cigarette on the collar of his coat.

A tiny, scrunched-up piece of paper was found in the man's trousers with the words ``Taman Shud'', the last two words of the 900 year-old The Rubaiyet, written by Omar Khayyam. Roughly translated they mean ``The End''.

The mystery deepened when a Glenelg doctor reported to police a copy of The Rubaiyat had been thrown into his car the night before the dead man was found. The words Taman Shud were missing. On the inside cover of the book was found a code arranged - MRGOABABD
MTBIMPANETP
MLIABOAIAQC
ITTMTSAMSTGAB.

That remains unbroken.

There also was a telephone number of a former nurse. She told police she had given the book to a man called Boxall. But Boxall was still alive and opened the door when police called.

``It certainly remains one of the great mysteries,'' said retired Detective, Senior Sergeant Gerry Feltus, who spent more than a decade on the case.

Caption:	LAST RESPECTS: The funeral for the unknown man with the place where he was found at Somerton marked with an X and his tombstone.
Illus:	Photo: funeral for unknown man found at somerton Photo: x marks where body was found Photo: tombstone of unknown man
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