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# Man found guilty of Australian beach murder after hiding in India for years

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Tiffanie Turnbull

Sydney



The murder of Toyah Cordingley prompted an outpouring of grief across the state of Queensland

A former nurse has been found guilty of the high-profile murder of Toyah Cordingley, whose body was found on a popular tropical beach in Australia seven years ago.

Toyah Cordingley was stabbed at least 26 times while out on a Sunday afternoon walk with her dog in October 2018.

The 24-year-old's body was discovered by her father, half-buried in sand dunes on Wangetti beach between the popular tourist hotspots of Cairns and Port Douglas.

Rajwinder Singh, 41, fled to India the day after Ms Cordingley's body was found and spent four years on the run. After a month-long trial, he was found guilty by a jury on Monday, eliciting cheers and tears from members of the public gathered in court. It is the second trial for Singh, after a trial in March ended in a hung jury.

A health store worker and animal shelter volunteer, Ms Cordingley was well known, and well loved, by the local community and her death caused an outpouring of grief across the state of Queensland.

Ms Cordingley was "repeatedly" stabbed with a sharp object and put in a shallow sandy grave with "little or no hope of surviving", the Cairns Supreme Court heard.

Singh - originally from the Indian state of Punjab - had been living in Innisfail at the time of the killing, a town about two hours south of the crime scene.

Detectives had quickly zeroed in on him as a suspect, but he had already flown out of the country, leaving his wife, three children and parents behind, the trial heard.



Rajwinder Singh fled to India the day after Toyah Cordingley's body was found.

Prosecutors alleged this was an indication of his guilt. Though circumstantial, their case would show the evidence pointed to Singh "and eliminated others", the court heard.

That evidence included DNA recovered from a stick at the scene which was 3.8 billion times more likely to have come from Singh than a random member of the public. They also said the movements of Ms Cordingley's phone matched the movements of Singh's car in the moments after the attack.

Singh will return to court for a sentencing hearing on Tuesday.

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