

# AUSTRALIA'S MOST BIZARRE MURDER CASE



## A CRY IN THE DARK



**N**o one in the city of Basking Ridge, New Jersey ever dreamed the little ugly duckling would become a movie star. But that's what Meryl Streep blossomed into, much to everyone's amazement.

Instant recognition of Meryl Streep's enormous talent came in her second film *The Deer Hunter*. It garnered her an Academy award nomination and brought her substantially larger and more important roles. It didn't take long before she was recognized as one of the most significant stars of this

decade.

She was a hit in *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, wowed her fans in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, won Best Supporting Actress in *Kramer vs. Kramer* and an Academy award for *Sophie's Choice*. And now she's going to co-star with Sam Neill (*My Brilliant Career*) in **A Cry in the Dark** a true story about Australia's most sensational and bizarre murder case, directed by famed Australian director Fred Schepisi.

Streep was born June 22, 1949 to a father, a pharmaceutical company executive, and a mother who worked as a commercial artist at home. She grew into a child with

pudgy cheeks, a crooked nose, wearing heavy spectacles and dental braces. Not exactly one's picture of a captivating child on the way to being a movie star.

Life didn't get off to a happy start for the young Streep. She felt she was so homely that the only people in the world who loved her were her parents. And it didn't get much better when she went to school. Her school mates thought of her as domineering, prissy and determined.

But that all changed when she was 15 years old and decided to put her ugly duckling appearance behind her and become the perfect *Seventeen* magazine glamor gal. She replaced her glasses with contacts, put peroxide and lemon juice on her hair and became a sizzling blonde. Result: when she entered high school she became a cheer leader and discovered her niche in life when she found she could wow audiences with her singing and acting ability in school musicals.

However, her new look didn't

give her the friends she hankered after. She found her school mates were now jealous so she only had two close friends, one of which was her cousin.

She went on to Vassar, the exclusive Ivy league university, and was quickly recognized as an actress with a gifted talent. Then it was on to New York in 1978 and after only six months she appeared in eight plays and drew ecstatic reviews.

Though her career was going well, she went through a devastating personal tragedy. The man she loved and lived with, actor John Cazale, died of bone cancer two years after they met.

She found it too painful to stay on in the apartment where she'd lived with Cazale after he died. Fortunately, her brother introduced her to sculptor Don Gummer who said she could camp in his studio while he took a vacation.

When he came back he told her there was no reason to leave. Brad Darrach in *Life* magazine reported Meryl was already fascinated with his sculptures — large, abstract objects of meditation executed with extreme finesse — and soon after, with the man.

And no wonder. Besides being a major artist, he's good looking, tall, dark and ruggedly masculine. They became involved quickly and were married within six months in her parents home in 1978.

They've been together ever since. During the past ten years they have had three children; Henry nine, Mary Wills five and Grace 18 months, while juggling two major careers. They also moved from their Manhattan lodgings to a \$1.8 million estate in Connecticut which holds a 47 acre lake.

The house can't be seen from the road, which gives them the desired privacy they all need. They keep soul and estate together with a part time gardener and a full time nanny. Streep shops, cooks three meals a day, does the washing and ironing and herds the children back and forth. It can't be easy.

But the family manages and Streep's career continues to flourish. Directors and audiences alike still think of her as one of the most beautiful actresses of this decade. And one wonders why. Her nose seems to wander around, she has thick legs, chubby hips, a somewhat flat bust and eyes whose color are non-descript.

None of these physical attributes matter when she gets into a role — the talented actress makes her characters come alive.

And all of a sudden she is beautiful.

— Sylvia Train