

ULTIMATUM

RELEASE DATE: RONALD RYAN'S DEATH DAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2022

Bolte rounded on Perkin.

'The question, Perkin. The question is *not*, 'Do I, or do I not, allow Ronald Ryan to live. The question is, do you run the state or does *the government* run the state?'

It's Melbourne, right at the beginning of February in 1967.

Hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets daily to protest the imminent hanging of petty burgler-cum-Pentridge-breakout-star Ronald Ryan.

Graham Perkin is at the helm of the nation's most-read, most-followed newspaper, *The Age*, where he had almost single-handedly changed the nature of Australian journalism. Founding father of social justice journalism, Perkin wrote incisive and scathing commentary around the decision to hang Ryan. And as the social culture of Australia began to shift, just ahead of the Vietnam War, the idea that you could kill a man for killing a man sat uneasily. People demanded change.

The world was watching.

The Premier, Henry Bolte, Victoria's longest-serving Premier was the man towards whom everyone directed their vitriol. Surely, he could change the outcome for Ryan? Surely, if one man could exercise mercy and commute a death sentence into life, wasn't that man Henry Bolte?

History remembers Bolte as the man responsible for Ronald Ryan's death.

History remembers Bolte as the man in charge when paedophile and murderer Tait wasn't hanged because he was insane.

Historians and commentators, over and over again, have written, 'Bolte wanted revenge for Tait'.

But it's not true.

Ultimatum tells a different story. It tells of an attempt by Graham Perkin to bribe the Premier in exchange for Ronald Ryan's life, in what was to be a year of a decisive election.

It's a story nobody has told.

Until now.

Ultimatum is a six-part podcast narrated by author Leticia Mooney, whose short and sharp narrative throws light on what has become the story of our modern Ned Kelly.

Release date: 3 February, the day that Ronald Ryan was hanged.

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