

Innocent - Without a doubt

Who is Schapelle Corby?

Schapelle Leigh Corby is a 28-year-old trainee beauty therapist from the Gold Coast, Australia. She is a warm hearted girl who has a real love of life and people and had suspended her studies to look after her seriously ill father.

When and why was Schapelle arrested?

On October 8, 2004, Schapelle's life changed forever when she was detained at the Denpasar Airport, accused of smuggling 4.1 kg of marijuana, in her boogie board bag, from Australia to Bali, Indonesia.

Why was Schapelle travelling to Bali?

Schapelle travelled from Brisbane, via Sydney, to Bali on a Qantas flight with two friends and her younger brother James, to celebrate her sister Mercedes' 30th birthday.

Mercedes is married to Wyan and together with their two children live on the Gold Coast. They were in Bali to allow their children a period of exposure to their Bali heritage prior to commencing school on the Gold Coast in 2005.

What happened when Schapelle was arrested?

When questioned by customs officers, Schapelle identified the boogie board bag as hers and upon opening it, was horrified to discover that it contained 4.1 kg of marijuana inside two overlapping see-through vacuum-sealed bags placed on top of her 'boogie board'.

What evidence suggests Schapelle's innocence?

The smuggling of marijuana into Indonesia from Australia is very rare; in fact drugs are more likely to come **from** Indonesia into Australia. Marijuana sells for considerably more in Australia than in Indonesia as supported by various legal and professional observers to this case.

Such a large quantity of marijuana could only be provided by a major supplier. Neither the Queensland Police nor Australian Federal Police investigations could find any connection between Schapelle and any illicit drug trade. Furthermore, Schapelle is not a drug user.

Interference with passengers' luggage is rife throughout Australian airports, as subsequently confirmed by hundreds of people. Passengers' baggage has on several occasions been used to convey drugs within Australia. In Schapelle's case, the marijuana placed in her luggage was for some reason not collected before the flight from Sydney to Bali.

The drugs were blatantly left on top of the other contents of the boogie board bag and this lack of concealment meant that the drugs were easily discovered on arrival. This is inconsistent with a major supplier planning the movement of drugs through three major airports and the associated security but would appear consistent with the package being put there in a hurry for transit behind customs and security lines.

Marijuana emits a strong pungent smell which was quite evident when the bag was detected by Indonesian Customs Officers. This would have been readily detected when the bag was checked in at Brisbane Airport however Qantas staff testified that there was nothing unusual about the bag at check-in.

The situation became worse for Schapelle when the Indonesian Police/Customs destroyed vital opportunities for her to establish her innocence.

- Schapelle and her travelling companions consistently requested that the bags be weighed and checked for fingerprints throughout the investigation and also requested that CCTV film be checked.

However the Indonesian police **refused** —

- to weigh her luggage to compare it with the check-in weight at her port of origin;
- to have the bags checked for fingerprints, and indeed allowed the packages to be handled by others. The absence of Schapelle's fingerprints on the packages would support her account that she had never handled them. Fingerprinting may also have established who was responsible;
- an offer by Australian Federal Police to test the drugs to establish their place of origin.



Picture by Steve Pennells, supplied courtesy of The West Australian ©

- CCTV tapes and airport information, recorded in Australia during check in, were wiped before they could be viewed, but well after they had been requested, denying Schapelle another opportunity to prove her innocence. CCTV at Bali Airport was ‘conveniently’ not operating at the time.
- Schapelle’s travelling companions confirmed that her bags were zippered shut before leaving the Gold Coast for the Brisbane airport and that there were no drugs in them. Their evidence was rejected by the court because they could not name the owner of the drugs or who put them in the bag.
- An Australian prisoner testified that he had overheard other prisoners in Australia referring to the specific incident when the drugs were put into Schapelle's bag for internal conveyance from Brisbane to Sydney, and that he knew the name of the person responsible.
- Professor Paul Wilson, a criminologist with expertise in criminal profiling testified that Schapelle did not fit the profile of a typical drug courier.
- Schapelle was the unfortunate random victim of a crime that could have been perpetrated on any passenger on the aircraft. Her luggage happened to be a suitable target as it was unlocked, easily identifiable and had room for the drugs to be inserted.

What important points were made at Schapelle’s sentencing?

1. The Judges made it clear in their sentencing remarks that as the marijuana was found in Schapelle’s bag, and as she could not prove who put it there, she is therefore guilty.
2. The Prosecution demanded that Schapelle be imprisoned for the rest of her life. On 27 May 2005, Schapelle was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Her legal team have mounted an appeal, as have the prosecution which is still demanding a Life sentence.

What is Schapelle's present position?

Schapelle is being detained in Kerobokan prison in Denpasar, Bali in appalling, inhumane conditions. She is distraught at her predicament, which is compounded by the fact that her father is dying of cancer. Her distress at being unable to support her sick father, while knowing that she is innocent, is a terrible burden for her to bear. Her family visits her each day and brings her meals and bottled water because hygienic, nourishing food and clean water are not available within the prison. It is feared that continued ill health may endanger her life. Schapelle’s mother has sold her Gold Coast business and is struggling to make ends meet in supporting Schapelle throughout her detainment.

What can you do?

1. Write a letter to your local Member of Parliament, and/or to the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, and their opposition counterparts, expressing your concern for Schapelle, and urging that the government take immediate action to secure her release from prison and return her home to her family.
Letters must NOT be sent to the Indonesian Government or Judiciary.
2. Write to Schapelle. Letters and Care Packages should be addressed as follows -
Ms Schapelle Corby
C/- LPM Kerobokan
Jl. Tangkuban Perahu
Kerobokan, Denpasar 80117
Bali, INDONESIA
For tips on all letter writing contact SASG-V at the address below.
3. Include Schapelle and her family in your prayers and encourage your church groups to do likewise. Schapelle is a Christian and was baptised while in prison.
4. Tell your friends and colleagues about Schapelle’s wrongful imprisonment and urge them to likewise become involved. You can forward this information sheet to them and / or obtain further copies from the address below.

Further information may be obtained at <http://www.freeschapelle.net/>

or by writing to Schapelle Action Support Group - Vic
P O Box 149
Mulgrave Vic 3170

© SASG-V 2005