

Police investigate disappearance of large inheritance and \$70,000 in loans taken out by Ann Smith

Posted Sat 20 Jun 2020 at 1:48pm, updated Sun 21 Jun 2020 at 12:03am



Ann Smith died of profound septic shock and multiple organ failure in April. (Supplied: SA Police)

A large cash inheritance and \$70,000 in loans disappeared from Adelaide woman Ann Smith's bank account in the lead-up to her shocking death, police investigating the case have revealed.

The discovery is one of a number of "financial irregularities" found after Ms Smith, who had cerebral palsy, died of profound septic shock and multiple organ failure in April.

Police believe the 54-year-old, who was also suffering from malnutrition, may have spent up to a year sitting in a cane chair prior to her death.

[They launched a manslaughter investigation last month](#), and this week made a public appeal for information about [missing jewellery and fridges](#), and [the use of her car](#).

In the latest development in the case, police on Saturday revealed two separate loans totalling \$70,000 were taken out in Ms Smith's name in the last six years.

The loans, taken out from "small lending companies", were supposedly to allow her to travel and buy a new car, but were not used for either of those purposes.

Investigating officer Detective Senior Sergeant Phil Neagle said it was "most unlikely" Ms Smith had obtained the loans by herself.

"They were significant loans," he said.

"We know she did not travel or buy a new car after they were taken out, but the money is now gone."

A large cash inheritance left to Ms Smith by her parents in 2009 had also been withdrawn from her bank account.

Investigators acknowledged some of the money would have been used for Ms Smith's day-to-day expenses, but said "the total amount is disproportionate with [Ms Smith's] lifestyle".

Key points:

- Two loans totalling \$70,000 were taken out in Ms Smith's name before her death
- The money was obtained for travel and a new car, but it was not used for those purposes
- Police say the money spent is "disproportionate" with Ms Smith's lifestyle

"Ann may well have spent some of the money herself, but we are now trying to ascertain how much, and if any has been unlawfully removed from her account, and where it went," Senior Sergeant Neagle said.

"An excessive amount of money seems to have been withdrawn in recent years."

Police said Ms Smith was known to be generous with her friends and it was possible her kindness may have been exploited.

There have so far been 45 calls to Crime Stoppers in relation to the case.

Car used by an 'unknown person'

Detective Superintendent Des Bray said 10 of those calls had been received since police appealed for information regarding Ms Smith's 1998 Silver Honda Accord sedan on Friday.

Police revealed the car was registered in Ms Smith's name and had been used multiple times between 2015 and her death.

Superintendent Bray said the car had been used legitimately by carers to take Ms Smith to and from her house.



Ann Smith's car was captured going through a red light arrow at the corner of Portrush and Magill roads in Norwood on January 20, 2017. (Supplied: SA Police)

However, he said an unknown person used the car for their own purposes.

"Somebody appears to have been using the car for their own use, and had incurred four traffic expiations," Superintendent Bray said.

"These fines totalled \$2,161.

"We want to know who was driving that car at that time."

Police said the fines were paid with funds from Ms Smith's bank account, and resulted in her being disqualified from holding a drivers licence for three months.

During their investigation, they also discovered there was no refrigerator or nutritional food in Ms Smith's home.

Food found inside the house included potato chips, packet soups, chocolate and soft drink, as well as pasta with an expiry date of 2014.

Police also found a near-full tube of toothpaste with an expiry date of 2017, and said Ms Smith was unable to clean her own teeth.