

- From -
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Shot-at officer sues force

SUE HEWITT

A FORMER policeman almost killed in the line of duty and forced to retire is suing Victoria Police.

The former detective claims he has been unable to work since a serial burglar he was trying to arrest grabbed his service revolver and fired at him.

Igor Tomazic and another officer tried to arrest Damien Mark Nobile in Collingwood five years ago when Nobile snatched his gun.

He fired at police before hijacking a car, then a taxi and speeding through the city with police in pursuit on January 14, 2005.

Mr Tomazic's lawyer, Lisa Treeby of Arnold Thomas and Becker, said more had to be done to ensure that police officers' safety was treated with the "utmost of importance".

"Members of the police force put themselves in the face of stress and danger on a daily basis to serve the public," Ms Treeby said.

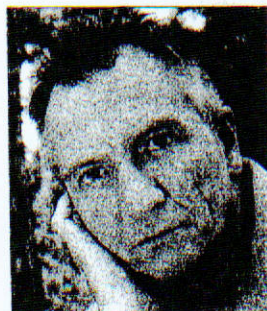
Mr Tomazic, a former Melbourne senior constable, said a bullet came "within a centimetre" of his face.

"My partner and I were lying on the floor and he was standing above us with the revolver," he said.

"I thought we were dead. I have never experienced a feeling in my guts like the fear I felt at that moment."

The judge who convicted Nobile said he had "shattered" the lives of the officers involved. Mr Tomazic agreed.

"It's five years down the track and it still haunts me. I



Stress claim: Igor Tomazic is suing Victoria Police.

struggle just to get through the day, my mind just wanders," he said. "It affects your relationships, but I am lucky my wife, Joanne has stayed with me."

The father of seven had been a policeman for 21 years before the incident.

"I never got back to work — I feel I was treated like a number (by force command)," he said. "They (command) retired me because of ill health."

Mr Tomazic, 48, this week issued proceedings in the County Court claiming chronic and severe post traumatic stress disorder, flashbacks, nightmares and depression.

His statement of claim says Nobile tried to kill or injure Mr Tomazic.

It claims Victoria Police was negligent in several areas including failing to provide a gun holster which was safe and could not be unclipped by an offender.

He is seeking unspecified damages. A police spokeswoman declined to comment.

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