

Cop whistleblower in constant fear for his life

Living a nightmare

IT IS a chilling scenario, even for the most hardened police officer.

You are having a drink in a city hotel when a suspended detective, who knows you are investigating him, struts in with an accused underworld killer.

The underworld identity is not there to bend the elbow with a drink, but rather to flex his muscles in an act of intimidation.

"(The alleged killer), who is known to me as an underworld identity, was a pace behind him, glaring at me, intimidating me right through," Detective Sergeant Simon Illingworth later told a court. "It achieved its purpose."

In June, the *Herald Sun* published security camera footage of the suspended detective and the accused killer, who cannot be named, leaving the hotel in December 2003.

In May, Det-Sgt Illingworth

Jeremy Kelly

worth had appeared on ABC's *Australian Story*, an unprecedented act for a serving Victorian police officer.

In between tears, he told of how tackling corruption was a dangerous business. "You don't know whether you are going to turn a corner and get a handshake or a bullet," he said.

He said he was once bashed by a fellow officer.

"I fell down to my knees and I was kicked in the head a number of times," he said.

"I got on to my hands and knees and stood up. I wanted to show that a whistleblower had what it took, and then I fell head first into the floor.

"But I am still here."

Det-Sgt Illingworth told the program he joined the ethical standards department after finding corruption in his second year in the force.

A sergeant had stolen money from an illegal card game and was paid off by the owner.

Det-Sgt Illingworth said the sergeant later hatched a plan to kidnap a criminal.

"He spoke about taking him to a quarry, and I asked him what he was going to do."

Det-Sgt Illingworth said the sergeant indicated he was going to kill the criminal.

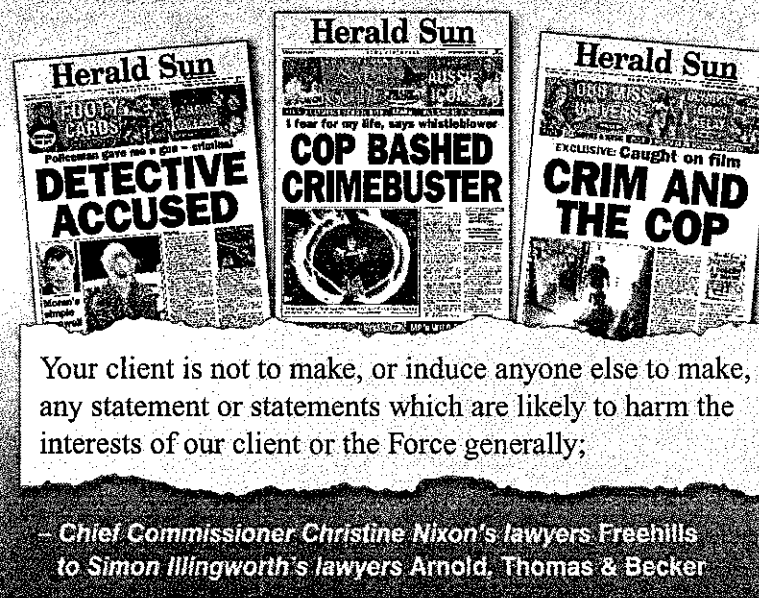
"This was going to be an execution."

The officer was later jailed, helped by the statement of Det-Sgt Illingworth.

He told the program his home address has been leaked to criminals and he had had to move house several times.

At the time of the broadcast, he was carrying a gun at all times despite being on sick leave.

"This nightmare that I am living with will continue," he said.



Your client is not to make, or induce anyone else to make, any statement or statements which are likely to harm the interests of our client or the Force generally;

— Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon's lawyers Freehills
to Simon Illingworth's lawyers Arnold, Thomas & Becker

Police hush money claim

Det-Sgt Illingworth said he was unconcerned by those clauses but the gag order amounted to hush money.

"I don't care if it's \$2.5 million, I am not going to sign it. I am not going to sell my soul. It's not for sale. It never has been. Everyone has their price? I don't. "This is hush money and the cover-up makes it a scandal."

He said he would resign from the police force after 16 years of service and be forced to sell his house.

"At least I will have my soul and feel good about myself," he said.

"I don't believe hushing up a problem is going to fix the problem."

He said he would resume negotiations if the gag clause was removed.

"I am not going to come out swinging against the force."

Det-Sgt Illingworth said he still had concerns for his safety, as many of the criminals and police he has charged are still going through the courts.

"Particularly because of the crooks I was involved with," he said.

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One of the criminals he charged was busted with eight guns, a silencer and night vision goggles.

"And he was given my address. (These) are not just criminals, they have the equipment of an assassin."

Since he knocked back the offer, Det-Sgt Illingworth said he had learned that police command had started auditing every case he had worked on.

"Going through everything I have had my hands on. I guess they want to know what I might say," he said.

Asked what the force feared he might say, he said: "I don't know. I asked them that, and they said 'Everything'."

Det-Sgt Illingworth is currently trying to establish a small business giving workshops on ethics and leadership.

Police last night refused to comment.

Three die on roads

TWO people died and another was seriously hurt in a car crash in western Victoria yesterday.

Paramedics found the driver, a South Australian man, 33, and an American woman, 24, dead at the scene, and a female passenger trapped in the wreckage about 3.30pm.

Police said the car ran off the Western Highway and hit a tree near Nhill, about 80km east of the South Australian border.

The injured woman, 28, also from the US, was taken to Nhill hospital with leg and back injuries.

Last night she was flown from Horsham to Melbourne, where she was in a stable condition.

A man, 30, died after his car hit a tree and rolled off the Great Alpine Rd near Myrtleford last night.

— Geráldine Mitchell

Dingo is destroyed

THE dingo that stalked two children on Queensland's Fraser Island has been found and destroyed.

The dingo had entered a bedroom of a unit at the island's Kingfisher Bay resort last Friday, threatening a 14-week-old baby and a five-year-old girl.

It was found last night near the resort and put down by lethal injection.