

*SHE DISCOVERED, SHORTLY AFTER, that the man who had just raped her was a policeman.*

*To add to the humiliation, when he had finished with her, several of his colleagues emerged from closets and doorways where they had been hiding, watching while their friend degraded her.*

*He thought it was funny. So did his mates. He produced his identification badge and she tried to read his name. She wanted to memorise it, because she was about to do the unthinkable. She was going to report the incident to the police. She didn't want this to happen to other working girls.*

*Her name was Mary Anne Brifman, the eldest daughter of the former prostitute, brothel madam and police whistleblower Shirley Margaret Brifman, who had been found dead of a suspected drug overdose on 4 March 1972.*

*It was Mary Anne who had discovered the twisted corpse of her mother on that Saturday in the small room of the family flat in Bonney Avenue, in the Brisbane suburb of Clayfield. It was Mary Anne who only a year before her mother's untimely death was being groomed against her will to take over her mother's brothels in Sydney, before Shirley was charged with soliciting her own child for the purposes of prostitution. When the charge failed to disappear, even though Shirley had been paying off corrupt police like Glen Patrick Hallahan, Tony Murphy and Fred Krahe for more than a decade, she went on live national television and snitched on the whole rotten lot of them.*

*Following Shirley's live-to-air interview the Brifmans had returned to Brisbane to hide, to disappear, to keep safe. Shirley and her husband Sonny had lived in the sub-tropical city from the late 1950s until 1963, when the*

*National Hotel inquiry into police misconduct at the famous city watering hole got started. Shirley had been a star witness at the inquiry. At the time she had denied being a prostitute. She rejected any intimate association with Murphy and Hallahan. And no, she claimed, there was most definitely not a prostitution ring working out of the National. It was a classy joint. And what would she know of it anyway? She wasn't a working girl.*

*Having perjured herself, Shirley then moved the family to Sydney. Almost ten years later, after blowing the whistle, she returned to Brisbane. Nine months after that she was dead.*

*Now Shirley's daughter, Mary Anne, was in her twenties with two children of her own. She was working as a call-out prostitute for an independent outfit called Quality Escorts. The job on this particular night was slightly unusual. The client had asked to meet Brifman in an auto repair shop north of the Brisbane CBD. She accepted the job, but was unaware she was walking into a sexual ambush.*

*They didn't know her real identity, of course. They didn't know she was a Brifman. If they did, and word got back to headquarters, alarm would have spread through the building. It might have been several years earlier, but the stench of the Brifman 'suicide' still haunted the corridors of the Queensland Police Force. The tall, gangly officer Shirley knew from the Consorting Squad when she worked in the Killarney brothel over in South Brisbane, Terry Lewis, would rise to become Commissioner. And her friend and lover, Tony Murphy, would stand as the most powerful detective in the force.*

*In an eerie replica of another time, another Brifman was being used and abused by police. Mary Anne lodged an official complaint against the officer who had raped her and later gave a formal, detailed statement. She too, in a small way, was standing up to those who had disrespected her, just as her mother had done.*

*For a week internal police investigators visited her home to counsel and placate her. It was clear that while they appeared genuinely concerned for her wellbeing, they also didn't want the press to get wind of the incident. The constable who raped you, they told Mary Anne, was engaged to be married and*

*had since lost his fiancé because of his actions. He would be exiled to a police station in a remote part of the state.*

*Mary Anne Brifman didn't proceed with charges. She didn't want the world to know she was the daughter of the deceased Shirley Brifman. She didn't want to live with the shame, so she stepped back into the shadows. From that moment on, for as long as she worked as an escort in Brisbane, she never heard from or came to the attention of the police again. They didn't dare go near her, the daughter of the ghost of Bonney Avenue.*





**1970s**



## The Year of the Dragon

By mid-1976 Inspector Terence (Terry) Murray Lewis of Charleville, a dusty town in western Queensland, should already have known that he was in for a stellar year. To begin with, it was a leap year, and he finally got to celebrate his birthday – 29 February – on the actual date. Also, he was born under the Chinese astrological sign of the Dragon, and 1976 was coincidentally the Year of the Dragon. Lewis would be turning 48.

He may not have been familiar with the characteristics of the revered Dragon in Chinese astrology: inflated self-assurance, tyrannical with a stern demeanour, impressed by prestige and rank, devoted to work and lucky with money-making schemes – the Dragon was renowned for leaving a trail of wealth.

By winter Lewis had already had a frank and lengthy discussion with Queensland premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen on the airstrip at Cunnamulla following a country cabinet meeting of the ruling National Party, and he would soon be making a flurry of political contacts. He also wasted not a single opportunity – like his friend Anthony (Tony) Murphy up in Longreach – to disparage the administration of Police Commissioner Raymond (Ray) Wells Whitrod.

The day after Bjelke-Petersen flew back to the big smoke of Brisbane, Lewis returned to his desk in downtown Charleville, in the wooden police station beside the stone bank in the main street. It was

a timely visit by the premier. Lewis had had enough of being stuck in western Queensland, and had actually applied for a vacancy in the Commonwealth Police. The Dragon could be stubborn and impetuous at times, and did not like taking orders – they could express flexibility and be amenable to life around them; but only to a point.

‘It crossed my mind to leave – that’s when I applied for a job in the Commonwealth [Police],’ Lewis recalls. ‘I made an application ... I think there were two vacancies, one for an Assistant Commissioner somewhere, and a Superintendent. They flew me to Sydney.’

Lewis was picked up at the airport by New South Wales police officer Dick Lendrum who had married Yvonne Weier – one of Lewis’s favourites from his days in the Juvenile Aid Bureau (JAB) in Brisbane in the 1960s.

After his interview (he would later find out that he didn’t get the job), Lendrum arranged for Lewis to meet the New South Wales Police Commissioner Fred ‘Slippery’ Hanson, a foundation member of the legendary ‘21 Division’ unit, formed to smash post-war hoodlum gangs. Hanson had become Commissioner in 1972, succeeding the corrupt Norm Allan.

Hanson had made his views on policing very clear not long after he took the top job. ‘Every cop should have a good thumping early in his career to make him tolerant,’ he told the press. ‘A good thumping teaches a young policeman how to get along with people. It’s no use getting police recruits from university, the ones who have never knocked around the lower levels.’

It was rumoured Hanson had been corrupt New South Wales Premier Robert Askin’s organiser of paybacks from illegal casinos, as had Allan.

‘[Dick] took me and introduced me to Fred Hanson, whom I’d never met,’ Lewis says. ‘He’s the one who said [of Whitrod], “Oh yeah, how’s that fat little bastard up there who should be charged with assuming the designation of a police officer?”’

## THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Meanwhile, retired detective and former Rat Packer Glendon (Glen) Patrick Hallahan was trying to make a fist of the farming life. He had left Brisbane under a cloud following his abrupt resignation from the force in 1972, although for a while continued to live at Kangaroo Point before shifting to acreage in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

He and the land would be an awkward fit. The big, powerful Hallahan, plagued with bouts of ill-health since the late 1950s, was a city creature, a habitu  of bars, wine saloons and restaurants – he relished the bright lights of Sydney. Well into his thirties, he continued to enjoy the nightlife.

In the aftermath of his departure from the force, his good friend – newspaper reporter from the 1950s and now editor of the *Sunday Sun* newspaper Ron Richards – offered Hallahan an alternative career.

Hallahan, one-time crack detective, receiver of graft from prostitutes, accomplice to criminals in both Brisbane and Sydney and associate to drug dealer John Edward Milligan, would try his hand as a specialist writer and break exclusive stories about crime and corruption. Richards believed that Hallahan could utilise his extensive police (and criminal) contacts, both state and federal, and drum up some rollicking Sunday crime reads.

Despite the fact that the office of the *Sun* was located in very familiar territory to Hallahan – the heart of Fortitude Valley – life as a reporter didn't work out. 'He produced a story using Federal Police intelligence about the arrival of the phenomenon of the car bomb in Australia,' recalls Des Houghton, then a young journalist on the *Sunday Sun*, based in Brunswick Street. 'It caused a bit of a drama and there were questions asked about where he got his intelligence from.'

'Hallahan was aloof. He was a hit with the women in the office. Most of the time he asked for help in how to fill out his expenses.'

After the car bomb scoop, Hallahan virtually disappeared, resuming residence with his wife, Heather, in Obi Obi on the north coast,

growing fruit and vegetables and toying with the idea of selling farm machinery. Despite the distance between them he was not lost to his old mate Tony Murphy. The two men remained in regular contact.

During this time in the state's capital, the classified advertisements in the *Courier-Mail* newspaper were featuring – in the Beauty and Health section – a relatively new phenomenon to the Brisbane scene – the massage parlour.

In the preceding few years parlours such as the Brisbane Health Studio, The Oriental Bathhouse, The Coronet and others, actually dispensed what they advertised – qualified massages. Each was equipped with bona fide massage tables.

The first Brisbane 'health studio' to be prosecuted as a premises used for prostitution was the Carla-Deidre Health Studio in Enoggera in June 1970. A man called Bernard John Pack was prosecuted. The case against Pack established that 'relief massages' given to men fell under the prostitution umbrella.

Quaintly, staff of the Temple of Isis were charged in 1971 with breaching the *Physiotherapists Act* by misleadingly calling themselves qualified masseurs or masseuses.

Police from the Licensing Branch, Drug Squad, Consorting Squad, the Valley Crime Intelligence Unit and even Commonwealth Police regularly visited the parlours, trying to catch prostitutes in the act of sexual congress. On some occasions officers confiscated parlour towels.

If prostitution was detected, the girls were immediately breached. There were no tip-offs about raids, no protection money payments, no charging on rotation. But by 1976, the entire parlour scene had changed.

As Lewis toiled in Charleville, and Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen jetted out on an overseas trade mission, hoping to convince both the British and the Japanese to invest in Queensland's limitless reserves of coal, and state Cabinet debated sand mining on Moreton Island, gentlemen were being invited to explore the pleasures of female 'masseuses' across Brisbane city.

## A LEMONADE IN BLACKALL

There was the Penthouse Health Studio at 141 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley. There was the Kontiki at 91 Gympie Road, Kedron. ‘Have you met our pretty and talented girls at Kontiki? Well they’re just longing to entertain you the way you enjoy the best.’

There was the Fantasia Health Spa at 187 Barry Parade, Fortitude Valley. And the Golden Hands Health Salon at 1145 Ipswich Road, Moorooka. ‘Come and meet our lovely talented girls ...’

In the Year of the Dragon, a lot of money was changing hands in Brisbane after dark, and men like corrupt former Licensing Branch officer Jack Reginald Herbert picked up the scent.

The luck of the Dragon would touch Lewis not once, but twice, in just a matter of months. Coming events – an act of police brutality in far-off Brisbane, and a bungled drug raid in even remoter Far North Queensland – would trigger Commissioner Ray Whitrod’s demise. They would also, as if by magic, open a clear path for Lewis to the summit of the Queensland Police Service.

## A Lemonade in Blackall

Just as Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod and Police Minister Max Hodges had paid a visit to Inspector Terry Lewis in Charleville in the winter of 1976, taking morning tea in the station and keeping tabs on the banished Rat Packer, they continued their tour 300 kilometres north to remote Blackall.

A grazing town perched on the Barcoo River and home to the historic Blackall Woolscour, the township evolved mainly as a service centre to surrounding properties. On one of those – Alice Station – in 1892, shearer Jack (Jackie) Howe broke colony records when he shored with hand shears 321 sheep in seven hours and 40 minutes and catapulted himself into folklore.

As was the custom, Whitrod and Hodges’ visit necessitated a

function in one of the local hotels, which was attended by 30 to 40 dignitaries, graziers and of course the local police. The Blackall police station was operated by sergeant in charge Les Lewis and four other officers. At the event, Les Lewis was sipping a glass of lemonade when he was approached by Minister Hodges.

‘What are you drinking, sergeant?’ Hodges asked him.

‘Lemonade,’ Sergeant Lewis replied.

‘What would you usually drink?’

‘Beer,’ he replied. ‘But I never drink [alcohol] in uniform.’

Hodges pointed out that even the Commissioner of Police was drinking a glass of wine in full uniform, and said to the barman: ‘Give the sergeant a beer.’

As the two men engaged in conversation, the Minister immediately expressed his dislike of the inspector in charge of the Longreach district (which took in Blackall, 213 kilometres away), Tony Murphy.

‘Murphy’s got a chip on his shoulder,’ Hodges remarked. ‘So has [Terry] Lewis.’ Hodges went on to tell him that Whitrod planned to transfer Terry Lewis from Charleville to Innisfail in Far North Queensland, ‘to keep him as far away as possible from Brisbane and the Commissioner’, and that Murphy would be staying put in Longreach ‘until he learned to smile’.

Sergeant Les Lewis, who worked well with Murphy and believed the famous detective from Brisbane had done a good job in Longreach, told Hodges that Murphy was expecting a transfer to Toowoomba where his wife and children had settled.

Hodges said it wasn’t going to happen. ‘Hodges was very firm,’ recalls Lewis. ‘He was the boss.’

A few days later, Murphy’s car pulled into the police yard in Blackall. He was on his way down to Toowoomba to see his wife, Maureen, and the kids. The drive – over 1200 kilometres – also took him en route through Charleville.

## LOVE IN THE LIDO

Sergeant Les Lewis felt compelled to relay to his boss details of the meeting with Hodges and Whitrod. 'I've got something to tell you if you promise not to take it further,' he said. He told of Hodges' refusal to move Murphy out of Longreach until he 'learned how to smile'.

Murphy immediately got out of the car in a rage and repeatedly kicked the tyres of the vehicle. 'Those bloody bastards,' he shouted.

Murphy then 'took off out of the yard' and headed for Terry Lewis in Charleville. In Murphy's mind, Hodges' remarks about himself and Terry Lewis constituted the persecution of senior officers in the Queensland Police Force.

He would most certainly be taking the matter forward.

## Love in the Lido

Down in the mean streets of Kings Cross, Sydney, once plied so successfully by former Brisbane madam Shirley Margaret Brifman, another young prostitute, Anne Marie Tilley, was working the lanes and backstreets.

Tilley, even before she hit her teenage years, was steeped in the business of prostitution. Her foster father had once been a driver for the legendary Sydney madam Matilda (Tilly) Devine of the Razor Gang era in the 1920s and 1930s. He told her many stories through her girlhood. At the age of 11, Tilley was entranced by the popular 1963 Billy Wilder film, *Irma La Douce*, a musical comedy about a policeman who falls for a prostitute in Paris. In the movie, honest gendarme Nestor Patou (Jack Lemmon) unwittingly begins arresting call girls who are favoured by corrupt senior police and is thrown out of the force. By fate he becomes close friends with prostitute Irma (Shirley MacLaine) and eventually declares his love. Tilley adored the luxuriant lifestyle of the on-screen prostitutes. She adored Irma's fluffy white dog. She knew this was the life for her.

At the age of 16, in a Kings Cross nightclub – the Lido in Roslyn Street, a notorious haunt for gangsters and callgirls – Tilley met her very own Nestor Patou. His name was Hector (Hec) Hapeta, not an honest policeman, but a retailer of pet meat based in the distant suburbs of western Sydney.

Hapeta was hanging out with a prostitute ‘keeper’ called Bob. Tilley and a girlfriend wanted to get on the game. Bob threw some money on the table and asked young Tilley to go buy him and Hec a drink at the bar. She refused – ladies didn’t go to the bar – and Hapeta, dressed as he habitually was in a three-piece suit, told Bob to leave her alone. Hec would get the drinks.

Hapeta was a ‘smiler’; he had a happy demeanour and a cheeky sense of humour. Tilley thought he was a gentleman. They would soon move in together in a flat in Liverpool, and Tilley would begin her notorious career as a prostitute and brothel madam.

It would have been inconceivable to both Hapeta and Tilley that by the late 1970s they would find themselves drifting north to the sun and warmth of Queensland. There, with astonishing speed, they would build a vice empire of gargantuan proportions that would make them wealthy.

It could have been a plot from one of the film-loving Tilley’s matinees, but this time a western. Two savvy operators ride into a hick town, take over the saloons and the houses of ill-repute, and laugh all the way to the bank. And they wouldn’t need to worry about the sheriff. Because very quickly, the sheriff would be handsomely remunerated to turn a blind eye.

## **A Stellar Career**

Meanwhile, in the Queensland capital, Gerald (Tony) Fitzgerald, QC, aged 34 (and born in the Year of the Snake), was not only one of the

## A STELLAR CAREER

busiest and most respected lawyers in town but was also juggling a young family – three children under the age of five. The Fitzgeralds lived on the Brisbane River in Rosebery Terrace, Chelmer, just across the Walter Taylor Bridge from Indooroopilly.

Having taken silk the year before – one of the youngest to do so in the state – Fitzgerald had carved a lucrative niche for himself in commercial law. A Catholic, and son to a senior public servant, he had been something of a prodigy. He was called to the Bar in 1964 and for a time worked out of chambers above Cassells' frock shop in Queen Street, dubbed the 'Outs of Court' (as opposed to the official home of Brisbane's legal fraternity, the Inns of Court up on North Quay.)

By the mid-1960s he was being mentored by the legendary lawyer Gerard Brennan and moved up to the Inns, on the same floor as knockabout barrister and South Brisbane MP Colin Bennett. Brennan was the epitome of ethics and fairness in the law. A Catholic himself, he was also a champion of gentlemanly distance between the courts and government. The son of Justice Frank Brennan, he, like Bennett, believed strongly in social justice for all. He had a profound impact on Tony Fitzgerald. Brennan's father had died when he was just 21. Fitzgerald had lost his mother, Doris, to a kidney ailment when he was six years old. Both had risen out of humble financial circumstances.

Fitzgerald, like many of his young contemporaries, had heard of the police practice of 'verballing' or fabrication of evidence. And like the rest of Brisbane, knew the gossip that former police commissioner Frank Bischof was corrupt and that his bagmen in the 1960s were known as the Rat Pack.

Fitzgerald most likely heard much of the local tittle-tattle in the rooms of the Johnsonian Club in Adelaide Street. A beacon for barristers and journalists, the place was often packed with members for weekday lunch. It served a mean steak and offered the hottest English mustard in town. There, Fitzgerald rubbed shoulders with some of Brisbane's most colourful legal practitioners, including the cigar-smoking Jack

About. The old barrister would often leave a burning cigar on a stairwell outside court and pick it up again on his way out. About, his taste buds dead from smoking, adored lashings of the Johnsonian mustard.

Fitzgerald also got to know the best legal minds of the day – Eddie Broad, Wally Campbell, Des Sturgess, John Macrossan, Bill Pincus and Paul de Jersey. Within such a small pool of lawyers, it was hard not to notice that those who allied themselves with Joh Bjelke-Petersen's government and its legal work found themselves on the path to a successful career.

Fitzgerald, however, had little interest in day-to-day politics, though his attitude to police corruption may have been a little different. His grandfather, Casey, had been a Queensland police officer. Fitzgerald was, by choice, a lawyer who kept a low profile and treasured his privacy. He might have a regular game of tennis with a few close and trusted mates, but he did not court the social set nor did he have any interest in seeing his name in the newspapers.

Ironically, his future included a couple of years where he would become perhaps the best known legal practitioner in Australia and would embed his name in Queensland history.

## The Key Club

Across town, some enterprising entrepreneurs like the petty criminal Roland Short were starting some new business ventures in the skin trade.

The city had a few illegal gambling dens and some fledgling massage parlours and 'health studios', but Short was taking things to a whole new level. Short already had the Penthouse Health Studio in Brunswick Street, and another parlour in suburban Indooroopilly, west of the CBD. His centrepiece, though, was the new Key Club at 584 Stanley Street, Woolloongabba, within sight of the Brisbane Cricket Ground.

## THE KEY CLUB

Short had asked his friend, barman and parlour manager Geoff Crocker, to pop around and take a look in mid-1976: 'I'd never seen anything like it before in my life, lovely ladies there and everything,' Crocker said later.

Crocker checked out the club. There was gambling in two gaming rooms, pornographic movies being screened in a bar, separate areas with spa tubs and women coming out of the saunas with 'their boobs hanging out of the towels'. It was a scene from a Roman orgy.

Short told Crocker that if he looked after the parlour for him and did a good job, he would eventually end up running the place. 'So that was a bit of incentive for me, I liked the place, it looked good, you know?'

Uniquely, Short had instituted a special membership subscription to the Key Club. It cost \$500 to be a member, and you put another \$500 on an account card. Cash changed hands only in the gaming rooms. As a member, you were identified by your Key Club number and your birthdate. It cost \$100 an hour to be with a girl.

Crocker observed that the club was 'a class above' anything else he'd seen in Brisbane. '[There were] no rough-spoken ones,' he said of the women employed at the Key Club. 'No tattoos, we couldn't employ a girl if she had a tattoo, it was Roland's orders ... if their hair wasn't right or their dress wasn't up to standard, I'd say go home and get changed or do something with your hair and come back ... if you do it again I won't let you in.'

The gaming side of the operation was run by a man called Luciano Scognamiglio, who had games going right across the city. The thin, sickly-looking 'Luci' was also known to punters as 'Louis'. Crocker estimated that Short was making \$25,000 to \$30,000 each week off the illegal games at the Key Club.

Private investigator John Wayne Ryan was called in to fit out the club's security. 'Roland always had the latest technology,' he recalls. 'If he wanted closed-circuit television, he'd order the latest from the United States.'

‘Roland was a bit of a heavy. He had a reputation. And he was fairly well connected. He had something to do with a couple of coppers and he’d help them out on stuff. Because of the people who were coming into his clubs – magistrates, parliamentarians, lawyers – he had a lot of potential blackmail material. He also had a lot of things on a lot of cops.’

According to Ryan, Short was an associate of both Tony Murphy and former detective Glen Hallahan. He claimed that when Hallahan had been facing corruption charges in October 1972, Short had compiled damaging material on the judge set to hear Hallahan’s case – Eddie Broad. In the end the Crown offered no evidence against Hallahan and the case was dismissed. Hallahan resigned from the force shortly after.

Still, the incident highlighted that Short – though he had a well-known detestation of police – worked with them when required. As for the Key Club, Ryan befriended some of the girls working there and they called on him on several occasions to help them with personal security.

‘I did a couple of favours for the girls,’ Ryan says. ‘They were receiving threats for money. One of the threats came from Glen Hallahan, though he was no longer in the police force. The cops at the Gabba were weighing in too, asking for favours and money.’

‘The girls were under a lot of pressure. They were working the parlours by day and then coming into the Key Club at night. Most of the time they were carrying huge sums of money and I’d escort them to their cars. Or I’d grab their money and put it in the night safe. Then when the cops pressed them, they could say to them they were running a bit short on money that night.’

Ryan, who had been intimately connected with Brisbane’s club and vice scene since the 1960s, was walking a fine line. And Brisbane city was more volatile than anyone in the suburbs could have imagined.

Following the supposed suicide by drug overdose of the prostitute Shirley Brifman in her flat in Clayfield, the murder of Jack Cooper,

## DETECTIVE SAUNDERS

manager of the National Hotel in Queen Street, and the Whiskey Au Go Go bombings that killed 15 people, it emerged that Brisbane had a dangerous underworld.

‘I was walking around with two guns,’ Ryan reflected. ‘I was in the middle of everybody. Billy Phillips [tattooist, petty gangster, stolen goods fence and former informant or ‘dog’ to Hallahan] would give me a hug like I was his brother, but I was keeping an eye out for him pinning my arms and being stabbed by someone.

‘When I helped some of my police contacts, I’d be thanked personally for the work I’d done and wait for my arms to be grabbed and another copper to shoot me. That’s what it was like.’

## Detective Saunders

The face of the future of the Queensland Police Force, Lorelle Anne Saunders, a former army sergeant, had joined the force just weeks after the death of brothel madam Shirley Margaret Brifman in 1972. Less than three years later she was appointed by Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod as Queensland’s first female detective. She was just 26.

In a profession dominated by men, the Saunders appointment was big news. SHE BEAT MEN FOR DETECTIVE VACANCY, said one newspaper headline. And another: GENTLEMEN WHEN LAW IS A LADY.

‘Even hardened criminals have been known to melt when arrested by Detective Constable Lorrelle [sic] Saunders,’ a local Brisbane newspaper reported. ‘It’s amazing – they can be really polite,’ Saunders was quoted in the article. ‘You get a hard, rough crim yet he will talk to you, open doors and pull out chairs for you.’

Detective Constable Saunders could also stand on her record. She had a prodigious work ethic, effecting more than 650 arrests and her bravery in the line of duty was evident. In July 1974 a man threatened

to blow up a building in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley if he wasn't paid \$10,000. Saunders was used as a decoy. (The extortionist was apprehended before any rendezvous with Saunders.)

Saunders was the embodiment of modern Whitrod reform. He wanted more women in the force and he wanted them in senior positions. It was a measure that he hoped would go a long way towards tempering an old-fashioned, ill-educated and misogynist police force. She was not an ornament but a bona fide detective.

Yet soon after her historic appointment Saunders would upset the Rat Pack, and in particular the legendary detective Tony Murphy. Coupled with her powerful advocacy for women's rights in the force, a sense of justice and a knowledge of entrenched police corruption, she would soon suffer the same games exercised by corrupt members of the force against perceived enemies – public and professional humiliation, intimidation, direct death threats, concocted evidence, verballing and, incredibly, time in prison courtesy of a fabricated charge that she attempted to secure a hitman to kill a fellow police officer.

Dozens of promising police careers had been destroyed by the Rat Pack and its supporters, but nothing approached the venom directed at Saunders. 'As long as I can remember I have wanted to be in the force,' she told a newspaper following her elevation to detective.

As long as she could remember, too, she had had an acquaintance with Terence Murray Lewis. Interestingly, in the first week of his duties as head of the new Juvenile Aid Bureau back in the winter of 1963, Lewis had paid a visit to 25 Alamine Street, Holland Park, the home of a Mrs Lindall Rose Saunders and her daughter, Lorelle, then 15.

Lorelle had been in some minor trouble involving some undesirable young local boys and a teacher at her school, Cavendish Road State High, when the head of the JAB and his sidekick, policewoman Yvonne Weier, turned up to help set the girl on the straight and narrow.

## POLITICKING

Just over a decade later Saunders would be one of Whitrod's bright young hopefuls. A decade after that she would be in solitary confinement in prison, wondering where it all went wrong, suspended from duty and awaiting a charge of attempted murder.

Keeping an eye on every movement of her case was her boss, the kindly officer who had come to the door of her family home all those years before, Inspector Terry Lewis.

## Politicking

Out west, the campaign against Commissioner Whitrod continued unabated.

Labor Opposition leader Tom Burns was touring western Queensland towns with his private secretary Malcolm McMillan when they turned up in Charleville. Burns, a popular working-class knock-about who had been elected to the Brisbane bayside seat of Lytton in 1972, loved to get among the people. An ALP powerbroker, he had been quickly elevated to leader of the Opposition and in a short time had had some memorable stoushes with Premier Bjelke-Petersen and his National Party cronies in Parliament House. He was quick on his feet and cunning of mind.

In Charleville, they of course made the acquaintance of Inspector Lewis.

'He came to see Burns,' remembers McMillan. 'The essence of the discussion was that [Police Minister Max] Hodges was no good and had to go, and Whitrod was no good and had to go. Lewis was discreet, polite, deferring, diplomatic. Lewis quite clearly understood the make-up of government and opposition.'

The next day Burns and McMillan continued on to Longreach. That night, both men were working late in Burns' motel room when there was a knock at the door.

‘It was Tony Murphy,’ says McMillan. ‘He apologised for arriving unannounced. He repeated verbatim what Terry Lewis had told us the day before. This was clearly a concerted campaign [against Whitrod] going on right around the state.’

While it was not unusual for members of parliament to meet civic leaders and law enforcement officials while touring rural areas, Murphy’s tete-a-tete was memorable. How did he know precisely where Burns and McMillan were staying that night in Longreach? And what was so urgent that a police inspector felt impelled to track down the leader of a state opposition political party late at night and share his opinions about a minister of the Crown and the number one police officer in Queensland?

The war against Ray Whitrod had become brazen.

In Brisbane, some strange machinations were also at play. Edgar Bourke, a career public servant and staff clerk to the Commissioner of Police, had seen and heard a lot of things since becoming attached to the police department as a young man in 1948.

As Lewis and Murphy were trying to sway politicians in the bush, Bourke was in a meeting with several other colleagues at headquarters when the phone rang. ‘It was Stan Wilcox from the Premier’s Department,’ Bourke recalls. ‘He wanted to know what sort of bloke Terry Lewis was, and would we ask around.’

Bourke says the staff remembered Lewis well from his lengthy secondment to the JAB under former commissioner Frank Bischof. But the call from Wilcox was a bolt out of the blue. ‘We thought Terry was quite good but we had no idea where all of this was leading,’ Bourke remembers.

Incredibly, Premier Bjelke-Petersen was also making secret enquiries about how Whitrod might be legally removed for breach of contract. He ordered his press secretary Allen Callaghan to seek advice on the possibility of terminating Whitrod’s tenure. A memo came back offering Bjelke-Petersen a number of options on how to eject the Commissioner.

## THE SHOOTER

Meanwhile, Lewis, on leave in the city several days after meeting with Bjelke-Petersen in Cunnamulla, dropped into the Premier's Department and added to his private file (# 246) a sheaf of documents. Among other things, the file contained rumour and innuendo about Whitrod that had been gathered from six years earlier: '31 August, 1970. Mr G. [Gough] Whitlam visited Mr Whitrod at police headquarters.' And: 'On 22/12/70. Inspector Ron Eddington [sic] said the ALP not only liked Mr Whitrod, they love him.'

In the dossier Lewis also included a list of people who could provide glowing character testimonies on his behalf. The list starred two Supreme Court judges, six District Court judges and five members of parliament. Lewis then noted to the Premier: 'If Mr Whitrod hears I have spoken to you he will immediately engage in the character assassination that he learned so well from his ALP friends in Canberra.'

The irony that Lewis himself was assassinating Whitrod's character with his secret missives to the Premier seems to have escaped the inspector.

Without Whitrod's knowledge, and coming from several quarters, the grooming of Lewis for higher rank had begun in earnest.

## The Shooter

James (Jim) Slade, from the small town of Kyogle in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, and not far south of the Queensland border, was seemingly born for intelligence work. His great-grandfather emigrated from Ireland and became a New South Wales police officer, one of many who hunted the notorious bushranger Ben Hall in the 1860s. His father, Edward, had worked undercover in Occupied Greece during World War II.

Bearing the laconic traits of a rural upbringing as part of a large Catholic family, Slade moved to Canberra in 1971 and joined the

Commonwealth Police before heading to the Document Examination Bureau based at North Head in Manly, Sydney. Over the next three years he became an expert in forensic document examination. He then specialised in photographic intelligence gathering.

When Cyclone Tracy hit on Christmas Eve and into Christmas Day in 1974, police from across Australia were mobilised. The catastrophic storm killed 71 people. Terry Lewis was there as part of the Queensland contingent. So too was Jim Slade, who landed in Darwin on Boxing Day.

‘It was my job to photograph everything that normal police would have done in relation to dead bodies and forensic work,’ Slade remembers. ‘It was also to provide a good visual photographic record of what happened up there. I was up there for a few months. I had a Bolex [camera] and hundred-foot rolls of 16 mm film coming out my arse.’

After Tracy, the ambitious, perhaps impetuous, Slade wanted to move forward with his career. ‘I had a very big interest in intelligence and I really wanted to pursue that,’ he says. ‘I wasn’t interested in political intelligence like ASIO, I was very interested in crime intelligence.’

At the same time he was also raising a growing family with wife Chris; their three children – Tanya, Paul and Mark – all suffered from asthma. A family doctor suggested they move north to the sub-tropical climes of Queensland.

Jim Slade was sworn in as a constable of the Queensland Police Force in late July 1976. He had unwittingly joined a force rife with political in-fighting and low on morale. In addition, the war between the Police Union and Commissioner Ray Whitrod was about to hit fever pitch. Premier Bjelke-Petersen was secretly trying to remove Whitrod, and Inspector Terry Lewis of Charleville was lobbying the Premier and politicians against the Whitrod regime.

Slade, the forensic shooter, had no interest in politics. He was just itching to gather intelligence on crooks, to get out into the field, to

work undercover and bring some substantial kills to the table. He was initially posted to the working-class suburb of Woodridge and it was there that he rode out, from a distance, the great battle of Whitrod.

Within months, he would be hand-picked to work in a squad in headquarters that would bring him face to face, many times over, with some of the biggest criminal cases of the 1970s. He would go on to be anointed by none other than one of Queensland's finest ever detectives, and later one of its most notorious – Tony Murphy.

## Town and City

Brisbane's activist students had been relatively quiet since the Springbok apartheid demonstrations, which had rocked the city five years earlier, but by July 1976 something again stirred their ire. Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser refused to increase student allowances across the country, and it was enough to fire up students on campus at the University of Queensland in St Lucia.

Student Union president Richard Spencer – studying law and economics – began mobilising recruits in June. A half-page advertisement in the 22 June issue of the university magazine *Semper Floreat* declared: 'Protest Demand Against Federal Government Education Cuts. Student Strike! Thurs 29 July 10 am – 3 pm. March into Town. Rally City Square 1 pm.'

About 1000 students marched with cloth banners and placards affixed to timber sticks from the campus, down Sir Fred Schonell Drive, up Gailey Road then around the bend of the river at Toowong, along Coronation Drive, and into the city to King George Square. Their protest signs were innocuous. 'Save Education', some of them read.

Spencer recalls: 'I was committed to doing it grandly and, using the portable megaphone, collected a bumper crop of students to rally and "march" from campus. [It was] more fun than lectures.'