

ernment had passed two major computer crime Bills. The government had also passed legislation that would make it a federal crime to tap into federal digitised communication lines, which was a far cry from tapping into oral communications, he said.

'As a point of interest, one of your prosecutors said if such legislation was passed in Australia we would be putting people in jail for tampering with digital watches,' he added.

'I can safely say we have passed that kind of legislation in the US with appropriate safeguards to protect the innocent.'

Mr Bequai said Australian law enforcement officers also needed specialised training to deal with computer crime.

'When I see Australian police going to the FBI Academy I don't think it's good enough. Sending two or three people to the US, or elsewhere, once or twice a year is not sufficient,' he said.

'You must set up your own broadly-based training programs dealing with specialised methods to combat computer crime. Fifteen years ago in the US we realised that we had to take the initiative and while we still have too many crimes of this nature they would be far greater in number if untrained people were thrown

in the deep end of such investigations. I believe that all too often young police officers who show great promise have their confidence shaken by being assigned cases that are far too complex for them to handle,' he said.

'They become bogged down and start doubting their capabilities and look upon themselves as failures. Inexperienced officers should be assigned to routine cases, by way of an apprenticeship, if you like, before being asked to perform much more complex tasks.'

Mr Bequai added a chilling dimension to computer abuse which poses a threat to life and limb.

'There is evidence in America and Western Europe that clearly shows that terrorists groups have used key computer facilities for their own advantage,' he said.

'Don't for one minute think that all terrorists are disillusioned malcontents who run around shooting people and blowing up buildings; some of them maybe, but their ranks also include well educated people such as engineers, scientists and other, some of whom have computer training'!

Mr Bequai said more than five hundred instances have been documented where terrorist organisations have attack-

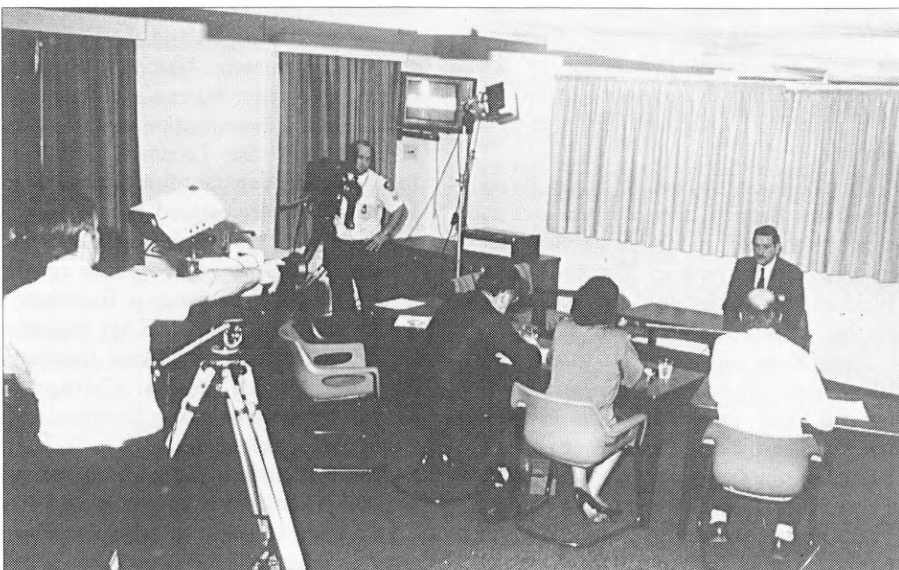
ed computer facilities and computer vendors. He said the Los Angeles District Attorney's office had released details of a study that clearly indicated that terrorist groups had used computers to further their claims.

'The Pentagon spends more than \$3 billion of the taxpayers' money each year to secure its computers and is still at risk from the insider,' he said.

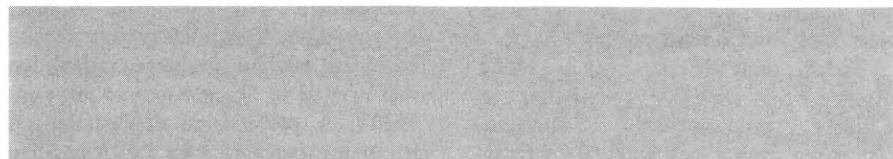
'If you pick your target, the drug addict who needs large sums of money to support his habit, the debt-ridden gambler, the womaniser scared of being found out, all can be compromised.'

According to Mr Bequai, in the final analysis it all gets back to basics. 'These systems are only as good as the people who manage and operate them; it is not the computer that commits the crime and causes the havoc, it is the dishonest people who manipulate them,' he said.

On balance the advantages that computers bring to mankind far outweigh the disadvantages and wherever this technological marvel may lead us in the future, who could have guessed that from the humble abacus would evolve technology that would enable artists to expand their horizons, and place the potential for crimes of gigantic proportions at the very finger tips of the unscrupulous.



Detective Superintendent John Mitchell holding a simulated press conference at the AFP College Barton with Sergeant Bill Mackey and Senior Constable Graham Tulk on the cameras.



Media Match

Fourteen senior Australian Federal Police officers took part in a three-day media awareness course starting on 5 August at AFP Training College Barton.

The course has been organised to ensure that all AFP officers are better able to deal with the media and respond quickly and effectively to media members' reasonable requests.

The officers, mostly Chief Superintendents and Superintendents, are from the ACT and the regions.

The program emphasised practical 'hands on' training in which for two of the days the officers undertook television and radio interviews organised by media consultants Mr Bill Dowsett and Ms Sue Smith.

The course was organised by the AFP's training staff in liaison with the Director of Information, Mr Philip Castle, who conducted some sections of the instruction.

During the three days, field visits were made to the editorial offices of The Canberra Times and the studios of Capital 7 TV News where the officers saw the final touches being put to news items.

The course is part of a wider program of media training for all AFP officers and recognises the need that to be an effective enforcement body, officers must understand the media and work with it.