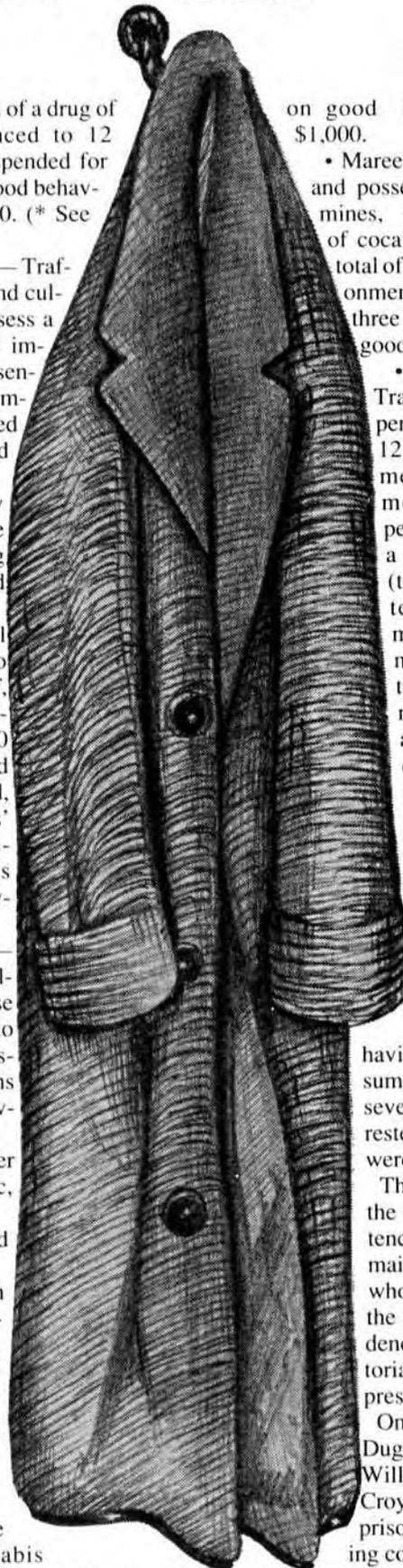


Operation Coat



MELBOURNE-based members of the Australian Federal Police and their Victoria Police colleagues joined forces in November 1987 to investigate a drug ring which was active in the distribution of cocaine, hashish, and cannabis.

It was to be a highly successful operation, to which the results of court hearings show.

Prior to the operation getting into full swing, AFP investigators had gathered sufficient intelligence which indicated the group was large and extremely active in trafficking illicit drugs.

Their suspicions were confirmed when, as a result of the close co-operation which exists between the AFP and the Victoria Police, State police investigators revealed that some of their undercover officers had made drug buys from the same ring.

Further intelligence showed the group was not only active but intended to become stakeholders in the results of large importations of cannabis resin.

After at least two successful interceptions of major cannabis importations in far north Queensland and on Sydney Harbour, the amounts of wholesale cannabis did not meet the syndicate's expectations of the availability of illicit drugs.

State and federal police then decided it was time to move, rather than wait until the syndicate was successful in getting bulk supplies of the illegal drugs from their established or alternative sources.

On 21 June 1988, teams of AFP, Victoria Police and Australian Customs Service officers with their drug sniffer dogs, raided addresses around the Melbourne metropolitan and outer suburban areas in one of the biggest, most closely co-ordinated joint operations ever seen in Melbourne.

So successful was the operation, a total of 17 people were brought before the courts.

During February 1989, a total of 10 men and women appeared before the bench of the Melbourne Magistrates Court. Each of the defendants pleaded guilty to a variety of drug-related offences. They were:

• Dorian Michael Ribush, General Practitioner — Conspiracy to traffic,

traffic and possession of a drug of dependence; sentenced to 12 months in prison suspended for 12 months to be of good behaviour and fined \$6,000. (* See footnote).

• David John Ross — Traffic in cannabis leaf and cultivate cannabis, possess a suspected prohibited import; fined \$1,500, sentenced to 4 months' imprisonment (suspended 6 months to be of good behaviour).

• Lisia Olga Carey — Aid and abet in the trafficking of a drug of dependence; fined \$1,000.

• Paul Michael Harris — Attempt to traffic cannabis leaf, possession of cannabis leaf; fined \$2,000 on the first count and \$250 on the second, sentence to six months' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months to be of good behaviour).

• Chris Latham — Attempt to traffic, cultivate, possess and use cannabis; sentenced to 9 months' jail, (suspended for 12 months to be of good behaviour), fined \$3,000.

• Neil Owen Couper — Attempt to traffic, possess and use cannabis; fined \$1,000.

• Miranda Elizabeth Burgess — Possession of a drug of dependence; fined \$500 and placed on a 12-month good behaviour bond.

• Rodney Barrett — Traffic in a drug of dependence, use cocaine, use cannabis resin; sentenced to three month imprisonment (suspended for six months

on good behaviour), fined \$1,000.

• Maree Anne Barr — Use and possession of amphetamines, possession and use of cocaine; sentenced to a total of six months' imprisonment (suspended for three months to be of good behaviour).

• Danny Krant — Traffic in a drug of dependence, sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment of which six months was suspended; possession of a prohibited import (two counts), sentenced to three months' imprisonment on each count to be served concurrently; possession of a drug of dependence, sentenced to one month in prison (to be served concurrently with the above); possession of an unlicensed pistol, one month imprisonment (to be served concurrently with the above).

With 10 people having been dealt with summarily by the court, seven other people arrested in the operation were committed for trial.

The County Court was the venue for the sentencing of the seven remaining offenders, all of whom pleaded guilty to the charges on the evidence the AFP and Victoria Police were able to present in their briefs.

On 4 June 1990, Judge Duggan sentenced Mark William Thomas, 39, of Croydon, to six years' imprisonment for trafficking cocaine, cannabis and hashish and for possession of cannabis.

Ian Francis Doig, 43, of Middle Park was sentenced to four-and-a-half years jail (with a minimum of three years) for trafficking in cocaine and possession of cocaine and cannabis.

Colin Stuart Hatfield, 32, of Eltham, was sentenced to two years in prison with a minimum of one year on four counts of trafficking in cannabis and one count of possession of hashish.

Mahmood Akbari, 36, of Kinglake West, was sentenced to two years and ordered to serve a minimum of one year on one count each of trafficking and possessing cannabis.

Colin Geoffrey Seed, 30, of Lilydale, was jailed for two years and ordered to serve a minimum of 15 months for three counts of trafficking cannabis, one count of cultivating a cannabis plant and one count of possessing cannabis.

Jonathon Masters, 32, of Kealba, who had been charged with one count of trafficking cannabis was sentenced to two years in prison with a minimum of 15 months.

Anthony Paul Carnovale, of Deer Park, received a 20-month sentence and was ordered to serve a minimum of 12 months in jail on one count of trafficking in cannabis.

When sentencing the seven men, Judge Duggan said he was angry that young lives were being blighted by drug addiction, and people who sought to exploit them deserved contempt.

Invaluable

AFP Case Officers Detective Sergeants Peter Sheehan and John Morrison, who had strong support from Detective Constable (now Sergeant) Tony Werts, are full of praise for the assistance they received throughout their investigation from Special Projects in Canberra.

They said that because of extensive Special Projects material provided in evidence before the courts, of the 17 people targeted, all 17 pleaded guilty at their subsequent trials. As a result of many hours of valuable work, the contribution had played a very large part in the success of the operation and the presentation of irrefutable evidence to the courts.

*** FOOTNOTE: Shortly after the trial, Australian Federal Police notified the Medical Registration Board of the offences with which Doctor Ribush had been charged and the fact he had pleaded guilty to the offences. He was subsequently suspended from practicing for a period of nine months.**

Local Area Network increases efficiency

THE AFP has begun the first stage of installing networks of personal computers in Canberra and Sydney Headquarters, and in parts of the Weston Complex.

The installations, called local area networks or LANs, are probably the first of many. Eventually, all regions should be operating them.

The networks have the potential to dramatically alter the way in which the AFP processes information and in which individuals work.

That doesn't mean, however, that the AFP is about to embark on an information processing revolution. Progress must be evolutionary and there must be steady and controlled migration from the present centralised system to what will be a decentralised system providing high technology solutions to the AFP's computing needs.

At the end of the day, all staff using computers as part of their work routine, will be able to do all their computing through their own personal computer (PC) attached to the network. They will be able to communicate freely with all other users on the LAN and with users on all the LANs in all the regions.

Communication with the AFP mainframe and to systems run by other police forces and agencies will be via the LAN, providing the user with a single transparent interface to all systems.

Understanding how this can be achieved requires a study of the evolution of computing.

Organisational computing as we know it commenced during the 1960s with the advent of mainframe computers.

These machines were very large in terms of physical size, but by today's standards, low on computing power.

The computer programs (ie the software) that were needed to drive these machines had to be written by specialists in a code that was unintelligible to the uninitiated, a task that was both laborious and painstaking. Such is still the case today.

Nevertheless, these computing dinosaurs permitted what were tremendous advances in information processing.

In the 1970s, smaller machines known as minicomputers came onto the market. These machines were ideal for small departments unable to afford or not

requiring the size of a mainframe.

Computer programming languages had advanced to the third generation but still required special skills to use them for building applications.

The 1980s saw the advent of the PC. This machine was originally built as a toy for the amusement of people at home. Entrepreneurs very quickly realised, however, that these machines could do useful work for the businessman and people began writing serious programs that were sold to the user for personal use. These programs were written so the user required no special skills to operate the programs and get the results wanted.

At long last, after more than two decades, the user had computing power they could control. By buying appropriate software, they could do the same type of work the mainframe system at the office could do, albeit on a much smaller scale.

More importantly though, users could do their work in a much friendlier user environment and in a more productive manner — no longer did the computer users at the office have to wait for specialised program development by ADP staff; no longer did they have to wait hours or days for responses to database queries too complex to be performed in real time; and no longer were they constrained in their ability to access the system and get things done.

PCs quickly grew in processing power and information storage ability. This growth is continuing unabated and many of today's machines sitting on desk tops are more powerful than the early mainframes.

Along with the growth in hardware has been the growth in software. In the past two years, more software for PCs has been written than in 20 years for mainframes.

There are now more than 33 million IBM-type PCs throughout the world and well over 400 000 pieces of software. Users are faced with the problem of too much choice rather than too little!

By the mid 1980s, the corporate world was experiencing an ever-increasing flood of PCs into the workplace. It was not only PCs that were marching through the front door — in order to produce hardcopy, each PC had a printer and, in