

Once I started reading the book I found it, and the revelations it contains, hard to put down. It should be read by all those working in law enforcement agencies, lawmakers, prosecutors and everyone with a concern for justice, and interested in the history of this state, which in the times of which Juliet has written, was (perhaps deservedly) referred to by some as “The Wild West”.

*Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC
Governor of WA 2011-2014*

This is a shocking book. As the cover proclaims, it is all about what is alleged to be a “state sanctioned murder”. Perhaps we might expect such allegations to involve tales of intrigue or dirty dealings in some obscure part of a foreign country many years ago. Instead, it involves the relatively recent activities of the police and associated agencies in Perth, Western Australia in the 1970s.

The author has provided a valuable service to all of us who live in Australia by having held as it were a mirror up to nature, and allowed us to see an important aspect of our society for what it is. It is a great achievement on her part—and a terrible disgrace on the part of others.

*Dr Robert Moles LLB (Honours)
Author and Retired Associate Professor of Law – Adelaide University*

Dirty Girl challenges the notion that a justice system can function with the policy of ‘containing’ certain crimes as opposed to seeking eradication or legalization. The policy of containment leads to inconsistent application of the law, favoritism, corruption, and cover-ups. And, in the case of Shirley Finn, likely resulted in her death.

Corruption can only end when individuals within the law enforcement community stand up against the system when it fails to serve the community.

There is much to learn from *Dirty Girl*. Juliet Wills should be congratulated for spending years researching and writing this important book.

*Professor Justin Brooks
Director, California Innocence Project
California Western School of Law, San Diego, CA*

Juliet Wills has choppered into crocodile breeding grounds, been chased by rioting armed gangs, and jumped from a civilian plane with the 13th load at 13,000 feet on Friday the 13th. She has also pursued the story of brothel madam Shirley Finn's murder with fearless obstinacy.

Born in Sydney, Juliet has lived and worked throughout Australia. She has been awarded for her Excellence in Television Journalism, written for major newspapers, and lectured in broadcast journalism at two universities.

The mother of three lives in Perth and now works in real estate. Her first book, *The Diamond Dakota*, was published by Allen and Unwin in 2006.

DIRTY GIRL

• THE • STATE • SANCTIONED • MURDER •
• OF • BROTHEL • MADAM • SHIRLEY FINN •



FONTAINE
— PRESS —

JULIET WILLS

You can find out more about Juliet Wills' quest for justice for the Finn family at www.finnmurder.com

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For Bridget

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*The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed out-braves his dignity;
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.*

— William Shakespeare

Foreword

Western Australian writer Dorothy Hewitt once described the palpable sense of corruption she experienced in both Sydney and Perth. Writing in 1982, she said the glitzy materialism and conspicuous consumption linked with vice and organised crime in Sydney was “vulgar, articulate, and unashamed”; whereas in Perth, “the worm in the bud is secretive.”

It is this secretiveness that most observant followers of Western Australian cultural life consider the decisive factor behind Shirley Finn’s murder in 1975, and which forms the subject of *Dirty Girl*.

I first met Juliet Wills in 2008 while researching Shirley Finn’s murder. This project began for me in 1998 when I met and became friends with Shirley Finn’s youngest son, Shane. At the time, I was teaching a poetry class in Casuarina Prison, and Shane shared with me documents given to him by a sympathetic policeman. He encouraged me to write about his mother’s murder.

The enquiries I made and the people I met informed the three crime novels I’ve now written—using crime fiction entertainment as a vehicle to explore the stories, characters and secrets of my hometown.

Initially, I had little idea what I was in for. However, the climate of fear and suspicion and the real threats of reprisal for writing about the murder were soon made clear. I mention this background only to express my great admiration for Juliet Wills and the evidence she has gathered, at great personal cost, here within the pages of *Dirty Girl*.

The overall picture of policing practices, and their connection to Shirley Finn’s murder, is as damning as it is exhaustive and detailed. Her quiet determination and investigative skills, so apparent at my first and subsequent meetings with Juliet, are applied here in the best kind of journalism.

Juliet shines a light into the darkest corners, bringing clarity and vivid expression to the characters, the stories and the secrets that have hitherto remained unspoken, and so unknown. There is much that will surprise

readers and much that gives flesh and voice to what was once only speculation, rumour and innuendo.

Dirty Girl is not only an exposé of this terrible and cruel unsolved murder, and its devastating effects on a family, and a community. It is a work of social history, covering a period and a stratum of society rarely examined in print. Much is new in this publication, including descriptions of close links between Sydney's organised crime and corrupt policing, and Perth's police service and criminal underworld.

We are presented with the statements of new witnesses and new evidence. The author's careful and structured application of these testimonies creates a damning timeline of events—involving those from the lowest level on the street to the highest office in the state.

This book is a highly readable, tough-minded and clear-sighted explanation of why it became necessary for vested interests to kill Shirley Finn, and then to cover up her murder, both at that time and well into the future. However, *Dirty Girl* is also a moving personal story—the story of the woman and mother behind the public persona, of her children, and of the damage done by loss and grief to each of their lives.

Dirty Girl is the result of over two decades of patient and often unnerving research. It is a great testament to the unwavering fight for justice by both Bridget, Shirley Finn's last surviving child, and the author, Juliet Wills. *Dirty Girl* deserves to be widely read and to endure as an important historical document that reveals the secrets and lies of powerful interests, criminal and political.

David Whish-Wilson, 21/02/17

PUBLISHERS NOTE

For an overview of the main players, flip to *Who's Who* at the back of the book.

Introduction

The Kwinana Freeway runs alongside the Canning and Swan Rivers for almost ten kilometres before the city of Perth comes into view. The six-lane freeway is the main path for commuters heading to and from work. As the city comes into view, most eyes are drawn to either the broad expanse of the Swan River dotted with yachts, or to the city skyline ahead. But I always look to the right, towards the shrubs and trees on the side of the Royal Perth Golf Club.

Men and women tee off from the seventh fairway on manicured greens, mostly unaware of the cold calculated murder that took place just metres away, more than thirty years ago.

My mind pours through the statements of the many witnesses who drove past on the busy motorway on 22 June 1975. I try to work out the spot where it happened.

Four shots—point blank range. The small frame of a petite woman slumps behind the wheel of her luxury limited edition car. A trickle of blood runs down the side of her face from beside her ear, past her large hooped earring. Her styled, short blonde hair is stained red with blood.

She's just thirty-three years old, a mother of three. The shimmer of her glittering ball gown glistens through the window. Satin bell sleeves and cinnamon-coloured pleats fan out from just below her breasts over the leather seats to the floor below. Were it not for the revealing low cut, the design was the type you might find on a church choral singer; but Shirley Finn was no choral singer.

She was one of two police-protected brothel madams running an enormously successful criminal enterprise in Perth in the early 1970s. When police decided to organise crime by greenlighting certain criminal groups, it must have seemed like a good idea. They even coined a cute phrase to justify the illegal policy called 'containment' and sung its praises.

There were clear financial benefits to all parties in on the deal as long as it wasn't exposed. Gambling, prostitution, drugs, robberies, gold

smuggling—if the police could shut down the opposition the protected businesses could thrive, and favours and benefits could be readily called in by those who offered the protection. Political friends were necessary for the scheme to succeed.

Did Shirley nearly unravel it all?

The day the news of the murder broke, the politicians that knew Shirley Finn must have breathed a collective sigh of relief, especially the man who would be Premier. Her diaries must have been a cause for concern. Conveniently they seemed to have disappeared.

Who sat next to her in the front seat and who held the gun to her head from behind? Who was in the three cars spotted near the crime scene; a white van, a large black sedan and a small green car? How wide was the net that closed in around her that night?

I know that I have more than likely sat face to face with her killer or killers, or at least those that conspired to have her shot. Dark secrets they prefer to remain buried. My mind sifts through the faces, and the words they spoke, and I try to sort out the lies from the truths and the available evidence.

I think of the families of police officers driven to drink and madness trying to evaluate who among them was capable of such a callous and brazen crime. From the commissioner at the time and all the way down, almost everyone I interviewed seemed to accept a police officer was, at the very least, involved. They just differed on which one.

Further up the Freeway, past the city that glistens by the Swan River, I pass the old Home of the Good Shepherd overlooking Lake Monger. What happened inside those walls? The heritage building now houses the Catholic Education Office. I picture the young girls working away in the laundries, sent there to bleach their souls. Dirty girls, clean sheets. Shirley's symbolic cleansing would cement her view of herself and help set her on a path that would ultimately lead to her execution.

Then I drive on. I wonder if I'm mad, but until the case is solved, I won't be able to pass by without asking: who killed Shirley Finn?

1

Goldfinger

*The story is still dangerous. You will be stopped.
People will stop you.*

— Goldfinger

When my youngest son confidently strode through the pre-primary doors on his first day of school, already laughing and joking with friends he had met through his siblings, we had both reached a milestone. After eight years of nursing babies, playgroups, casseroles, reading groups and Kinder-gym, his life, like mine was entering a new phase. I had enjoyed nurturing my three young children and only occasionally missed the excitement of the television news world that I had left behind with the birth of my eldest son. Interstate moves and my husband's long hours didn't allow for us both to pursue careers despite the hit to the family budget.

I was an experienced television journalist, having worked for all major commercial television networks before I had children. However, over the years my confidence had slipped away and, having moved twice, I had lost all contacts in the industry. Not to mention that I was fast approaching forty, and in an industry like television, age is not a virtue.

I felt like a kid straight out of university as I rang around the television stations, hoping to sell my credentials. The ABC told me to send in my resume, Channels Ten and Nine said not at the moment, but Channel Seven, the top rating news show in Perth at the time, invited me for an interview.

I had been living in jeans and tracksuits, and I couldn't wait for the chance to get dressed up again. I looked in the wardrobe at the faded, shoulder-padded suits that I hadn't been able to throw out, confident that they would one day come in handy again. I pondered the vagaries of fashion; that something that can look so 'in', so hip, so 'it' one year, can seem so drab and tedious another. Despite my misgivings, I succumbed to the latest fashion trend and purchased a smart new long-line grey jacket and pants (no shoulder pads) with a dusty pink blouse. The hairdresser told me that every client whose hair she had styled recently for a job interview had been successful.

As I walked into the throng of the Channel Seven television newsroom, I felt an adrenalin rush, remembering the thrill of a breaking story or a daily deadline. I had missed these more than I had been willing to admit. The haircut worked and I was offered a casual position.

In 2002, the Channel Seven newsroom was buzzing with rumour and the retelling of old cases in the lead up to the Kennedy Royal Commission in Western Australia to be held that year *into whether there has been corrupt or criminal conduct by any Western Australian Police Officer*. No-one knew what would make the grade. Organised crime, dirty deals and corruption. I wasn't from WA and knew few of the names, but the stories fascinated me.

Veteran crime reporter Alison Fan was working on the Mickelberg case. The three Mickelberg brothers – Brian, Ray and Peter – had been charged and convicted of the theft of more than half a million dollars' worth of gold bullion from the Perth Mint in 1982. It was a daring, brazen and sophisticated robbery, carried out with almost military precision. Three separate couriers bearing false cheques had arrived separately at the Perth Mint, in the centre of the city, where they were given forty-nine gold bars weighing sixty-eight kilograms, before delivering these to an office a short distance away. The couriers and the gold promptly disappeared. The case caused a sensation throughout Australia and had all the makings of a Hollywood heist. It was one of the most notorious corruption cases in WA criminal history. At immense personal cost, courageous journalist Avon Lovell had spent years investigating and writing

about the crime and the conviction (on largely fabricated evidence) of the Mickelberg brothers.

Lovell's first book, *The Mickelberg Stitch*, was banned after the WA Police Union placed a levy on every officer to help fund their legal fight against the author. The brakes on his car failed, and his wife and son nearly died. He believes he was the target of corrupt police officers. His business was ruined, and then they worked on his reputation. Just one of many good men destroyed by the rat pack.

At the centre of his claims were the questionable tactics of Detective Don Hancock with the Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) at Belmont police station on the day police arrested Peter Mickelberg, the youngest and considered the most vulnerable of the three brothers. Dubbed 'The Silver Fox', Don Hancock was later murdered in a car bomb attack in suburban Perth in 2001 after an altercation with bikies.

Tony Lewandowski was the junior police officer on duty the day Detective Don Hancock had secured his questionable confession from Peter Mickelberg. Lewandowski had, at the time, vehemently denied that Hancock had beaten Peter and fabricated the confession, as Peter had claimed.

After twenty years of pressure from Lovell, and after the death of Hancock, Lewandowski had finally rolled. He signed an affidavit admitting the confession he obtained with former Detective Don Hancock was fabricated.

Lewandowski and Lovell were now in hiding, and the media was in a frenzy trying to find them. Alison Fan was the newsroom's lead reporter, and the case had always been close to her heart. In 1987, a sack full of gold weighing fifty-five kilograms had been deposited at the front gate of Channel Seven with her name on it. A note was attached proclaiming the Mickelbergs' innocence and naming a WA businessman as the culprit.

Desperate to prove myself, and wanting to play a part in the story, I thought I might be able to help track down Lovell and Lewandowski. I'd met Avon Lovell, and I believed he trusted me. His son and my son were friends, and I suggested to the Chief of Staff that he might be willing to talk to me and reveal their whereabouts. He thanked me as I

eagerly started making phone calls that went unanswered. Those in the know must have been smiling because Alison was, at that time, flying to Thailand where Lovell had Lewandowski in hiding. Channel Seven had already paid to get the interview from the pair exclusively, but I was a newcomer, and the deal was a closely guarded secret.

I had cut my journalistic teeth in the days of *The Moonlight State*, Chris Masters' cutting edge story that aired on the ABC's *Four Corners* program about police and political corruption in Queensland. The exposé resulted in the Fitzgerald Inquiry and the subsequent jailing of the Commissioner of Police. Chris Masters was the standard to which I aspired. Re-entering the newsroom in the lead-up to the WA Royal Commission into police corruption was reminiscent of those earlier days. Would WA politics and police be turned on their heads as they were in the heady days of the Fitzgerald Inquiry in Queensland? The prospect was enthralling.

I saw this as a time where journalism could do in Perth what it had achieved in Brisbane in the wake of *The Moonlight State*, creating a more transparent age and helping to redefine the line between criminals and those who investigated them. However, I later read this story gave Masters more grief than glory.

As the news of Alison's exclusive interview spread, the Chief of Staff smiled sympathetically at my naïve efforts to find Lovell. Strike one. I needed to make up ground and come up with a good story—and then it came to me. Whistleblowers! I needed to find those public servants who were willing to put their jobs on the line to expose corruption. I checked online and marvelled at the ease of research in the digital age. Bingo! There it was: *Whistleblowers Australia*. I rang and asked to be put in contact with any police officers on their books.

I was part-time, casual, which enabled me to conduct some research in my own time. I met former police officer Frank Scott who was suffering from the same problems that afflict all whistleblowers—feelings of isolation, persecution and stress—and was carrying numerous files to back up his claims. He didn't expect to be believed.

Few journalists have the time to analyse controversial claims and happily leave any investigating to the police and authorities. But I was

fresh back in the game and eager to recut my teeth on a substantial investigation. Frank had been out of the Police Force for a while, and I was looking for something current to take to my boss.

Frank said there was another member of the Mickelberg investigating team that had allegations raised against him, and the Mickelberg investigation was the story of the day. The former police officer was now a Member of Parliament and back in the limelight due to the Lewandowski allegations of a fabricated confession. All I had to do was find an article Frank had seen in the *Western Mail*, a newspaper that would later merge with *The West Australian*. If I could find that information, Frank assured me, though he couldn't remember the exact details of its location and timing, it would be a great story. It was a long shot. A very long shot. But if I could do a bit of digging in my own time, I thought, I might find that nugget, and it could help redeem me. No-one needed to know if I failed; that's the beauty of a personal project.

The Batty Library is a treasure trove of little known but amazing stories. Back then there was no finger clicking to find an aged document; it took a lot of time and patience to find a single article with only an approximate year. It was the search for the proverbial needle in a haystack.

In a dark corner, small spotlights shone through microfiche film reflecting old newspapers onto a whiteboard screen. The only sound allowed in the library was the clunking of the microfiche as it spooled through the projectors. I found that I could get through three microfiches in an hour—if I didn't get distracted or stop to read the articles. But days of searching failed to find that story.

To this day, I have no idea if there was anything in the library about Frank Scott's politician. I became too distracted by another story on those pages, revisiting a murder that took place a decade earlier, the killing of a madam Shirley Finn in 1975. It kept cropping up over the years. It intrigued me. Her fabulous home in South Perth, with bay windows, leadlights, and a manicured garden. Her initials had been embossed on the bottom of the large oval pool, and the mosaics that made up the letters were said to be solid gold. Around the pool she had hosted fabulous parties attended by the who's who of Perth. Among her celebrity guests, on one especially

notable occasion, was one of the world's greatest musicians, Elton John.

The newspaper said she knew too much and had high-level connections. In early 2017, the murder remains unsolved, dredged up every few years by a journalist hoping to make a breakthrough. Like the theft of the gold from Perth Mint and the setup of the Mickelbergs, the murder sounded more Hollywood than Perth.

In the newsroom, I spoke to my Chief of Staff, Mark Bennett, and mentioned I had been contacting whistleblowers. He recounted the tale of Spike Daniels, a police superintendent in the 1970s who tried to blow the whistle on corruption in the police force concerning prostitution, in the days of Shirley Finn. He said Spike had paid a terrible price for speaking out. "They destroyed him," he said. I wanted to find the superintendent and talk to him. Mark Bennett's father-in-law, Matt Stephens, a politician and friend of Spike Daniels, was another man who had fallen foul of the rat pack in the 1970s.

Another veteran reporter described the Finn case as the greatest festering sore on the side of the WA Police Force, suggesting it was the genesis of the corruption which followed and which was now being investigated by the Kennedy Royal Commission in 2002.

The Royal Commission was only looking at cases after 1985. I needed to focus on one of the cases they were investigating.

Frank Scott, the police whistleblower who'd inspired my microfiche search in the Batty Library, had more information for me. He thought he knew what happened to the Mickelberg gold, which had never been found and, of course, if the Mickelbergs didn't do it, there remained that other big question. Who did?

Frank believed a Northbridge Italian identity could have been behind the theft at the Perth Mint. He said he had personally witnessed the man bringing in large amounts of gold to a gold trader in Perth around the time of the swindle. He had advised senior officers and believed they intentionally bungled a raid on the gold dealer.

I was aware Alison knew more about the Mickelberg case than just about anyone, so I took her the name of the man Frank had identified and this potential new lead. I handed her the paperwork, briefly outlining the allegations, and hoped she'd give some indication as to whether they were

worth following up. Alison was busy, and I was the new kid on the block. She showed no interest in the claims at all. Strike two.

I also mentioned the name of the gold dealer to a veteran cameraman, nicknamed Mouse, who knew the ropes.

“Mate, you need to read the book, *This Little Piggy Stayed Home*. It’s about the Perth mafia!” He said the gold dealer was mentioned in the book.

“Perth mafia?” I couldn’t reconcile myself with this concept. Mafia in Perth? I was originally from Sydney where Justice James Wood had exposed enormous corruption within the ranks of the NSW constabulary. Several Royal Commissions on the east coast had touched on organised crime, but I was fresh out of playgroup, and the idea of a mafia in a small place like Perth—I just couldn’t get my head around that.

I checked all the libraries. All their copies of *This Little Piggy* were missing, but Mouse eventually found a copy for me. The book was about drug couriers Kevin Barlow and Brian Chambers who were convicted of trafficking heroin in Malaysia in 1986. Despite international pleas for clemency, they were hanged for their crime. *This Little Piggy* detailed the dealers and organised crime network, mainly operating out of Northbridge in Perth, that sent the pair to Malaysia.

The crime lord at the centre of the Barlow and Chambers case was Paul Mussari, a Mr Big of the drug world with links to crime groups interstate. Coincidentally, when I was part way through the book, an article appeared in *The West Australian* about Paul Mussari. He was on trial for conspiring to possess 524 grams of heroin. *JURY HEARS OF HEROIN DEAL TELEPHONE CALLS – Threats to shoot man in ‘Caribbean shuffle’ or break his legs*, the headline read. Almost twenty years on, and he was still allegedly plying his trade. And it was now more than fifteen years since Kevin Barlow and Brian Chambers had been hanged.

The next day I attended Paul Mussari’s trial for possession of heroin. Mouse, a veteran Channel Seven cameraman, came along to help me identify some of the characters. It was like watching an episode of *The Sopranos*, the television drama about an Italian-American mobster who struggles to balance his home life with his criminal career.

One individual caught my eye: a tattooed Italian aged in his fifties who signalled to Paul Mussari in the stand. I wondered if he was John Asciak, a crook who, in 1988, was convicted of conspiring to import heroin with Barlow and Chambers. Said to be Mussari's offsider, he had provided a lot of information to *This Little Piggy's* author David Williams about the crime syndicates operating in Perth. Outside the court, I took the bold step of approaching him.

"Hi, I'm Juliet Wills from Channel Seven. Are you John Asciak?"

"No," he replied and gave me his name.

It was the gold dealer!

I must have looked startled, as I remembered him from my conversation with Frank Scott, because he asked, "How do you know my name?"

"I've been reading about you in *This Little Piggy*."

He laughed, "It's all true that book."

"And still happening from the sounds of that court case... There's a sequel in that?"

"I could tell you a story or two," he replied.

I hadn't anticipated this—that the man allegedly linked to the Mickelberg gold theft by Frank, the former police whistleblower, would present himself to me. A combination of fear and the prospect of a scoop sent adrenalin coursing through my veins. "Can I buy you a coffee?" I asked.

We sat in the open-air café behind a columned heritage façade opposite the Magistrates Court. Another notorious crime figure sat a few tables away—in the centre of town surrounded by lawyers and crooks, alongside office workers sipping lattes oblivious to the theatre around them—I wasn't sure why I was there or where it was going, but the prospect of what Goldfinger might know held me transfixed.

We talked about the book, *This Little Piggy Stayed Home*, about the illegal gambling dens and drug deals. He told me there was still illegal gambling going on in Perth and that he was happy to show me.

He explained that among the Italians in Northbridge certain people were in charge of different areas of business. Gold trading and insurance were his specialties. He told me he was known to many as 'Goldfinger' and that he'd made a vast fortune from trading in illegal gold.

Goldfinger was an amiable storyteller. I went to bring out the tape recorder, but he said, “No,” very firmly. I hoped he meant not yet, but I would soon learn that there would be no formal record of my conversations with Goldfinger, bar my notes when I returned home. Instead I just sat and listened.

While the Perth Mint robbery is well known, largely because of the work of Avon Lovell and his crusade to clear the Mickelberg brothers, what is less well known is that hundreds of millions of dollars of gold was systematically looted from WA mines in the seventies and eighties. Gold bullion disappeared from flights, was looted from mines, and police reports emerged of armed ships with concealed cargos of gold off the Western Australian coast. Illicit gold from WA was reportedly used in the purchase of heroin from the golden triangle. Gold was the preferred currency of organised crime, and many a nugget was discovered on a patch of dirt in WA, illegally melted and delivered to the mint as a ‘discovery’, dirty money washed squeaky clean. Gold and organised crime in WA were intrinsically linked to international crime syndicates.

Goldfinger was in the big league and just being around him made me nervous.

He said he did take gold to the Gold Exchange where whistleblower Frank Scott had seen him bringing in large quantities of gold. I asked him if it was from the Perth Mint heist. He said it was not. He was adamant about who did steal the gold and said it wasn’t him.

As he listed off stories about people notorious in Perth for drug trade and corruption on a grand scale, I began to wilt in my enthusiasm. A part-time working mum taking on organised crime did not seem like a sensible option. I had read of journalists in other countries who had died for similar stories. Nonetheless, without venturing too far into this treacherous terrain, I thought the story of Paul Mussari still plying his deadly trade almost twenty years after the death of Barlow and Chambers could be worthy of a yarn, especially since it had gone through the court process. In retrospect, perhaps I should have just sat back, for my enthusiasm was not well received.

I bowled into the office of Mario D’Orazio, the Executive Producer of *Today Tonight*, to run my idea by him. He didn’t seem overly impressed.

He'd done plenty of heroin stories before, he said, even had reporters going in with button hole cameras in Northbridge to catch the crooks out. He didn't think they rated that well. He said he'd think about it. By coincidence, or design, the next day my casual shifts were cut, and I wasn't asked back to the Channel Seven newsroom. I was never given a reason.

That same year, in 2002, author and journalist Avon Lovell was charged with contempt of court for refusing to answer questions at the Kennedy Royal Commission into police corruption. His years of investigating and trying to expose corruption surrounding the Mickelberg case continued to cause him grief. No credit was ever given for his bravery and tenacity in exposing corruption, despite the enormous emotional and financial price he paid.

Heroin dealer Paul Mussari, whose trial I had attended months before, was now serving time behind bars. He was also called to answer questions about police corruption at the Royal Commission. He too refused, banging his head against the wall saying he couldn't remember. He was not charged with contempt.

Brian Mickelberg had died in a helicopter crash in 1986, having served nine months in jail. Ray and Peter served eight and six years, respectively. Their convictions were overturned in 2004, and they were awarded one million dollars in ex gratia payments for their wrongful incarceration. Whoever stole the gold from the mint remains unknown.

Perhaps people had heard too much of Royal Commissions and corruption, or perhaps because few names were revealed, and the crooked cops and crims were not identified, the public couldn't relate. The Royal Commission soon faded into obscurity with seemingly few repercussions.

I met with Goldfinger at another café in James Street, Northbridge. He pointed to a door that he claimed still led to an illegal gambling club and offered to take me one night. I made excuses. I was without the support of a television network. Goldfinger was in tight with the Northbridge crime set, and I wondered if he knew Shirley Finn. It was a name that everyone in Perth seemed to know.

“I can tell you who killed her.” He paused and—thinking he might change his mind—I allowed the silence to hang between us. He seemed to be reassessing. “I won’t tell you who did it, but I’ll tell you who ordered it.” Another pause. Then he spoke. The name he gave me swam in my head. It went to the very top at that time. I didn’t know whether to believe him. It seemed too big to be true, and besides, he couldn’t back it up.

I ran Goldfinger’s allegation by a few well-known journalists from the era. They had heard the rumour too. In fact, they tended to respond with a degree of surprise that I hadn’t. The common belief was that the police investigation had been so flawed and corruption so rife, at the time of her murder, that there was no prospect of ever finding out exactly what happened to Shirley Finn.

Foolishly, I decided to try, in spite of being told by Goldfinger, “The story is still dangerous. You will be stopped. People will stop you.”

So began a journey that would take me more than ten years, as I trawled through the life and times of this Perth madam. I was to dig through mountains of historical documents; meet her friends, her family, and her business associates; interview police, politicians, lawyers and some of those who were said to have had a hand in her death.

Along the way, I received many threats and warnings including this anonymous one:

You have no security and no confidentiality or privacy due to the subject matter you are working on. You are being tracked and monitored every second of every day and your wellbeing is not safe.

Watch your back at all times. Continually check your car for interference and fuel contamination, check all your mail for interference, any anomaly at all with anything, record it and include the date, even unusual phone calls. Say nothing of value on your mobile.

Keep the video eye in your computer/laptop covered at all times. If you don’t they will video you through your own computer and use

it against you at a later date. They can see and hear everything you do WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

If you have NO suicidal tendencies and never have had them, write a letter and explain that "under no circumstances would you ever commit suicide" and give copies to your family and friends to keep in safekeeping (in case of involuntary suicide).

Who's Who?

THE COPS

Ayton, Les – WA Deputy Commissioner of Police and head of Internal Affairs (retired). Chased Detective Johnson for many years without result.

Brian – The 40-year career cop who saw Finn in the police canteen in the days leading up to her murder. Buried the secret for 40 years due to threats to him and his family.

Daniels, Harold Edwin 'Spike' – Police Superintendent – whistleblower. Crushed for speaking out. Died disgraced and humiliated in 1992.

Detective Seven – Resigned after inquiries into allegations of protection payments from prostitutes in the 1980s. He died in suspicious circumstances.

Hancock, Don – Detective – 'The Grey Fox'. Murdered by a bomb placed under his car in Perth in 2001. Was a member of the Finn murder investigation team. Framed the Mickelberg brothers for the theft of gold bars from the Perth Mint in 1982.

Johnson, Bernard Bromilow – Detective – (retired) head of Consorting Squad at time of Finn murder, allegedly ran gambling and prostitution protection racket. Nicknamed the King of Vice.

Kiernan, Max – WA Detective – (retired) in charge of prostitution control with Wick, Tangney and Johnson in the lead

up to the Finn murder. The 2002 Kennedy Royal Commission into police corruption heard allegations that Kiernan received a corrupt payment to shut down an inquiry into the theft of diamonds from the Argyle Diamond Mine.

Leitch, Owen – Commissioner of Police in 1975. Fast tracked to the top two months after the Finn murder.

Lewandowski, Anthony – Detective – his conscience got the better of him and he confessed to fabricating evidence against Peter Mickelberg who was wrongfully convicted over the Perth Mint Swindle in 1982. Committed suicide.

Rogerson, Roger – The serial killer cop convicted of the murder of James Gao in 2016. The NSW detective was said to be in Perth at the time of the Finn murder with suspect and friend, Detective Bernie Johnson.

Scott, Frank – Police whistleblower.

Simms, Arthur – Detective and suspect in the Finn murder. He wanted to talk and wrote a manuscript, but the manuscript was burned.

Skeffington, John – Detective Skeffington, Johnson and Whitmore gave Dorrie Flatman the green light to run her trade monopoly in Perth and helped shut down her opposition. After leaving the force he became a business partner with Detective Bernie Johnson and Kim Ng in Kim Wah Seafood importers.

Tangney, Kerry – Detective in charge of prostitution control at time of Finn murder. He alleged police were involved in the Finn murder after he was dismissed from the force in the wake of a drug scandal.

Whitmore, Ron – Detective. Consorting officer working in prostitution control. Whitmore and Johnson arrested Shirley Finn ahead of her entry into the containment system.

Wick, Tony – Detective in charge of prostitution control in the lead up to the Finn murder. He resigned in 1982 in the wake of corruption scandal alleging he and colleague Detective Seven collected payments from Perth prostitutes.

THE GIRLS

Bercove, Marlene – Ran escort agency, arrived from Sydney around the same time as Dorrie Flatman. Marlene was married to Abraham Bercove – Crown Law Solicitor. She was secretary cum receiver for some 100 'Bottom of the Harbour' companies while her husband's job was to prosecute tax evasion in WA.

Dean, Rosalie (a.k.a. Black) – Shirley's partner, Rose. Grew up rough in Victoria before finding shelter with Shirley Finn.

Brifman, Shirley – Prostitute and madam who blew the whistle on corrupt cops in Queensland and NSW. The crown case against some of the police officers fell apart when she was found dead in 1972 of a barbiturate overdose in a Queensland safe house. No inquest was held.

Davies, Janet – Arrived from Sydney with Dorrie after the Sydney brothel wars in the sixties. Still running January's brothel in 2004, next door to former Il Trovatore gambling club.

De Bray, Josie – Roe Street madam. Had all her property confiscated during the Second World War. The Federal government became landlord. Roe Street was shut down in 1959.

Lisa (alias) – Flatman prostitute who killed her husband after enduring years of domestic violence. Spoke to Superintendent Daniels and told him big money had changed hands to drop prostitution charges. She then changed her story at the Norris Royal Commission.

Finn, Shirley – Madam. Murdered because she knew too much.

Flatman, Dorrie – The top dog in the WA sex industry in the seventies. Ran seven brothels in Sydney and then took over the brothel trade in Perth in the late sixties. To her deathbed, she denied paying police.

Harding, Gladys – Former Roe St madam. Shut out when Dorrie and Shirley took over the trade.

Helen – Ran Bettina's Brothel for Dorrie Flatman. Showed former madam, Gladys Harding, three envelopes and said one was to pay police.

Irene – Kalgoorlie brothel madam. Her husband, Joe Borg, headed up the brothel trade in Sydney's notorious

Doors district until he was killed in a car bombing in 1968. Irene headed west with many of Borg's associates and set up in Kalgoorlie.

Pandora – Madam who tried to operate but couldn't get police approval. Told police whistleblower Spike Daniels she was subjected to violence and mafia threats and forced to leave.

Scherry (alias) – Topless go-go dancer who worked at the Oasis Nightclub with Shirley Finn.

Scrimgeour, Dulcie (Mary) – Former Roe St madam. Shut out when Dorrie and Shirley took over the trade. Bought a 'contained' brothel after Shirley's death.

Strong, Stella – Ran brothels in Sydney before heading west in the late sixties. Police protected madam in Perth with Shirley Finn and Dorrie Flatman, before fleeing to Kalgoorlie after a series of fire-bombings.

Varis, Leigh – Former Kalgoorlie councillor, driver for Shirley Finn. Said she regularly drove the Police Minister, and later Premier Ray O'Connor, around with Shirley Finn.

Walsh, Dot – Former Roe St madam. Shut out when Dorrie and Shirley took over the trade.

Watson, Linda – Former madam. Blew the whistle on police protection money and then started an exit house for girls who wanted to escape prostitution.

ROGUE'S GALLERY

Antonetti, Rocco 'Ginger' – Gambling identity, ran Ginger's 'Two-Up' School in Northbridge under the containment system. Knew Shirley and knew the system. Said not only was Finn murdered, but her son was set up for a murder he didn't commit.

Borg, Joe – Blown up in the Sydney brothel wars of the late sixties. His wife and some of his girls fled to Perth where they continued to work in the contained brothel industry

Butterly, Archibald – charged with Christopher 'Rentakill' Flannery and Robyn Holt over David Jones Robbery in Perth in 1975 when a security guard was shot. Holt and Butterly were convicted, but Flannery was acquitted. Butterly was later convicted with WA bikie Coffin Cheater, Eddie Withnell, over violent armed robbery in 1977.

Connell, Laurie – Race fixer, conman, merchant banker, fraudster. One of Australia's biggest corporate crooks, behind the collapse of Rothwells' merchant bank with estimated losses of 600 million dollars. Used government mates for the bailout in what became known as WA Inc. Died Feb 1996.

Flannery, Christopher – Hitman, known as 'Mr Rent-A-Kill'. Carried out the dirty work for corrupt NSW cop, Roger Rogerson, and others. Arrested by Bernie Johnson and Kerry Tangney over the 1974 David Jones robbery in Perth. Sydney criminal, Neddy Smith, said Flannery paid a bribe to Rogerson to

escape conviction. Flannery is missing, presumed dead.

Holt, Robyn – Convicted of armed robbery of David Jones in Perth with Archibald Butterly in 1974. Hitman Christopher Flannery was acquitted of the crime.

Mussari, Paul – Heroin trafficker and drug kingpin who spent most of his adult life behind bars.

Ng, Kim – Business partner of Bernie Johnson and Laurie Connell in seafood company in the 1980s. Exposed Sydney Chinatown drug rackets in the late sixties then fled west. Close relationship with police in Sydney and WA.

Rispoli, Carlo and Enrico – Illegal casino operators with relatives, Bert and Lawrie Tudori. Partners in Il Trovatore. Money lenders.

Rispoli, Vincent – Brother-in-law to Bert and Laurie. Ran Il Trovatore until the casino expanded in the seventies.

Saffron, 'Abe' Abraham – Mr Sin. Nightclub owner and property developer said to head up organised crime in Australia. Ran hotels and nightclubs Australia-wide. In Perth, he owned the Raffles Hotel at Applecross and three other hotels. He corrupted politicians and cops across the country, and 'fixed' any problems they got into.

Tudori, Bert and Lawrence (Laurie) – The protected gambling lords of the day. Also said to be involved in prostitution and to partner with police detective

Bernie Johnson in illegal gambling and gold tenements.

THE POLITICIANS

Askin, Sir Robert – NSW Premier. Allegedly made a deal with nightclub owner and Sydney crime king, Abe Saffron, to organise crime. Was a similar deal made in the West?

Brand, Sir David – WA's longest serving Premier – 1959-1971. In the Brand government, Ray O'Connor was Minister supporting Charles Court.

Burke, Brian – Premier 1983 – His government got into bed with big business and paid the price. Disgraced over the WA Inc scandal. Jailed for fraud in 1994 and sentenced to two years jail; jailed again in 1997 for three years for stealing ALP party funds.

Court, Sir Charles – Premier 1975–1982. Replaced David Brand in 1972 as head of the Liberal Party in WA, defeating ALP Premier John Tonkin in 1975 to become Premier. Premier at the time of the Finn murder

Dowding, Peter – Premier 1988-1990, succeeding Brian Burke. Barrister. During the WA Inc inquiry, he was criticized for continuing to support Rothwells' Merchant Bank at enormous cost to WA taxpayers when it was clear the bank was doomed to fail. In 1975, Dowding represented police whistleblower, Spike Daniels, at the Norris Royal Commission.

O'Connor, Ray – Minister for Police at the time of the Finn murder. Premier 1982-83. Succeeded Sir Charles Court. Convicted of fraud following the WA Inc scandal and jailed in 1995. He was said to have been having a relationship with Shirley Finn in the years leading up to her murder.

Stephens, Matt – National Party MLA in the seventies. Friend and supporter of whistleblower Spike Daniels.

Tonkin, John – ALP Premier WA 1971-74.

THE LAWYERS

Cannon, Ron – Barrister and solicitor. Shirley Finn's lawyer; held Finn's trust account and tidied up the books on her death. The books were never called for evidence.

Kenneison, Charles James – Commercial lawyer. Moved millions of dollars for Shirley Finn. Alleged Sir Charles Court moved money through Hong Kong Bank accounts. Was soon after disbarred and arrested on fraud charges. Has made repeated complaints of corruption to the police and government bodies.

Norris, J. R. – Judge. Headed Royal Commission into the Laws relating to Prostitution, which blatantly ignored evidence of corruption.

French, Robert – Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. Represented Spike Daniels at the Norris Royal Commission.

THE WITNESSES

The Bouncer – Spoke to Shirley the day she died. Worked as security at Finn & Flatman brothels.

Healey, Mick – Acting Private Secretary to Ray O'Connor, witnessed a meeting between Bernie Johnson and Ray O'Connor and other businesspeople on Friday night before the murder.

Jacqueline – Partner of SP Bookmaker Don Mack. Shirley came to her home two days before she died and was overheard by Jacqueline saying she'd been threatened. Held her secret for 40 years due to fear.

Mearns, John – Passed by the crime scene in a vehicle with his wife on the morning after the murder and saw a green car parked next to Shirley's Dodge. Wrote down the number plate and tried to give it to police. Gave several statements to police that went missing.

Max 'Rodgers' (alias) – Claims he saw Bernie Johnson near the crime scene around 10pm on the night of the murder, mentioned it to Johnson and was bashed as a result. Involved in illegal dealings with Laurie Connell under the alias 'Rodgers'.

Sutherland, Don – Drove passed the crime scene about 11pm and saw two men leaving hastily. Got a good look at them and when he heard about the crime went to police wanting to give detailed descriptions. They didn't want to know. He did give a statement, but when he applied to police to get it, it wasn't there.

'Joe' (alias) – Saw a white van at the crime scene around 10pm on the night of the murder. Got a good look at the occupant. Repeatedly tried to give the information to police.

'Dave' (alias) – parked near the crime scene on the night of the murder. Heard gunshots and saw a white van and a black car. Warned to keep quiet.

Webber George – Shirley Finn's partner when she first started in the containment system.

THE BUSINESSMEN

Brown, Ron – Wealthy businessman who bought a new yacht, Ebb Tide. When Bernie skipped town after the murder, he sailed off on Ebb tide.

Dymock, Edward – Shirley's accountant.

Evans, Rod – SP bookmaker. John Curtin Foundation – WA Inc – Brian Burke. Friend and associate of Shirley Finn.

Mack, Don – SP Bookmaker and owner of the Oasis Nightclub where Shirley Finn worked.

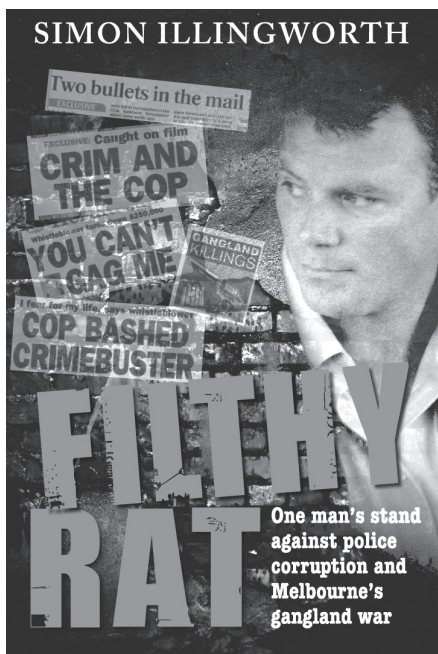
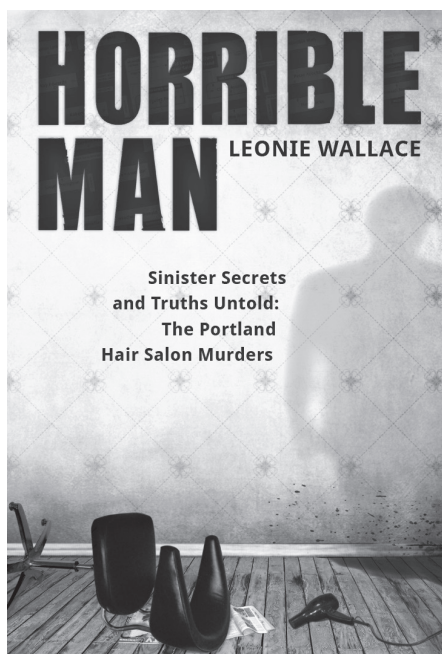
Jones, Jo – The mysterious foreign banking representative who Kenneison says assisted Shirley Finn in getting money offshore for businesses and politicians.

Stewart, George – Business partner with Shirley Finn at the Royal Show. Shirley had a body painting tent next to his boxing tent. Close friend of Shirley Finn who knew too much. Hand-grenades were put on his lawn as a warning not to speak out.



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