

October 2015

Police

Journal



MEMORIES OF MEAGHER

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The barbaric rape and murder of Jill Meagher had Victorian homicide squad detective Ron Iddles on the case from the start. Three years to the day since the crime, he came back to Adelaide where, for him, the investigation began.



By **Brett Williams**





Jill Meagher

RON Iddles can recount detail after detail about the Jill Meagher murder investigation, without a single pause or reference to any notes.

For the high-profile Homicide Squad detective and now Police Association Victoria secretary, so much of the highly publicized case still remains indelible in his mind.

Even matters on the periphery of the 2012 investigation have stayed with him. There was the surprise phone call he got from the distressed mother of the killer, violent serial rapist and parolee Adrian Bayley.

She spoke of the day she gave birth to her now locked-up son and asked Iddles if he thought she should go to visit him. He said: "I think blood's thicker than water and, if you want to go and see him, you go and see him."

There was the photo controversy two years ago, when Iddles spoke at a Bendigo fund-raiser for prostate cancer. For about one second during his 90-minute presentation, he showed an image of Meagher's body in the shallow grave where it lay after her murder.

In no time he came under attack from eager critics, including then-premier Denis Napthine and 3AW morning radio host Neil Mitchell. Victoria Police assistant commissioner (crime) Steve Fontana accused Iddles of "an unfortunate error of judgement".

What the critics either did not know, or knew but ignored, was that Meagher's husband, Tom, and parents, George and Edith McKeon, had given Iddles their full backing.

There was the intense, spontaneous public reaction to the brutal rape and murder of the innocent 29-year-old Meagher, an Irish national. In part tribute and part protest, thousands marched down Sydney Road, Brunswick just days after the September 22 crime.

And on the health of some of the experienced police who worked on the case, Iddles remembers a "massive impact". Some wound up with post-traumatic stress disorder and have never been able to return to work.

Says Iddles: "One of them said to me: 'Ron, don't ask me why, but when I got to the (Meagher) gravesite, that was it...'"

Each peripheral issue sparked the kind of emotion Iddles and his colleagues could never afford to succumb to at the core of the investigation. Every enquiry they made, and every action they implemented, had to be supremely thorough and methodical.

A good example was the "brilliant" questioning that accomplished interviewer Detective Paul Rowe undertook of Bayley. That critical exchange took place only after Rowe and Iddles had spent hours pre-planning it.

And the three-hour interview brought about the ultimate result: Bayley, then 41, broke down and confessed that he had indeed raped and murdered Meagher. He also exclaimed: "... they should have the death penalty for people like me..."

This was the climax of an investigation which had started out with a simple report to police of the missing Meagher. For Iddles, it began – and continued for two days – in Adelaide, where he had come for his son's graduation from flight school.

He got his first phone call about the job around 1pm on Saturday, September 22. It was Homicide Squad colleague and fellow detective senior sergeant Dave Butler, who outlined the circumstances of the Meagher disappearance.

Almost 12 hours earlier, around 1:30am, Meagher had left Bar Etiquette on Sydney Road, Brunswick after Friday-night drinks. The ABC employee had gone there with workmates and was setting out to walk the short distance home to her Lux Way flat.

On her way, she made a call to her brother, Michael McKeon, in Perth at 1:32am. He would later describe a male voice he thought he had heard in the background during the call, before the phone line went dead. McKeon called his sister back but got no answer.

Around 2am, Tom Meagher fired off some text messages to his wife after he woke to find that she was still not home from Bar Etiquette. He found a text message she had sent him earlier, while he was asleep. It read: "Meet me at the pub."

But, now, she was not responding, and she never arrived home. That prompted a worried Tom to go to the police that day to report his wife missing.

Here, from Adelaide, Iddles began to lead the investigation through "a lot of phone conversation", until he got back to Melbourne. His direction to his detectives was to split up and pursue different lines of enquiry.

That meant that some were to knock on doors and take statements and others were to receive and assess incoming information. And, for a third group, the focus would be on Tom Meagher who, for a time, had police curious about him.

He and his wife had been through a period of separation; and it concerned Iddles that, between 4am and 8am, Tom had left his phone switched off.

"Now, 96 per cent of murders are committed by someone known to the victim," Iddles explains. "So I said: 'The bottom line is you've got to eliminate him (as a suspect).'"

And that would happen on the following Tuesday, after police had twice interviewed Tom and forensic examinations revealed nothing suspicious in the Meagher flat.

By the end of the weekend, Meagher – who had never before gone missing – had still not turned up at home, and her disappearance was making local news bulletins.

CCTV footage of Jill Meagher taken from inside the Duchess Boutique



"There was a view that, if you released the footage, and she was still alive, would that cause the offender ... to kill her."

Then, on Monday morning, September 24, police found a black handbag in an alley off Hope St, which runs off Sydney Road. The bag contained Meagher's belongings but was never in the alley when police searched it two days earlier.

It turned out that a local, who came forward, had taken the handbag early on Saturday morning. But he returned it on Monday because news of the Meagher disappearance had emerged and he feared he might end up implicated.

On Tuesday, homicide detectives went in search of CCTV footage from business houses along Sydney Road – and scored a breakthrough. An internal camera in the Duchess Boutique, aimed at its front glass door, had captured Meagher walking by the bridal shop at 1:42am.

Her blood-alcohol content was .230 and, as Iddles observed, she appeared "quite unsteady on her feet". What made the footage so chilling was that when she first came into view, so too did a man wearing a blue hoodie.

And, in this first appearance, both stopped at the southern corner of the boutique (far right of screen) for about seven seconds. The man, standing slightly ahead of Meagher, was clearly directing conversation at her.

Then, when they walked on, he continued to talk from a pace in front of her with his head and upper body turned back. After 16 seconds, he had walked out of view of the camera.

Meagher, on the other hand, remained within view for several more seconds as she stood on the footpath. She seemed to be checking her phone and, at one point, looked back along Sydney Road.

Finally, she too walked off and out of view heading north, as had the man in the blue hoodie. And, in the one minute, 45 seconds before he first appeared in the footage with Meagher, he had twice walked past the boutique, first north and then south.

Says Iddles: "We had that video footage, and there's always a judgement call as to whether or not to release it.

"There was a view that, if you released the footage and she was still alive, would that cause the offender, if it was him, to kill her? If she was already deceased, would it cause him to get rid of his clothing?

"So there was a decision made at a fairly high level and it (the footage) was released to the public."

And while the public responded with hundreds of calls, Iddles and his colleagues kept doggedly pursuing answers. One came on Wednesday, September 26, from tracking Meagher's phone.

"We found that, at 4:30, her phone was on the Tullamarine Freeway heading towards the airport," Iddles recalls. "At 5 o'clock it was on the Calder Highway at Sunbury and, at 6 o'clock, it was at Gisborne."

That tracking information led Detective Jason Wallace to conceive an important plan. It was to check every vehicle which had travelled under the CityLink toll point at Moorland Road between 4:15am and 4:45am.

"Something like 286 cars had gone under there," Iddles says. "So, when we checked all of those, Adrian Bayley's car came up, which was a 2003 white Holden Astra."

Wallace ran checks on Bayley, whose criminal record showed 17 priors for rape.

"That, in itself, didn't mean that he'd killed (Meagher)," Iddles says. "It just meant that he was out and about at 4:30 when her phone was tracking there (on CityLink).

"We were able to identify *his* phone number and, then, do the same thing (tracking) with his phone. We found out that, at 1:32am, it was in Sydney Road, right beside Jill Meagher's phone.

"And, at 4:30, his phone was hitting the tower at Moreland Road and the Tullamarine Freeway. At 5 o'clock it was at Sunbury and, at 6 o'clock, at Gisborne.

"We had a map and we tracked them (both phones) all the way out. Only one phone, which was his, came back to Coburg where he lived. So, then, you're starting to say: 'Hang on a minute, this looks like he's the offender!'

"But you've got to prove it. So it was then about building a profile on him."

THE detectives found that Bayley was on parole after serving eight years' jail for five of six rapes he had committed on prostitutes in St Kilda. And he was now living in a rented Coburg room with his girlfriend, radiographer Rameeza Ali.

Other intelligence the detectives gathered, as surveillance officers moved in to watch Bayley on Thursday, September 27, was that he frequented massage parlours. "It was quite clear that he had a strong sexual urge," Iddles says.

And, days earlier, Bayley had worn a blue hoodie when he withdrew money from a National Bank. Iddles and his team could see that it was "identical" to the one worn by the man in the Duchess Boutique footage.

"By that stage," Iddles explains, "we were confident. We had his car, we had the phones together (his and Meagher's), and we had him in a hoodie four days before at a bank. It was looking pretty good."

And, with that evidence, detectives were ready to arrest Bayley on Thursday afternoon. They had abandoned a plan to grab him when he next reported to his corrections officer and instead went straight to his home.

There, detectives executed a warrant to search the place and arrested Bayley, whose outward response Iddles says was "super confident".

Although not on the scene, he learned that Bayley had said: "No worries, mate,

happy to come back (to St Kilda Road police station) with you. I don't know what this is about."

His response to the search of his home was the same: "Go your hardest. You can even have my DNA. You can take anything you like."

At the same time, police were picking Ali up from the Melton clinic where she worked. She would tell detectives that, two weeks before the Meagher murder, Bayley had "raped me, strangled me". Ali had thought about going to the police but could not bring herself to do it.

"And there's no doubt she's lucky to be alive," Iddles says.

Back at the station, Paul Rowe would interview Bayley in a contemporary style based on overseas models and used by the Homicide Squad for just a few years. The setting would be contemporary too: no table and just the two men in the room sitting three metres apart.

At first, Bayley denied any knowledge of, or involvement in, the Meagher disappearance. So Rowe asked him to account for his movements from Friday afternoon through to Saturday morning, and let him speak uninterrupted for the next 35 minutes.

His story was that, on Friday evening, September 21, he and Ali had gone to the Quiet Man Irish Pub in Flemington. The occasion was the finale of his work footy-tipping competition, and his boss was covering the bar tab up to \$1,000.

Around 11pm, the couple left the Quiet Man and headed over to Lounge in Swanston St where, according to Bayley, he argued with Ali and she left him there. He claimed that, eventually, he too left Lounge and went home to Coburg to find no Ali waiting for him.

But she was there, in the house, just not in the room she and Bayley rented. Ali had taken refuge on a mattress in another room, in which Bayley never found her – if indeed he went home as he claimed.

"We say he never went home at all," Iddles says. "He didn't leave the city until around 12:30am, quarter to one. We say he cabbied it to Sydney Road, got out and just walked around."

"We had his car,
we had the phones
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Above: rapist and murderer Adrian Bayley; **right:** the alley off Hope St



But Bayley insisted that he had searched the house for Ali, failed to find her, and had then driven around the city for 90-odd minutes looking for her. He told Rowe that, after that, he had gone nowhere else besides straight back home via Nicholson St.

As the interview went on, Bayley kept responding with lies, even when it came to the most damning evidence against him. Rowe showed, and asked, him to explain a photo of his car on the Tullamarine Freeway at 4:30am. "I can't explain it," Bayley said.

Nor could he explain the phone records that showed his and Meagher's mobiles tracking in the same places.

And Rowe produced an incriminating photo from the CCTV footage. It showed the man in the blue hoodie talking to Meagher outside the Duchess Boutique. Bayley conceded that the man looked like him, but insisted it was not him.

After a break in the questioning, Rowe resumed the interview armed with perhaps the most damning evidence of all. Detectives, who had searched the room Bayley and Ali rented, had found a phone SIM card. It was in a shirt pocket – and it belonged to Meagher.

"So," Iddles says, "Paul goes back in and says: 'We've searched your house and we've found a SIM card registered to Gillian Meagher. Can you explain that?'"

"He (Bayley) just sits there and goes: 'I don't want to explain that.' So Paul comes out and I said to him: 'Listen, this is what you're going to have to do...'"

Iddles advice to Rowe was to say: "Adrian, there's absolutely no doubt in my mind that you've done

"And, then, slowly but surely, he (Bayley) went on and confessed. He broke down..."

this, but I think life's about choices and you've made a bad choice.

"I also think you're a bit like an alcoholic: you can't stop yourself. You get these sexual urges, and I actually want to understand what's going on."

Says Iddles: "Paul goes in and he goes for about three minutes but Bayley wasn't buying it. He just wasn't connecting, so he (Rowe) came back out.

"He was out of the room 30 seconds when the buzzer went off. He went back in and Bayley goes: 'Don't you want me to tell you?' Paul said: 'Well, yeah, I do.'

"Then Bayley said: 'Well, I want to cut a deal. I want to see Rameeza and sign my two cars over to her. If you let me do that then I'll tell you what happened.'"

Rowe, of course, never entertained the idea of a deal and wisely pressed on with the interview.

"And, then, slowly but surely, he (Bayley) went on and confessed," Iddles remembers. "He broke down but I don't think it was about what he'd done. It was about him.

"He said in one part of the interview: 'I was even going to come in today and tell you all about this.' Well, guess what? For the first hour-and-a-quarter he bullshitted."

SO Bayley was indeed the man in the blue hoodie, which detectives had found during their search of his home.

He had spotted Meagher on Sydney Road just after she left Bar Etiquette and approached her. According to him, he thought she looked "lost" and "distracted" and so offered to help her.

"I was just walking ahead of her and we'd already interacted on Sydney Road, and that's when she rang her brother," he told Rowe. "She was actually telling me about her father."

Bayley claimed he had not intended to hurt Meagher.

"She flipped me off and that made me angry, because I was actually trying to do a nice thing," he professed. "I didn't take well to her response."

Ultimately, Bayley dragged Meagher into the alley off Hope St where he raped and strangled her. But, now, he was telling Rowe: "I just don't wanna go through it in detail."

And he cried as he exclaimed: "What have I done?! What have I done, man?!"

Says Iddles: "Gillian was only about 300 metres from home; and there were about eight people who heard screaming.

“The crew did a good job. And the courts have imposed a penalty which really means he’ll never walk the streets again. So I think we did our job.”

One lady said to her husband: ‘Oh, I think a lady’s being raped!’ But not one person picked up the phone and called the police.”

Bayley left the murder scene, went home to collect a shovel and drove his car back to the alley. He got there at 4:22am, loaded Meagher’s body into his boot and drove out to Gisborne South.

“I cried, man, and I dug a hole,” he told Rowe. “I cried, man, and I didn’t cry for me. You need to understand that. I didn’t cry for me, just like I’m not crying for me now.”

Bayley agreed to show detectives where he had buried Meagher’s body off Black Hill Road at Gisborne South. Police and pathologist Matthew Lynch removed it from a 35cm-deep hole; and Lynch would later find Meagher’s thyroid cartilage and larynx broken.

It had taken just six days for Homicide Squad Crew 4 to gather critical, overwhelming evidence against Bayley. But it would take nine months for the typically slow justice system to condemn him.

In the Victorian Supreme Court on June 19, 2013, Justice Geoffrey Nettle sentenced Bayley to a minimum of 35 years’ jail: life for murder and 15 years for rape. That meant he would not be eligible for parole until he turned 76.

“I think it was a good outcome,” Iddles says. “No one had to give evidence. George and Edith, the parents, had come over from Western Australia. Tom was there, too, and it was a good result.

“Tom’s a quiet person, somewhat reserved. He didn’t like the limelight and, at times, was very emotional but didn’t want to show it.

“George, her dad, was just a lovely guy to meet and talk to, and so was Edith. George was a well-educated businessman but was very sick at the time.

“They were just lovely people; and I think Tom and Gillian were back on track and everything was finally going all right for them. But Tom, in the end, made the decision to go back to Ireland. The parents still live in Western Australia.”

In a vile show of disregard for those “lovely people”, Bayley sought leave to appeal against the severity of his sentence.

But, in the Victorian Court of Appeal in September, 2013, Chief Justice Marilyn Warren and justices Marcia Neave and Paul Coghlanthe refused him that leave.

Indeed, Bayley was to end up with his sentence extended last May. Juries in separate trials in 2014 and 2015 had found him guilty of three other rapes. His victims were two prostitutes and a Dutch backpacker.

County Court judge Sue Pullen lengthened his sentence to a minimum of 43 years. But, on June 25 this year, Bayley lodged an appeal against two of the three rape convictions and his extended sentence.

Victoria Legal Aid has since refused to fund the appeal, and Bayley has now launched court action against that refusal.

Iddles had to be right about Bayley not crying over “what he’d done”. In fact, during his interview with Rowe, he blamed his actions on Ali because she had argued with and left him at the Quiet Man Irish Pub.

He even blamed Meagher herself for fobbing him off and therefore making him angry.

The weight of public hatred for Bayley is likely incalculable, but Iddles does not buy into the hate fest. “It’s indifference (that I feel),” he says.

“I don’t feel sorry for him. The person I feel sorry for, really, is his mother. But for him, I think he got what he deserved.

“We did a good job. The crew did a good job. And the courts have imposed a penalty which really means he’ll never walk the streets again. So I think we did our job.”



Jill and Tom Meagher on their wedding day

THE GREAT MAN



THE stage or screen or both would surely have beckoned Ron Iddles (right) had he ever chosen to leave police work for acting. With his towering frame, grey crew-cut hair and craggy, character face, he could easily have played the TV detective.

And he did, after all, draw his inspiration to join Victoria Police from watching Australia's most iconic TV cop show, *Homicide* (1964-1977).

"There was John Fegan (who played Detective Inspector Jack Connolly); and the four of them (detectives) would walk up the steps of Russell St police headquarters," Iddles remembers. "It was just the intrigue of the investigation, I suppose, and they always solved it in an hour."

Of course, Iddles was to end up solving murders himself. He made arrests in about 95 per cent of the 300-odd cases he investigated with the *real* Victorian Homicide Squad over 25 years. And he gave evidence in at least 150 murder trials.

So, ultimately, he did end up on television, and in newspapers – only that was as himself rather than an actor. The media so often sought him out for comment on one murder investigation or another that he became one of the most recognized cops in Australia.

And his reputation for brilliance, as not only an investigator but also a communicator and thinker, led his Homicide Squad colleagues to nickname him The Great Man.

"I don't like the tag. I've always said: 'I'm an average guy doing a difficult job.' "

"I don't like the tag," he says. "I've always said: 'I'm an average guy doing a difficult job.' I think, at times, there was a lot of pressure because (the thought was): 'Well, Ron'll solve it.' "

But solve it he did, around 300 times; and few murder investigations have ever faded from his memory. One he struggles to talk about unemotionally is the stabbing murder of 16-year-old Michelle Buckingham, who had disappeared from Shepparton in 1983.

The case had gone cold until 2012, when journalist Tammy Mills wrote a series of stories about the crime for *The Shepparton News*. Among witnesses who then came forward was Norm Gribble, the brother-in-law of Buckingham's now convicted killer, Stephen Bradley.

Says Iddles: "I went and met him (Gribble) on

the middle of a footy oval, and he said: 'I know who killed her. It was my brother-in-law.'

"He had held that secret for 30 years; and it took me another 12 months, but I eventually charged Stephen Bradley."

Emotion overwhelms Iddles when he recalls his gut-wrenching interaction with Buckingham's now late mother, Elvira.

He remembers her saying: "You're here now, 30 years later, telling me you're going to solve it. How can I trust you? You've made the emotion as raw as it was on day one."

"Now, if you don't get there, you're going to take me up the top of a rollercoaster and you're going to tip me over the edge."

"But I got there," Iddles says, in a quavering but triumphant voice. "And she gave me a big hug."



Far left: Iddles (left) with his parents, Bill and Phyllis, twin brother, Barry, and sister, Nancye, in 1962; **above far left:** with his parents and brother in 1968; **left centre:** Iddles (right) with his brother; **above:** a St Kilda crime scene after Iddles was assaulted by an armed escapee; **left:** Iddles at his desk at the Homicide Squad office in 2011

A Victorian Supreme Court jury this month found 53-year-old Bradley guilty of the Buckingham murder. But, after all those years, Elvira never got to hear the verdict: she died of a heart attack just days before the trial began.

Another case Iddles remembers well is the 1994 disappearance of 22-year-old Elisabeth Membrey. The Manhattan Hotel in Ringwood, where she worked behind the bar, was the last place anyone, besides her killer, ever saw her.

In her East Ringwood apartment, the day after she disappeared, Membrey's parents, Roger and Joy, found carpet blood-stained and blood spatter on the walls. Police searched for but never found Membrey's body.

Assigned to investigate the unsolved case in 2000, Iddles stuck with it for 10 years until he arrested and charged Shane Bond with murder. Evidence suggested that Bond drank at the hotel, had had a romantic interest in Membrey, and had pestered her to go out with him.

But, in 2012, a Supreme Court jury, after deliberating for seven days, found him not guilty.

Only three Iddles cases ever ended without convictions, and this was one of them.

"I understand you have to prove beyond reasonable doubt," he says. "The defence ran a case whereby they nominated someone else, so you had competing hypotheses."

Of course, Iddles can still detail the unsolved 1980 Maria James murder – it was the first one he ever investigated. Someone stabbed the 38-year-old wife and mother-of-two 68 times in the Thornbury Bookstore, which she owned, on High St.

"I still talk to her son, Mark, 35 years on," Iddles says. "He still rings me.

"We've got the DNA of the killer – his blood was on a pillow – but the case is still not solved. It's one that I would dearly love to solve."

"All of a sudden, you're in this environment where you're dealing with people's lives, people's emotions, and you soon learn."

BUT solving murders dropped off the Iddles agenda in 2013, when he took on his current job as secretary of the Police Association Victoria. Now, after 18 months in the role, he sees a clear need to focus on police-officer welfare.

"I think there's a lot of work to be done around the welfare space," he insists. "The current stats say we're losing 22 (members) a month with post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety... We need to work in that space in terms of early intervention and prevention."

Both policing and unionism have kept – and continue to keep – Iddles in the public spotlight. He has had to live much of his adult life as a public figure. His early life was vastly different.

He grew up on a dairy farm in country Victoria with his parents, Bill and Phyllis, his twin brother, Barry, and older sister, Nancye.

"I think it gave me a really strong work ethic," he says. "We used to have to get up and help milk (the cows) in the morning. We had 120 cows, which was the average then for a dairy farm.

"So you'd go and help milk, have a shower, then ride your bike up to the bus for school. Weekends I worked on the farm, too. I was 10 and 11 when I was driving tractors and trucks."

After his schooling, Iddles considered a job with the railways and even went to enquire at the local station. When he found out he would have to polish brass taps and fill buckets with sand, he thought: "Oh, that's not me."



Iddles receives the Chief Commissioner's Certificate for Bravery from the now late Dick Knight in 1986

That was when the allure of the detective work he had watched on TV cop show *Homicide* kicked in. At the age of just 16, he left the farm for the city to join Victoria Police as a cadet in 1972.

And things moved quickly. When he was 17, he met 16-year-old Colleen, who later became – and after 41 years remains – his wife. The couple now has three adult children, Jo, Matthew and Shae, and three grandchildren.

By the time he had turned 18, Iddles was working in uniform on the front line out of Collingwood police station. It was a brutal start for a young copper with no experience of city policing, let alone city life.

There were 80-odd pubs in his patrol area and many of their patrons belonged to the notorious Painters and Dockers Union. So responding to hotel disturbances was a challenge, as was policing Victoria Park when the Collingwood footy club played its home games there.

“That was just a blood bath,” Iddles says. “There was no seating at the eastern-end goals, it was just mud, and they drank.”

“And if Carlton and Collingwood played, you knew there was going to be such a blue. We would lock 20 or 30 up every second Saturday.”

Iddles had to confront the tragedy of suicides, too. The first dead bodies he ever saw were those of people who had leapt from atop high-rise Collingwood flats.

“It did start to teach me about life,” he says. “All of a sudden, you’re in this environment where you’re dealing with people’s lives, people’s emotions, and you soon learn.”

Iddles remained a uniformed copper for five years and, in that time, got to work on the periphery of some homicide investigations in Collingwood and Fitzroy.

“The detectives who came out (to investigate) were always professional,” he says. “People would say: ‘They’re from the Homicide Squad.’ They were well respected.”

After his time in uniform, Iddles moved into detective work and wound up at Fitzroy CIB. Before long, he got the chance to go to the Homicide Squad to help investigate a St Kilda murder.

During his month-long stint with the squad, an old-time bespectacled senior sergeant became something of a mentor to him.

“I worked with him for the month and just became fascinated with the work,” Iddles says. “And, to some extent, he probably shaped me.”

Iddles went back to Fitzroy CIB and worked there for another 12 months before a vacancy came up at the Homicide Squad in 1980. He scored an interview and got the job, and that was the first of 25 years he would spend catching killers.

His time with the squad would have been nearer to 30 years had he not quit policing in 1989 to start a trucking business.

But he only stayed out of the fold until 1994. He rejoined the cops, underwent retraining at the police academy, returned to the Homicide Squad, and worked his way back up to detective senior sergeant.

Iddles thought about pursuing commissioned rank but figured he was “happy doing what I’m doing.” “I’ve had a great time in the job,” he says. “I’d do it all again.”

But he thinks young aspiring cops should “think long and hard” before launching into the police occupation of today.

“It’s been fantastic to me,” he says, “but I think it’s got more and more dangerous. The total environment has changed over the last five years, and that’s around (the drug) ice, threats of terrorism, more and more people are carrying weapons...”

“The whole culture has changed and there is less respect for police. But I still think it’s a fantastic job.” **PJ**