

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### SOCIAL EFFECTS: EMPLOYEES IN SECURITY ROLES

#### NIGHT-CLUB BOUNCER EMPLOYMENT

11.1 This inquiry has centred on the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport. The Committee was interested in the market for these drugs and the side-effects of drug usage. During the hearings, however, the Committee also sought information about linkages in the patterns of sporting drug abuse.

11.2 One of the most directly relevant activities was euphemistically called the 'security industry' in evidence before the inquiry. The Committee heard on numerous occasions that it was commonplace for people using performance drugs to be employed as bouncers, particularly in clubs and hotels. This is the case because bodybuilders, powerlifters and weightlifters are the type of persons required as bouncers for their size and strength. And, most of these people are likely to use performance drugs, particularly anabolic steroids.

11.3 In the normal course of events it is unremarkable that persons of size and strength are employed as bouncers or 'security guards'. The Committee's interest in the matter, however, has arisen both because it is very common for bodybuilders and powerlifters to be so employed and because the incidence of steroid use by bodybuilders and powerlifters is so high. A former steroid user, Mr Kriss Wilson, advised the Committee that eighty per cent of the competition bodybuilders in Queensland would be using anabolic steroids. (Evidence, p. 2204) And the former 'Mr America', John Grimek, suggested that 'between 99 per cent and 101 per cent of the entrants in the contest in 1972 used anabolic steroids'. (The Medical Journal of Australia, 26 June 1976, p. 993)

## BOUNCER VIOLENCE

11.4 The coincidence of steroid use and the employment of bouncers would not be of significance to the Committee except for a further factor connected with bouncers and night-clubs - that of violence. Violence has been a familiar aspect of the late night licensed premises environment. Recently, however, reports have begun to appear that link licensed premises, bouncers and violence. In Victoria on 5 October 1989, for example, Commissioner Ryan imposed a \$10,000 fine on the owners of the Melbourne Underground Restaurant for five offences involving assaults. On the same day Commissioner Bond found that the owners of a Melbourne night-club, The Hippodrome, had been grossly negligent in twenty-three incidents including attacks on patrons by bouncers. In reporting the hearing, The Age, advised that Commissioner Bond said:

I am appalled by the incidents at this club and manner in which it has been operated. The level of drunkenness and violence which management has thought tolerable and unremarkable would in my view be abhorrent to most reasonable people. (The Age, 6 October 1989, p. 1)

11.5 A further account of violence by night-club bouncers appeared in The Courier Mail of 6 January 1990. There it was reported:

Too many Gold Coast nightclub bouncers were thugs who relished bashing people, a security training officer said yesterday ... Reports of bouncer brutality have increased since the holiday period started ... A police spokesman said yesterday police received many complaints from people claiming they had been bashed by bouncers.

And in the Sunday Mail of 28 January 1990 it was stated:

Southport's ambulance superintendent, Syd Cross, says an average of two people a week allegedly bashed by bouncers are treated by his officers.

11.6 On 25 January 1990, The Courier Mail reported that two bouncers were involved in a hotel brawl over a packet of cigarettes. The bouncers were charged with having assaulted two men at the Hamilton Hotel in September 1989 and with having caused grievous bodily harm. The Age of the same day reported that one man's skull was fractured in the brawl.

11.7 A much more tragic case occurred on the Gold Coast in 1984. The Courier Mail of 25 January 1990 recorded the case of Mr Mark Doolan who was thrown down stairs by a Gold Coast night-club bouncer:

Mark Doolan, 21, fell head-first down a flight of stairs after an encounter with a bouncer at a Surfers Paradise nightclub. He died three days later from massive head injuries.

11.8 The Committee received numerous accounts of this kind of violence at night-clubs involving bouncers. Importantly, the evidence received linked steroid-using bodybuilders and powerlifters to night-club violence.

11.9 Sergeant Glenn Jones advised the Committee of links between weightlifters, powerlifters and assaults by bouncers:

I would say probably one half of the membership of the ACT Powerlifting Association at some stage or another was employed in the security field and a number of them as a consequence were arrested and charged with assault. (Evidence, p. 2820)

Sergeant Jones also mentioned a commercial organisation in the ACT where there are clear links between the security industry, weightlifters/powerlifters/bodybuilders and violence:

We know of at least one firm in the Australian Capital Territory, MIL Security, which hires a lot of powerlifters, cum bodybuilders. Several of the ex-AIS lifters [weightlifters] and the owner of the firm, Michael Ian Lawrence, have records as long as your arm, for want of the better word. My understanding is that he has a number of convictions for assaulting police

and that sort of thing. Violence seems to be run-of-the-mill for people who work for him. (Evidence, p. 2821)

Mr Lawrence, the principal of MIL Security responded to a letter from the Committee by confirming that he had a criminal record including four counts of assaulting police over the past four years. (Letter to Committee Secretary, 12 February 1990)

11.10 Sergeant Jones added concerning some security guards:

We have had information that some of them, once they get involved in these fights, become impossible to stop to the stage where they actually do grievous bodily harm to the victims and, from my understanding, with little provocation. (Evidence, p. 2822)

When asked whether this was caused by what is commonly described as 'steroid rage', Sergeant Jones responded:

I would assume so, yes. (Evidence, p. 2822)

#### **BOUNCERS AND STEROIDS**

11.11 Dr Nicholas Keks, an academic psychiatrist with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), also suggested a link between steroids, bouncers and night-club violence. In advising that anabolic steroids tend to induce increased aggressiveness, Dr Keks suggested that:

Certainly these kinds of effects, which perhaps could be termed mild, may explain such instances as the excessive violence by nightclub bouncers and so on. (Evidence, p. 3278)

11.12 The Sunday Sun of 28 January 1990 reported two bouncers whose views graphically support those of Dr Keks. One bouncer, Mr Jason Bardell, was reported to have said that he knew of doormen around Brisbane who used steroids and it had changed their personalities for the worse:

'They have become much more aggressive - they develop really short wicks', he said. He described them as dangerous because they became apathetic about damage they did to patrons.

The same newspaper reported an anonymous bouncer:

He said some bouncers used steroids to puff themselves out.

'They go on a six-month course of steroids and blow out,' he said. 'But it affects them in the head and they get aggro really easy.'

11.13 The Committee has found this kind of evidence most disturbing. A number of elements come together to compose a picture of considerable antisocial potential. Bouncers whose strength, size and aggression have been significantly increased through steroid use combine with an environment where high spirits and alcohol consumption are involved. Some inebriated patrons perhaps present a provocative and attractive target for certain bouncers to expend their aggression. Also, of course, some patrons will be provocative and aggressive. Mr Dino Toci, a powerlifter and bouncer advised the Committee in camera:

I was stabbed in the stomach at work. I stopped a guy and told him he could not take his beer outside, so he went to the car, got a knife and came back and stabbed me. (In Camera Evidence, p. 961)

11.14 The Committee was presented with first-hand evidence that bouncers can exploit these situations. Mr Nathan Jones advised the Committee that he took two courses of anabolic steroids entailing doses as high as 1300 milligrams per week. (Evidence, p. 2179) When asked about the context in which he was introduced to steroids Mr Jones replied that it was in the course of his employment as a security guard:

Where I worked it was like a bouncer situation and most bouncers are bodybuilders; so it was in that way. (Evidence, p. 2163)

In Mr Jones' case, he began work as a bouncer at age 16 and was introduced to steroids by another bouncer. At the time Mr Jones had not been to a gym and had not been in any bodybuilding competitions at all. (Evidence, p. 2164)

11.15 Mr Jones, in fact, was purchasing what he understood to be black market human anabolic steroids. Jones believed that they had been prescribed for his bouncer colleague who resold them to Mr Jones. And the supplier injected Mr Jones with the steroid provided. (Evidence, p. 2166)

11.16 Mr Jones described how, a couple of days after first receiving the drug he experienced an increase in aggression:

I felt aggressive, yes - touchy, on little things. (Evidence, p. 2170)

Subsequently, Mr Jones advised, he ceased taking the steroids because of the side effects including back pain, but also aggressiveness and paranoia. When asked whether he got involved in physical conflicts, Mr Jones stated that he did:

I got really aggressive very easily.  
(Evidence, p. 2173)

And Mr Jones confirmed that this was his experience at the time during which he was employed as a bouncer. (Evidence, p. 2173)

11.17 Mr Jones also revealed the extent of his loss of self-control when aggressive. The Chairman asked whether Mr Jones was more prone to get into fights, particularly given the nature of his work as a bouncer. Mr Jones confirmed that that was the case and that basically, in these circumstances, he could not stop. (Evidence, p. 2174) (It should be noted that Mr Jones is 207cm tall and weighs in excess of 125kg.)

11.18 Further, Mr Jones was asked whether being a bouncer gave legitimacy to the use of his aggression and whether his occupation screened his misbehaviour, or disguised it. Mr Jones confirmed that it did. (Evidence, p. 2174) The Deputy Chairman

mentioned to Mr Jones that in Western Australia a number of cases of assault charges against bouncers had arisen; in response to the suggestion that, by the use of anabolic steroids bouncers were indulging themselves in the symptoms rather than fulfilling their normal responsibilities as bouncers, Mr Jones confirmed that that was the case. (Evidence, p. 2174) Mr Jones explained that, on steroids, he would do more than 'keep the peace' as a bouncer; he would give:

A bit of punishment at the time when I felt the person deserved it because of the way he carried on. (Evidence, p. 2175)

And Mr Jones confirmed that his steroid consumption affected his attitude to the law whereby he felt invincible and that his wrongdoing would not be detected. (Evidence, p. 2179)

11.19 Mr Jones advised that while he took doses of anabolic steroids up to twenty times the maximum that would be prescribed by a medical practitioner, those doses were commonplace amongst the people with whom he worked. Mr Jones affirmed that these people had similar problems from time to time, as he did, with the law. (Evidence, p. 2178)

11.20 The picture confirmed by Mr Jones is, in some aspects unique to his experience: some details would not be shared by many steroid takers. Nevertheless, there are significant elements of Mr Jones' evidence that apply widely among bouncers. Chief among these are the tendency for a very high percentage of bouncers to be steroid takers, the enormous doses of anabolic steroids consumed by bouncers, the likelihood that bouncers will have an excessively aggressive attitude to night-club and hotel patrons, and that many bouncers had problems with the law. The emerging picture provided by a number of witnesses before the Committee, and confirmed by Mr Jones' first hand account, is one that is considerably antisocial and which contains the potential for particularly dangerous confrontations. The Committee is most concerned to note this consequence of the abuse of anabolic steroids.

11.21 The Committee is also concerned that the deleterious psychological effects of steroids on bouncers may be compounded by other drugs, especially amphetamines. Mr Nathan Jones advised that, in addition to a steroid intake of up to 200 milligrams per day, he was taking 60 milligrams a day of amphetamines. (Evidence, p. 2184)

#### RESEARCH ON BOUNCERS AND VIOLENCE

11.22 The Committee believes that there are connections between the sports of powerlifting, bodybuilding and weightlifting and the security industry, in particular the employment of bouncers. Those links may be compounded by the high incidence of anabolic steroid use among such people and the frequency of night-club violence.

11.23 It is understandable that at this point there is little by way of clear crime statistics and police evidence of links between steroid use by bouncers and night-club violence. This is the case because the problem identified before the Committee in this regard has not been widely recognised as a potential cause of such breaches of the law, and those committing assaults are not likely to have been asked by investigating officers whether they have used anabolic steroids recently. The ACT Deputy Commissioner of Police advised that:

Investigations ... have confirmed that a large percentage of men who are employed as bouncers at ACT night spots are bodybuilders and sports oriented people. Some are personally recruited from such places as gymnasiums and it is possible that some do use steroids.

The Deputy Commissioner went on to confirm, however, that the ACT Region Drug Operations Branch had no reports indicating steroid use among ACT security guards. He added:

Bouncers, though not necessarily violent, do have a reputation for being aggressive, a trait no doubt considered by employers to be



occasionally necessary. There is no evidence to suggest that any such aggressiveness is related to steroid use. (Letter to Committee Secretary, 22 November 1989)

11.24 While it is understandable that in the past the incidence of bouncer violence has not been widely acknowledged to have a steroid connection, the Committee considers that a substantial body of evidence concerning that link is now available. A selection of recent reports confirming the connection has been quoted in this Chapter. Nevertheless, more research is required on this topic in order to assist the law enforcement authorities in dealing with bouncer violence. A recommendation to that effect is made at the conclusion of this Chapter.

#### THE LICENSING OF BOUNCERS

11.25 The Committee notes that it would be most desirable for all security workers including bouncers and doormen to be licensed and required to wear identification. Commissioner Ryan expressed this view on 5 October 1989 in finding the owners of The Hippodrome grossly negligent in 23 incidents including assaults on patrons by bouncers. (The Age, 6 October 1989) The Committee was informed by Chief Inspector Topping that under NSW legislation those engaged in security work are obliged to be licensed. (Evidence, p. 2849) The Committee considers that this should be the case throughout Australia for the security industry, including bouncers.

11.26 The Committee understands that two states are already moving to regulate the 'security' industry and license bouncers - Queensland and Victoria. The Courier Mail of 23 January 1980 reported that hotel and night-club doormen will have to be licensed under laws prepared by the Queensland Police Minister:

Bouncers could lose their licence for 'rough-house' tactics on patrons without provocation under the laws, to be introduced in the February parliamentary session ... Under the licensing arrangements, bouncers with criminal histories would not be eligible

to apply for registration. Those who abused their positions would face prosecution ... A training system would be implemented.

11.27 With regard to Victoria, The Age of 25 January 1990 reported:

The Police Minister, Mr Crabb, is today expected to endorse a recommendation by the Community Council against Violence that a registration system be set up to ensure bouncers are properly regulated ... The report is believed to have recommended that all registered bouncers be required to carry identification badges with a photograph.

#### **POLICE AND THE SECURITY INDUSTRY**

11.28 There is, however, a further dimension to this problem and it compounds the Committee's concern. Chief Inspector Topping of the NSW Police confirmed to the Committee that police are allowed to accept 'second jobs':

They apply through normal channels. They seek permission to work. (Evidence, p. 2849)

Further, Chief Inspector Topping advised that they may work in the security industry but only subject to review:

In relation to whether they are permitted to hold a job in a certain particular security sphere, if the Commissioner considers that that job is in conflict, that it is perceived to be in conflict by the public, that it be in conflict with their interests, then such permission would not be granted. (Evidence, p. 2849)

11.29 Sergeant Glenn Jones was also questioned about the possibility of police officers 'moonlighting' as bouncers or security guards. Sergeant Jones advised that a number of police were involved in powerlifting, that they can be tempted to use anabolic steroids, and that:

Should a policeman obviously be in that position he would be as susceptible as the next person to the side-effects. (Evidence, p. 2823)

11.30 Sergeant Jones was subsequently to suggest to the Committee that, were police 'moonlighting' as security officers, there might be a 'conflict of interest':

I think there is a definite conflict of interest there. (Evidence, p. 2831)

Sergeant Jones explained that:

you are providing a service such as acting on behalf of an occupier, an owner in a premises and asking people to leave; generally that is what a security officer is supposed to do, to throw people out, for want of a better word. If that person refuses, you then have the conflict as to whether or not you are acting on behalf of the owner or you are acting as a member of the police force. Of course, that can bring all sorts of problems into effect. (Evidence, p. 2831)

11.31 The Committee considers that the conflict of interest may be exacerbated when police take courses of anabolic steroids. It is understandable that police officers would be tempted to do so - size and strength are obvious benefits in the task of law enforcement. Nevertheless, the adverse psychological effects of anabolic steroids can be particularly dangerous in police officers. Time magazine of 4 December 1989, for instance, reported:

To build muscles that will help them outwrestle suspects, some police officers have taken to popping anabolic steroids. But mental-health experts warn that the drugs can make users emotionally unstable and aggressive. Such concerns were expressed in Houston after Patrolman Scott Tschirhart, a body builder, fatally pumped six shots into an armed off-duty security guard he had stopped for speeding on Nov. 15. While not linking the killing to steroid use, Police Chief Lee Brown has proposed random drug testing of his men.

11.32 The Committee is aware that steroid-taking is not unknown among Australian police officers. It has been noted at Chapter Ten that one person whose name appears on the list of clients who purchased steroids through the mail from Western Australia was Scott Brodie. The NSW Cabinet Office advised the Committee that Mr Brodie subsequently joined the NSW Police Force. (Letter to Committee Secretary, 20 December 1989) Further, the Committee heard that Bruce Walsh, when a serving NSW police officer, supplied anabolic steroids to weightlifters at the Western Suburbs Police Citizens Youth Club in the 1970s. (Evidence, p. 2836)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation Thirty-Nine

11.33 It is clear that more research is required in order to establish the nature and dimension of the problem of night-club violence and the incidence of steroid use by bouncers. The Committee accordingly recommends that this be the subject of a research project to be carried out by the Australian Institute of Criminology.

### Recommendation Forty

11.34 The Committee refers to the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy the issue of steroids and violence involving bouncers. The Committee recommends that the Council consider the following resolution:

That all States and Territories regulate the bouncer industry by:

- . screening applicants for criminal records;
- . licensing each bouncer; and
- . requiring bouncers to wear numbered badges with photographic identification.

Recommendation Forty-One

11.35 The Committee recommends that Police Commissioners no longer approve 'moonlighting' by their officers in the security industry. Further, Police Commissioners should provide directions to their officers not to use anabolic steroids other than for therapeutic purposes.

