



24 FEB, 2025

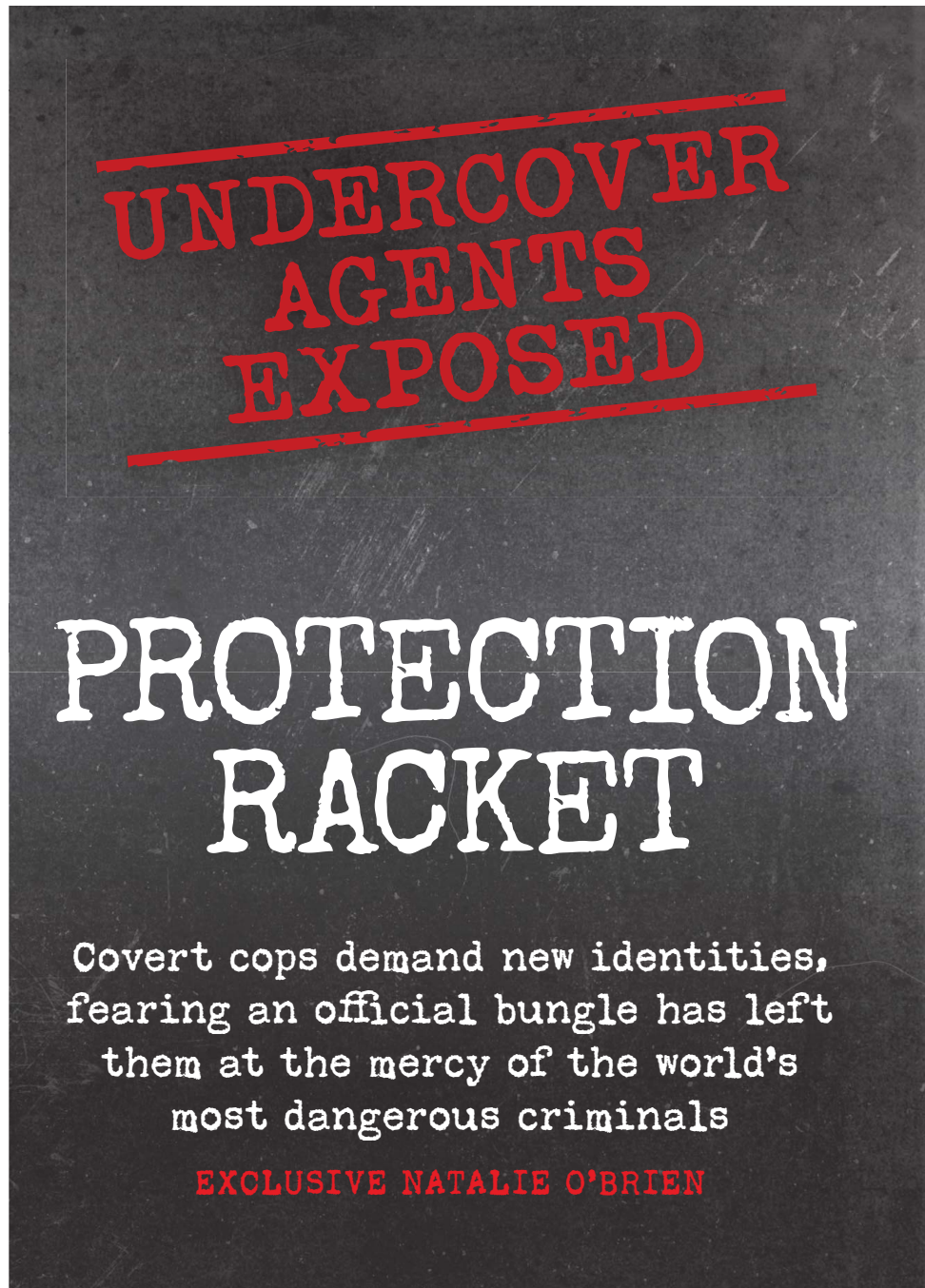
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Page 1 of 5





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Page 2 of 5

Cops infiltrating major crime networks now exposed by AFP bungle

Agents who went undercover to help bring down the world's most dangerous mobsters now in hiding and pleading with the Attorney-General for protection



EXCLUSIVE

**NATALIE
O'BRIEN**

A group of undercover police officers who infiltrated some of the world's most dangerous crime networks only to be forced into hiding when their cover was potentially blown, are now begging the Attorney-General for protection.

The agents are pleading for help saying their former employers, the Australian Federal Police, have bungled their case and failed to ensure their safety from mobsters who think nothing of killing suspected informers, let alone undercover cops.

In a rare glimpse inside the world of undercover police operations, the former cops say they and their families were exposed after discovering their assumed identities may have

been compromised and then being left with no "exit strategy" or story to give the crooks for suddenly vanishing from their entrenched positions.

"Deep infiltration by Australian undercovers on major organised crime targets in Australia should never have been considered in the first place without proper exit strategies, ensuring we were relocated overseas for an extended period of time," one agent said.

"It was a half-baked plan to deploy us with no real consideration of our real lives when it comes to the end."

The Australian Federal Police Association, acting for the agents, has written to the Federal Attorney-General Mark

Dreyfus, and the AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw for help.

AFP's president Alex Caruana has requested the undercover agents get the proper safety measures they deserve.

"Their service in high-risk and challenging conditions, along with their unwavering commitment to protecting our country and communities warrants this attention and intervention," Mr Caruana wrote.

The unprecedented situation has also sparked a number of professional standards investigations into four senior AFP police officers accused of

CONTINUED PAGE 4



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Page 3 of 5

FROM PAGE 3

misconduct in the way they handled a risk and threat assessment for the agents, which found there was a “expected” or certain threat but then ordering a subsequent “body of works” assessment which downgraded the threat to just “possible”.

In a letter to the AFP Commissioner, the AFPA said they had “been advised by a senior AFP member involved in the ‘body of works’ of the misconduct, malpractice and poor work standards that took place during its production”.

The Attorney-General has previously been asked to investigate the treatment of undercover police operatives by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement, because the committee did not have the power to investigate individual complaints or to review sensitive material.

The undercover agents have taken action against the AFP under the Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration, to cover international relocation costs for them and their families, loss of wages, superannuation and security costs.

The agents, who had infiltrated more than one crime group at the highest levels – multiple times – for years in various locations around the country, now say Australia is no longer safe for them.

The agents argue the only thing the AFP has done is install security systems with a panic button in their homes, which does nothing to protect them if they have an encounter outside their homes or while out with

their families.

An AFP spokeswoman said they assess threats and risks to current and former members of the undercover program and apply appropriate security mitigations.

“At present, the AFP have not identified any direct threat to these former members,” the spokeswoman said.

“Over the 22 years of the program, we have never had an undercover operative physically harmed through the course of their duties.”

Greens justice spokesman, Senator David Shoebridge, pictured, said these agents had put their lives on the line and when they desperately need help have been abandoned.

“They are asking for new identities and to keep them their families safe and that involves a bit more than providing a panic button,” Senator Shoebridge said.

“What they are asking for will disrupt their lives but experienced officers only ask for something like this if it is really needed.”

Senator David Van, who has drawn the case to the attention of Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, said: “I believe all good-hearted Australians would be outraged at the treatment of these agents by the AFP, I certainly am.”

“The lack of care and action by the AFP can only be explained by an unwillingness to provide the funds to protect them – it’s fiscally driven,” Senator Van said.

Senator Van said.

“The security of these members has not been taken seriously and this is reason enough to suspend the undercover program.

“It is arguable that members should think long and hard before going undercover,

potentially putting themselves in harm’s way.

“If the AFP is too heartless to remedy this situation, the Attorney-General must act urgently.

“If Minister Dreyfus fails to act then if any harm befalls these brave police the responsibility lands squarely on his shoulders.”

The agents say “above everything ... what we want is accountability and for the misconduct that has occurred to be uncovered and our safety addressed by the AG. Ultimately the AFP are not a mature enough organisation to run such a high-risk endeavour.”

A classified review of the AFP undercover program in late 2023 by retired AFP assistant commissioner Frank Prendergast showed it had been compromised for years by systemic failures, outdated technology and inadequate security.

The AFP have since said the undercover program has since been overhauled.

The Attorney-General has also been contacted for comment.

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program.
David Van



Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus.
Picture: Mick Tsikas





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