

LATIMER Simon

From: LATIMER Simon
Sent: Monday, 23 May 2005 11:22
To: JEFFERY John; CHAPMAN Tim; BATMAN Gail; VALASTRO John; DRURY John
Cc: BENUSSI Paul; AYLIFFE Zoe; CARTER Michael; PALMER Amanda; ROWLAND Rana; SCHOFIELD Chris; SWEENEY Barbara; TEALE Merran; WARDELL Matthew
Subject: UNCLASSIFIED: Womans Day article re Schapelle Corby and allegedly corrupt baggage handlers



WomansDay30May
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Pls find attached an article which appeared today regarding baggage security and the Corby case. You will recall that Customs was asked to comment on reports about concerns about baggage handlers at Sydney Airport (see exchange below). It appears that our only contribution was in relation to "not commenting for operational reasons" in relation to two issues.

Regards

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-----Original Message-----

From: AYLIFFE Zoe
Sent: Tuesday, 17 May 2005 11:44 AM
To: 'dffdd dsfd'
Subject: RE: questions for woman's day

Dear Norm,

Please find the responses to your queries as below. Any issues/ further questions, please do not hesitate to call.

1) Did a security group at Sydney International Airport called Tarmac (AKA Tango) exist? Customs did have a team known as Tarmac operating at Sydney airport for many years. The original Tarmac team comprised 5 people and was tasked with looking at the Customs related border security issues within the airport. Legislation was passed in 2002 which strengthened the powers under which it operated. The name of the team has been changed to Air Border Security and its numbers have been increased to 20 officers to ensure that it has effective coverage around the clock and can undertake a wider range of tasks.

2) What was its job? The Air Border Security function covers a range of tasks, including aircraft searches, maintaining the integrity of the Customs controlled areas and managing the various risks that may be posed by people working at the airport. For operational reasons it is not appropriate for Customs to comment on which groups of people may, at different times, have been assessed by Air Border Security but it is fair to say that all aspects of the airport environment are considered. The Air Border Security concept has been implemented at other Australian airports and the teams have achieved a number of successes.

As well as making it more difficult for any potentially illegal activity to take place, security breaches have been identified and smuggling activity has been detected and prevented. The Air Border Security team in Cairns was instrumental in detecting unlawful access to the Customs controlled area that led to a prosecution and

significant fines just last week.

3) Did it supply two reports, one in February, 2003, and another in November, 2003, warning about corrupt baggage handlers? For operational reasons, we are unable to comment.

4) Was Tarmac disbanded after the Corby arrest and if so, why? This team has certainly not being disbanded. Rather, its importance was recognised and its role was expanded well before the Corby arrest.

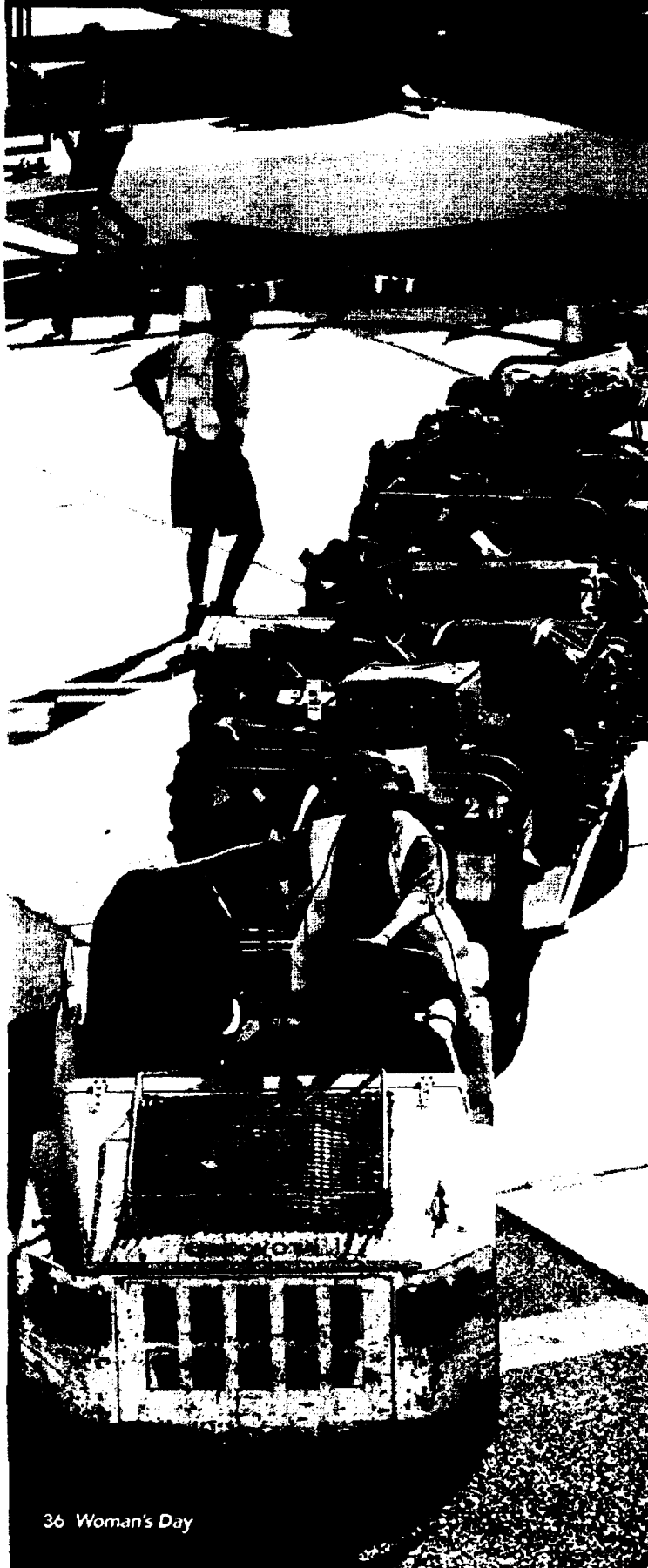
5) Was there in fact video surveillance at the airport's sterile area, with a number of closed circuit cameras in hidden locations and others overtly placed? Customs does use a range of CCTV technology at international airports. These cover a wide area and, on occasion, covert cameras are utilised to identify particular risks.

6) Is there any security concern over the activities of aircraft cleaners and if so, what? For operational reasons, we are unable to comment.

Kind regards,

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With airport security under scrutiny, travellers at Sydney Airport are being offered to have their baggage plastic wrapped to prevent tampering during the voyage. Many airports around the world already offer this facility.



FEAR OF flying

As Schapelle Corby awaits her verdict this week, arguments rage over airport security. Could the same thing happen to you?

Schapelle Corby hopes admissions by the Federal Government that investigations are underway into corrupt baggage handlers at Sydney Airport will free her from a Bali jail. But *Woman's Day* can reveal that allegations about the baggage handlers are just the tip of a terrifying iceberg threatening airport security.

Police are investigating claims that cleaners at Sydney Airport are also involved in smuggling activities. A law enforcement source, who asked to remain anonymous, told *Woman's Day* that it was known among authorities at Sydney Airport that both baggage handlers and

Airport by a man who'd just disembarked in Sydney. That same device was collected by an accomplice, an airport cleaner, and was later used to bomb the Hakoah Club at Bondi, a meeting place for the Jewish community.

"And if you don't think drugs are being smuggled this way, then you're a fool," says the law enforcement source.

The Australian Customs Service has refused to comment on any security concerns over the activities of aircraft cleaners for "operational reasons".

The Australian Federal Police have claimed in court that corrupt Qantas baggage handlers were paid a total of

'If you don't think drugs are being smuggled this way, then you're a fool'

cleaners had been enlisted to help smuggle drugs and other contraband into the country.

"The cleaners are among the first onto an aircraft after it lands and if someone leaves a package or backpack on the plane in a certain spot, it's easy enough for a corrupt cleaner to collect that package," the law enforcement source says.

The source claims that empty backpacks were often left on aircraft and were just tossed into industrial garbage bins, but he questioned what happened to the contents of the backpacks. Why were they empty?

"There is definitely a problem with baggage handlers, but there's also a problem with the cleaners," he said.

He points out that in 1982, an explosive device was brought into Australia. That device was left in a garbage bin in the quarantine area of Sydney

\$300,000 to help smuggle almost 10 kilograms of cocaine which arrived at Sydney Airport on October 8.

Fifteen people have been charged over the cocaine importation, but two of the alleged principals, Michael Hurley and former rugby league player Les Mara, are on the run.

One Qantas baggage handler has been stood down and others are being investigated.

Woman's Day can reveal that at least two reports – in February 2003 and November 2003 – were made to the hierarchy about corrupt practices involving baggage handlers.

In a statement to *Woman's Day* the Australian Customs Service would not comment on the existence of the two reports for "operational reasons".

A Sydney Airport source, who cannot be named for fear of retribution, said it was "common

knowledge" that certain "teams" of handlers were either in the pay of drug syndicates or "ratting" bags for valuables like cameras and jewellery.

Between 16 and 17 teams of handlers, known as "gangs", work rotating shifts at the airport. Each gang of six has a foreman, a leading hand and a "tug driver" who drives the car which carries the baggage to and from the plane.

"At least two gangs are heavily involved [in illegal activities]," the airport source says.

The same day the cocaine shipment came in to Sydney, Schapelle Corby's bag was loaded onto the plane in Brisbane. Our source says that instead of being placed "loose" in the hold, it was placed in a "can". This is a one-cubic metre metal container which can hold around 100 bags. This means that instead of being intercepted at Sydney Airport en route to Bali, the bag would not have been found by the corrupt handlers meant to collect it.

In Bali, Indonesian officials seized 4.1 kilograms of marijuana that had been placed inside the bag. Schapelle now awaits the verdict which could condemn her to a life in jail.

Meanwhile, the shipment of cocaine had arrived from a New Zealand flight (originally from South America). This suitcase had been among the last loaded on and could easily be found.

"I guess the decision was made that the cocaine was the bigger deal," said the source. "I believe whoever was to take possession of [Schapelle's bag] couldn't find it and had bigger fish to fry on the same day," he told *Woman's Day*.

He said that closed circuit TV monitors "almost every inch" of the sterile area and the location of around 70 per cent of these cameras are known to staff. But he says that "blind spots" are well known, and

some corrupt handlers are so adept at exploiting these that within a few seconds they can find the package and stow it without being detected.

Schapelle's defence team has always maintained the smuggling was the work of a network which included corrupt baggage handlers, but this was publicly dismissed by AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty, who claimed there was no police intelligence to link drug smuggling with corrupt baggage handlers.

Travellers are advised to lock their bags when travelling on domestic or international flights, although locked baggage is not permitted on flights to the US.

"Why is it that it has taken the plight of Schapelle Corby, the busting of a drug ring and a huge public outcry to finally make the authorities see what's been going on under their very noses and how shaky airport security really is?" asks the law enforcement source.

Story: Rachel Morris



Les Mara (left) and Michael Hurley, who are on the run, have been linked to cocaine smuggling, money laundering and robbery.



Schapelle Corby's bodyboard bag and the 4.1 kilograms of marijuana discovered inside.

LAWYER SPEAKS OUT

SCHAPELLE'S LEGAL ANGE

Lawyer Lily Lubis at first assumed her client was guilty, but soon changed her mind



When Schapelle Corby's lawyer Lily Anggia first heard about the young woman's case she was unsympathetic.

"I belong to a group of activists in Bali that campaigns against drug use, and when I heard just how much of the drug was involved I didn't want to defend her," says Lily, speaking exclusively to *Woman's Day* in Bali.

"My first impression was that she was a big drug dealer. I'm always careful about taking on such cases. But my sister [Anggia, also a lawyer] persuaded me to check out her story and make up my own mind."

"When I met Schapelle the next morning in an interrogation room, she looked devastated and very distressed.

Her hair was all raggedy. Her eyes were bloodshot from crying and lack of sleep. She was near hysterical when she began talking to me, trying to explain the nightmare she'd found herself in.

"I managed to calm her down and get her to tell me her story. I've defended criminals in the past - although my normal work until last October had been in corporate law, business and property deals - and my first impression was that she wasn't

the kind of person who'd do such a stupid thing.

"But I didn't want to be so naive and began questioning her closely. She told me everything in a matter-of-fact way. I soon realised something very fishy was going on. The whole case didn't add up.

"By the time I left the police station I knew in my heart she was innocent, caught up in a horrible nightmare. My heart went out to her and I decided to take on the case," Lily says, becoming very emotional as she talks about Schapelle's plight. Tears well in her dark brown eyes and she bites her lip and clenches her teeth.

"I can't help feeling like this," she says quietly. "When Schapelle pleaded her case in court a few weeks ago she was choking back tears. She could hardly speak at all. I must confess I cried... I had to hide my face behind a legal folder so no one would see my tears.

"I almost broke down, but I kept a grip on myself. I was afraid one of the cameramen crowding the courtroom would get a picture of me crying. I'm not supposed to do that. I'm a lawyer. I have to be strong at all times. I have to defend my clients to the best of my ability."

Schapelle will hear the court's decision on May 27.

Story: Alan Shadrake