



As forensic officers examined the crime scenes and mapped out vital clues, Task Force officers began the daunting task of interviewing sex workers and gaining their confidence to elicit clues in an attempt to generate suspects.

The Prostitution Enforcement Task Force, working together with Metropolitan North Region Prostitution Squad, provided invaluable knowledge of the industry and most importantly, knew who would be willing to talk to police in what was generally a secretive business.

These officers were able to move at night throughout the Fortitude Valley area and over time gain the confidence of the sex workers. Eventually the investigators were able to map out the last known movements of Ms Crathern and Ms McColl.

The task of examining extensive CCTV footage throughout the Brisbane Central District provided unprecedented challenges for Task Force Midas investigators. The problem was solved by engaging recruits from the Police Academy to view hundreds of hours of footage on VCR players borrowed from police stations across the greater Brisbane area.

The CCTV footage provided investigators with their first major lead. The driver of a silvery blue 4WD style vehicle approached a sex worker with a request for something different—in particular, bondage. The woman refused, and it is now known that her refusal saved her life. The driver's next attempt to gain a service was with Ms McColl.

Investigators supplied the critical sections of footage to Operations Support Command's Electronic Recording Services, where technicians enhanced the images to a quality suitable for general viewing.

The media played an important role in the investigation by displaying the images to a wide audience, resulting in numerous



pieces of information being phoned in to the Crime Stoppers Unit.

Many of the callers remained anonymous due to the code of silence that sometimes exists within the prostitution industry. Crime Stoppers Unit members demonstrated great skill in eliciting detailed information from the callers in an attempt to progress the investigation.

The State Flying Squad is a highly mobile group of officers with the skills and flexibility to respond to calls for assistance at short notice. The name refers to the team's unique capacity to be deployed anywhere at anytime rather than their mode of transport. The Squad are often sought after to assist with serious or major crimes and matters of high community importance, and in this case stepped in to help Task Force Midas interview witnesses.

During the final phase of the investigation the Technical Surveillance Unit lent their specialist skills to gather evidence crucial to the case. The Unit's work is sophisticated and covert and needs to remain confidential, however it can be revealed that their efforts succeeded in directly linking the killer to the crime scene where Ms McColl's body was found.

The meticulous work of Task Force Midas eventually identified the prime suspect in the murders of Ms Crathern and Ms McColl as 52-year-old ambulance officer Francis Michael Fahey.

At the completion of a long and complex investigation Fahey was arrested and charged with their murders on May 7, 2003. Later that year he was found guilty in the Supreme Court and sentenced to a minimum of 25 years imprisonment. The murders of Ms Henry and Ms Redmile remain unsolved.

*By Detective Chief Superintendent Mike Condon, State Crime Operations Command*