

GETTING DIRTY IS NOT SOMETHING MOST OF US
COULD BE PAID TO DO, YET THESE THREE COMPANIES
MANAGE TO MAKE IT A LUCRATIVE BUSINESS.
HELEN HAWKES INVESTIGATES HOW.

SOMEONE'S GOTTA DO IT

Murder most foul

Pam Marsden
BVM Clean Scene



What is the most revolting thing you could possibly think of doing? How about cleaning up after a murder, in which someone has been decapitated? Or mopping up the remains of a badly decomposed body?

For Pam Marsden, it is all in a day or night's work. When we spoke to her, she had been up until 1am the previous evening "because someone decided to jump off a roof".

The down-to-earth former registered nurse started her business 10 years ago, after reading an article in the *Australian Financial Review* about a crime-scene cleaning company in America and realising there was no equivalent here. Her first job was the Hellfire Club bikie murders. From there, the work just snowballed. Previously, the police themselves, or relatives of the victims, had had to do the grisly clean-ups.

Nowadays though, Marsden is the first person the police call when there is an unholy mess. "Any of the major crime scenes you've heard about – like the Sef Gonzales house, where he killed his sister and parents – I've done," says Marsden, who employs some 20 casual workers.

While she will not divulge her rates, it is clearly a lucrative business. BVM Clean Scene also does 'squalid cleans' such as clearing out the rat-infested homes of mentally ill people. This side of the business is growing, says Marsden.

The question has to be asked: how on earth can she bear it? Isn't it all too horrific? Luckily, Marsden has an excellent sense of humour and a no-nonsense attitude suited to the work she does. "There's nothing messier than midwifery!" she says. "Besides, the police make more mess than the murderers... finger-

printing chemicals are the vilest substance in the world to get off!"

Marsden says she has only retched once, when she came across the body of an old man named Ivan who had been 'cooking' in his bath for three weeks, thanks to the addition of an immersion heater. "It was an Ivan casserole," she cheerily admits.

But, she adds, "I love what I do. I'm helping people, and the work is varied and satisfying. It certainly beats nursing. I don't have the stomach for all that paperwork."