

Cleaning up crime

SO WHAT exactly do you do then?

"We call it forensic restoration – we go to the scenes of violent crime and clean up the mess. Murders, suicides, domestic violence, decomposing bodies – pretty much anything which involves cleaning up a nasty mess or bodily exudates."

Interesting business idea. How did you come up with that?

"I read about a woman in the US doing it. I checked around and found no-one here offering that sort of service."

So what's been your career highlight?

"The recent bikie shooting at the Blackmarket/Hellfire Club in Sydney was probably our highest profile job. That was a pretty ghastly scene – just as well it was contained to the basement. Four people were shot in the head at close range, so there were bullet holes everywhere. Luckily, it was a handgun and not a shotgun, but there was still

Pam Marsden from BVM Clean Scene is the cleaner you call when there's a mess you can't even look at

a sea of blood everywhere. Plus loads of bone fragments, fluids, etc – basically a very big congealed mess on the floor."

Bet that took some serious cleaning power to shift.

"Yes – well, we use special cleaning chemicals, not ordinary domestic products."

You must look forward to a shower.

"Sure, but we're well protected. We treat each scene as a bio-hazardous risk, so we wear disposable overalls, gumboots, double gloves – the whole bit."

Got any really major-league gross-out stories to wreck a dinner party?

"Well, decompositions are often the worst – we had one last week where a man haemorrhaged to death on his bed and they didn't find him for five days. With the hot weather, five days

is a long time – you know, maggots, flies..."

Ahh, whoa – we get the picture. How do you cope with that?

"My partner and I are both trained nurses, so we've got very strong stomachs. Plus we use blobs of eucalyptus gel under our nostrils, or if it's really bad, we'll go in the day before and treat it with a special odour-absorbing powder."

When you're in Woolies and hear the call come through the PA – "Cleaner with a mop and bucket to aisle three, please" – do you ever find yourself leaping into action?

"No, that's lightweight domestic stuff – we're strictly heavy-duty."

What if they said, "Grisly shotgun murder in aisle five"?

"That's different – we'd be happy to quote."

Got any tips for RALPH readers who are faced with the aftermath



of a huge party? Blood, vomit, groin hommos – that sort of action?

"Sorry, no trade secrets revealed, but maybe you should think about a handy hints section like the *Woman's Weekly*."

Hmm, interesting thought. So does crime really pay?

"We quote each job individually, but it does pay quite well."

So you don't just have a rate card that says something like, "Double murder suicide, \$200, book now and receive a free vommie clean-up"?

"Er, no – it's definitely job by job."

Ashley Westerman

Sadie meets the Toxic Avenger

"Take off your boots, you're walking blood throughout the house"

