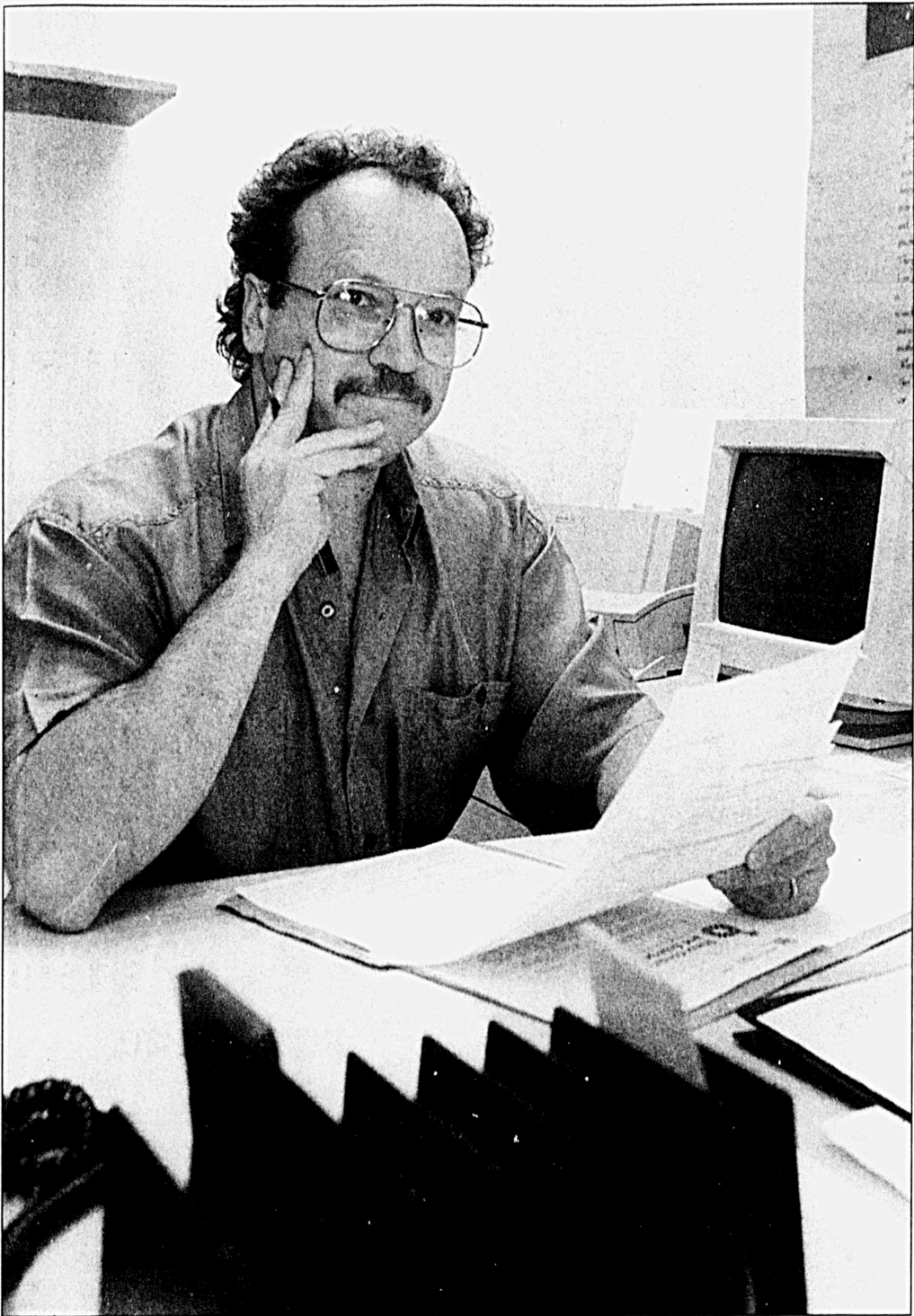


CITY/PROVINCE



Larry Leischner helps give remorseful wrongdoers one chance to avoid getting a criminal record.

Justice sometimes found outside courthouse, too

by DAVID HEYMAN
Citizen staff

Sometimes the scales of justice tip the wrong way.

When they do, it's Larry Leischner's job to see that the victims get their pound of flesh, society shows an ounce of compassion and the culprits get a huge weight off their shoulders.

Take, for example, "Joe." An 18-year-employee and father, in a squabble with his manager, impetuously decided to steal some items from his store. He was caught and faced not only being fired but having a criminal record. The Crown acknowledged his remorsefulness and asked Leischner to step in.

In this case, Leischner asked the youth to write an apology to his boss, to return the items and to make a \$300 donation to the B.C. Children's Hospital. The condition was that charges would be dropped and he could keep his job.

"He paid that same day," says Leischner. "He was happy to do it."

Another example:

A young man with no criminal record suddenly got the urge to steal something from a car. The owner spotted him and yelled at him to wait. He did, patiently, for several minutes until the police arrived and arrested him. He had no excuse, and his fiancée was mortified. Leischner arranged for a similar charitable donation, apology and return of the items.

He did the same for a 66-year-old woman, also with no criminal record, who shoplifted some teenager clothes from a store. Again, she had no motive and was utterly humiliated. Again, Leischner worked out a deal.

This "alternate measures" policy is done throughout B.C. The Crown (prosecutors) decides to divert only the most remorseful candidates and there are no second chances: If you're caught again, you'll go in front of a judge.

Also, any arrangement must be approved of by the Crown and the victim.

You cannot have a criminal record, except if it's a minor, unrelated charge or many years old.

Many of Leischner's clients are between 50 and

60 and almost half of them are women.

"That's far higher than the percentage (of women) in the court system, which would be about 10 per cent."

Now, if you think Leischner is "one of them bleedin' hearts," think again. He spent 18 years as a parole officer and has seen plenty of legitimate liars, cheats and crooks try to pull the wool over his eyes.

"Should some guys be in jail for the rest of their lives? You bet," he says, in his typical sentence structure.

"But should we haul some people into court for a pound of flesh? Probably not."

Policy bans Leischner from dealing with sex offenders, impaired drivers and wife-beaters, but he says he's dealt even with them occasionally in special circumstances.

In one case, a husband shoved his wife after a screaming match in which furniture was broken. The man was taken away by the police, giving the woman an eye-opening experience.

"Did the situation need to go to court? I don't think so. The victim is very strong. Very assertive. . . the offender was very embarrassed, very ashamed. For all intents and purposes, they are just normal folks."

But sometimes the remorse goes so deep, it leads to extraordinary solutions.

One last example: A single mother of four, who'd been badly abused by her ex-husband, stole some credit cards and cheques from a family member and ran up \$9,000 in bills at two banks. She confessed quickly but, because she has no job and is a full-time mom, she couldn't possibly pay restitution and no court in Canada would make her try.

Enter Larry Leischner.

The woman signed a contract in the spring of 1996 to pay each bank \$25 a month each until the \$9,000 is paid off. She'll make her last payment in the year 2011.

"The banks are convinced she'll pay them and I'm convinced she'll pay them, too."

Sometimes the scales of justice tip the right way.

Three men shot at Karaoke club

VANCOUVER (CP) — Three men were shot early Saturday as Karaoke clubs continue to be the playing fields for turf wars between Asian gangs.

One victim was shot in the face and was in serious condition in hospital Saturday night after a shooting at a karaoke club on Vancouver's west side.

Another man was shot in the head but managed to get to hospital on his own. The other was shot in the body.

Police, who have made no arrests and have no suspects, said they believe the shootings are gang-related.

Since 1991, at least 10 people have been killed and 17 wounded in 11 karaoke bar incidents.

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2. Every time that the Cougars go on a POWERPLAY, home and away, a \$10 gift certificate is added to the jackpot.
3. Every time the Cougars go on a POWERPLAY, home and away, The Mix 550 Cougar broadcast team will draw a name.
4. If the Cougars score on POWERPLAY, that lucky fan wins the jackpot.
5. If the Cougars are unsuccessful on the POWERPLAY, the jackpot will continue to grow by \$10 each POWERPLAY until it is won.
6. Sorry, contest not open to employees and immediate family members of Southam Inc., Overwaitea, The PG. Cougars, and Monarch Broadcasting.

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In April, 1993 Dave Lloyd, Bernie Henry and Tom Munro opened a new flooring store in Prince George. Formerly associated with Garibaldi Building Supplies and the Rug Bug, they brought considerable experience to the new venture initially known as P. G. Floor Fashions. As a chartered accountant Dave Lloyd had the expertise required for setting up and running a business. At that time Tom Munro, a former floor covering installer, was well versed in this area and Bernie Henry had been involved in purchasing and sales of flooring products for over 15 years. It's a well-balanced partnership.

This year the decision was made to

become part of Carpet One, North America's leading carpet retailer.

"One reason we made the move was to increase our buying power. Also, we could see where significant changes in the industry would see small independents and smaller buying groups being closed out by large buying groups," says Lloyd.

Carpet One is a co-operative of carpet retailers owned exclusively by its member companies. It is not a franchise. Every member has an equal voice. The co-op format was devised to insure that each retailer is able to maintain their independence while enjoying the benefits of the group.

Today, with over 700 member stores and approximately \$1.7 billion in sales nationwide, Carpet One has become a powerful force in carpet retailing. It has succeeded beyond all expectations. Lloyd, Henry and Munro have harnessed this force to the advantage of their store and their customers.

The Bigelow brand name, founded in the 1800s, is one of the most respected and desired in the industry. It is a Carpet One exclusive.

Bigelow Invincible, Bigelow Gold, and Invincible Cushion have all been awarded the Good Housekeeping Seal.



Carpet One takes the worry out of buying carpet with the best guarantees and warranties in the industry. Customers are offered the strongest wear, stain and satisfaction guarantees in every product category. As an example, Invincible, Canada's most durable carpet, has 25-year wear and static, 15-year matting and crushing and 10-year stain and soil guarantees and a lifetime installation warranty. Carpet One has the industry-leading 3M Scotchcare Plan, the most complete stain protection program available.

"The warranties Carpet One lets us offer our customers are second to none," comments Lloyd. Asked about current flooring trends, he says that during the past two years his customers are favoring hardwood and ceramic tile and textured carpets and more durable vinyls. And, people are replacing flooring more often compared to the previous average of 12 to 13 years. One reason for this could be that people move more often today.

Carpet One is housed in an attractive 9,500-square-foot (including warehouse) building at 1990 Ogilvie Street. Inside, the huge showroom is filled with a seemingly endless array of flooring samples.

Lloyd, Henry and Munro, and nine other employees including the five-member sales team look forward to introducing you to Carpet One and invite you to take advantage of their Multi-Million Dollar Carpet Sale now through October 19.

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