

On The Run - Strike Out

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It had been a long day at the Consumer Tenancy Trade Tribunal in Castlereagh St, Sydney. A client I was representing was trying to recover \$1,000.00 from a private investigation training organisation that had been defrauded from them, on a private investigation training package purchase. We had won judgement on the day although the training organisation hadn't appeared at the conciliation or the hearing on that day.

I caught the train from Central Train Station to Hurstville Train Station on my way home to the Sutherland Shire. I made a visit to a commercial agent in Hurstville that I knew, who ran a search through DTMS records to get some neighbour's phone numbers close by to where the debtor was thought to be living.

The next morning I called some neighbours who lived in the same block of apartments as the debtor. The kind lady I spoke with said she knew of the name given to her (the debtor) and forwarded me onto the property manager, who managed the debtor's residence.

I called the property manager on the telephone. The property manager said all she could do would be to forward on post mail, to the debtor's name mentioned, that had been living in their managed property and she explained the debtor was known to them and had been living at the mentioned address but she couldn't confirm with me that the debtor was still living at the address or not.

Earlier in the task, I had obtained a company extract from ASIC for the debtor (the private investigation training organisation). The company extract stated that the debtor was documented as the director of the company (training organisation). One of the private investigation industries well known unscrupulous private investigators was the only shareholder of the company, with the business registered on George Street, Sydney. The training organisation was advertising as trading from Bond Street, Sydney.

A sheriff had attempted a document service for us at the George Street and Bond Street, Sydney addresses given by ASIC documents and papers, which we had for the debtor but to find non existent business locations upon their inspections there. The sheriff did say in

his report that it appeared that the debtor could have been operating out of a business close by, at the George Street, Sydney address.

I ran some more electronic searches to find that there was a private investigation firm operating a business from the address that the sheriff claimed to be the suspected debtor's business address 1803 George Street, Sydney.

I planned to remain unknown by physical appearance and to have a private investigator that was known to me, attempt to get an appointment for an employment interview with the private investigation firm that was operating from the address that the sheriff had visited, to obtain some work with the private investigation business that was operating from 1803 George Street, Sydney.

All went well. The private investigator had made the appointment at the address via the phone number I had supplied to him, returning to me with the information required a few days later.

The private investigator had found information, letterheads and posters from the business every where in the office that was directly associated with the only shareholder of the company (the unscrupulous private investigator), that I was pursuing for my client for the \$1,000.00 defrauded amount.

As it was stated on the ASIC company extract, the debtor's principal place of business was at address 1804 George Street, Sydney which we found to be a non existent business address, as did the sheriff just close by there was the private investigation business operating from 1803 George Street, Sydney.

A couple of phone calls to the business didn't lead us any closer to the debtor for the person who answered the telephone said "oh that agent (the only shareholder of the debtor company, the unscrupulous private investigator) is overseas at the moment and he comes backwards and forwards from overseas quite regularly." So I knew that I was on the right track. A typical cover up from the private investigation business indeed.

The client and I were annoyed for we were following the correct procedures with the document service process. The false address of the private investigation training business and the cover up for the debtor, trading from a false business address, was very unethical.

Not to mention the false address that the private investigation training company was operating from, was also occupied by the private investigation business, whose trading address was advertised at 1803 George Street, Sydney in the current Yellow Pages Online. The private investigation business address was a currently registered business address with the Department of Fair Trading listed address as Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

Mind you, the debtor (the unscrupulous private investigator) was also trading from the current Yellow Pages Online, from Bond Street, Sydney and that building was non-existent as well.

So I thought some more about this matter and I had decided to write a letter to ASIC with information about the debtor, not having a correct address for his principal place of business on his company documents. ASIC informed me in writing that they would investigate the matter and that they may need my assistance at a later date. They thanked me for my report.

I kept running regular electronic searches for months on the debtor and finally his address for his principal place of business had been registered at his old secured living address, that had been confirmed where he had been living by his landlord earlier. Then after continually watching the ASIC business search records for months on end, hoping to find the debtor operating in other building addresses, I had noticed the debtor's business registration was on a strike out status with ASIC.

I didn't really wonder why too much and I thought the defrauded \$1,000.00 was lost. A month down the track the company was deregistered from being a proprietary limited company.

The investigation work that was performed on the task was well worth the result with no charge to our client. With continued efforts we revealed that the only shareholder of the private investigation training company may have been the director of the company acting as the director under a false identity.

Tonight as I make this entry of record, the private investigation business that has also been trading from false addresses, has had their business names removed twice from Department of Fair Tradings business register. They still have one name registered, that I can see. I wonder how long it will be until they register another similar business name for their next move. **On the Run**

