

\$350,000 a month 'squeeze' paid to Bayview - witness

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A man who has been granted immunity by the Independent Commission Against Corruption yesterday gave evidence during the trial of two European police superintendents that for over a year he and his colleagues collected \$350,000 a month from drug and gambling dens in areas under the jurisdiction of the Bayview Police Division.

He also said he and other collectors used the telephone in their North Point office-cum-home to tip off drug and gambling den operators in advance about police raids or inspection rounds.

Mr Chan Cheung-wing was subpoenaed to give evidence in the trial of superintendents Cecil James Matthew Cunningham and Benno Thompson.

The Assistant to the Attorney General, Mr Barry Sceats, said the immunity granted to Mr Chan covered only matters relating to the Bayview syndicate in which Mr Chan himself took part in 1971 and 1972, in order to allow him to speak freely about the "inside work."

Mr Chan told the court during 1966, and 1967, he met a man called Yu Yin (Yin Tsai) in Kowloon City while he was running an illegal betting establishment on horse and Macau dog betting.

He said Yin Tsai was a "profiteer," operating an opium divan and a gambling den in the New Territories.

They continued to see each other from time to time, and in June 1971, when he was unemployed, Yin Tsai offered him a job.

He was asked to assist Yin Tsai in collecting "squeeze money" in Causeway Bay, and he accepted the offer.

The illegal establishments he collected money from included a gambling den in Chung Yeung Street, North Point.

Mr Chan said he went there once every five days and on each visit he collected about \$11,000.

Other places which he visited and the amounts he collected were:

- A gambling den owned by a Kwong Charn. He could not remember the street but the place was commonly known as the 369 Restaurant - a little over \$2,000 a day.

- A wooden hut in Shaukiwan which was being used as a gambling den and owned by an Uncle Kit - \$450 a day.

- A gambling den on the

Shaukiwan waterfront near the Wing Wah Theatre, owned by a Chu Po-chuen - \$400 a day.

- A gambling den in a hut in Chaiwan, run by a man surnamed Mak - a little over \$100 a day.

Mr Chan said he also went to an opium divan on top of a hill in Shaukiwan operated by a Tsang Tze once every five days and collected on a \$100 a day basis.

Another collector for the Bayview syndicate, Kwong Chi, collected money from opium divans in the area.

The money collected was taken to a flat in the Hung Fook Building, Kam Ping Street, North Point.

Mr Chan said four people used the flat - Yin Tsai, Kwong Chi, Lam Yu-fan and himself.

The money collected was handed to Yin Tsai who would put it into his savings account at the North Point branch of the Hang Seng Bank.

"Sometimes he banked the money, other times I did. But withdrawals were always made by him, though sometimes in my presence," Mr Chan said.

The flat in the Hung Fook Building was also used as a place where information about police raids was received and then passed to the illegal operators by telephone.

Mr Chan said once he used the telephone to warn the operators the divisional superintendent would be making an inspection round so they could take evasive action.

The collectors also used the telephone to warn bookies that police "general squads" would be carrying out raids.

The premises were also used as a dormitory by employees of the syndicate.

Mr Chan said they worked in the Hung Fook Building flat for a little over a year until they were succeeded by "employees" of Detective Station Sergeant Ma Hak-shing who "rented the place from us."

He gave the names of these "employees" as Uncle Luk, Tai Kau-lau and Hung Tsai.

"I led Tai Kau-lau and Hung Tsai to the various illegal establishments where I collected squeeze money," Mr Chan said.

He said during his work as a collector, he was paid \$2,000 a month by Yin Tsai.

Referring to three pieces of paper which the ICAC seized from his home during a raid in August, Mr Sceats asked Mr Chan about the contents, and was told they contained records of money collected from illegal establishments which he had copied from notes supplied by

Yin Tsai in the Hung Fook Building.

Cunningham's counsel, Mr Gordon Hampton, objected to the admissibility of the papers as exhibits because they were copies of a copy.

Judge Garcia ruled they were inadmissible for the time being.

Mr Sceats asked Mr Chan if he could remember when he wrote the papers.

Mr Chan replied that he wrote them in the Hung Fook Building and took them home.

He also said he had never returned to the Hung Fook Building since Detective Station Sergeant Ma's followers took over the place in 1972.

Earlier, a Senior Investigation Officer for the ICAC, Mr Thomas Roy Guy, said under cross-examination by Mr Hampton, that a detective station sergeant already convicted of corruption and a would-be witness in the case, Lau Cheong-wah, had been given immunity for offences committed prior to the date of his being charged.

He also said 10 of the witnesses for the prosecution were suspected participants in the conspiracy.

The Assistant Director of Personnel, for the police force, Mr Eric Blackburn, produced files to the court concerning the services and promotions of Cunningham and Thompson.

He said Cunningham joined the force as a sub-inspector in 1952 followed by Thompson six years later, also as a sub-inspector.

Chief Inspector Tom Donnelly produced service files of former detective station sergeants Chiu Tak and Ma Hak-shing.

He was asked by Mr Hampton to produce a file to the court in relation to a complaint made against Lau Cheong-wah about a murder case involving a man, Leung Wai, alias Leung Chi-wah, in 1973.

Cunningham and Thompson are alleged to have conspired with Chiu, Ma and Lau to obstruct the course of public justice between July 1971 and February last year.

They are also charged with neglecting or failing to comply with a Section 14 (1) (B) notice under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance in that they did not declare all monies sent out of the Colony by them or on their behalf.

Cunningham is further charged with making a false statutory declaration.

The hearing continues today.