

THE STARS OF CCTV

You can tell by the Gucci sunglasses and the beehive hairdos that Judy Moran longed to be Melbourne's Zsa Zsa Gabor, a star of stage and screen. And while many of her family and friends have played out thrilling roles on TV, the stage on which they usually star is CCTV, and their capers on this medium have presented many a jury with a pleasant afternoon's viewing, and sealed the deal on where the lead actors would be spending their next little while.

It must have been galling for Judy then, when two of her understudies stole the show recently while being filmed on CCTV in Ascot Vale committing a terminal indignity on Les 'Tuppence' Moran. Galling for them too, really. Unless you're Mel Gibson and using blanks, it doesn't pay to be filmed while repeatedly shooting someone.

That's what makes the crime such an amateurish and unusual one. It isn't often crims will perform in front of CCTV these days. Most of them can spot a closed circuit camera half-a-block away and are repelled by them like a vampire by a cross.

It used to be that CCTV was so grainy and indistinct that you couldn't be sure who'd actually done what. A defence lawyer would say, "Well, yes your honour, maybe the guy swinging the baseball bat is my client, and maybe it's the defendant's third cousin twice removed or maybe it's Lord Voldemort trying out for the New York Yankees. Who could say?"

But not now. Those days of indistinct footage are over. Now the technology has risen to another plane with faster frame rates and better resolution and superior camera quality.

Charter Security are using the most advanced cameras available and we are able to film a thief in the night clearly and in such detail it's as if he's on Candid Camera. Big Brother is not only watching... he's laughing himself sick.

Sadly, those without CCTV are feeling the brunt. As criminals are driven back by the unwelcome gaze of CCTV they are pushed toward the dark, unfilmed areas of the urban streetscape. Businesses without CCTV have become the favoured environment of those who make their way in the world by crooked means.