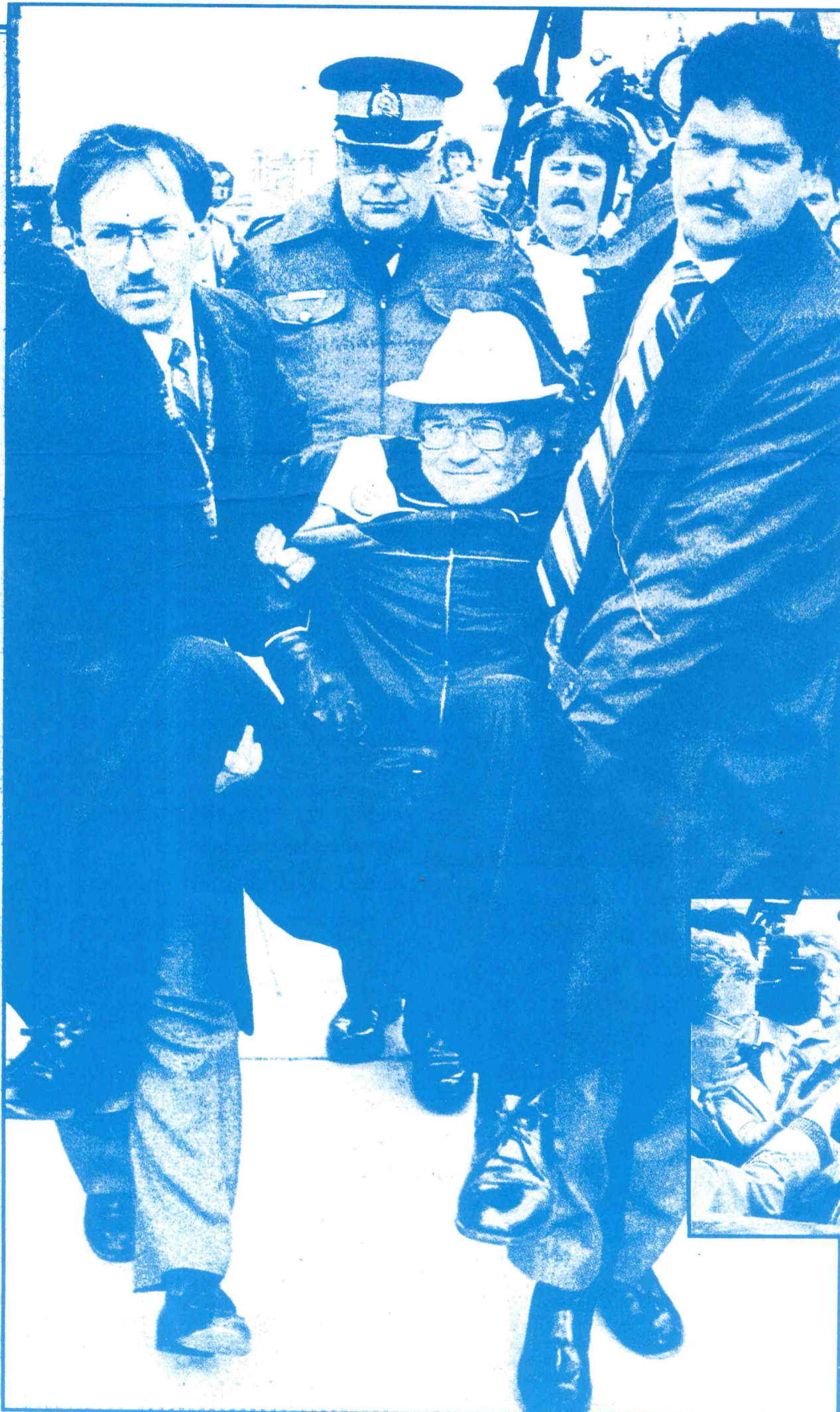


TO BE OR NOT TO BE

RCMP: POLITICIANS OR POLICEMEN?

THE OTTAWA SUN

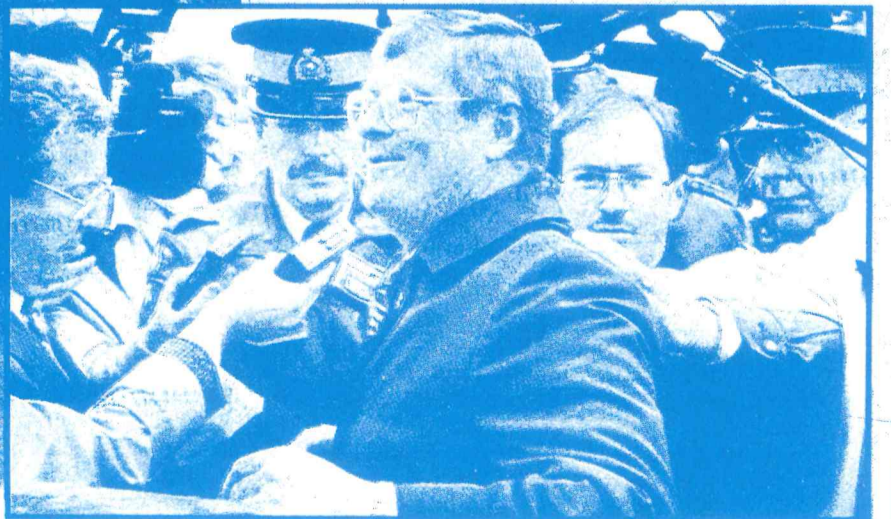
OTTAWA, ONTARIO, TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 1990



MPs OUTRAGED

STORM OVER 2 HILL BUSTS

*Tories slammed for
new demo law: P. 3*



- photos by ron poling, cp

Parliament Hill protesters Glen Kealey, above, and Father Tony Van Hee are arrested and forcibly removed by RCMP officers yesterday for being public nuisances. A new law, passed by the Tories in an order-in-council, bans protests within 50 metres of any Hill entrance. Opposition MPs called the new law an affront to free speech and vowed to stage their own protests today.

Sticking to his ethical guns

When RCMP officer Rick Jordan refused to lay criminal charges in the 1989 budget-leak case, he put his job and his reputation on the line

By Ian MacLeod
Citizen staff writer

The infamous 1989 federal budget-leak case showed Rick Jordan for the man many colleagues always believed he was — a model Mountie.

Despite intense pressure to lay criminal charges against Global TV reporter Doug Small and two others, Jordan stuck to his ethical guns. He believed charges were only an attempt to pacify angry politicians. As chief investigating officer on the case, he refused to lay them.

In a candid interview this week, the 42-year-old said he's no renegade. He simply acted knowing he couldn't have lived with himself had he given in to the pressure.

"I simply reached the decision beforehand that I simply couldn't live with myself if I didn't follow through and do what I felt I should do and had to do."

The London, Ont. native joined the RCMP in 1970 after majoring in philosophy at the University of Western Ontario. He became a uniformed officer in Cape Breton and was later a body-guard to then prime minister Pierre Trudeau. He also did work for the force's shadowy security service.

In 1978, at age 30, he was moved to the Ottawa region's commercial crime section, where one superior recommended he be fast-tracked through the ranks.

The RCMP enrolled him in the University of Ottawa's three-year common law course in 1985, from which he graduated with honors. In 1988, he was put in charge of the commercial crime section's fraud squad.

When Global's Small broadcast details of the new federal budget on April 26, 1989, the eve of budget day, detective Jordan was assigned to get to the bottom of the biggest budget leak in Canadian history. An angry Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and others lashed out that a "crime" had been committed.

A month later, Jordan completed his investigation. He told senior RCMP officers the evidence was weak and he would not lay charges. He was removed from the case and a junior officer signed the charges.

"I was completely open with my colleagues and superiors and I told them exactly what I was going to say (later in court)," he said. "I knew that there was going to be hell to pay, there's no question of that."

Going by the book

The RCMP agreed to the *Citizen* interview provided Jordan not repeat his courtroom testimony, single out individuals for comment or talk about the internal administration of the force. As always, Jordan went by the book.

While a judge found no evidence of direct political interference, he accepted much of Jordan's reasoning for refusing to lay charges and held that the RCMP pursued Small with an "unfairness and vexatiousness" that is "inappropriate to criminal proceedings."

Jordan called it a just ruling.

"The system is a great system when it works and people stand up and take responsibility. In this case, every element worked and came through to a just conclusion."

Jordan is quick to point out his explosive courtroom comments that he believed charges were intended to please the RCMP's political masters were offered only in response to questioning from lawyers.

"I was under oath and I answered the questions honestly and it happened that some of the questions dealt with matters of opinion. It wasn't anything that I was looking to do or wanting to cause trouble. I'm not a renegade."

He also stresses his remarks were never meant to suggest he had evidence of direct political interference in the case.

"It was not a question of alleging that someone had interfered from the top down. It was one of motivation."

He used the words "to please elected officials" in his testimony to describe "a perception of what was wanted. Whether that had an effect or not, I was offering an opinion."

Jordan's darkest days came when John Pearson, the prosecutor, dropped another courtroom bombshell by suggesting Jordan had lied while testifying. Pearson later withdrew the perjury remark and apologized. But by then, the damage was done.

"It was like a physical blow, it was stunning," said Jordan. "There are many things that I wouldn't want to be accused of and perjury is close to the top of the list."

His wife, Susan, heard the perjury accusation on a radio news report. "It was horrible for her. I think the hardest thing from a personal standpoint was for



A matter of principle:

RCMP Staff Sgt Rick Jordan received countless letters of support from people across Canada after he resisted pressure to charge Global TV reporter Doug Small, above, and two others in the budget-leak case

"Everything that came to me was fully supportive and that makes a very big difference when you're sort of standing alone in a situation like that. I just marvelled at it, that anyone would sit down and take the time and say, 'yes, your values are my values'. It's reassuring. I'd like to thank all of the people who wrote and expressed either their gratitude or their sympathy for what went on."

After testifying, Jordan returned to duty with the commercial crime unit. But he reportedly had an office with no telephone and went to work with little or nothing to do while the force determined what to do with him.

He will not comment on how he was treated officially when he returned to work under the cloud caused by Pearson's accusation of perjury. More than a month passed before Pearson retracted the accusation.

"Any differences I have with the force is being taken care of within the administrative framework of the RCMP and I can't go outside of that. But I'm a person who insists on being treated properly and within the law and any

remedies that are there, I'll pursue them.

"I'm sure there are some people in the force who don't appreciate what I did," he said. But "among the rank and file, it's been full support and that's very gratifying."

Jordan moved to his current post in November, following a brief stint in a headquarters administrative job. He's assigned to the RCMP's Professional Standards Branch in Ottawa, responsible for upholding the force's code of ethics.

"I'm happy here in these duties," he said of the lateral transfer from his detective job. "They're not trying to drum me out of the force, there's no question of that and, if they were, I would be resisting."

Signed on for four years

His boss, Supt. Lowell Thomas, is "quite pleased with the work he's doing here. He's doing a great job."

In return for the RCMP's putting him through law school — his legal training is a prerequisite for his current job — Jordan agreed to remain with the force for at least four years following graduation. He has one year left.

"One has to leave the force someday, certainly I will at some point. Someday I'd like to complete my legal education (by taking the bar admission course to become a lawyer)."

But for now, "I certainly want to stay and hold my ground and show that it (his testimony) was not a parting shot or anything like that because that's certainly not the quality of what I did."

Does Rick Jordan consider himself a hero?

"I don't know that that's the right word. I know in my own (commercial crime) unit at the time, there were a lot of people who were my subordinates and I wanted them to see that someone could go through that process and survive."

"When it comes to the laying of a (charge), that's a decision of great importance and they'll have a great effect on the lives of the people who are being investigated. If they (police officers) are not convinced — and they're swearing an oath that they are convinced — then they shouldn't do it and there's no lawful order that can make them do it. I hope there's been that example."

"I also hope that they look and they see that I'm not a ruined person or that I was plagued by horrible self-doubt and now I can't face the world."

"That's not the case. I want them to see that yes, you can do that."

“ The system is a great system when it works and people stand up and take responsibility. In this case, every element worked and came through to a just conclusion. ”

— Rick Jordan
RCMP Staff Sergeant

thing... but to her, it was an unknown process.

"I was very confident in what I was doing. I knew that in my heart I was right and I was relying very heavily on the system, which, in the last analysis, worked to perfection, but for that one glitch."

"After Mr. Pearson's remarks, that certainly turned the tide as far as I was concerned. As soon as there's something that goes that radically wrong, it causes one to reflect and wonder, 'well, what else might happen here?'"

"I never appreciated what it's like to have someone apparently accuse you of something that first of all I find abhorrent, but to be accused that way by someone who is in a responsible position. I have a much better appreciation for how that other person on the other side of the table is feeling, when he's the subject of a criminal investigation."

Countless letters from people across Canada helped him immensely, he said.