

NewsRoom

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Magistrate slams `hostile' detective over evidence

Steve Butcher

A magistrate criticised a detective's "hostile manner" yesterday after he described an alleged major Victorian drug trafficker as leading a Hollywood lifestyle.

A magistrate criticised a detective's "hostile manner" yesterday after he described an alleged major Victorian drug trafficker as leading a Hollywood lifestyle.

Magistrate Barbara Cotterell said she heard no evidence that supported the detective's assertion that Shane Pidoto's life was "something you see in the movies".

Detective-Sergeant **Paul Dale** told a Melbourne court that Mr Pidoto, 31, lived a life surrounded by luxurious furnishings, three pet lizards and watches and sunglasses for every day of the week. Sergeant Dale said that Mr Pidoto's renovated North Fitzroy rented warehouse had a theatre and he drove a modified WRX car. But he told Melbourne Magistrates Court that Mr Pidoto earned \$13,000 in taxable income in 2000/01 and had no legitimate means to support his lifestyle.

He opposed **bail** for Mr Pidoto, who faces six charges, including trafficking a commercial quantity of ecstasy and possessing the proceeds of crime. Mr Pidoto was arrested in May after he allegedly delivered 2500 high-quality ecstasy tablets, valued at \$125,000, to a co-accused for \$40,000. Sergeant Dale, of the major drug investigation unit, said police found \$52,200 cash in Mr Pidoto's chimney and alleged his criminal motive was greed to support his lifestyle. He opposed **bail** on the grounds that Mr Pidoto, a personal trainer, would commit further offences and endanger further police operations.

In granting **bail**, Ms Cotterell said that Sergeant Dale gave evidence in a highly charged and hostile manner and had used colourful language, which she had ignored. Ms Cotterell said she could not "find evidence to back up these assertions" and noted that Mr Pidoto could spend two years in custody before his charges were finalised.

Mr Pidoto, of Barkly Street, North Fitzroy, was released to appear again in June with a surety of \$200,000 and special conditions that included daily reporting to police.

---- **Index References** ----

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