

Alleged victim of Theo Theophanous in 'SOS' call from toilet

HE convinced her to see the place where the politicians met. He boasted she was in a building where photographs of "the men who make all the laws" hung. And he said it would be fun to see the Victorian parliament late one night in September 1998.

But in the darkness of Parliament House, the woman knew something was wrong and she made what she later called an "SOS call" from the women's toilet to her friend.

"I'm with Theophanous but please call me in 20 minutes, I am in danger," she said.

Prosecutors allege former cabinet minister and Victorian MP Theo Theophanous then raped the 34-year-old woman in his office on his "classic French-style red velvet couch". They say Mr Theophanous also threatened the woman, whom he met through friends in the Greek community, saying he would cut off her parents' pension and make her brother do longer military service in Greece.

The details of the former energy min-



Former Victorian cabinet minister Theo Theophanous is charged with raping a woman in 1998.

ister's alleged crimes were revealed in the prosecutors' opening of his committal hearing in Melbourne Magistrates Court yesterday.

Mr Theophanous, who has been charged with one count of rape, was seated in court next to his wife and his adult daughter as the details of his alleged crime were read out. As the more explicit details were revealed, his wife stroked the back of his head.

Lawyers for the MP strenuously deny the claims and say the woman fabricat-

ed the whole incident. They say she lied in an attempt to get money and notoriety and that she was a "self-confessed" drug addict.

Robert Richter, counsel acting for Mr Theophanous, said: "It (parliament late at night) might give you the heebie-jeebies and you might expect the phantom of the opera to come out. She in her unstable condition may have fantasised something like that."

Prosecutor Michele Williams said the woman did not come forward until 2006 because she was intimidated by Mr Theophanous. "He was a powerful and influential figure in the Labor Party, but more specifically in the Greek community," Ms Williams said.

"The complainant did not report the matter to police because of the position and status of the defendant. She felt she had no choice but to remain silent and face it alone."

The witness statement of the complainant -- who cannot be identified -- revealed she met Mr Theophanous at a party of a mutual friend where he introduced himself as a Latrobe University lecturer. She said they became friends and she agreed to meet

him for coffee on September 10, 1998, but did not think it was a date.

He later told her there were lots of people working in parliament and it would be safe to do a tour. The woman said they went in through a side entrance, it was dimly lit and the MP tried to pull her into an amphitheatre.

"I did not feel comfortable being there," she said. "My gut instinct was telling me to leave since he had tried to take me into a dark area and I had no way of getting out. I was trapped and Theophanous was in total control because he insisted he show me more of parliament before we left."

The woman, who gave evidence in a closed court, alleged she made an "SOS" call to her friend while in the bathroom and then went into Mr Theophanous's office.

She claims he then started touching her and pushed her on to the couch.

"I started to cry and I said that I wanted to go," the woman said in her statement. "He put his right hand over my face and throat ... All I felt was agony and pain."

The hearing continues.

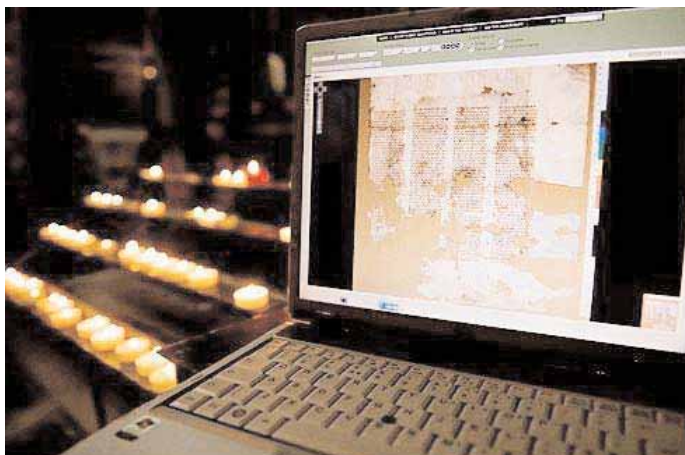
Article from *The Australian*

World's oldest surviving Bible published online

LONDON (AFP) — About 800 pages of the world's oldest surviving Bible have been pieced together and published on the Internet for the first time, experts in Britain said Monday.

The Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek on parchment leaves in the fourth century, is available online in a project involving institutions in Britain, Germany, Egypt and Russia which held different parts of the ancient book.

As part of the four-year joint project, digital photographs have been taken of the reunited manuscript, allowing scholars worldwide to research in-depth



the Greek text, the British Library in London said.

The library, which holds a large chunk of the Bible, also opened an exhibit Monday that includes artefacts linked to the manuscript to coincide with its online launch.

"The Codex Sinaiticus is one of the world's greatest written treasures," said Scot McKendrick, head of Western manuscripts at the British Library.

"This 1600-year-old manuscript offers a window into the development of early Christianity and first-hand evidence of how the text of the Bible was transmitted from generation to generation," he said.

Originally 1,460 pages long and measuring 16 inches (40 centimetres) by 14 inches, the manuscript was handwritten by a number of scribes around the time of Constantine the Great who died in 337, experts said.

The manuscript, which was revised and corrected over the centuries, lay

undisturbed in a monastery in Sinai in Egypt until it was found by a German professor in the mid-1800s and handed to Russia's Tsar Alexander II.

Britain later bought most of the book from the Soviet Union in the 1930s, while Egypt kept still more pages found in the monastery in 1975.

Professor David Parker, whose team made the electronic transcription of the manuscript, said the Internet project proved challenging with some of the pages in poor condition.

"The process of deciphering and transcribing the fragile pages of an ancient text containing over 650,000 words is a huge challenge, which has taken nearly four years," said Parker from the University of Birmingham.

"The digital images of the virtual manuscript show the beauty of the original and readers are even able to see the difference in handwriting between the different scribes who copied the text," he said.

The manuscript is available at <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org>.

Two girls 'seized' in Sydney schoolyard

Two young girls have been grabbed while playing in a Sydney schoolyard in a failed abduction attempt, police say.

The girls, both aged seven, were in a playground at Mascot Public School on King Street when they were approached by a man and woman about 11.30am (AEST) on Friday. "The girls allege the man grabbed the pair, but they managed to break away and ran to tell a teacher," police said in a statement.

"One of the girls has told investigators the man and woman got into a van which was parked nearby and drove away."

The van is described as white, with several windows and graphics of orange flames near the wheels.

The man is said to be aged in his 40s, with short dark hair and wearing dark jeans and a yellow T-shirt.

The woman is about 30, with long blonde hair. She wore black jeans and a white T-shirt.

Police are warning parents around the Mascot area to take particular care of their children and explain the dangers of being approached by a stranger.

Student safety was of paramount concern at Mascot Public School, an Education and Training spokesman said.

"Mascot Public School has a rolling stranger danger/safety to and from school program in terms of messages for students and parents," he said in a statement.

Anyone with information about Friday's attempted abduction is urged to contact police.

Hospitals clear space for swine flu

HUNDREDS of extra hospital beds in NSW are being made available to cope with the large numbers of people presenting at hospitals with flu symptoms. The state now has 1446 confirmed cases of swine flu, and as many as four in 10 people could become infected. The NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, said there had been a 17-fold increase in hospital visits for flu compared with the same period last year. Along with 550 extra beds, 8000 hospital-in-the-home places will be made available, allowing health-care professionals to provide acute care to patients in their place of residence.