

Cams pose safety risk: prosecutors

Cameras in the courtroom aren't just a distraction, they are a safety threat, say many Crown attorneys.

Prosecutors say they don't want their faces televised or otherwise broadcast for all to see, including cohorts and friends of the criminals they put in jail.

"I honestly wouldn't do this job if there were cameras in the courtroom," said one prosecutor, speaking on condition of anonymity. "I don't even want my picture in the paper, never mind having it

on camera. The fact is that if they want to find us they can, why help them out? Why make it even easier?"

Gang prosecutions would pose particular dangers to justice officials if broadcast, the prosecutor said.

Gang bangers

"(When) prosecuting gang bangers we would have to worry about dealing with all their cohorts and being able to be picked out of a crowd at the drop of a hat. No thanks."

Many Crown attorneys report being threatened at one time or another inside court.

In 2007, a Winnipeg Crown attorney was the victim of an attempted home invasion, just hours after a man she prosecuted threatened her in court. That incident and another in which an accused followed a Crown attorney as she drove home from work resulted in

Manitoba Justice improving safety protocols for its staff.

"We have legitimate concerns when you think what has happened in the past to other Crowns," said one Crown attorney.

The dangers of broadcasting court proceedings far

outweigh any benefits, said Lisa Carson, president of the Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys.

"It's one thing to have members of the public come in and watch, it's another thing to broadcast the

faces of everybody involved on the local news," Carson said. "That definitely creates a concern."

It's a concern shared by some defence lawyers as well.

"It's one thing for a family of a victim to see me in court and make disparaging remarks to me," said defence lawyer Josh Weinstein. "It's another where my mugshot is broadcast everywhere and somebody who has a beef with what I do sees me in Safeway and approaches me."

— Pritchard

"I don't even want my picture in the paper, never mind having it on camera."

— anonymous Crown prosecutor



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Would cameras in courts further endanger the safety of Crown prosecutors?

winnipeg.sun.com/cams

This is Exhibit "H" referred to in the ^{supplementary} affidavit of
JANET KEHLER
 affirmed sworn to before me this 4
 day of April 20 13

A Notary Public in and for the Province of Manitoba