

MEET THE



Funeral GATE-CRASHER

WHEN BILL EDGAR STOOD UP, OUT OF THE BLUE, TO INTERRUPT A HEARTFELT EULOGY, NO-ONE IN THE CONGREGATION EVEN KNEW WHO HE WAS.



But that was entirely the point. Mr Edgar, a private investigator based in Australia, was hired by the person that had died to attend his funeral, get to his feet and deliver some 'home truths', including kicking out his brother and sister-in-law.

That wasn't all. He had some enlightening messages for some of the other guests, all from beyond the grave, but delivered in person.

Mr Edgar has made quite a name for himself, and a fast-growing reputation, after becoming a self-styled "funeral wrecker", and people are queuing up for his business. Essentially, he is paid to interrupt the ceremony at a given time and say whatever it is the deceased person wants him to say.

At up to 10,000 Australian dollars (£5,570), he isn't cheap but, for those who clearly want to get something off their chest, he says he provides an invaluable service.

"No-one wants to leave their life partner, no-one wants to die," he said. "We all fear it in the end because we don't know what comes next. But why take it with you?"

"If you've got something to say, say it. But, for these people, it's the end of their life; they don't need to tell someone then and there, they want to say it after they are gone. So why not?"

Mr Edgar's odd second career began last year, when a 79-year-old terminally ill client he was doing some investigating for revealed he was unimpressed at the potential guests at his funeral.

In an interview with ITV's *Good Morning Britain*, he said: "He didn't want his brother and sister-in-law there. He hasn't seen them in over 30 years so asked - why would they attend his funeral? Basically, I was engaged to interrupt the funeral at a certain time and tell certain people to leave.

"You never know who is going to turn up to your funeral and it's all arranged by other people, so this was his way of saying, basically, 'see you later'".

It didn't end there.

"His so-called best mate was reading out the eulogy at the time I interrupted. I read out that his best mate had tried to coerce his wife into having an affair, she rejected this and he knew all about it." He said over half of the

88 guests at the funeral got up and left for fear of what might be coming next.

Another time he was asked by a biker to reveal to his family at his funeral that he was homosexual. "He didn't have the guts to come out while he was alive, and his lover was actually there at the funeral," Mr Edgar told the *Daily Mail Australia*.

The declaration was understandably met with shock, particularly from his club members, he said. "But the crowd turned and said 'let's hear him out' and, once you get into it and get the crowd on your side, you can't be stopped. They want to know what their loved one has to say."

Dubbed the 'coffin confessor', Mr Edgar - from Australia's Gold Coast - said he has also been asked to go to the deceased person's home and retrieve (and dispose of) potentially embarrassing items, while one request he has turned down was to kill someone's dog so that it could be buried with them.

He admits he is often faced with hostility and also that it might be impossible to know if some of the allegations that the deceased person was making, about the people they didn't want at the funeral, were actually true.

But, he added: "At the end of the day if they're going to lie on their deathbed, well so be it, and if they don't want someone at their funeral that's their business.

"It's not all about criticising or abusing anybody, there are some loving messages as well. Some of the confessions I have done are quite beautiful. Some have been very moving."

One of his prime motives, he says, is that he is able to give the deceased a voice.

"When you go to a funeral, you are respecting the living. But what about the dead? This is about lending my voice to the departed. It's about them saying 'I want to leave on my terms, I want to have the last say and I don't want anybody else to have it for me.'"

