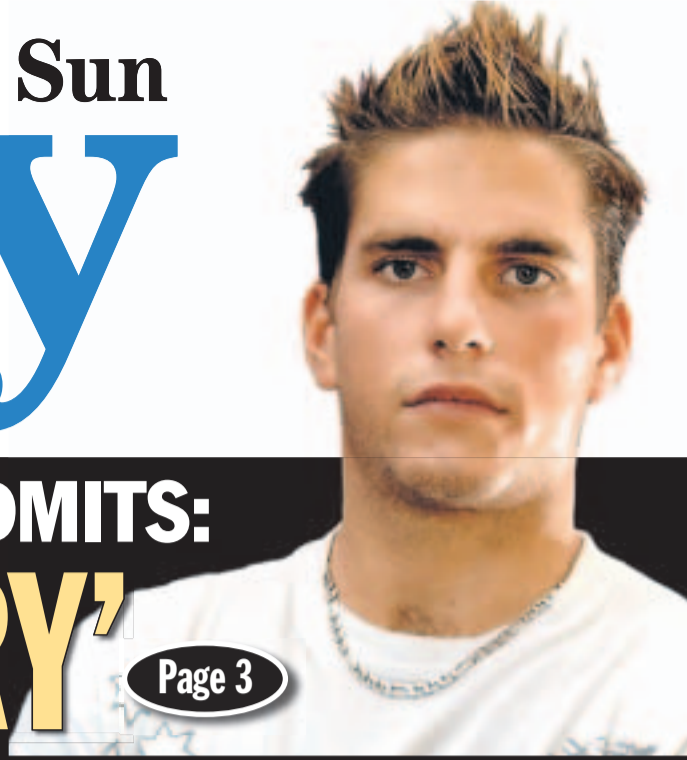




## BIG BROTHER'S ASHLEY ADMITS: 'I'M SO SORRY'

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### LEADERSHIP BOMBSHELL

# HOWARD'S BROKEN PROMISE

## EXCLUSIVE: Witness tells how PM reneged on secret pact to hand the top job to Costello

JOHN Howard made a promise at a secret meeting in 1994 to step aside for Peter Costello, according to the only witness in the room.

Mr Howard undertook to serve only two terms as Prime Minister then hand over the leadership to Mr Costello. He is now in his fourth term as leader.

The then Opposition spokesman on the environment, Ian McLachlan, was a witness to the vow and made notes of the meeting.

Mr McLachlan, who went on to become Defence Minister, yesterday confirmed the meeting.

He told the *Sunday Herald Sun* he

### GLENN MILNE

had carried the notes in his wallet for more than 10 years.

The notes specifically refer to "undertaking" as a description of the conversation.

"The essence of what you have described to me about what happened in that meeting is accurate," Mr McLachlan said.

The meeting took place at the height of Liberal Party turmoil over Alexander Downer's crippled leadership.

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