

Royal Commission  
into the Management of Police Informants

STATEMENT OF JOHN THOMAS GIBSON

1. My full name is John Thomas Gibson. I am currently unemployed. I was previously employed by Victoria Police from 1978 to 2009. I retired as a Detective Sergeant due to ill health.
2. I make this statement in response to a request from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants dated 19 March 2019.

Educational background and employment history

3. I joined Victoria Police in 1978. In around 1982 I was the first person in Victoria Police to become a Detective at the low rank of Constable. As a criminal investigator, I worked at the following locations:
  - a) Sunshine Criminal Investigations Unit. (Detective Constable & Detective Sergeant).
  - b) Major Crime Squad (Detective Senior Constable).
  - c) Homicide Squad Task Force (Detective Senior Constable).
  - d) D24 Communications (Sergeant).
  - e) St Albans Criminal Investigation Unit. (Detective Sergeant).
  - f) Caloola Institute Task Force (Office in Charge).
  - g) Bureau of Criminal Intelligence (Detective Sergeant).
  - h) State Criminal Intelligence Officer (Detective Sergeant).
  - i) Prison Squad (Detective Sergeant).
  - j) Special Response Squad (Detective Sergeant).
  - k) Arson & Explosive Squad. (Detective Sergeant).
  - l) Gaming & Racing Crown Casino. (Officer in Charge).
  - m) State Crime Suspicious Deaths Crime Themes Desk (Detective Sergeant).
4. While employed by Victoria Police I was also:
  - a) President of the Police Federation of Australia & New Zealand in around 1993.
  - b) President of The Victoria Police Association for a term of three years commencing in around 1992.
  - c) Officer in Charge, Seymour Criminal Investigations Unit in around 2000.
5. My educational background is as follows:
  - a) Completed Year 10.
  - b) Qualified electrician (1972 Apprentice of the Year).
  - c) Qualified Real Estate Agents Representative.

6. While employed by Victoria Police I completed training courses including the following:
- a) Detective Training School (DUX).
  - b) Advanced Detective Training School (DUX).
  - c) Bureau of Criminal Intelligence Criminal Analyst Training Course (DUX).
  - d) Arson & Explosive Training Course (DUX).
  - e) Bomb Scene Investigation Course.
  - f) Certificate in Fire Technology / Advanced Diploma.
  - g) Sub-Officer Training Course.
  - h) Investment in Excellence Training Course.
  - i) Brief Managers Training Course.
  - j) Communications Training Course.
  - k) University of Melbourne Diploma of Criminology Studies.

**Involvement or association with any investigation which had dealings with Ms Gobbo (question 2)**

7. My only involvement with Ms Gobbo was in July 1995 when I was a Detective Sergeant in charge of Team 1 of the Special Responses Squad (SRS). Our main priority in the SRS was to investigate aggravated burglaries. At this time, I reported to Senior Sergeant Brian Rix.
8. I have very little recollection of this period now and have refreshed my memory by reference to my police diary.<sup>1</sup>
9. From my review of my diary, my only meeting with Ms Gobbo was on 12 July 1995 at 2.45 pm, when Sergeant Trevor Ashton of the 'A' District Support Group attended the SRS office with her. I spoke to Sgt Ashton and Ms Gobbo about a gun trafficking inquiry. Ms Gobbo nominated a suspect, Brian Wilson. I had never heard of Brian Wilson before this meeting, and cannot recall anything about him.
10. I cannot recall how I came to be at that meeting. It may be that my supervisor, Senior Sergeant Rix, nominated me to speak to Sgt Ashton. At that time it wasn't unusual for members including Sergeant Ashton to meet with members of the SRS because as SRS members we had 24-hour access to firearms and the ability to work across different locations. This gave us greater capabilities than squads such as the 'A' District Support Group. Other police members did not have 24 hour access to firearms at this time.
11. I have no recollection as to when this meeting finished or the duration of the meeting. I can tell from reviewing my diary that during the course of the meeting we developed a plan. The plan was that I would be on call for the 'A' District Support Group to assist them with their inquiry into Brian Wilson. The 'A' District Support Group covered the

---

<sup>1</sup> VPL.0005.0020.0038.

Melbourne city area, which included inner-city suburbs such as Brunswick, Carlton and Fitzroy.

12. After the meeting, I informed my supervisor, Senior Sergeant Brian Rix, what the informer had told us. I would not necessarily have revealed the identity of the informer to him.
13. My diary shows that in accordance with the operation plan, I was on call from 6.00 pm until midnight on 12 July 1995, and then from midnight until 8.00 am on 13 July 1995. I recall that Detective Senior Constable Brian Malloch was also on call.
14. My diary records that on 13 July 1995 I received a call from Ms Gobbo. I do not recall the substance of the conversation I had with her, but my notes show that after the call, D/S/C Malloch and I conducted drive by surveillance of 250 Rathdowne Street, Carlton. The drive by surveillance was carried out for the purposes of the gun trafficking inquiry into Brian Wilson. I do not recall conducting the drive by surveillance and believe that nothing came of it. If something had come out of the surveillance, I believe I would have recorded it in my diary. After conducting the surveillance, I was dispatched to the Lilydale Court for a different job. When I returned to the office later that day, I had a telephone conversation with Sgt Ashton about the gun trafficking inquiry into Brian Wilson. I cannot recall if it was me or Sgt Ashton who initiated the contact, or specifically what was discussed.
15. My diary records that I was on call from 5.00 pm to midnight on 13 July 1995 and then from midnight until 8.00 am on 14 July 1995 in relation to the Wilson inquiry.
16. My diary records that on 14 July 1995 at 10.30 am D/S/C Malloch and I attended 'A' District Support Group and had a discussion with Sgt Ashton about Wilson. I cannot recall what was discussed. When I returned to my office, I made follow up inquiries regarding Wilson. I cannot recall what these inquiries were.
17. My diary records that I was on call from 5.00 pm to midnight on 14 July 1995, and then from midnight until 1.00 pm on 15 July 1995.
18. On 15 July 1995 my diary shows that I was on duty at 1.00 pm at 'A' District Support Group regarding Wilson. I then attended SRS and liaised with a colleague, Detective Inspector Sharp. I was off duty from 9.00 pm.
19. My diary records that I was on call from 9.00 pm to midnight on 15 July 1995, then all day on 16 July 1995 and from midnight to 7.00 am on 17 July 1995.
20. Being on call on 17 July 1995 is the last reference to Brian Wilson and, by association, Nicola Gobbo, in my diary. I cannot recall why my involvement in the gun trafficking inquiry into Brian Wilson ceased on 17 July 1995. I assume that we informed Sgt Ashton that we could not be on call indefinitely. It was his inquiry.

21. If the gun trafficking inquiry into Brian Wilson was my inquiry, I expect that I would have included more detail about it in my diary. My recollection is that we were simply assisting Sgt Ashton with his inquiry because of our 24-hour a day access to firearms.
22. Similarly, the lack of detail recorded in my diary regarding my involvement and contact with Nicola Gobbo is explained by the fact that Sgt Ashton was handling her. At that time, the common practice was to not actively involve yourself with another member's informer.

#### References to G3/95 in my diary

23. On 19 July 1995, my diary suggests that I had a meeting with confidential informer G3/95. On 8 August 1995, there is another notation regarding payment being made by me to G3/95.
24. I have been informed by Operation Landow that G3/95 is the registration number that was given to Ms Gobbo. I was not aware that Ms Gobbo had been registered, or that this was her number. If I had known Ms Gobbo had been registered, I would have referred to her in my diary by her number, rather than by name.
25. I was, at that time, in contact with an informer who was registered in relation to Operation Fargo. That informer's registered number was C3/95. Operation Fargo was an investigation into the handling of stolen property. It did not involve Nicola Gobbo. On page 329 of my diary, I recorded that I spoke to informer C3/95 on 26 July 1995 about Operation Fargo.
26. On 19 July 1995 and 8 August 1995 I did not have a meeting, or any involvement with, Ms Gobbo. I believe that I had contact with informer C3/95, and that I have mistakenly recorded that informer's registration number as G3/95 instead of C3/95.
27. The registration process that existed in 1995 involved us registering an informer through our Detective Superintendent, who at the time was Daryl Clark. In order to register an informer, we would provide D/S Clark with a sealed envelope containing the informer's name. D/S Clark would ask questions about the nature of the information the informer was to give, D/S Clark would then write a number on the envelope and place the envelope in his locked safe. I am not sure why there were such similar registration numbers being used at around the same time.

#### Use of Ms Gobbo as a human source (questions 3-8)

##### Question 3

28. I refer to my response to question 2 concerning my state of knowledge as to information and assistance provided by Ms Gobbo during 1995.

29. In relation to any information or assistance Ms Gobbo has provided to police after 1995, I have only learned about this recently through seeing news reports on television.

Question 4

30. The only member of Victoria Police I believe was aware in 1995 that Ms Gobbo was providing assistance to police was Sgt Trevor Ashton.

31. I have no knowledge of any other member or organisation being aware of Ms Gobbo's role.

Question 5

32. I refer to my response to question 4, but do not know for certain who registered her.

33. I was only recently made aware that Ms Gobbo was in fact registered as informant G3/95. I do not know if she was registered when I was dealing with her in 1995.

Question 6

34. I refer to my response to question 2.

Questions 7 & 8

35. I have no knowledge in relation to these matters.

**Concerns in relation to Ms Gobbo (questions 9-11)**

Questions 9, 10 & 11

36. I have no knowledge in relation to these matters.

**Other relevant matters**

Question 12

37. No.

Question 13

38. I cannot recall all of the training I received while employed by Victoria Police or all of the topics covered in the training courses I undertook. However, I believe I received the following training or retraining in relation to the identified topics:

- a) I do not recall receiving any training regarding an obligation of disclosure to accused persons, prosecution agencies and the courts.
- b) I recall receiving training regarding the right of an accused to silence at the Police Academy and at Detective Training School. I expect that I would have received various training on this issue throughout my career. This was referred to every time we cautioned an accused.
- c) In relation to an accused's right to a lawyer, I refer to and adopt my response in paragraph b) above.
- d) I recall receiving training regarding legal professional privilege at the Police Academy and at Detective Training School.
- e) I do not recall receiving any training regarding public interest immunity. However, I gained an understanding of this by attending court when I was performing my official functions.
- f) Professional and ethical decision making was a constant theme throughout all police training and courses that I participated in throughout my career.

Question 14

39. I have nothing further to add in response to question 14.

Dated: 27 March 2019



John Gibson