

Royal Commission into The Management of Police Informers

1. In making this Statement, I have relied both on my recollection and copies of my Police Diaries and Day Book entries made available to me, which I understand are also in possession of the Royal Commission.
2. My full name is Wayne Geoffrey Strawhorn.
3. I was previously employed by the Victoria Police from 1974 to early 2003.
4. I make this statement in response to a request from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informers. This statement is provided in response to a Notice to Produce served on me by the Royal Commission.

Q1. Personal Information

5. Early to mid 1974 I entered the Victoria Police Academy.
6. I graduated later that year as a Constable. A summary of my employment history is as follows:
 - a) Initially worked general uniform duties at Russell Street then Prahran Police Stations.
 - b) Late 70's promoted to Detective Senior Constable and performed investigative duties at Russell Street and Elsternwick Criminal Investigation Branches, then specialist investigations at the Breaking Squad then the Racing Squad.
 - c) Mid 1980s promoted to Sergeant and performed general supervision duties at Richmond Police Station.

Mid to late 1980's transferred to the Drug Squad as a Detective Sergeant team leader investigating general trafficking in Victoria.
 - e) During 1995 transferred into Division 2 (Clandestine Laboratory Unit) of the Drug Squad. I reported to the Detective Senior Sergeant Operations Manager of that unit.
 - f) Probably late 1997 to early 1998 I was promoted to Detective Senior Sergeant within the Drug Squad and took over as Operations Manager of Division 1. My role was to manage the administration and operations of the four investigation teams. I reported to the Detective Inspector in charge of Division 1.
 - g) Sometime after the Division 2 Detective Senior Sergeant Operations Manager left the Drug Squad, possibly late 1998 to early 1999, I moved from Division 1 to Division 2 to take over the Operations Manager role. I reported to the Detective Inspector in charge of Division 2.

- h) late 2001 to early 2002 I transferred to the Fraud Squad as Operations Manager of an investigation division.
- i) Early 2003 I left Victoria Police.

7. I have undertaken the following Victorian Police qualifications and training:

- a) Detective Training Course.
- b) Sub Officers Course.
- c) Advanced Detective Training Course.

Q2. Involvement in any investigation which had dealings with Ms Gobbo

8. The first recollection I have of contact with Ms Gobbo relates to persons charged from an investigation I conducted named [REDACTED]. I had made efforts to have one of those charged become an informer. They initially declined to do so but at [REDACTED] proceedings [REDACTED] 98) the defendant approached and spoke to me. This led to Ms Gobbo, who was acting on behalf of the defendant, telephoning me and arranging a meeting on behalf of and with the client. I met Gobbo and the client where I discussed the process and requirements of becoming an informer. [REDACTED]

9. I recall that arrangements were made to introduce [REDACTED] to my [REDACTED] counterparts to provide information about drug suppliers. I recall travelling to Sydney with Ms Gobbo and [REDACTED] where I introduced them to [REDACTED]. We then returned to Melbourne.

10. [REDACTED] though wanting a discount from informing, did not want to provide the assistance necessary to gain that discount. [REDACTED] had a long held hatred of police and had never spoken to police, even when interviewed. [REDACTED] had difficulties overcoming [REDACTED] own ethics and it took some time before [REDACTED] would comfortably communicate with us. Even then the information provided was minimal and unactionable. It was not till sometime in 2000 that [REDACTED] agreed to fully cooperate which led to [REDACTED]

11. I have perused my police diary and daybook entries and the following ones relate to dealings with Ms Gobbo re [REDACTED]

- a) 11 May 98 diary records a meeting with the OPP Jackson, Pellisier, Ms Gobbo and **KRUGER** re [REDACTED]

- i) At this time, I have no recollection of this meeting but appears to be normal process of prosecution, defence and police informants discussing likely trial options. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] was charged as a result of [REDACTED]
- b) 07 Dec 98 diary records meeting Ms Gobbo whose representing [REDACTED]
- i) At this time, I have no recollection of this meeting but believe it would have been to discuss arrangement for travelling to [REDACTED] to introduce [REDACTED] to the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- c) 16 Dec 98 my diary records meeting Ms Gobbo and [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] where we meet Detective [REDACTED] then we go to the [REDACTED] returning to Melbourne later that evening.
- i) I recall this trip. [REDACTED] gave [REDACTED] Ms Gobbo represented [REDACTED] interests.
- d) 18 Mar 99 my diary records me having a meeting with Ms Gobbo re [REDACTED]
(hereafter referred to as [REDACTED]).
- i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting but assume it was seeking an update of [REDACTED] or trial status.
- e) 22 Mar 99 my diary records meeting with Ms Gobbo re an enquiry.
- i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting, the purpose or the details of the enquiry.
- f) 12 May 99 my diary records myself and Detective **KRUGER** meeting with an unregistered informant and introducing same to Detectives Seagrave and Pope of the Assets Recovery Unit.
- i) This is a reference to Ms Gobbo being passed over to an appropriate unit to investigate allegations she had made about her employer. For further detail refer to Question 3.
- g) 09 Jun 99 my diary records me having a meeting with Ms Gobbo re [REDACTED].
- i) At this time, I have no recollection of this meeting but assume its seeking an update of [REDACTED] providing assistance.
- h) 29 Jul 99 my daybook records a list of things to do that day which included contacting Ms Gobbo for coffee.

i) At this time I have no recollection of this entry but there appears to have been no contact made or meeting had.

i) 20 Aug 99 my diary records me meeting with Ms Gobbo [REDACTED].

i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting. I assume it would have been about [REDACTED] providing assistance or [REDACTED] trial status.

j) 06 Feb 01 my diary and daybook records having a meeting with Ms Gobbo [REDACTED].

i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting. The timing is consistent with the conclusion of the use of [REDACTED] as a registered informer and the requirement to prepare a document for production at [REDACTED] forthcoming trial.

k) 25 Feb 02 my diary records me meeting Ms Gobbo re the upcoming trial [REDACTED]

i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting but assume it would be to discuss a report I was producing for the court detailing [REDACTED] assistance.

12. I believe these are the only contacts I had with Ms Gobbo during the period relating to registered informer [REDACTED]. Those contacts related to her representation of [REDACTED]

13. Perusal of my diary and daybook record other occasions where I had contact with Ms Gobbo. Details of those contacts are as follows:

a) 26 Nov 99 my diary records me meeting with Ms Gobbo re Marino.

i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting or of Marino.

b) 11 Dec 00 my diary and daybook record me meeting Ms Gobbo re Kayak.

i) At this time I have no recollection of this meeting. Kayak would be a reference to Task Force Kayak.

c) 16 May 01 my diary and daybook record me having a conversation with Ms Gobbo at sentencing hearing at the Melbourne Magistrates Court re defendant Crehan.

i) I recall the sentencing hearing but at this time I have no recollection of contact with Ms Gobbo.

d) 29 Apr 02 my diary records I was contacted by Ms Gobbo barrister for Tony Mokbel. To meet tomorrow re Mokbel.

- i) I recall this contact. Ms Gobbo wanted to arrange a meeting with her, an unnamed 3rd party and me to discuss Mokbel. I advised that seeing she was bringing a 3rd party I would arrange for and bring Detective Sergeant Allison to the meeting. Ms Gobbo suggested the 3rd party would not like to meet with anyone else and she would get back to me. She did not do so and no meeting took place.
- e) 10 May 02 my diary and daybook records that I rang Ms Gobbo [REDACTED] and that Ms Gobbo would ring back Monday for a meeting.
 - i) I recall this contact. The mention of [REDACTED] was ruse to have a meeting with Ms Gobbo to discuss the contact of 29 Apr 02. No meeting or contact took place.
- f) 15 May 02 my diary records I attended a bail application at the Melbourne Magistrates Court for McCulloch. Whilst there I had a brief meeting with Ms Gobbo where I invited her for a coffee. Ms Gobbo declined as too busy.
 - i) The aim of this contact was to have a meeting with Ms Gobbo to discuss her contact of 29 Apr 02 (13.d. above). No meeting took place. I tape recorded this conversation and the contacts were the subject to a report that was forwarded to Ethical Standards Department.
- 14. During the period 1993 to 1997 I conducted an investigation named Operation Phalanx targeting a criminal group led by John Higgs. Alex Lewenberg lawyers represented many of the defendants and Ms Gobbo may have had some involvement in their defence.
- 15. I managed Task Force Kayak during 2000 to 2001 targeting criminal groups including those led by Lewis Moran, Tony Mokbel, David McCulloch, Terrence Hodson and Carl Williams. Lewenberg firm represented some of the defendants as I believe did Ms Gobbo.

Q3. Use of Ms Gobbo as a human source

- 16. Sometime during 1998 whilst I was a Detective Senior Sergeant in Division 1, I recall that the then Senior Sergeant of Division 2, Mark Bowden mentioned to me that whilst Detective **KRUGER** was serving briefs on Ms Gobbo for defendants charged from Operation Carron, Ms Gobbo had supplied information about alleged criminal activities by her then employer. I believe the information related to money laundering through a trust account. I believe Bowden verbally provided this information to me for my interest as I had conducted Operation Carron. I am unsure where the conversation occurred other than it was at the Drug Squad or who else if anyone was present.
- 17. My only contact with Ms Gobbo as a human source was when I transferred into Division 2 of the Drug Squad and facilitated the introduction of her to the Assets Recovery Unit for them to investigate her allegations against her employer.

Q4. Details of anyone else who was aware Ms Gobbo was providing information to VicPol

18. I am aware of Assets Recovery unit becoming aware as they investigated the information provided to **KRUGER** by Ms Gobbo and took over dealing with Ms Gobbo as an informer.
19. I believe that members of the team that **KRUGER** was working with, his Detective Sergeant at the time, his Detective Senior Sergeant Mark Bowden, the units Inspector, the units intelligence officer, the Chief Inspector and possible Superintendent would have known that Ms Gobbo was providing assistance. Briefings would have been provided and information reports submitted.

Q5. Provide details of persons you believe were involved in authorising Ms Gobbo use as a human source.

20. This would have been a decision taken by the managers of the Division of the Drug Squad that **KRUGER** was working at the time, which was Division 2 the Clandestine Laboratory Unit. This would have included his then Detective Sergeant, Detective Senior Sergeant and Detective Inspector - those having direct supervision of **KRUGER**. As I outline in paragraph 30 of this statement, I was not involved in the authorisation of Ms. Gobbo as a human source.

Q6. Provide all personal contact you had with Ms Gobbo including when, who present, what was said and any records that exist.

21. Believe the answer to Q2 covers this.

Q7. Provide details of information received by VicPol between 1995-2012 which you knew or believed that Ms Gobbo was the source of the information.

22. The information I am aware of Ms Gobbo providing related to the information she gave **KRUGER** concerning her then employer. This was investigated by Assets Recovery Unit. I believe no arrests were made from that investigation.

Q8. Provide details of assistance provided to VicPol when believed Ms Gobbo provided the assistance.

23. My only knowledge is of the information provided to **KRUGER** and on forwarded to Assets Recovery. My recent knowledge of Ms Gobbo's assistance exists due to media reporting.

Concerns in relation to the use of Ms Gobbo as an informer**Q9. Awareness of any concerns raised by anyone as to the use of a legal practitioner as a human source.**

24. I have no knowledge of concerns being raised.

Q10. Awareness of any concerns being raised as to the use of Ms Gobbo as a human source.

25. I have no knowledge of concerns being raised apart from recent media coverage.

Q11. Awareness of the obligations of disclosure in relation to material concerning the use of Ms Gobbo as a human source.

26. No person was charged from the information provided to Assets Recovery Unit.

Other relevant matters**Q12. Provide details of any other human source who has provided information or assistance to VicPol who were subject to legal obligations of confidentiality or privilege.**

27. Late 1 [REDACTED] when I was involved in the arrest of [REDACTED] for knowingly involved in the [REDACTED] offered to become an informer and did provide information that was not actioned. That information related to [REDACTED] suppliers and customers.

28. In Mid 2001 I had dealings with registered informer [REDACTED] whose lawyer was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was not complying with instructions which was creating major issues with investigations being undertaken during [REDACTED]. I spoke to [REDACTED] about the difficulties we were having with his client and [REDACTED] invited me to a meeting. At this meeting [REDACTED] provided information that had been provided to him from his client in confidence and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I reported this information to Detective Superintendent Newton and later introduced Ethical Standard members Fontana and De Santo to [REDACTED]. ESD members took over dealing with [REDACTED]

Q13. Detail training you have received.

29. I refer to the earlier part of my statement relevant to training courses.

Q14. Any other relevant matters to the Terms of Reference of which you can provide assistance.

30. At the time that Ms Gobbo provided information to Detective **KRUGER** I was a Detective Senior Sergeant in Division 1 of the Drug Squad involved in the management of personnel and investigations of that unit. I had no involvement in the recruitment, handling or management of Ms Gobbo as a human source. This was a matter for investigators and managers of the Clandestine Laboratory Unit of which Detective **KRUGER** was a member.

31. It appears that my only involvement in the information provided by Ms Gobbo to Detective **KRUGER** came about when I transferred from Division 1 to Division 2 - the Clandestine Laboratory Unit - sometime after when the then Detective Senior Sergeant, Mark Bowden transferred to another location. I believe this would have been late 1998 or early 1999. Based on my diary/day book entries it appears my only contact with Ms Gobbo relating to the information being supplied was as facilitator of the hand over to Assets Recovery Unit.

32. The main period of contact with Ms Gobbo re [REDACTED] was during 1999 (five meetings – 7Dec98, 16Dec98, 18Mar99, 9Jun99 and 20Aug99), the period where I was trying to get [REDACTED] to provide substantial assistance. The absence of contact with Ms Gobbo during 2000 coincides with [REDACTED] agreeing to and providing substantial assistance which concluded in late 2000.

Statement dated 18th April 2019

Wayne Geoffrey Strawhorn..... 