

This document has been redacted for Public Interest Immunity claims made by Victoria Police. These claims are not yet resolved.

**Royal Commission
into the Management of Police Informants**

STATEMENT OF Highway-O

1. My full name is Highway-O
2. Until [REDACTED] 201 [REDACTED] I was a [REDACTED] attached to the Covert Support Division of the Technical Support Unit at Victoria Police. I am now retired.
3. I make this statement in response to a request from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants dated 23 May 2019. This statement is produced to the Royal Commission in response to a Notice to Produce.

Educational background and employment history (Q1)

4. I graduated High School in [REDACTED]. Between [REDACTED] and April [REDACTED] I worked for [REDACTED] as a [REDACTED].
 5. In April 197 [REDACTED] I joined Victoria Police. I graduated from the Police Academy in September 197 [REDACTED]. A summary of my progression through the ranks is as follows:
 - (a) from September 197 [REDACTED] to May 1981, I performed uniformed duties as a Constable at [REDACTED] Police Station, [REDACTED] Police Station, [REDACTED] Police Station and [REDACTED] Police Station. During my time at [REDACTED] Police Station, I performed temporary duty for 3 months at [REDACTED] involving uniform and plain clothes duty.
 - (b) from [REDACTED] 1981 to [REDACTED] 1982, I performed technical surveillance duties at the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] and was promoted to Senior Constable in September 1981;
 - (c) from September 1982 to August 1985, I performed investigative duties at the [REDACTED] Criminal Investigations Branch (CIB), during which period I was:
 - i. seconded to the [REDACTED] Task Force investigating [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] between [REDACTED] 1983 and [REDACTED] 1984; and
 - ii. seconded to the CIB [REDACTED] between March and May 1985;
 - (d) in [REDACTED] 1985, I was promoted to Detective Sergeant and from [REDACTED] 1985 to [REDACTED] 1993, I again performed technical surveillance duties at the [REDACTED].
 - (e) in [REDACTED] 1993, I was promoted to Detective Senior Sergeant and from [REDACTED] 1993 to [REDACTED] 1994, I performed technical surveillance duties as Detective Senior Sergeant - [REDACTED] at the Crime Department - [REDACTED].
 - (f) from March 1994 to June 1997, I performed [REDACTED] as Detective Senior Sergeant at Crime Department, [REDACTED]. This involved the preparation of affidavits for warrants authorising the use of surveillance devices and telephone intercepts.
 - (g) from [REDACTED] 1997 to [REDACTED] 2005, I performed technical surveillance duties as Detective Senior Sergeant - [REDACTED] at the Ethical Standards Department; and
 - (h) from [REDACTED] 2005 until my retirement in [REDACTED] 201 [REDACTED] I performed technical surveillance duties as [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] at the Technical Support Unit, Covert Support Division.
- Highway-O
6. In [REDACTED] 201 [REDACTED] I retired from Victoria Police.

Involvement or association with any investigations that had dealings with Ms Gobbo (Q2)

7. I did not know that Ms Gobbo was a registered human source, or otherwise assisting Victoria Police, until that fact was reported in the media.
8. I joined the Technical Support Unit, Covert Support Division in [REDACTED] 2005 as a Detective Senior Sergeant. My role was to receive applications for covert technical assistance (in the form of camera surveillance, listening devices, vehicle tracking devices or the like) and to task members of my team with providing, and to oversee the provision of such assistance.
9. I estimate that, in my first few years in the Division, approximately 60% of the Division's work was done at the request of the Purana Taskforce. It is possible that some of the technical assistance which the Division provided was provided as part of an investigation which had some connection to Ms Gobbo. I am not aware of that in fact being the case however. To the best of my knowledge, and save as I note below, I have not had any involvement or association with an investigation which had any dealings with Ms Gobbo.
10. I recall that sometime after I had joined the Covert Support Division, a request was made to provide some camera security at Ms Gobbo's home address in Port Melbourne. I handled the request and tasked a crew to install a camera or cameras at Ms Gobbo's home. I cannot recall with certainty, but I believe that the request might have been made by Inspector Steven Smith from the Petra taskforce. I was told that the reason camera security was required was because threats had been made against Ms Gobbo. I am not aware of who had made the threats or who the suspects were. It was common for the Division to receive requests for cameras to be installed, including in cases where people had been the subject of threats – I estimate that the Division would receive many such requests each year. At that time, I did not know who Ms Gobbo was or what connection, if any, she had to Victoria Police. As best as I can recall, I only knew that she had received threats, that those threats resulted in a request for camera security at her premises in Port Melbourne and that I actioned the request by tasking a crew to install the camera or cameras.
11. For the purpose of preparing this statement, I have been informed that Ms Gobbo may have had some involvement in Operation Briars. During my time in the Covert Support Division, I recall providing some assistance to Operation Briars. I cannot recall precisely when this occurred or at whose request, but suspect it may have been either Detective Senior Sergeant Ron Iddles or Inspector Steven Waddell. I do recall that the assistance took the form of tasking a crew to install covert vehicle tracking and listening devices, that the target of those devices was one or both of David Waters or Peter Lalor and that those individuals were former police officers who were being investigated in connection with the murder of 'vampire gigolo' Shane Chartres-Abbott. I do not recall Ms Gobbo's name ever coming up in the context of that, or any other, police investigation and have no reason to believe any information I received was sourced from Ms Gobbo.
12. I have been informed that relevant emails to my Victoria Police email address have been produced to the Royal Commission. I have been shown two emails dated 22 August 2007 and 17 August 2010.¹ The emails refer to 'Witness F' and 'Gobbo'. I did not know at that time who 'Witness F' or 'Gobbo' was. I do not independently recall those emails now, but have no reason to doubt that I received them at the time. I do not now recall any additional discussions concerning these emails or the matters raised in them.

Highway-O

¹ VPL.6135.0010.6218; VPL.6135.0002.2919.

13. For the purpose of preparing this statement, I have not reviewed my police diaries. This is because, due to the nature of my role, I do not believe those diaries would contain any entries related to Ms Gobbo or otherwise relevant to the Commission's terms of reference.

How I learned, or were given reason to believe, Ms Gobbo was providing information to police (Q3)

14. I first became aware that Ms Gobbo provided information or assistance to Victoria Police via reporting in the media. I had no knowledge of her role as a human source during my time at Victoria Police.
15. For the purposes of preparing this statement, I have been informed that the Commission has been provided with a list of people at Victoria Police who are said to have been aware that Ms Gobbo was a human source and that my name is on that list.² I confirm that was not the case. I was not aware that Ms Gobbo was a human source until that fact was publicly reported. I do not know why my name is on the list.

Awareness of others (Q4)

16. Save for what has been reported in the media, I am not aware of any members of Victoria Police or any other organisation who were aware that Ms Gobbo was providing information or assistance to Victoria Police.

Authorisation of the use of Ms Gobbo as a human source (Q5)

17. I do not know who was involved in the authorisation or continued authorisation of Ms Gobbo as a human source.

Personal contact with Ms Gobbo (Q6)

18. I do not believe I have ever met or had any other personal contact with Ms Gobbo.

Information & assistance received (Q7 & Q8)

19. Save for what has been reported in the media, I have no knowledge of any information or assistance given by Ms Gobbo to Victoria Police.

Concerns raised as to the use of a legal practitioner as a human source (Q9)

20. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Concerns raised as to the use of Ms Gobbo as a human source (Q10)

21. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Awareness about disclosure in relation to Ms Gobbo (Q11)

22. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Other human sources with obligations of confidentiality or privilege (Q12)

Highway-O

23. I am not aware of any such human sources used by Victoria Police.

² Exhibit RC112.

Training (Q13)

24. My recollection of the relevant training or retraining I have received is as follows:
- a) obligations of disclosure – I cannot recall receiving specific training on this topic, but believed this was covered in the Sub-Officers' Course and Detective Training School;
 - b) right to silence – as above;
 - c) right of an accused person to legal practitioner – as above;
 - d) legal professional privilege – as above;
 - e) public interest immunity – I cannot recall receiving specific training on this topic, but was generally familiar with public interest immunity from my role in the Technical Support Unit, Covert Support Division, because members of that Unit had to occasionally give evidence in Court and be careful not to divulge covert police surveillance techniques;
 - f) Professional and ethical decision-making – I believe this was covered in the Sub-Officers' Course and various in-house training modules over the years.

Other information (Q14)

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

Dated: 10 October 2019

Highway-O

Non-PDF and Non-Image File

Document ID: VPL.0014.0074.0001

Page Number: 5

Page Label: Text

File Name: VPL.0014.0074.0001.txt