

STATEMENT

1. I make this statement in relation to my knowledge surrounding the death of Victor PEIRCE at Port Melbourne on 1 May 2002. I have previously made a statement in relation to this matter.
2. The previous statement also outlines my knowledge in relation to the murder of Frank BENVENUTO. This statement provides more detail specifically in relation to the PEIRCE murder.
3. It was impossible for Carl WILLIAMS to organise the murder of Victor PEIRCE. I base this on a number of reasons. Firstly, Carl was in prison at the time of PEIRCE's murder. Carl had been inside for some period of time before the PEIRCE murder.
4. Secondly, Carl had not even met Andrew VENIAMIN at that stage. I was the person who actually introduced Carl to Andrew. This introduction occurred approximately three to six months after the PEIRCE murder. I introduced Carl to Andrew at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court whilst I was there for another matter. Andrew came with me to court for support, as did Carl.
5. Thirdly, Carl did not have a motive to murder PEIRCE. Carl allowed Victor PEIRCE to attend his wedding and was OK with PEIRCE being there. There was no dispute between PEIRCE and Carl at all.
6. I have previously outlined how I met Andrew VENIAMIN. It wasn't until after ^{PII} [REDACTED] in 2000 that I became close friends with Andrew. At the time of the PEIRCE murder I would speak to Andrew once or twice a week. Andrew and I spoke to each other on the phone often. I would estimate that we spoke on the phone once a day.
7. In paragraph 6 of my previous statement I stated that I exchanged telephone numbers with Andrew VENIAMIN approximately 6 months after ^{PII} [REDACTED] and then we met up two days later near the service station in Port Melbourne. I have since thought more about the timing of this meeting. This meeting took place within the twelve months before the murder of Victor PIERCE.
8. In paragraph 8 of my previous statement I talk about a meeting I had with Faruk and Andrew when they asked me if I had any information about PEIRCE. This meeting would have been approximately one month before PEIRCE was murdered. It was at this time that Andrew began getting anxious about getting PEIRCE.
9. In paragraph 9 I describe a meeting between me, Andrew and Faruk. The convenience store that I am talking about is in the continuation of Beach Road, just past Station Pier. It is next door to Rex Hunt's fish shop. Faruk was with me at this time as we were also close friends and we were often together. On this occasion Faruk was driving the same Porsche.

10. At the time of the PEIRCE murder I was dealing in drugs. I often used Andrew to come with me to some of these meetings. Most people in that game knew who Andrew was and what his reputation was like. Everyone knew that Andrew was a killer. When people saw me with Andrew they knew I wasn't playing around and they knew not to mess with me. I looked after Andrew for helping me out. By that I mean I gave him money as a friend, whenever he needed it. I would sometimes help him out with favours. For example, if he needed finance I would put him onto someone I knew. If he needed jewellery I would put him onto someone I knew to look after him. I was making a lot of money from selling drugs and was happy to share it with my friends.
11. Andrew's reputation was that of a killer. That was his profession and he loved it. Andrew used this reputation to his advantage. Whenever he caused trouble, at nightclubs and other places people left him alone. Everyone in those circles knew that Mick GATTO and Steve KAYA looked after Andrew and people were concerned of what Mick and Steve would do to them. Both are very powerful figures in the criminal world.
12. There was only one occasion where I asked Andrew to help out friends of mine. There was a dispute at the R-Bar in Port Melbourne between Jim KAFRITSIS and Roberto SCHRIANI (or similar) over \$75,000. Roberto owed Jim for some shares Jim had in the R-Bar. Jim wanted out and Roberto was mucking around when it came time to pay. We set up a meeting upstairs at the R-Bar and I bought Andrew along. During the meeting Andrew gave Roberto two days to come up with the money. Andrew didn't say what would happen if he didn't. He didn't have to. He had that reputation. Roberto ended up paying the money and gave Jim various cheques for the amount. Prior to the payment of the debt Roberto was \$20,000 short. I felt sorry for him and gave him the \$20,000 in two Commonwealth Bank cheques which Roberto later repaid. Andrew didn't want anything out of the deal. I suggested that Andrew ask Jim for the use of a car for a few months. Jim gave Andrew and S430 Mercedes which Andrew still had at the time of his death.
13. During my friendship with Andrew I also became friends with Faruk ORMAN. I first spoke to Faruk when Andrew was locked up for about seven weeks. I had met Faruk previously but had never really spoken to him. This was after [REDACTED] and long before Carl WILLIAMS became friends with Andrew. Faruk rang me up and wanted to meet up with me. I met him in Sunshine and he asked me for a Telstra card for a phone. I got him one. We called these 'thrash' cards as you don't pay the bill. This meeting took place a week or two after Andrew got locked up.
14. Andrew and Faruk were best friends and were almost always together. Andrew used Faruk as a driver and got him to drive him around everywhere. Andrew also used Faruk to do surveillance on whoever they

were working on at the time. If I was using Andrew to attend meetings Faruk would often drop him off to the meeting. Faruk would sometimes stay for the meeting or would drive around the block while he was waiting for Andrew. They were very close. No one was as close to Andrew as Faruk was during this time.

15. Around the time of the PEIRCE murder Andrew and Faruk were driving the dark Porsche Boxster convertible. They also sometimes used Steven VENIAMIN's car, a silver hatchback. It was a very small car. These were the only cars I can recall them driving.
16. When Andrew and Faruk were going to commit a murder they used stolen cars. They would often steal the cars themselves and burn them afterwards. Both Andrew and Faruk often talked about burning the stolen cars after using them to get rid of any DNA.
17. I recall that before the PEIRCE murder Andrew told me that he had some dramas getting a hot car and made mention of how hard it was to get a hot car these days. Andrew didn't say why he needed it but I knew it was for the PEIRCE murder. I knew that because Andrew was obsessed with getting PEIRCE at that time. Andrew always planned his murders out and wanted to have everything ready before doing them so it ran smoothly.
18. Andrew was the sort of bloke that if he knew someone wanted to kill him he wouldn't rest until the other person was dead. When Andrew found out that Victor PEIRCE wanted him dead Andrew did everything he possibly could to get PEIRCE first. Before the PEIRCE murder Andrew was not himself. He was very anxious and focused at getting PEIRCE. After the death of Victor PEIRCE Andrew was much more relaxed and relieved.
19. Andrew first told me about Victor PEIRCE wanting to kill him no more than ten weeks before PEIRCE was actually murdered. PEIRCE was the hardest one for Andrew to get and took the longest to murder. Andrew and Faruk had a lot of trouble finding PEIRCE that's why they approached Mick GATTO and asked him for help. Mick eventually arranged the meeting with PEIRCE for Andrew. Andrew went to Mick as there was not anyone else that was willing to set PEIRCE up. People were scared of repercussions from PEIRCE's family if they found it.
20. Around the time of the PEIRCE murder Andrew and Mick were also very close. Whenever Mick called Andrew, Andrew would drop everything to go and see him. Andrew told me this.
21. Steve KAYA used to run card games around the Western suburbs. Mick GATTO ran the card games on the other side of Melbourne. Whenever Steve had any trouble around the Sunshine area he would use Andrew to sort it out for him. Andrew was friends with Faruk and introduced Faruk to Steve. After that Steve and Faruk became very close friends. Steve KAYA also introduced Andrew VENIAMIN to Mick GATTO. Steve was like a

controller for Andrew and Faruk. Steve KAYA and Mick GATTO are very close friends and meet regularly.

22. After meeting Andrew, Mick would ring Andrew to come and meet him on a regular basis. Everyone knew what Mick used Andrew VENIAMIN for. Andrew was a killer. Andrew caused a lot of grief at nightclubs and parlours because he knew Mick GATTO would look after him. Mick is a very powerful figure in the criminal world. Mick always put up with Andrew's trouble because of the things Andrew helped him out with.
23. Prior to the PEIRCE murder, Andrew and Faruk approached me and asked me for help in locating PEIRCE. Andrew knew I had a lot of connections and knew a lot of people who were friends with Victor. These people included Jason MORAN, Nik RADEV and others. Andrew believed that I could find out where PEIRCE lived. Andrew told me that it was Mick GATTO who originally told him (Andrew) that Victor PEIRCE wanted Andrew dead and was going to kill him. I don't know who it was that told Mick initially. Andrew told me that GATTO told him to be very careful with PEIRCE as he wasn't playing around and that he was a very dangerous person. I didn't know PEIRCE myself and had only met him on two occasions.
24. Andrew used to work with Victor when they both worked for Frank BENVENUTO and already knew what Victor PEIRCE was like. Victor PEIRCE was employed by Frank BENVENUTO as a body guard. Andrew VENIAMIN also occasionally worked for Frank BENVENUTO as a hitman in the 1990's. That is what Andrew told me. Andrew also told me that BENVENUTO used PEIRCE to plan out murders and that he was very good at it. Andrew also told me that PEIRCE was able to sneak up on people and get them when they didn't expect it. He was very cunning. That is why Andrew was so concerned about him and wanted him murdered. Andrew really wanted him. Andrew received a few threats in his time but was really concerned about Victor.
25. Frank BENVENUTO gave Andrew the nickname "Tricky" and called him that regularly. Mick GATTO also sometimes called Andrew "Tricky" when he was upset with Andrew. He knew that Andrew didn't like it and that upset him.
26. In the weeks leading up to the PEIRCE murder Andrew became more concerned about not locating Victor. Andrew was becoming more aggressive as time went on. Andrew got Faruk to look for PEIRCE and do surveillance on him. Andrew was even getting angry at Faruk for not being able to find Victor. I knew that they wanted PEIRCE badly and knew it was only a matter of time before they got him. When I heard that PEIRCE was murdered I wasn't surprised and knew straight away who had done it.
27. Even though Andrew and Faruk had asked me for information on the whereabouts of Victor I didn't have any information to give them. I did ask around with a few people if they had any information about Victor

PEIRCE's location. I remember asking Glenn WILLIS but he wasn't able to give me anything. I also asked a male named Mark McCOY who was a friend of 'Crab' but he couldn't help. Crab was a friend of Victor's. I had to be very careful with who I asked because if Victor found out he would come after me. I didn't need that drama. I told Andrew I would help him out but I didn't actively go out looking for information. I went along with Andrew and Faruk and didn't really care if Andrew got him or not. The problem was between Andrew and Victor and had nothing to do with me. I later found out (after the PEIRCE murder) that a friend of mine named John GIANERELLI lived close to PEIRCE and could have possibly helped with information.

28. Within the two weeks before PEIRCE was murdered I approached someone to ask if it was OK if Andrew murdered PEIRCE. I approached a male named Michael LAVERDE and asked him to find out from other people if it was OK if Andrew murdered PEIRCE. Before this I had known Michael for about five years and was [REDACTED] like me. He is a true gentleman. I approached Michael in person at a Dry Cleaning shop in Coburg that he owned at that time. This shop was burnt down some time around then. We went for a walk together in the streets around the shop when I asked. This took place during the day. Michael told me straight out that it was none of his business and that it had nothing to do with them. I took this to mean that it was OK with Michael to murder PEIRCE. I did not say anything to Andrew about this.
29. The only other help I gave Andrew and Faruk was after the PEIRCE murder. I will elaborate on this further later in my statement.
30. When talking on the phones it was common practice to speak in code to avoid being detected by police telephone intercepts.
31. On Tuesday 29 May 2007 the police played me a number of recorded telephone calls between Andrew VENIAMIN and I. I listened to those telephone calls and told the police what the calls were about.
32. I was played a telephone call which took place on 23 April 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 9.49 PM. During the call Andrew says that "Baby" had the phone number for that Sheila and needed the address. I tell Andrew that the Sheila lives at 38. Baby is George MANTZOUNEOUS. Baby was an associate of Andrew and I.
33. During this phone call Andrew and I are talking in code. We discuss me getting a handgun for Andrew. I tell Andrew that I have a .38 calibre revolver. I then tell Andrew that I will get it to him. This gun was later recovered by the Police when they executed a search warrant on Andrew's place after the PEIRCE murder. Andrew told me that the gun was found in his kitchen.
34. I was played a telephone call which took place on 25 April 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 11.20 AM. During the call Andrew

talks about a “Slut” that never fronted. Again this is coded conversation between Andrew and I. Andrew is clearly talking about Victor PEIRCE. He is saying that PIERCE didn’t turn up to a meeting that had been arranged. When Andrew talks like that it was pure hatred. You can tell that Andrew is depressed. He was like that when he didn’t get what he wanted. On this occasion he couldn’t get PEIRCE. The Italian bloke refers to Michael LAVERDE.

35. Mick GATTO had told Andrew that there was a rumour going around that some Italians had a contract out on Mick and Andrew. I immediately thought it was not true as Mick used to manipulate Andrew. Andrew was asking me to find out if this was true. I told Andrew that I would speak to Michael LAVERDE and get back to him.
36. I did speak with Michael LAVERDE and ask him about the supposed contract. Michael told me that this was not true. I then told Andrew that it was untrue. This meeting with Michael was different to the one during which I asked him about PEIRCE. Andrew didn’t know about that meeting. I did that off my own bat.
37. I was played a telephone call which took place on 26 April 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 3.25 PM. During this call Andrew tells me that he is in Carlton waiting to see someone. The person he was seeing in Carlton would have been Mick GATTO. It is clear that Andrew is not happy about something. Andrew was not happy as he was having trouble finding PEIRCE and was obsessed about getting him.
38. I was played a telephone call which took place on 26 April 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 6.02 PM. During this call we talk about driving around with each other in my Ute. This refers to Andrew driving around with me and keeping me company whilst I was dealing. I have previously talked about Andrew helping me out by coming with me to meetings. You can also tell that I am reluctant to go to Carlton and meet with him.
39. I was played a telephone call which took place on 29 April 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 12.19 PM. During this call I ask Andrew what is wrong as he sounds depressed. Andrew then wants to meet up with me. Andrew is clearly depressed as he couldn’t find PEIRCE. Andrew was always like his until he sorted a problem out. When I say that Andrew knows Bay Street I am inferring that he knows the area well as he had been there a lot looking for PEIRCE.
40. I was played a telephone call which took place on 29 April 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 12.25 PM. During this call Andrew and I arrange to meet at the 7/11 (convenience store) in Bay Street, Port Melbourne. This meeting was about Victor PEIRCE an Andrew trying to find him as discussed in the previous phone call. Faruk could have been with Andrew during this meeting as they were together during most meetings I had with them around that time.

41. I was played a telephone call which took place on 1 May 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 1.11 PM. During the call Andrew says that he is under bad pressure and that he has a situation with that 'Sheila'. Andrew says that he's fucked and that he is going to break up with the 'Sheila' that night. Andrew also says remember last time, a couple of hours after that. I then say that I'll be around.
42. This is clearly coded conversation. Andrew is talking about the pressure he was under to get Victor PEIRCE before PEIRCE gets him. The term 'Sheila' is coded talk and definitely refers to Victor PEIRCE. Andrew is saying that he is going to kill Victor PEIRCE that night. It appears that during he call I'm busy and not really listening to what Andrew is saying. After listening to the call it is clear that Andrew was going to kill PEIRCE that night. Andrew is also saying that a meeting has been set up with PEIRCE and that meeting is a couple of hours later that the first arranged meeting where PEIRCE didn't turn up. I also appear to tell Andrew to let me know when he does it.
43. I knew that Andrew and Faruk were going to kill PEIRCE. At the time of this call I didn't know that it was going to happen that night. After listening to the call again it is clear that he did tell me it was going to happen. It just didn't register with me. I was trying to keep Andrew's spirits up by encouraging him. I didn't really care what Andrew was going to do. When played the call I couldn't believe that Andrew was talking like that over the phone. It is clear how much pressure he felt he was under.
44. In hindsight it is clear Andrew was talking about a hit that was just about to go down.
45. The day after the PEIRCE murder Andrew rang me a couple of times and really wanted to see me. I remember meeting up with Andrew and Faruk at a Sushi Restaurant in Clarendon Street, South Melbourne. We then went back to my place at [REDACTED] in the early afternoon. I don't remember what car they were driving that day. I met them both out the front of my address and we all went for a walk along the banks of the Yarra River away from the Westgate Bridge and the Bolte Bridge. It was during this meeting that we discussed the murder of PEIRCE.
46. Andrew told me that it was he and Faruk that had murdered PEIRCE. Andrew was concerned about cameras on Citylink and that he and Faruk had been photographed using it. Andrew wanted to make sure that the cameras didn't take a photo of Faruk and him the night before. I told them that the cameras only photographed the front number plates of he car.
47. Andrew then detailed to me what happened during the murder. Andrew told me that Faruk was driving the car and pulled up beside PEIRCE's car. Andrew said that he got out of the car, said something to PEIRCE before pulling out a gun. Andrew said that the first gun jammed on him and he

then smashed the window on PIERCE's car with his elbow. Andrew showed me how he did it as he described it to me. Andrew told me he then used another gun to shoot PEIRCE a few times before he and Faruk drove off together. Andrew swore that he would never use an automatic again after that.

48. Whilst Andrew was telling me this Faruk was walking with us and was listening to Andrew. Faruk didn't say anything but I saw him nod and by his expressions I could see that he agreed with what Andrew was saying. Faruk is a very quiet bloke anyway.
49. Also during the same meeting Andrew and Faruk asked me about the cameras in the Telstra shop in Bay Street, Port Melbourne. Andrew told me that they shot Victor in his car out the front of the Telstra shop. Andrew asked me if I could go to the Telstra and have a look to see if they had any cameras. Andrew was concerned that they may have been videoed when they killed PEIRCE. It wasn't supposed to happen at that location so Andrew hadn't planned for that and was worried.
50. I have been played a telephone call which took place on 2 May 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 12.50 PM. During this call we arrange to meet up in South Melbourne. It is clear that Andrew is in a better mood as PEIRCE was now dead. When I said to Andrew that it was a beautiful day today I am talking in code. I am effectively saying to Andrew that he got what he wanted by killing PEIRCE and that it was a good day for Andrew.
51. I have been played a telephone call which took place on 2 May 2002. I have been told that this call took place at 1.05 PM. During this call I tell Andrew I'm in South Melbourne at 162 Clarendon Street. I was at a Sushi Restaurant and we arrange to meet at the restaurant. Andrew and Faruk turned up and met with me at that restaurant. After that the three of us went to my place in [REDACTED] Street where Andrew and Faruk told me how they had murdered PEIRCE the night before.
52. About three or four days after the murder I went into the Telstra shop and brought myself a recharge card for my phone. I remember paying cash for the card. Whilst in the shop I had a look at the cameras and found that they only covered the front of the shop and didn't cover beyond the foot path. the footpath was about two metres wide and the cameras would not have reached the road. I knew Andrew and Faruk were OK. I knew a little bit about surveillance cameras as I had them in my own shop and apartment. I later told Andrew and Faruk they had nothing to worry about. I told them this when I next bumped into them, most likely in the following days. I didn't speak about it over the telephone.
53. Andrew and Faruk didn't tell me about what happened with the PEIRCE murder all in one meeting. I was told little bits here and little bits there. If I came out and asked about every detail at once it would look suspicious to them.

54. During another meeting with Andrew and Faruk in the weeks after the murder, they told me that they had burnt out the car they used in the PEIRCE murder. They said that they dumped the car and had to run across a paddock to get away from the area they left it in. They didn't mention where the car was stolen from or who had stolen it. I assumed they did it.
55. In paragraph 15 of my previous statement regarding the PEIRCE murder I referred to Andrew pointing out Vince BENVENUTO as the person who set up the meeting with PEIRCE with Mick GATTO. During that paragraph I said that the murder was supposed to happen the night before it did. By that I mean that the initial meeting was arranged to take place the night before or a couple of nights before. Andrew told me that Mick GATTO had set up the meeting so Andrew could murder Victor. Andrew said that the meeting was to take place in the car park of the Coles Supermarket in Bay Street. Andrew told me that Victor didn't turn up to that meeting. Andrew told me that he went back and saw Mick and asked him to arrange for Vince BENVENUTO to set up another meeting. It was during this meeting that Andrew shot PEIRCE. Andrew also said that PEIRCE didn't turn up at the car park that night but they had found PEIRCE parking his car in Bay Street outside the phone shop. Andrew said that it was at that location where they actually shot him.
56. The meeting referred to in paragraph 14 took place at the Flower Hotel or similar name.
57. Also in paragraph 15 I stated that Vince BENVENUTO was buying drugs off PEIRCE. This is totally incorrect. It was actually PEIRCE who was buying drugs off Vince BENVENUTO.
58. Some time after the PEIRCE murder I also met with Faruk near my address at [REDACTED] Faruk was alone. This was after the meeting with Andrew when we talked about Vince BENVENUTO. Andrew was not with Faruk during this meeting. Faruk dropped in to see me as we had also become close friends after the Victor PEIRCE murder. During this meeting we went for a walk along the Yarra River. I asked Faruk about the PEIRCE murder and what happened. I was interested how Faruk drove off after the murder without getting caught as it was such a busy street. Faruk told me that he pulled up beside PEIRCE's car and Andrew said something like, "Hello mate" and pulled out the gun. Faruk described how the first gun jammed and how Andrew smashed the window, pushing it in on PEIRCE before shooting him. Faruk told me that he had to remain calm and drive off calmly without drawing any attention to the car. Faruk told me that if you did that you wouldn't get pulled over by the police.
59. During another discussion with Faruk ORMAN, some time after the murder of Paul KALLIPOLITIS and when I met with Mick GATTO in Lygon Street, Faruk again told me about his involvement in the PEIRCE

murder. Faruk again went into how he drove to and from the shooting quietly and without drawing attention to Andrew and him.

60. Some time after Andrew was shot by Mick GATTO I had another meeting with Faruk. I remember this took place at Monroe's in Fitzroy Street, St Kilda. Faruk told me that no one would ever beat Andrew's record of how many people he had actually killed. Faruk was one of the few people who would actually know this. I told Faruk that he should know as he was with Andrew for most of them. Faruk agreed with me.

61. Whilst I was in [redacted] Prison with [redacted] Mr Andrews I found out that they had both sent a Christmas Card to Wendy PEIRCE on my behalf. They both knew about my involvement with Andrew and my knowledge of the PEIRCE murder. I had previously told [redacted] about Andrew's involvement. I had never told [redacted] about my knowledge of it. I received a letter from Wendy PEIRCE after I was sentenced. [redacted] were laughing about it when I got the letter. They then told me that they had jokingly sent the Christmas card to Wendy PEIRCE earlier.

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Mr Thomas

Statement taken and signature witnessed by me at Victoria on 29 May 2007 at hours.

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Mark HATT
Detective Acting Sergeant 30272

I hereby acknowledge that this statement is true and correct and I make it in the belief that a person making a false statement in the circumstances is liable to the penalties of perjury.

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Mr Thomas

Acknowledgment made and signature witnessed by me at Victoria on 29 May 2007 at hours.

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Mark HATT
Detective Acting Sergeant 30272