

29.

STATEMENT

Name: _____

Mr Cooper

STATES:

My name is ^{Mr Cooper} _____ The following statement relates to the death of a person I knew to be Mario CONDELLO. I met Mario in 2002 at the Crown Casino and was introduced to him through some associates of mine. When I met him he asked me if I wanted to invest some money in his loan business. I did not accept his offer and have never done any business with him.

In the statement I will refer to a group known as the Brunswick Crew. This group of people is made up primarily of; Tony MOKBEL, Milad MOKBEL, Horthy MOKBEL, Karl (Kamal) KHODER and other lesser known people from the Brunswick/Coburg area. I have been involved with these people for approximately 25 years.

Between the 1st and the 10th of January 2006 I had a meeting with Milad MOKBEL behind The Grove Café in Sydney Road, Brunswick. Milad told me at this meeting that he was in the process of organising a delivery of 2000 litres of P2P (Phenyl2propanone) to be used in the manufacture of methamphetamine. This amount of P2P could be turned into 2,600 kilograms of product. Milad told me that he wanted me on board in the process to organise the manufacture of the product. He then told me that he wanted me to put up the money for it. We had an argument about this and I told him that I was prepared to 'turn it' (into product) but I was not prepared to put any money up for it. I had been planning a holiday to Queensland and Milad told me that the deal would have been brokered by the time I got back. He told me that the deal was being brokered by a Mario. I did not realise who he was talking about at the time.

On 10th January 2006 I went for a holiday to Queensland [REDACTED] and returned to Melbourne on 21st January. On the 23rd January 2006 I met up with Milad again about the P2P and he told me that there were problems with the delivery. He said that the P2P had arrived but they could not access it. He told me it was in Sydney and that someone had stuffed up and he thought they had

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lost their money. He told me he would keep in touch and let me know when it arrived.

Between the 26th and 27th January I had another meeting at [REDACTED] Street, Brunswick with Milad and Horty MOKBEL. The discussion on this occasion was about contingency plans if the deal fell through. They told me that they had a few things on the burner. One of the things was that they could get some P2P from another associate of theirs they called Dennis. Another proposal was to get Phenylacetic acid from Shane MORAN. Milad and Horty both asked me if I could source other required chemical components; acetic anhydride. I told them I would see what I could do. I left and we agreed to catch up later. When I left this meeting the 2000 litre P2P deal was still on the go.

I would meet with Milad and Horty every three to four days during this time to see what was happening and try to get money that they owed me. I was getting the money they owed me in \$10,000 and \$15,000 lots. These meetings were always face to face meetings. They would always call me first on my mobile phone number [REDACTED] and arrange where to meet.

On 6th February 2006 I went to The Grove Café in Sydney Road, Coburg at about 8.30 pm to meet with Milad to pick up some money and discuss how the deal was going. There was a game of Texas hold 'em poker on at the café that night. Tony MOKBEL, Milad MOKBEL, Horty MOKBEL, Kabalan MOKBEL, a guy called Bassam (he is about 35 years old and a big gambler), Joe PARISI, Ken NADER, Andrew DEMIAN (I call him Andrew Masserati), Tony BAYEH, Max (his real name Joe FERROLA) and another guy called Larry were all there playing cards. It was very busy for a Monday night. There were a few of the younger Lebanese guys playing pool downstairs. This group of young guys included Abdul KHODER and a few of his mates. I remember Abdul wearing a baseball cap and a greyish coloured track suit and he was standing near the fireplace rocking back and forth and appearing to be fidgety, which I thought was a bit odd because it was hot and the fire was not going.

On this night I received \$10,000 from Milad and he told me to go straight home and not to go out that night. His exact words before telling me to go home

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were; "Condello is gone". He whispered this to me and giggled while he was saying it. I immediately assumed that Mario CONDELLO was going to be killed. This conversation took place outside the café and after Milad told me to go home I got in my car and went straight home. At about 11.30 pm that night I saw on the television news that Mario CONDELLO had been murdered. I didn't speak to anyone about this other than an associate Frank AHEC who was at my house at the time. I didn't say anything to Frank about my meeting with Milad that evening we just discussed the murder because I knew Mario.

In about December 2005 Abdul KHODER turned up on the scene hanging around The Grove Café. I had not seen him before but was convinced that he was a runner for Milad MOKBEL. By this I mean that he would do Milad's collections and deliveries of his drugs and drug money. Milad would often tell me that he was sending Abdul to drop off the money or he would ring a person he referred to as Abdul over the phone and then Abdul KHODER would turn up with money.

At the conclusion of my meeting with Milad MOKBEL on the 6th February 2006 I had arranged to meet with Horthy MOKBEL on the 8th February to pick up \$15,000 from him that he owed me from a previous drug transaction. On the 8th February 2006 at 10.30 pm I went to The Grove Café and met with Horthy. There was another card game on and this time Abdul KHODER was there at the coffee bar with the usual people including all the MOKBELS. I remember that Tony was in a suit. I think he may have had legal proceedings that day. There was an overwhelming amount of attention being directed towards Abdul KHODER from everyone that was there that night. Abdul appeared to be uncomfortable with the recognition. The other guys were patting him on the back asking him what he wanted to eat or drink, behaviour normally directed towards someone higher in the crews hierarchy. Most of the attention was coming from Milad MOKBEL. I felt this all a bit strange and wondered what had changed as in the past Milad had always called him names on the phone when he was late and had generally treated him poorly. I got my \$15,000 from Horthy and left shortly after.

After this meeting on the 8th February 2006 I met with Milad on many more occasions and on every occasion after this Abdul KHODER was with him. It appeared to me that Milad was using Abdul as his bodyguard or assistant. I would always say hello to Abdul but he would never make eye contact with me and would divert his eyes to the floor or the wall when he spoke to me.

At about the end of February I met Milad at his house to discuss the P2P that was coming from Dennis. We went for a walk around his house and discussed the P2P deal. We also discussed Tony MOKBEL and it was at about this time that I was told that ^{Mr Andrews} had made a statement implicating Tony in murders. Milad discussed with me the possibility of Tony running if there was no way for him to get off his court matters. They said they were waiting on confirmation that ^{Mr Andrews} had signed his statement. Milad also put an offer for me to go with Tony if he did a runner because he would need company. There was no direct discussion of the details just that we would go via Hong Kong. I told Milad I was not about to leave [REDACTED] and I was not involved in any murders so I was not going to leave and [REDACTED]

At this meeting we discussed the CONDELLO murder and I asked Milad what Mario had done to deserve it. Milad was coy with me and asked me why I wanted to know. I reminded him that he told me it was going to happen. Milad then went on to explain that Mario CONDELLO had been the broker for the initial deal on the 2000 litres of P2P. He told me that Mario was supposed to broker the deal with some Asians to pick up the P2P in Sydney. He said Horthy MOKBEL had been involved in the deal and they had both outlaid a large amount of money to Mario to broker the deal. The total purchase price was around \$2,000,000. Horthy and Milad had given CONDELLO about \$1,000,000 and he had taken that to the Asians. The Brunswick Crew were under the impression that CONDELLO would have the total amount with him when he concluded the deal with him putting in the other half. Milad said CONDELLO had actually gone to the Asians with only the \$1,000,000 from them and tried to broker a deal for half now and half later after the product had been turned and sold. The Asians accepted this deal at first but on consignment of the chemicals they changed their mind and told CONDELLO they wanted the other million dollars up front. This put the deal on hold and the MOKBELS decided

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they wanted their money back. Milad later told me he lost their money and the deal had fallen through. He didn't tell me who had the money though. He didn't say anything else about Mario's death and our conversation went onto something else. I didn't pry into the matter any further and went ahead with another deal to convert product for Milad.

There is another guy called Tony that goes to The Grove Café, he is an Italian with blue eyes and tattoo's, about 50 years old with receding greyish hair. In about March 2006 this Tony was having a conversation with Habib MOKBEL about the CONDELLO murder. He was saying that he had heard that CONDELLO had been trying to get \$500,000 back from one of his own (The Italian Carlton Crew) and that is why he had been murdered.

In 2004 on the night that Lewis MORAN was murdered in Brunswick I was at the Belfiore Restaurant in Sydney Road, Brunswick opposite the Brunswick Police Station. Milad and Tony MOKBEL were also there with some other people. I was with [REDACTED] During the night Milad told me that I should go straight home that night because Lewis MORAN was going to be killed. [REDACTED] would have been able to hear Milad when he told me this. Later that evening while we were still at the restaurant I remember seeing a large number of police cars exit the Brunswick Police Station heading south in Sydney Road at high speed. I learnt later that they were going to the Brunswick Club where Lewis MORAN had been shot.

Mr Cooper

Statement taken and signature witnessed by
me at am/pm on/...../..... at Lara.



Date FITZGERALD

Detective Senior Constable 30502

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 ^{Mr Cooper} is liable to the penalties of perjury.

Acknowledgement made and signature witnessed
by me at am/pm on ...11/3/06... at Lara.


.....
Date FITZGERALD
Detective Senior Constable 30502