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Meeting with Gobbo

From: "cn=michael davson/ou=ombudsman/o=vicgov/c=au"
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Date: Mon, 04 Sep 2006 15:19:21 +1000

FYI

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"Attrill, Lindsay"

[REDACTED] >
04/09/2006 03:09 PM

To: Michael Davson, [REDACTED] cc: Subject: Meeting with Gobbo

G'day Michael,

Here is the substance of the meeting with Gobbo as summarised in an IR:

On Monday 24 July 2006 at about 9.30am, Swindells and I met with Gobbo. I made notes of the conversations.

During what transpired to be a one hour and thirty nine minute meeting, Gobbo became visibly emotional and clearly concerned for her safety and wellbeing. She expressed a fear that should she be required to make a statement or appear before any hearing, harm would come to her. Gobbo mentioned she had received a death threat the previous day and had reported the threat to certain police. She declined an offer for further assistance by Swindells. The threat was not related to this investigation.

During the meeting Gobbo became teary and was visibly upset. I believe this emotional state was triggered by my disclosure of certain information relevant to Operation Khadi that she believed came from a confidential source known only to her. I was surprised and taken aback by her reaction and became increasingly concerned as the meeting continued. Reasons for my concerns cannot be disclosed in this report but were later conveyed to Detective Superintendent Wilson on my return to ESD following the meeting.

Gobbo at times asked probing questions, querying the source of some questions put to her and questioned the degree of value of any assistance she would be able to provide from an evidentiary perspective. She also raised the issue of

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professional privilege and hearsay.

However, Gobbo agreed to allow Swindells to give me her contact telephone number and offered to discuss the my intentions to interview Azzam Ahmed ([REDACTED]), Scott Faragher ([REDACTED]) and [REDACTED] with each witness as she was in regular contact with them to some degree. Gobbo offered to do this providing she was not required to make a statement or appear before any hearing. Swindells and I advised Gobbo no undertaking could be given until such time as the matters were discussed and approval given by our superior (Detective Superintendent Rod Wilson). It was agreed I later contact Gobbo following discussions with Wilson. Gobbo stated Ahmed was at Barwon Prison, that she had an appointment which she was already one hour late for meeting at the prison in relation to a Purana matter and the death threat. Gobbo stated she would meet Ahmed but then changed her mind until a decision had been made whether she was required to make a statement and or appear before any hearing. It was apparent Gobbo had become more emotional and to some degree, agitated by the time the meeting concluded.

Swindells and I returned to the office and discussed our concerns with Detective Superintendent Wilson. I firmly believe Gobbo has genuine concerns for her safety. I am of the view that if Gobbo is required to make a statement for this investigation or appear before any hearing and this became public knowledge or was conveyed in any way to persons having criminal connections it will have serious consequences for her (i.e. professionally and/or will result in harm coming to her).

A decision must be reached quickly at a senior level between Victoria Police and the OPI to ensure the issues raised in this report are discussed fully before any further approach is made to Gobbo. There are other more serious issues to consider with this witness and in the context of this investigation I do not believe the potential risks for Gobbo, warrant compelling her to make a statement or appear before any hearing to give evidence in this investigation, providing she is able to assist in an alternative way (e.g. intro to Faragher, Ahmed and [REDACTED]).

I cannot take it any further.

Lindsay

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