

5 RECORD OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN INVESTIGATOR CHRIS WIGHTMAN AND INVESTIGATOR ANN-MAREE ROBINSON AND MR BAHRAM GUSHEH AT, NEW SOUTH WALES ON THE 18TH OF JULY 2014.

TIME: 10:52am

10 PRESENT: MR CHRIS WIGHTMAN, INVESTIGATOR ICAC.
MS ANN-MAREEE ROBINSON, INVESTIGATOR ICAC.
MR BAHRAM GUSHEH
MRS PARIVASH GUSHEH

15 WIGHTMAN: Okay, so this is an electronically recorded Witness Statement of Mr Bahram Gusheh, this recording is being conducted at Duffy's Forest New South Wales ah the time is now ah 10:52am on Friday the 18th of July 2014. My name is Chris Wightman and I am an Investigator with the Independent Commission Against Corruption, also present is
20 Investigator Ann-Maree Robinson and we are joined by Mrs Parivash Gusheh as well. Um for the purpose of the interview is it okay if I refer to you as Bob?

GUSHEH B: Yep.

WIGHTMAN: Bob, I wish to question you for the purpose of obtaining your
25 knowledge concerning the Tattersalls Hotel in Armidale –

GUSHEH B: Yeah.

WIGHTMAN: - specifically the Commission is seeking information about your engagement to provide services and about the nature of those services. My questions and any answers you give will be recorded this is only so
30 the interview can be completed more efficiently, and so that later if required the recording can be used to produce a written statement if you wish. Is that okay?

5

INTERUPTION

WIGHTMAN: So look I have to repeat this bit here in relation to um my questions and any answers that you give will be recorded, this is only so that the interview can be completed more efficiently and so that later if required the recording can be used to produce a written statement if you wish. Is it okay that we do the recording here today?

10

GUSHEH B: Yes.

WIGHTMAN: Any information that you provide in this recording needs to be true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief, do you understand that?

15 GUSHEH B: Yes.

WIGHTMAN: For the purpose of the transcript would you please state your full name, date of birth and um current occupation?

GUSHEH B: Yeah my name is Bahram (inaudible) Gusheh and my age is I was born on 8 7 1942, which make me 72 years and my current opulation ah occupation is I am retired, Civil Engineer.

20

WIGHTMAN: Very well. Do you agree that prior to us meeting here today that I sent you an email?

GUSHEH B: Yes, I do.

WIGHTMAN: And the email I specified the purpose of why it is that we are coming up to talk to you?

25

GUSHEH B: I am not still clear about the my my my my stance this this (inaudible).

WIGHTMAN: The email that I sent you had a link to it to the ICAC website –

GUSHEH B: Yep.

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- 5 WIGHTMAN: - and it linked through to an introduction to the scope of what we are investigating.
- GUSHEH B: Yep.
- WIGHTMAN: Did you read that?
- GUSHEH B: Yes.
- 10 WIGHTMAN: And you saw that the investigation relates to a person by the name of Mr John Cassidy?
- GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: And I think by our conversation here this morning you have already indicated that um you know him?
- 15 GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: And you also know of –
- GUSHEH B: Very well.
- WIGHTMAN: - and you also know of a person named um Mr Darrell Hendry?
- GUSHEH B: I know him very well.
- 20 WIGHTMAN: Can we um just start with you you said that you um were qualified as a Civil Engineer?
- GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: And so prior to your retirement what what exactly were you doing and who were you working for?
- 25 GUSHEH B: I was ah how far back do you want to go?
- WIGHTMAN: Ah in the last five years.
- GUSHEH B: Forty years?
- WIGHTMAN: Oh okay. Look did you used to work for Abigroup?
- GUSHEH B: Yes.

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- 5 WIGHTMAN: Okay tell me what you did for Abigroup when you first started.
- GUSHEH B: I was a Civil Engineer working for Abigroup.
- WIGHTMAN: Hmm and um was that the only role that you had when while you worked for Abigroup?
- GUSHEH B: Yes, well I I was assigned whatever the company asked you to do you
10 know that from day to day is different.
- WIGHTMAN: Hmm.
- GUSHEH B: I worked for them for 28 years –
- WIGHTMAN: Hmm.
- GUSHEH B: - and during this 28 years different missions I was given and different
15 tasks I was given and I did it.
- WIGHTMAN: I saw documents um from the internet that refer to you as being a Senior Project um Engineer or Senior Project Manager, was that your title?
- GUSHEH B: I was yes, I was ah I was Project Manager as well as other things, yes.
- 20 WIGHTMAN: Okay. Um so what what is your expertise in relation to um like being a Civil Engineer what kind of things do you do?
- GUSHEH B: The the Civil Engineer is very involved into construction activities in general –
- WIGHTMAN: Okay.
- 25 GUSHEH B: - which includes ah civil works, um sites with roads dams, dams in ah and it goes into structure and it goes into buildings and ah various kind of construction work that project managers and civil engineers do it, it depends ah what what is available at the time you know that there is not a specialised out here that one person goes out and does one

5 things that I remember very well which is something some stuff for
example last night I went to start looking when I went to Armidale I
couldn't find any documents in the mess of the painting and everything
and tonnes of documents. It is ah I think John had joined Abigroup few
months or just about the time that I joined Abigroup late in 1985, I
10 don't remember which month and I couldn't find my pay slips to tell
you.

WIGHTMAN: Hmm.

GUSHEH B: But I John has joined Abigroup just before Abigroup went through
some financial difficulties and then, then at that time ah John joined
15 Abigroup, I don't remember whether it was very midyear or sometime
before that.

WIGHTMAN: And that um I mean from that period on there was quite an evolution in
the business where it turned around from being a –

GUSHEH B: It was at first the the construction industry of Australia just before
20 Olympics and in 1980's it had been through a big change –

WIGHTMAN: Hmm.

GUSHEH B: - the construction industry and the economy of Australia –

WIGHTMAN: Yep.

GUSHEH B: - and ah there was lots of infrastructure build, I started my job with
25 Abigroup on M2 Motorway which is the one –

WIGHTMAN: Yes.

GUSHEH B: No no no on F3 sorry, F3 –

WIGHTMAN: Oh.

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5 GUSHEH B: F3/M1- the one from Hornsby to Berowra that I was involved in construction of that. And that was one of my first job with Abigroup and Abigroup went through ah not on, it wasn't only Abigroup the whole industry went through a big change and a big big renaissance.

10 WIGHTMAN: Okay. Can I ask you in terms of your relationship with John Cassidy do you regard it as being a friendship?

GUSHEH B: He was a boss, he was ah the Managing Director at the time of company and I was a Project um Engineer residing at the job site and my office was in near Berowra in Hornsby on the road side. And um we we didn't have ah for first few years we didn't have any any direct communication or anything with each other, I knew he was he was about four levels, five levels higher than me.

15 WIGHTMAN: Yes.

GUSHEH B: He is the boss.

20 WIGHTMAN: Okay, so in the 28 years in the 28 year period so um towards the end of your time with Abigroup and towards of um the end of Mr Cassidy's time were you guys, were you friends? Did you socialise outside?

GUSHEH B: Its in John's nature, it wasn't with me it was yes to answer your question I was friend, John was friend with thousand people.

WIGHTMAN: Hmm.

25 GUSHEH B: John –

WIGHTMAN: Did you see him outside of work?

GUSHEH B: - John, John was friends with with with all employees, John was friends –

WIGHTMAN: Very good.

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- 5 GUSHEH B: - he would he would he would become part of your family and he would whenever he saw you he would ask about your wife your kids he knew what they were doing and so he was a sort of management which you don't see these days –
- WIGHTMAN: Very good.
- 10 GUSHEH B: - and that was you feel –
- WIGHTMAN: I have to –
- GUSHEH B: - sorry you feel that I have to say that to be fair to him, it is.
- WIGHTMAN: Oh that is fine, no no its nothing about its not really relevant to why I am here.
- 15 GUSHEH B: Yep.
- WIGHTMAN: Did you see John outside of work?
- GUSHEH B: Pardon?
- WIGHTMAN: Did you – Have you seen John outside of work, to socialise?
- GUSHEH B: In the 28 years?
- 20 WIGHTMAN: Yes.
- GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: And did he ever come, did you ever go to his house?
- GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: Did he come to your house?
- 25 GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: Um tell me about um Darrell Hendry, how long have you known Darrell Hendry for?
- GUSHEH B: Same time.

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5 WIGHTMAN: And was your relationship with Darrell Hendry similar to that as Mr Cassidy? That is you socialised outside of work?

GUSHEH B: No.

WIGHTMAN: You went to each other's houses?

10 GUSHEH B: No, no. You know I have been in him house, I have been in his daughter's wedding ah he's been – Did Darrell come that night here (inaudible)?

GUSHEH P: Yes.

15 GUSHEH B: He has been in our house, but it's ah he our relation my relation with Darrell wasn't the same as with John because Darrell was a f was more financial side of things and John was more technical side of things and my was more involved in technical.

WIGHTMAN: Sure.

20 GUSHEH B: However later on that I didn't I didn't for many many many years I didn't have a line of communication with Darrell but later on ah I got to know him you know after ah a little bit better but at the beginning, my ah John was a different his approach is different his he he opens up and becomes friendly with the employees –

WIGHTMAN: Sure.

GUSHEH B: - whereas Darrell was a totally financial person.

25 WIGHTMAN: Sure. We are here today to talk about the Tattersalls Hotel.

GUSHEH B: Yeah.

WIGHTMAN: And we are here to talk about information that we have received that you were engaged to do something at the hotel. Do you remember what it was that you were engaged to do?

5 GUSHEH B: It is ah I don't remember the how the the nature of the the the proposal came but it is John knew that I'm retiring and and I might be just interested in some of that activity. He asked me one day to go to Armidale to said he's ah I don't know at that time and I don't, I think it was 2008 or 2009 or 2007 in that area –

10 WIGHTMAN: Hmm.

GUSHEH B: He asked me to go there and ah he's he he he either said he had purchased that hotel or he is in the process of purchasing that hotel or or whether he is going to purchase it. When I said your email I gathered that the hotel was owned by Darrell, which I didn't know
15 until I read your email. I didn't know that - anyway he didn't tell me the full detail but he asked me, he wanted to know my opinion because ah I I work on construction sites and hands on he he – the hotel was very run down absolute eh dilapidated place, he wanted to know what is the best way to turn this hotel into the ah the convent - because he
20 was running the University at the time and people that were coming to meeting they didn't have ah meeting place something like that –

WIGHTMAN: Yes.

GUSHEH B: - he wanted a place with the room and meeting places to have seminars and thing like that you know (inaudible).

25 WIGHTMAN: Yep.

GUSHEH B: And he asked to come there to look at the hotel and and give him my opinion what is in construction wise what is the best way to fix up that hotel.

WIGHTMAN: Okay.

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- 5 GUSHEH B: I got on an airplane that day very early in the morning, I went Darrell was supposed to come with us that day. I went to the Armidale two times and and and that time I don't know remember whether it was that time or the time after that Darrell um missed the aeroplane, he didn't get to there on time –
- 10 WIGHTMAN: Yes.
- GUSHEH B: - even though I got his boarding card when it was one of those ah local aeroplanes, I think it was either Qantas Country or Rox (inaudible) –
- WIGHTMAN: Rex or Qantas?
- GUSHEH B: Yeah Rex, Rex, Rex.
- 15 WIGHTMAN: You think it was Rex that he flew?
- GUSHEH B: I think it was Rex, I think. I went down there but Darrell didn't show, didn't come I flew and as it happened that Darrell that day he overslept he came with the flight after of day. And I went and I looked at the holiday and I tell you before you ask question I tell you what is in my
- 20 mind so freely –
- WIGHTMAN: Please do, yeah please do.
- GUSHEH B: - and and and um Darrell when he came in he went with other business which I don't know what it was, it was um I really don't know. I went to the hotel and we looked at, the hotel had some managers working
- 25 there, couple of people working there at the time and I looked around the hotel was a disgrace, disaster and the main thing I told John I remember is that ah the hotel didn't have any parking and I said - how you want to run a convention centre without the parking, you know that people come here where where are they going to park. The hotel

5 was a was a mess and and I told them that you have to get ah you have
to look at it to some design and and find a do the parking in and get the
council permission and go from there. That was the whole ah – so then
in the middle of the day, or I don't know if it was that trip or the one
after I separated from John, John had some business prop with his
10 running of the thing. He went through with his business and I went
around around the main street, I never been around that before, I went
around the street to see what sort of ah structure it is and what if you
want to find a car park where there is gen eh eh a public car park or not
and and gain my information about the situation and it was about I
15 think it was about two three o'clock or four o'clock in the afternoon I
flew back –

WIGHTMAN: Okay.

GUSHEH B: - on the first day. On on on the second day it was I went there to to see
then on by that time it is my retirement was was coming in and I went
20 to see whether there is any further development in the project or not, I
went there and it was exactly the same the same as it was before. I
didn't get involved in John about any of the details of the nature of
running the business –

WIGHTMAN: Sure.

25 GUSHEH B: - but the only thing he talked about, we talked we went to the room we
say he said the best way to do the room, we talked about he said yeah
how we can fix it up temporally so it can be used, but I kept telling him
without the car park you cannot use this place. And and ah talked about
in general how we going to fix the hotel and um I flew back and I told

5 him that he has to get the plans, he has to get the designers and get the
get the specially design something with a car park get council
permission and after he got these things let me know and I might just
go and and and try and work with him, I didn't tell him that I would or
not. Then I came back and talked to my wife and realised that I am
10 retired I am not going to work even though if he offers me to work and
I am not going to go there. But in general I tell you this thing I am
willing this evidence in front of anyone.

WIGHTMAN: That's fine.

GUSHEH B: In my opinion John and Darrell both of them, to my extent of
15 knowledge are very nice people and I am willing to back up and I am
willing to give evidence and I am willing to be a witness to today.

WIGHTMAN: Very well, your trip up to Armidale there is two trips. One trip you talk
about getting on a plane up to Armidale, Darrell Hendry missing that
flight -

20 GUSHEH B: Yep.

WIGHTMAN: - but you go up and meet with John. Look, how much notice did you
have of heading up to Armidale? Was it something that was arranged
weeks prior, a month prior or would you just get a phone call in the
morning saying get to the airport?

25 GUSHEH B: I don't remember, I I think I don't remember it maybe it wouldn't be -
it wouldn't be more than three, two or three four days I don't think so -

WIGHTMAN: Okay.

5 GUSHEH B: - or maybe a week, it ah I don't remember the ah correct answer is I don't remember. Would if can I ask you this question? What what time or what date was it, was it 2008?

WIGHTMAN: Umm look its probably just more appropriate for me to ask you the questions rather than me answer them. Can I ask you about –

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INTERUPTION

WIGHTMAN: - because we have detracted from things that I want to talk to you about. So now we need to get back on into to talking about this travel up to Armidale and getting flights up there. Right my question is; um did you organise the the flights yourself or were they organised for you?

15

GUSHEH B: They were ahh don't remember, normally the flights is organised through through our office.

WIGHTMAN: Hmm. Are you a member of any Frequent Flyer program?

GUSHEH B: Yes.

20 WIGHTMAN: And who's who are you with?

GUSHEH B: Qantas.

WIGHTMAN: You're with Qantas?

GUSHEH B: And Emirates.

WIGHTMAN: And with Qantas and Emirates what level of membership are you?

25 GUSHEH B: Pardon?

WIGHTMAN: Is there a level of membership or are you just?

GUSHEH B: No there is a level of membership yeah.

WIGHTMAN: Yeah, what level of membership are you?

GUSHEH B: Ah now?

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- 5 WIGHTMAN: Yes.
- GUSHEH B: I don't know.
- WIGHTMAN: In relation to your engagement to go to Armidale, who contacted you to do that?
- GUSHEH B: John definitel, I I think John.
- 10 WIGHTMAN: When, I'm sorry um, you used the the term before you spoke about a convention centre um was that was that your words or was that the words that somebody told you?
- GUSHEH B: I just it is I said it, I I I eh I was, look (inaudible) – his he wanted to build something which people come there they they ones I recall it was
- 15 the police organisation or a police group or police boys scout or the police young things – some people they been coming to Armidale for University Convention and and and they didn't have any place any proper place to stay and he wanted a place that that people that come can come have a room, have a meeting room and convention and use
- 20 that for the university –
- WIGHTMAN: Fine.
- GUSHEH B: - so this is what ah ah whether it's called the convention or it's called a gathering or it's called or whatever it's called I don't know, that was the nature of thing he was thinking to to turn. I think he was thinking
- 25 he wasn't adamant at the time but he was he was tossing ideas around of what to do.
- WIGHTMAN: Sure. Can I ask um in relation to your engagement um were you paid a fee?
- GUSHEH B: No.

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- 5 WIGHTMAN: So you did that voluntarily to go and get that advice?
- GUSHEH B: Yes.
- WIGHTMAN: Um in relation to these conversations that you had in (coughs) – all these things that you were told –
- GUSHEH B: Yep.
- 10 WIGHTMAN: - in relation to considerations of what the business might or might not do for the university. You said um he told you that ah he is um are you saying John Cassidy told you that?
- GUSHEH B: Well eh ehe in in a course of conversation if you were talking about John if you Darrell when I don't know when it was said, he normally
- 15 he when when we talking about the John activities when I say he I mean John –
- WIGHTMAN: Yes.
- GUSHEH B: - when I talk about Darrell I mean Darrell.
- WIGHTMAN: Fine. Can I ask you more about your interactions with Darrell? Did
- 20 you talk to Darrell about the Tattersalls Hotel?
- GUSHEH B: The what?
- WIGHTMAN: Did you talk with Darrell about Tattersalls Hotel?
- GUSHEH B: I don't remember. If if if any (inaudible) very the line of communication that about the technical issues of what I am talking to
- 25 Darrell, Darrell is wholly and solely a financial person.
- WIGHTMAN: So um Darrell can I take it that Darrell didn't tell you what his vision was for the use and purpose of the hotel?
- GUSHEH B: No, Darrell wouldn't have said that.
- WIGHTMAN: Okay. Ann-Maree do you have any questions?

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5 ROBINSON: No I don't.

GUSHEH B: I don't even remember whether we walked, we walked with Darrell or John, I remember the talk with John around the hotel but I don't remember that Darrell was coming was in was involved in the walk or not, I don't remember.

10 WIGHTMAN: Okay, look um this is all the questions that I have for you today so I am going to be ending the recording. Um the time is now um 18 minutes past 11.

11:18am

15 **END OF INTERVIEW**