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INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

THE HONOURABLE PETER M. HALL QC
CHIEF COMMISSIONER

PUBLIC HEARING

OPERATION PARAGON

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT SYDNEY

ON WEDNESDAY 26 MAY, 2021

AT 2.00PM

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This transcript has been prepared in accordance with conventions used in the Supreme Court.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner.

THE WITNESS: Sorry, I, I just remembered something. Can I add, is that okay?

10

THE COMMISSIONER: Sorry, is there is problem?---I just, I remembered something from your previous discussion.

MR DOWNING: Something relevant to the questions that I asked you before lunch?---Yes.

If there is something you wish to correct, please – or to add to.---Not correct, just to add.

20

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Go ahead.---Is that okay if I can - - -

Yes, you go.---Regarding Mr Goldberg and the liquidation, I remember him, there was a, I remember something along the lines of he was primarily concerned with the safety or the – he was primarily concerned with his brother, Towfik, and so as a result hence the liquidation of the other company needed to occur. So I was just trying to figure out, I was try to, I just remembered the link of how that happened.

30

MR DOWNING: So, that he, when he speaks to you about doing something about a company, he expresses a concern that his brother, Towfik, might be identified through some record of payments into your company?---Correct, that was his primary concern and as a result, and, and but then obviously it evolved over time.

Just pausing there. Do you think that the company that he might have been concerned about the moneys going into could have been MWK Developments rather than Australian Technology Group Pty Ltd?---He was more concerned about his brother, Towfik, transferring money into Australian Technology Group.

40

But just pausing there. Are you sure that it was Australian Technology Group as opposed to the company that the transfers from Towfik had gone into, being MWK Developments?---Oh, I can't remember those details but that's, that's kind of, that's the conversation I remember happening, yeah, yeah.

So it was an expression of concern about his brother being identified through the record of payments into the company?---And then as a result, he, his advice came about to liquidate the other companies.

So in effect to shut the company down and to - - -?---And anything else that was associated with that company.

10 But it's the case, isn't it, that in terms of whether it was the Australian Technology Group or MWK Developments, are you certain one way or the other now or unsure as to which company it was that Mr Goldberg suggested you needed to take some steps to shut down?---I think it was Australian – I'm, I'm not sure. Again, I can't, it's long time ago but it would have been whatever company had money transferred into it.

THE COMMISSIONER: Were you aware of whether Mr Taha received payment through MWK Developments?---That would have been after - - -

Later?---After, yes.

20 All right. We'll come to that.

MR DOWNING: Anything else from the evidence that you gave this morning?---That's what I recall, sorry, I just thought I would put that - - -

No, thank you. Just to confirm, I've taken you through a bit of a chronology of your work from starting at the RTA originally as a contractor, then I've got to the point of about March 2014 when you begin working under Mr Soliman.---Okay.

30 And it's correct, isn't it, that that was the point at which you became an employee of the RMS?---That sounds about right.

I'll show you the documents. But you've confirmed that you started off in the ITSP and were working, despite originally applying for a job as an engineer, you began effectively as a project manager?---Correct.

And that you indicated that, I think, and tell if this is a correct summary, that not too far down the track you were working not in the ITSP but in the Compliance and Enforcement branch?---Correct.

40

Can I, perhaps to try and assist you with dates, because I acknowledge that this was some time ago and a fair bit's happened since then. Can I show you some documents just to see if this assists. Can we go, please, to volume 2.1, page 124? Do you see that this is an email from you on 7 January, 2011?---Okay.

And putting aside who it's to, it's to a Dabit Raed, whoever that is, but someone within the RTA.---Yep.

But do you see that the description of your position in the email is Senior Project Manager, Project Delivery and Installation, Compliance and Enforcement branch?---Okay.

So, that indicates, doesn't it, that by January 2011 certainly you were working in that position?---Okay.

10 What's your best recollection as to how long you were in the ITSP for?
---The, the way I remember, I, I, the way – the way I try to remember was that I had a contract I think for either, either it was for six months initially or for one year and then that got extended, from memory, for another potentially six months. And then that's when the term, I think, of me working there had finished.

In the ITSP?---That's how I tried to work it out.

20 And just in terms of what you were doing at this time, if we could go to the next page, please. I'm sorry, could we go back to page 124? I do apologise.
You'll see that in the email you make reference to projects at Kankool and Mount White?---Ah hmm.

And do you recall that they were both heavy vehicle checking station locations?---Yes.

30 And indeed in the email you note that they were projects that involved purely civil and construction so that you would carry out the contractor engagement and manage the implementation rather than the ITSP doing it?
---Okay. So, okay. Okay.

And if we go to the next page, please.---I can add to that if you like, yeah.

40 Well, tell us – before we move to the actual document in respect of the works, is there something else you wanted to tell us about this email and the contractor arrangement around these jobs?---This is what I vaguely remember because it was a long time ago, 2011, 10 years ago, more than 10 years ago. I vaguely remember something along the lines of when ITSP, the structure they had in where, in by where they priced the projects, they had a lot of additional costs added to the projects from admin fees to PMO fees to a certain percentage so these branches actually, actually made profit. They would have had 20 per cent on or 30 per cent on. Other branches do the same thing, when they do work for other divisions within the RMS. So - - -

So just pausing there, is it the case that the ITSP works in effect as its own separate business unit?---Correct, correct.

And it provides services at cost to other units within the - - -?---Not at cost, at a profit.

Well, at a price I should say.---At a, at a potentially cost plus a percentage.

10 Right.---So, and me leaving or being, now migrating over to the Compliance and Enforcement Branch, taking over the body of work, the Compliance and Enforcement Branch was essentially a client for ITSP, a sort of client, and ITSP was a service provider. There was a little bit of a tug-o-war here where I could deliver the project cheaper and I could deliver the project rather than ITSP delivering it for a higher price or value, so there was a little bit of tug-o-war in that sense, yeah. That was the background.

But when you say deliver the project, you're talking about once you were in the Compliance and Enforcement Branch?---Correct.

And you're also referring, aren't you, to delivering it via the use of outside contractors rather than using internal resources?---They all do the same, they all use outside contractors.

20 But that's what the way in which you would deliver the project?---Yes.

That you would use outside contractors.---Yes.

And if we go to the next page, please, just as the example, you'll see that the RTA had prepared a request for quote in respect of this particular job which involved the Mount White North heavy vehicle checking station brake tester works.---Okay.

And you'll see that it's dated 27 January, 2011.---Ah hmm.

30 And if we go to page 126, please, you'll see there's a brief description there of the scope of works involved.---Ah hmm.

And this is one of the areas of responsibility that you had, consistent with what you told us earlier as to your works when you were in the - - -?---ITSP.

Sorry, no, it wasn't this once you'd -- you were in the Compliance and Enforcement Branch.---Compliance and Enforcement Branch, correct, the deliveries.

40 So works in respect of the heavy vehicle checking stations.---Correct.

And then moving beyond the Mount White job that this request for quote relates to, if we could go ahead, please, to page 177. And do you see similarly it's a request for quote in respect this time of the Bell heavy vehicle checking station?---Correct.

And again it was another one of the checking stations that fell under your area of responsibility during your period in the Compliance and Enforcement Branch.---Correct.

And then if I could take you, please, to page 205 in the same volume. You'll see now in March 2011, on this date, Sunday, 20 March, you're actually sending a request for tender, on this occasion to Chahid Chahine – so I'll just go back to page 205 – Chahid Chahine at, you'll see it's hoodycbf@[REDACTED]?---Yeah.

10

And I'll come to the request for quote in a moment, but you recall, don't you, that Mr Chahine's nickname was Hoody?---Ah, yes.

And Mr Hadid, that is Barrak Hadid's nickname was Baz?---Yes.

And if we go to the next page, please, you'll see this is a contract schedule for project contract, and you would have seen from the email that it relates to Mount White expansion works.---Yes.

20 And do you recall again that there was works that were involved in this instance involving the expansion of the exit lane at Mount White?---Yes.

So they're examples I take it of the sorts of work that you were responsible in respect of the different heavy vehicle checking stations during your period in the Compliance and Enforcement Branch?---Correct.

30 Can I then take you back to the change in your position in March 2014. Now if we could go, please, to volume 1.1, page 64. And take a moment to read it to yourself. It's actually a three-page document. We can go to the other pages. But it's a letter of offer of employment on 31 – dated 21 March, sorry, 31 March, 2014, and offering you the position of Heavy Vehicle Maintenance and Program Officer within the Compliance Operations Branch of the Safety and Compliance Division.---Okay.

And you accepted that job, didn't you?---Yes.

And if you note on that page, it indicates that you were to negotiate your starting date with your new supervisor, Samer Soliman.---Ah hmm. Yes.

40 So is this the case, that the position that you ultimately obtained was the Heavy Vehicle Maintenance and Program Officer in March 2014?---That's the full-time, that's the – correct.

As an employee.---Yes, correct.

But it's the case, isn't it, that Mr Soliman was your immediate superior? ---Correct.

And do you recall that his position was as the Manager of Heavy Vehicle Programs?---Manager of Heavy Vehicle Programs. Okay. All right, yeah, may have been. That's probably when the restructure potentially – maybe, yes.

But was it at this time that you also applied for the same position that he obtained?---Yes.

And - - -?---Oh, prior to this.

10

So it was leading to this time at which you got the position under him?
---Correct. He had, they finalised the manager role first and then, then, then those roles came in afterwards.

So that you, Mr Steyn and Mr Soliman had all applied for the manager role.
---Correct.

He obtained it.---Correct.

20

And you then obtained this role, which was the Heavy Vehicle Maintenance and Program Officer, directly under Mr Soliman?---Correct.

And it's correct, isn't it, that Mr Steyn was appointed to the same position at almost exactly the same time?---It was the same title, from memory.

But almost exactly the same time, wasn't it?---Yes, yes, that was. Just to keep us there.

30

And if we go to the next page, please, you'll see that as per the letter your salary at that point was \$103,876.---Yes.

Based on you being in year three of USS Grade 9.---Yes.

You'll also see in that document that there's a reference to the RMS's Code of Conduct and Ethics.---Yes.

And if we go over the page, please, you'll see that you signed on 7 April, 2014.---Ah hmm.

40

And you acknowledged as part of that that you'd been provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Ethics and that you'd read and agreed to be bound by it.---Okay.

Now, just pausing there, was your understanding at the time that the change from the Compliance Enforcement Branch to Compliance Operations Branch was just a change of name rather than any real change of substance?---Correct.

And in the new role, starting from this point, was there any change when it came to the level of financial delegation that you had and you had to apply when it came to contracts?---Mmm, I don't remember.

Do you recall there being any time when you were working at the RTA or RMS when it changed that between 50 and 250 – I withdraw that. That below 50 there was one quote, above 50 and up to 250 was two or more, and then beyond 250 a tender process?---That didn't change.

10 And in terms of the actual contract system, CM21 had been well and truly in place before this time.---Yes.

Did that ultimately change over the period of time that you were working now in the Compliance Operations Branch?---It was still there but I remember they introduced other systems as well.

But in terms of the process involving quotes, contract number creation, purchase order creation, then payment of invoices, did that stay the same? ---More or less, yes.

20

THE COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask about Mr Soliman? He was your immediate supervisor.---Correct.

When did he become your immediate supervisor? Do you remember approximately what year?---I think it was 20 – I can't remember. It would have been probably in the - - -

About 2011 or?---No, it would have been I think maybe 2014.

30 Then.---2014, yeah. He would have been, from memory he had been employed prior to this by the RTA or RMS, whatever it was at the time, by Paul Hayes and then I think they had a restructure, this is from memory, and then he applied for that role or he was told, asked to apply for that role and I think Paul Hayes interviewed him and somebody else from recruitment and he was awarded that role, but it would have been around the same time.

About 2014?---2013, maybe late 2013, but it wouldn't have been - - -

Something like that.---Yeah.

40

And for how long did he remain your immediate supervisor?---Oh, up until he, until 2018 I think when we left the RMS.

You would have seen him on a daily basis?---Or sorry, can I correct that? I think he, he had left earlier, a year prior, so yeah.

And was the working situation that you would see him on a daily basis? ---Yeah. I mean at one point we sat next to each other, yeah.

And was his office near where your office was?---He sat next to me.

And so you developed an effective working relationship with him?---Pretty much, yes.

In other words, you didn't have any difficulty working with him that you recall, any particular difficulty?---No, none, not that I remember.

10 And did you from time to time see him outside work, and if so, in what context?---No. The only time I saw him outside work, maybe for a Christmas party or something along those lines.

Only for a?---For a Christmas party or maybe something like a team, like, a Friday afternoon gathering or something along that line,

And if you needed advice, would you turn to him as your immediate supervisor, from time to time?---I'm not sure. What sort of advice? Like I just said - - -

20

Well, did you speak to him during the course of an ordinary day frequently about the work?---Sometimes.

Your work?---Sometimes. I mean he was across it. We developed business plans and, and so he was across all the work that we were doing.

And how did he exercise his supervision over you so far as work was concerned?---How did he exercise his supervision? I mean it went, I mean - - -)

30

Perhaps I'll try and break it down. Were you under his constant supervision or did it not work that way and that you would, in the course of an ordinary day, often work without much oversight by him?---He didn't necessarily micromanage the work. We had a program of works that needed to be delivered and he was, he would have meetings I think almost monthly or -- we sat next to each other so a lot of the times where I needed to update him on a sort of project, works were completed, I would send him images and he would sign off on the purchase order so he knew what was coming through, budgets, he would be aware of what budget's been spent and had to be spent, so that's how it worked over the course of the years.

40

Yes, thank you, Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner. Just on Mr Soliman, I'm suggesting to you the position that he was in, that is as the person directly above you, was as the Manager of Heavy Vehicle Programs. Can you recall who else came above him in the chain of command within the RMS at the time?---At the time I think it was, I think it was Paul Hayes, I think.

And could it be that the next position above Mr Soliman, I'm suggesting he was the Manager Heavy Vehicle Programs, do you recall that he reported to Mr Hayes as the Principal Manager Compliance Systems?---Potentially, yeah, I mean.

10 And do you recall above Mr Hayes, who was next along the line when it came to the chain of command?---Maybe at one point it would have been Peter Wells, maybe other time it would have been the general manager I think for the, for the division. It changed multiple times.

Well, I'm going to suggest it was the General Manager Compliance Operations.---Yes.

Maybe that's what you're referring to.---Yes, yes.

20 Was the person that filled that position, at least for some of your period working in the Compliance Operations Branch, Paul Endycott?
---Sometimes, yeah.

Spelt E-n-d-y-c-o-t-t?---Yeah.

And can you recall if someone else fulfilled that role for some part of your time?---Is this the whole period you're talking about? There was Roger Weeks, there was - - -

30 Well take us through, the period from when you start in March 2014 right through until when you finish up in 2019, Mr Soliman, up until his departure remained your direct supervisor, correct?---Yes.

And when he departed who replaced him?---When he, when Samer - - -

Mr Soliman.---I think it was a gentleman by the name of Mr Sarkar, Saurav.

Saurav Sarkar?---Sarkar, yeah.

40 And as far as Mr Hayes, did he remain in the position that was - - -?---No, Mr Hayes got pushed out by, what's her name, I think it was Melinda, Ms, is there a Bailey, is there a Ms, is there a director Bailey? I think Melinda Bailey. I think. He got pushed out by her, so did Paul Endycott. And then he was replaced by - so Paul Endycott was replaced by Roger Weeks and Paul Hayes was replaced Arnold Jansen.

Sorry, Paul Hayes was replaced by Mr Weeks?---No, Paul Endycott, the general manager, was replaced by Roger Weeks and Paul Hayes was replaced by Arnold Jansen, from memory. I think that's his, I think that's his surname. Arnold Jansen.

And it's the case, isn't it, that in that time then from March 2014 through to Mr Soliman's departure that the person you would turn to most often where you had a particular approval that you needed was him?---Correct.

So that when it came to recommendations that you were making for who a contract would be allocated to, it would be him that you were providing the recommendation to?---Of course, that's my direct supervisor, yes.

10 And as you indicated earlier, when it came to signing off on purchase orders, you would normally propose them and he would normally approve?
---Correct, yeah.

Now, were you aware – I withdraw that. You came from an engineering background?---Correct.

So when it came to doing civil works, works on roads et cetera, you had some understanding of the technical makeup of the work?---Over time I developed that, yes.

20 So you had an expertise based on your education that equipped you in order to understand that way in which the work might be done?---Yeah, over time I've developed a more, a better understanding of, for the civil works but I had a good understanding of the, the technology that was developed to be used, yes.

Did you understand that when it came to Mr Soliman, he actually came from an IT background?---Yeah, I think he worked at Optus, yeah.

30 But to the best of your knowledge had no particular background when it came to construction, civil works, engineering, anything of that nature?
---No.

So did you understand that he was pretty heavily reliant on you when it came to recommendations as to what work needed to be done and how it would be done?---Sometimes, yes.

40 Well, wasn't it the case that you were the one that would be in a position to look at a quote, break down the elements of the work and know what was required and roughly what it might cost?---Yes.

You were in a much better position than Mr Soliman when it came to being able to make that assessment?---Yes, yes.

Now, you've answered some questions already about your understanding of conflicts of interest and corrupt conduct and you've confirmed that within 12 months of starting you had an understanding in terms of what a conflict might mean and corrupt conduct might mean?---I would have had to, most definitely, yes.

Do you recall whether, consistent with the offer of employment that I took you to, you actually read the code of conduct and ethics that was attached to it or not?---No, I don't remember reading it.

Is it the case that whilst in acknowledging and signing your letter of acceptance that you had, there was a document that you received but you didn't actually read it at the time?---Yeah, correct.

- 10 But it's the case, isn't it, that by the time you signed this contract – and if we go back, please, volume 1.1, page 66. By the time of you signing the letter to accept the position on 7 April, 2014, you had already acted corruptly for a considerable period of time?---Yes.

And by that I mean you'd used your position in order to receive kickbacks from contractors in return for them receiving work in your area?---We did the work and, and as, as part of the, the way it worked, I received kickbacks, correct, yes.

- 20 And again also, as far as conflict of interest is concerned, it's correct that by the time of you signing this on 7 April, 2014, you had faced a number of conflicts of interest when it came to the allocation of work to contractor companies where you had a friendship or a family relationship.---Yes. Yes, yes.

And you'd never disclosed any of that.---No.

- 30 And that conduct, both in terms of conflicts of interest and corrupt conduct, had then continued right through until 2019, didn't it?---2018 was probably some of the last contracts we gave out. But, yeah.

Do you recall in early 2019 you became aware that there was some investigation going on in respect of Mr Soliman?---I think it was 2018.

Do you recall at the time being interviewed and being asked to give an account of your dealings with Mr Soliman and what you knew of him? ---Yes, I think I was interviewed, yes.

- 40 When that occurred, did that make some difference to the way you were conducting yourself?---Well to (not transcribable) I mean?

Well, I mean you've indicated that you believed perhaps the last contracts you gave out were 2018.---Maybe. I can't, from, vaguely, vaguely remember, yeah.

I'm just wondering what was it – I withdraw that. On your account, before the time at which search warrants were executed at your address, which I'm going to suggest was 18 June, 2019, you seemed to be suggesting that you

had stopped acting corruptly.---No, I didn't suggest that. I don't remember if we gave out any contracts during that period.

But just allied to that question, can you recall, perhaps whether you might have changed the way you related to the contractors and the way in which you received kickbacks from them once you became aware of the investigation into Mr Soliman?---Am I aware of any changes that have been made? Is that what you're asking?

10 Well, did you make any changes in the way you were dealing with the contractors and the way you were receiving kickbacks from them once you became aware of the investigation into Mr Soliman?---No, I don't recall any -- no, I don't, I don't know.

THE COMMISSIONER: What was your customary method in dealing with contractors who paid kickbacks? Just you'll be asked for some details later, but in general terms throughout the period up to, whether it was late 2018 or '19, can you just describe for me the essential elements of the method whereby contracts were awarded, invoicing and suchlike matters.---Mmm, it
20 just depended on the type of work, whether they'd be, they'd done the work prior to that so they knew what's the, you know, what sort of prices they would charge or it was new works. It varied. Discussions probably were, were, were had if they were new works.

So if I could just interrupt you. I think what you're signalling, tell me if this is right, it depends on what arrangements were required, depending upon the work. In other words, there are categories.---Yeah, correct, there are.

Well, could you just outline what, firstly, were the general categories - - -?
30 ---Okay, so - - -

- - - associated with contracting work which resulted in some payment of benefit to yourself.---So if you're doing fabrication works, if you were doing maintenance works on new items, you were doing asphaltting works, you're doing brand-new civil works, you're doing basically gate works, overhead signage. It all kind of varied. If they had done the work previously and they knew what the rates were, what the prices were, whereas, as opposed to a brand-new RFT that included new maintenance items, they would, would have a meeting to go through the individual items
40 and see what that, what it would entail. It just kind of varied.

I can understand there'd be some variation depending upon the work.
---Yeah.

What were the common elements involved in the contracts associated with the various types of works you've just identified?---They would provide quotations through the emailing system. Quotations were then received. I mean, prior to that, RFT or an RFQ was sent with the contracts. CM21

numbered the, obviously, on there, on the, on the, on these documents, on the documents. Quotes received. Sometimes prior to that meetings would have occurred with the contractors once we received the quotations, and any additional information required. The purchase orders were put together with all the additional information required in terms of contract documents, send through the Equip system or, prior to that, it was manually done to the supervisor that would review the documents. There would, a requestor would be used, primarily myself, sometimes somebody else. And then the approver would sign the purchase order, send back to the Finance Team.
10 Afterwards it was used, the Equip system was used, purchase order created and sent to the contractor.

When did that system finish - - -?---The Equip - - -

- - - that method you've just described?---When did it finish? I don't remember when the last contract was, was given, to be honest. It could have been end of '18, could have been early '19. I don't remember.

20 Yes anyway you're just taking us through the steps.---Yes.

Meetings, quotations received.---Yep.

Purchase orders.---Purchase orders received, yeah, created. So do you want me to elaborate further on those?

30 Well, in the course of the steps typically taken with most forms of work, how was provision made for the margin or amounts that would find their way through to you?---The majority of the time it would, after the work had been completed, the contractors would calculate the costs associated with the works. They would remove any additional items or any items such as taxes required, and then at various periods, either I would transfer, you know, like we mentioned earlier, or cash was provided or other benefits provided.

The benefits could be in the form of cash to you, is that right?---Correct.

Paid by contractors.---Correct.

40 And if it wasn't cash, it could be other forms of, other - - -?---Could be a cheque.

- - - forms of benefit?---Could be a cheque, could be, it could be, could be a cheque. Earlier it was bank transfers and very rarely it was, you know, like a phone or a computer or something along those lines or, you know, works.

What about goods and services?---Goods and services, it wasn't, it wasn't as, it wasn't as often as the other.

What sort of goods or benefits would flow to you from, via contractors as a result of the contracts being awarded to contractors?---Goods or, goods or benefits?

Again, we're not going into the detail, I just want to understand.---It could be, for example, it could be items that I'd maybe potentially use. Could be gifts. It could be works on a house. It could be - - -

10 A house of yours, you mean?---Yeah, one of the houses that was for rent. But that was minimal, yeah, in comparison.

Yes. With cheques, were they payable to you or to corporate entities or - - - ?

---Corporate entities, yep, yep.

Such as?---Dealerships for vehicles.

20 So this would be cheques made payable to third parties?---Third parties, correct.

I see.---From an entity that was, belonged to the contractor.

And in terms of the amounts of moneys received either directly or indirectly by you, how were the contracts or the invoices adjusted to make provision for a margin that would be paid out to you?---How were they adjusted?

30 At what stage of the process?---The majority weren't adjusted. They were basically to market value. That's what we tried to do. Sometimes, very rarely, were they adjusted.

Well - - -?---I mean, sorry, you can correct me if I'm wrong.

You're not denying, are you, that you received corrupt payments through the contracting system?---No, I've just admitted that, yes.

Yes.---Previously I have admitted that.

40 And how would the amount of, call them kickbacks, how were the amounts determined?---So once the, as I said previously, once the work has been done, the contractors would calculate the cost for the work to be done and remove any taxes that had to be paid and any additional items that need to be removed based on the costs, and then they would calculate the percentages and that's how they formed the, the figure that they would give me.

They'd calculate the percentages, which would include a margin for yourself.---Yeah, well, based on the profit they, based on the profit, they treated me, some of these contractors, as, as partner to them, and then the

profit that they had, was remaining from the body of work they had done, it would be, a percentage of that profit would be given to me.

And discussions took place between you and the contractors - - -?
---Sometimes - - -

- - - as to the amounts of the margin or kickbacks that would come to you. Is that right?---That, that, that, that discussion kind of happened early on and then it just kind of remained as, it changed kind of at some time but - - -

10

Mr Dubois, you realise these matters we're discussing will be dealt with in greater detail.---Yeah, I - - -

I'm just simply trying to get an overview at the moment.---That's fine. I've gone into the details in previous sessions.

All right. Thank you. Yes, Mr Downing.

20 MR DOWNING: Mr Dubois, it's correct that once you were working in the Compliance Operations Branch in this position under Mr Soliman in 2014, you and Mr Steyn worked closely together?---Yes.

You'd worked together reasonably closely going back to 2011 when you'd been moved into the Compliance and Enforcement Branch and seated next to him?---Not initially, no.

But it's the case, isn't it, that from March 2014 you were both effectively in the same position working next to each other?---Correct.

30 And from that point you certainly worked closely together. Correct?---Yes.

At some point between March 2014 and the middle of 2019, did you become aware of Mr Steyn acting in some way corruptly himself?
---Yes.

First of all, did you become aware of him awarding contracts to companies that were controlled by friends or family members?---Was I aware of him awarding - - -

40 Contracts to companies that were controlled by his friends or family members?---Between 2014 and 2019? Yes.

And which companies or friends can you identify as him awarding contracts to?---I think it was AA Steel and there was the, I think there was the Marty, Martin - - -

Sorry, was that Mr Duchesne?---Yes.

And that's M&M Inspections - - -?---Yes.

- - - that was doing quality checks.---That's the one. I think he had a previous, previous relationship with Lancomm I think.

That's Mr Rahme?---Mr Rahme, R-a-h-m-e I think it was. I think he also may have previously known Steve Masters maybe, I'm not sure, maybe he has, maybe he didn't, I'm not sure.

10 That was the principal of S A Masters Electrical?---Maybe, yeah.

Now, first of all, how did you become aware that he had any previous association or relationship with those people, was it based on observation or something that he told you?---He had told me. It initially was observation but he had told me afterwards.

That is that he knew those people or had a pre-existing relationship with them?---Yes.

20 Did you also learn that he had obtained some benefit from some or all of those contractors during the period that they were doing work for him? ---I kind of assumed so.

Well, what was the basis of that assumption?---I think he mentioned to me something that they had done work on his house.

And who can you recall him mentioning to you that - - -?---I think AA Steel did some work, maybe Steve Masters did some work, maybe I think Lancomm may have done some work with electrical, I'm not sure. But I do
30 remember AA Steel and maybe Steve doing some work there, Steve Masters.

But is that something that Mr Steyn mentioned to you in the course of your relationship?---Yes. Are you talking just about those contractors or there's others?

Well, were there others that you're aware of that he had a relationship with and were doing RMS work?---Oh, I mean the other contractors such as
40 contractors that were managed by Barrak and Chahid, yeah, Hassan Alameddine.

You're referring there to contractors that you had the initial relationship with.---Correct, yes.

But in terms of those separate to you that you understood that Mr Steyn had a relationship with, I think you've identified Lancomm, M&M Inspections, AA Steel and S A Masters Electrical. Is that correct?---Yes. I don't recall others, but yeah it may have others, yeah.

And did Mr Steyn say something to you to indicate that they had been doing things for him when it came to work on his house?---Yeah. I remember him mentioned something like a beam at his house or something along those lines, yeah.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: You said before that you became aware that Mr Steyn was acting corruptly, you understood from what he had said to you that he was deriving personal benefits through the contracting on behalf of the RTA, later RMS. Is that right?---Well, I was – sorry, I don't understand your question.

You've given evidence that you became aware of Mr Steyn acting corruptly.---Yes.

20 And acting corruptly embraces the receipt of kickbacks or unlawful margins and you're aware that he was engaged in that sort of activity. Is that right? ---I couldn't be sure that he was receiving kickbacks from the ones he knew but I knew he was receiving kickbacks from the contracts I initially knew. Correct.

Well, in what way was he acting corruptly to your knowledge?---These contractors were, some of them were family members, some of them were - - -

I'm sorry, I can't hear you.---Some of them were family members, some of them were people that he knew prior.

30 Yes, but what made you aware of the fact as you've now told this hearing twice that he had been acting corruptly? What information is that based on?---Well, there's a conflict of interest to start off with.

What else?---And he told me that - - -

40 We're talking about corruption in terms of corrupt transactions. What did you know about his activities?---All I could, all I knew was that the, some of the contractors did work on his house, the ones that he was dealing with, but I was definitely certain of work getting done on his property from other contractors.

And you knew, did you not, that he was organising the contracting system at RMS to his benefit?---Yes.

Now what sort of benefits, apart from the house I mean?---Oh, later on there was a vehicle but, you know, there was gifts and - - -

What vehicle?---We're going to go into that detail now? Okay, C63.

Did he tell you about that car?---Ah hmm.

And did you see him driving that car?---I actually didn't see him driving the car but I'm one million per cent sure that that car was through a, a bribe, kickback because I helped organise it, okay, so - - -

Were there any others that you were aware of?---Mainly his house work.

10 Mainly but not exclusively. You're not - - -?---The ones I knew of - - -

You're not pretending, are you, that you don't know anything about him receiving benefits through rigging contracts?---Whether he received benefit from AA Steel in terms of cash money, I don't know. I never was told about that, okay, and I, I haven't read the transcripts so I don't know what he's received.

20 Who told you about him receiving - - -?---I don't. I'm just assuming - - -
- - - corrupt margins?---Sorry?

What was your source of knowledge of him receiving corrupt margins through the contracting?---I didn't say he received margins. All I said was the contractors that he worked with AA Steel, Steve Masters he had told me they had done work on his house. Whether he received financial benefit from them, I don't know. He had never told me that but I knew he had received benefits through other contractors at his house and a, and a vehicle.

30 And what was your involvement in the vehicle that he obtained?---Can you just be a bit more specific did I?

You said a moment ago you were instrumental in helping him get the car. ---Oh, he asked me to organise it for him, yes.

How did you do that?---How did I do that. Well, we, I'd arranged for contractors that did the work for his program to pay a dealership for the vehicle - - -

And do you remember the amount?--- - - - on his request.

40 The money paid for the car?---I think it was 100 and, I can't remember, 120, 130, I can't remember.

Something of that order.---Something like that, yeah.

Thank you. Yes, Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner. Just dealing with those that you've identified that you were aware Mr Steyn had a relationship with and

he was giving work to, one of them you identified was M&M Inspections, that is Martin Duchesne.---Yes.

But I don't think you identified him as someone that you understood had done any work on the house.---No, not him.

But is it the case the others, that is AA Steel, Lancomm and S A Masters you understood they had done some work on his house.---From what I recall he's told me, yeah.

10

Now, through your working relationship and then ultimately your friendship with Mr Steyn, did you learn that he was embarking on some work on a property that he owned?---Sorry, can I add to that. There was also the design work for his house.

Well, I'll come to that in a moment but I take it through speaking to him from time to time you learnt that he was planning to do some work on his house.---Yes.

20 And you were aware that he owned a property in [REDACTED]?---Yes.

And did he indicate to you that he was planning to either renovate or perhaps completely knock down and rebuild?---Correct.

And did you give him some advice about what might be the better way to proceed with what he was thinking about doing?---No, I don't think I gave him advice but I, I remember going to his property one time, he, he took me to his property and showed me the original house and what he wanted to do with the house, yeah.

30

All up, on how many occasions do you believe you've been to his house in [REDACTED]?---Not many times, maybe four or five times.

But one of those involved going there at a time when the old house was there with a view to you having a look at what was there?---Correct, yeah.

And did you express some views then about perhaps the pros and cons of knocking down and rebuilding or renovating?---I can't remember to be honest, yeah.

40

But you made some reference beyond the contractors that Mr Steyn had an existing relationship with, the contractors that you had a relationship with ultimately did some things on his house as well?---Correct, yeah.

And just pausing there, can you identify which of those contractors you are aware did work in respect of – either did work or paid for work in respect of his house?---Yeah. So it would have been Barrak, Chahid and Hassan Alameddine.

And how did that come about? That is that they became involved in either doing work or paying for work?---It was just over a period of time. So they were doing work on his program and then he would request that they allocate certain money for things that he needed for his house.

Would you be involved in organising them to do things or was it Mr Steyn communicating with them?---Both. Communicating with them, sorry, in what, what regard. Sorry, I've got to word my, word it carefully.

10

Now, separate to – I withdraw that. As far as the contractors you've identified, that is Hassan Alameddine, Barrak Hadid or Chahid Chahine, did you understand they were doing work or paying for work?---Correct.

Ah - - -?---Sorry?

Did you understand they were doing work or paying for work or perhaps both?---Both. Both, both.

20 And were you ever present when they were at the house doing work?---Oh, maybe once or twice. Maybe once or twice yeah - - -

And did they speak to you, that is either Barrak Hadid – sorry, I withdraw that – Barrak Hadid, Chahid Chahine or Hassan Alameddine, about what they were doing on the house and in effect how it was being paid for? ---Yeah, of course.

30 And what did you understand was the arrangement based on what they told you?---So, a lot of the times they would get contractors to do the work and they would pay for it.

They would pay for it?---Correct.

Now, going back a step, do you also recall that separate to either Barrak Hadid, Chahid Chahine or Hassan Alameddine, that someone may have assisted Mr Steyn when it came to design as regards to the house?---Yes.

And who was that?---That was GEC Consulting.

40 That's Mr Sangari's company?---Correct.

And how do you understand that Mr Sangari became involved in assisting with the design when it came to Mr Steyn's house?---I don't recall exactly but I think I, I may have mentioned to Craig, because I, I, I think I may have used Ghazi's services prior to that at one of the jobs, maybe at Kankool, for an office furniture design.

That is that GEC had been a contractor for the RMS?---Yeah, they had been, I think they did one job or maybe more than one job, I'd engaged them for, for, for layouts to be done for an office interior, a refurbishment. So, and I knew that they had, they, because I, I think I I'd met them through my cousin who was in the building industry.

That's Nabil?---That's Nabil, yeah, correct. So I knew that they actually did work on a lot of homes.

10 So residential, separate to commercial-type work?---Correct, yeah. They, correct. So, I may have suggested for Craig to talk to, to GEC or maybe, may have also, maybe initiated, initiated or organised a meeting for him go and, to talk to them to see what he can and can't do because property is one of those things where, depending on the council, that it, that it resides in, they, the engineers or architects can tell you what, what you can't do with the property, yeah.

Do you recall attending a meeting with Mr Steyn and someone or more than one person at the GEC offices?---Yeah, I, I would have went with him for that initial meeting.
20

And do you recall who was present at the meeting?---It was, would have been me, Craig and maybe we sat down with Ghazi initially to talk through what he was trying to achieve with the property.

You indicated earlier that the connection, there was also a connection with Ghazi Sangari via I think Ahmad Wehbe.---Yeah, he may have sat down at the meeting. I can't remember.

30 But did you understand, then, that GEC was doing the design and planning works in respect of Mr Steyn's house?---Yes, yes.

Did you understand whether that was being paid for or how it was being arranged?---No, it wasn't paid for.

How do you know?---I'm pretty certain.

Well, based on what?---Because they didn't get paid by Craig. They were, basically he asked me to see if I can give them more work to compensate for the work they were doing for his house.
40

And who's that that asked you that?---Craig.

Sorry, Craig asked you to give them more work?---Oh, see if there's anything else that we can give them to - - -

All right. Now - - -?---That's as far as I know.

Okay.---He's paid them secretly, I don't know. But from what I know, he hasn't paid them.

Over the period that you and Mr Steyn were working together, did he ever, in plain words say to you that he was receiving benefits from any of the contractor companies he was dealing with?---No. He was very secretive like that, no.

10 No. But is it the conclusion you drew based on, first of all, your observations of him and his relationships?---Correct.

And secondly, based on what you knew from your own contractors who were doing things for him?---Correct.

Now, going back to Mr Soliman for a moment.---Ah hmm.

20 To your knowledge was he aware, first of all, of your conduct as regards to the various contractors that you were dealing with in that period 2014 to 2019?---Sorry, can you just elaborate a little bit on that?

Sure. You described to us that in that period, first of all, that you were, many of the contracts you gave out involved a conflict of interest.---Ah hmm.

That is, that you had a personal relationship or a family relationship with many of the contractors.---Correct.

30 Secondly, you've acknowledged that you acted corruptly in the sense that you were receiving kickbacks from those who were receiving contract work.---Correct.

To your knowledge, was Mr Soliman aware of either you acting via a conflict of interest or corruptly during that period?---Yeah, I think he insinuated that in a meeting we had with myself and Craig.

When, as best you can recall, did that meeting occur?---I don't remember. Maybe 2017, 20, 2017, 2018. It was around that time.

40 So late in the piece, when it came to - - -?---Yeah, I can't remember. 2016, 2017. I don't remember exactly when, yep.

But do you recall who else was present at that meeting?---Yeah, Craig, myself and Samer.

THE COMMISSIONER: Whereabouts did the meeting take place?---The meeting took place in the Octagon.

In the - - -?---In the Octagon Building that we were in. In the office.

MR DOWNING: So the Octagon being, is that the old building where you had worked as part of the ITSP?---Correct.

So not the place where you worked as part of the Compliance Operations, Compliance - - -?---No. We had moved. The whole branch had moved. The whole branch had moved, yeah.

Sorry, back to the Octagon Building?---Correct.

10

So when you were in the Compliance Operations Branch, the entire branch moved to the Octagon?---Correct.

So then go back to the meeting. I know you've been unsure as to the precise date, but you say it's a meeting involving Mr Soliman, you and Mr Steyn. ---Yes.

Do you recall who called the meeting?---I remember we sat in the, in Paul Hayes's old office, and he had said that he had been approached by Saurav.

20

Sorry, Mr Soliman?---Soliman had been approached by Saurav, who had been approached by Paul Hayes. They had just had a meeting prior - - -

Just slow down for me.---Sorry.

So Mr Soliman indicates he'd been approached by Paul Hayes.---By, By Saurav.

Saurav Sarkar.---Correct.

30

Who had been approached by Paul Hayes.---Correct.

About what?---So prior to that, they, they were all in a meeting prior to that. So Samer, Saurav Sarkar and Paul Hayes had been in, in a meeting at the building adjacent to the Octagon. There's a, there's a café with a meeting facility. And then he was approached by Saurav. This is what he was telling us. Was approached by Saurav Sarkar, telling him that Paul Hayes believes that Craig and I, or maybe, I'm not sure, he may have mentioned me or Craig in the same sentence, I don't remember, that we were working or dealing with contractors that were our friends. And then he called for a meeting with me and Craig.

40

So you attend the meeting.---Yes.

He relays that, in effect, it's been raised with him that, an allegation that either you alone or you and Craig as well - - -?---Correct.

- - - are giving out contract work to friends?---Yes.

What did he say about that?---He said something along the lines of, not word for word, but he doesn't really care. He knows how much work we, we deliver. He asked something along the lines of are there any, is there any evidence of any transactions and we didn't respond to that. And he said, "Look, as long as you keep your paperwork and you cover your backside then just," you know, but something along, along, along those lines.

10 Did you infer from what he was saying that provided that you delivered the work and had your paperwork in order, he didn't want to know more?
---Pretty much that's what I understood. That's how I took it.

THE COMMISSIONER: What did he say again? He asked were any payments involved, or something to that effect?---Something to that effect.

Who was he directing that to, to you and - - -?---To me and Craig.

Huh?---To myself and Craig.

20 And doing the best you can, what words did he use, how did he put it?---"Is there," – something along to the effect of, "Is there any evidence of any transfers," or something like this.

And who responded?---I don't remember who responded. I can't – I think Craig was quiet, I may have nodded it off and said, "No."

You said no?---Potentially, maybe, I don't remember the exact back and forth.

30 But you answered in the negative in some way.---Correct, correct.

Did Craig also answer in the negative?---I don't remember.

He didn't put his hand up and say, "Yes, I've been receiving payments and benefits?"---No, he didn't.

No. And was that the end of the meeting?---Yeah, it was only a very quick meeting and, yeah, that was it.

40 Was Mr Hayes standing there perplexed about that or did he say anything after you and Mr Craig had made your response to Mr Soliman?---No, we didn't see anything that alluded that from Paul Hayes or Saurav.

Mr Hayes was not present at this meeting though.---No.

Or was he?---No.

No, he was not.---No.

Were you surprised that Mr Soliman was so casual or offhanded about in effect being satisfied with your negative answer and no further inquiries being made?---We were surprised by the whole question, to be honest.

Were you surprised at the fact that Soliman didn't seem intent on drilling down to make sure that everything was in accordance with proper practice? He just left it at that, according to your account?---That was pretty much – we, we hadn't had a conversation like that after that.

10

Well, that much have given you some comfort to know that he wasn't going to cause any trouble.---I don't know how I felt at the time, to be honest. So at that time - - -

You must have been relieved that he was not, as it were, going to carry out some detained investigation to make sure that everything was being done properly.---It wasn't a good feeling, to be honest, so we had, it was, it was a, it was a, the anxiety was through the roof. So you know, you're asking me how I felt about Samer Soliman, I wasn't really thinking about Samer Soliman, I was thinking about the anxiety that I was feeling at the time. The pressure from all those years of contracts and the potential for those is something that has affected me for many years. That's how, that's what I was thinking about.

20

And when you speak of all the pressure, what were the circumstances that did create that sort of pressure over the years on you?---Well, there have been cycles of this, you know, so I wanted to leave many, multiple times.

30

Was it the pressure of trying to ensure that any corrupt dealings were not discovered or detected?---That was one. Pressure from other contractors for more work, pressure from there where they initiate work and then, you know, without asking us to, for them, asking us to initiate work and then purchasing equipment or they're in debt and they need to work and, you know, the community. There was many, many things that, that contribute to that anxiety and stress, so - - -

40

Well, to avoid detection you had to carefully organise any corrupt dealings so that there wouldn't be any risk of detection, I'd imagine.---It was too late for that. It was too obvious.

In any event, coming back to the meeting you we're talking about that you had with Mr Craig and Mr Soliman, by what Mr Soliman said after he posed those questions to you, did you feel relieved that he was not going to be a source of any likely difficulty for you in terms of detecting whether or not the practices were proper or not?---No, I didn't feel any relief.

Hmm?---I didn't feel any relief.

You didn't?---No.

It became pretty clear to you from you say he said that he was not going to go on some investigation path?---That wasn't the issue. The issue, somebody had mentioned something, it was, it was one of those things that every couple of days something could, could occur that could trigger something. It just took one phone call from somebody, or a complaint. So it was, it was an ongoing, ugly situation.

10 MR DOWNING: But on ongoing, ugly situation from which you received very significant financial benefit over a significant numbers of years, correct?---Correct.

Now, just going back to that meeting, did you have any discussion with Mr Steyn after it was over about what had been raised with you?---Of course I would have spoken to him but I don't remember what the conversation was to be honest. We may have just – I can't remember, yeah.

20 Was it the case that by that time you had a fair inkling in yourself about what Mr Steyn was doing?---Yeah, of course but I, I think I may have mentioned to Mr Steyn that, I think a few days later we, we, we weren't too sure if Samer was telling the truth, if it's something that he is maybe just trying to get a reaction from, was he doing the same thing. I wasn't too sure, yeah.

So you wondered as to the genuineness of what he was reporting to you about the suggestion that you had been working with friends?---I was trying to make sense of it to be honest.

30 But at that point, had you ever disclosed to Craig the nature of your arrangement with the various contractors?---No.

Did you have a belief though that he was probably aware?---Well, he, sorry, I, I, I, you need to say a little bit more.

By this point, and you've indicated the meeting you believe could have been 2016/2017.---Yeah.

40 By this point a number of your own contractors had been doing work for Craig?---Yes.

And had been paying for things related to the work on his house?---Yes.

So you had a pretty clear idea that he was acting corruptly?---Yes.

And I take it that you would have assumed, given that the relationship he then had with your contractors, that he would have had some fair idea about

the way you were conducting yourself?---He told me initially, “I know what’s going on here, these are your friends.” That’s, that’s how it started.

Did you have some view at the time that, between you and Craig, there was a fair degree of trust that no one was going to spill the beans on each other? ---Oh, well, it wasn’t in his interest and it wasn’t in mine. So, because he would, if I spilled the beans, he would, it was double-edged sword.

In effect, you could have brought each other down?---Pretty much.

10

But is it the case that after that meeting with Mr Soliman, nothing further gets raised with you from anyone higher up in the RMS food chain?---No.

So, whether it was genuine or not, what he had reported to you, in terms of what Mr Sarkar’s concern was, or Mr Hayes’ concern, it didn’t go anywhere?---No.

20

And it’s the case, isn’t it, that you continued acting in the same way after that meeting?---Well, just the work kept increasing. It kept, you know, things needed to get done and, and we just had a system in place.

Well, the work got done but also you received benefits from the contractors who were doing the work?---Yes. I have already said that, yes.

30

Now, the Commissioner touched on this with you earlier, but as far as your dealings with contractors, it’s the case, isn’t it, that from very soon after your commencement at the RMS – sorry, the RTA as it then was – you were giving out contracts to multiple companies controlled by friends and relatives?---Potentially, yeah.

When you say potentially, you did.---I don’t, I don’t remember if it was very early on, if was halfway through the piece, to three quarters, I don’t remember.

Well, I’m going to suggest to you that after your commencement in early 2009, certainly by 2010, you were awarding contracts to companies controlled by friends or relatives.---That potentially could – yeah. Makes sense.

40

And you’ve already confirmed that within 12 months you knew that it was improper to act in that way?---Yep.

Was it also the case that by 2010, acknowledge your commencement in early 2009, that you were receiving benefits in some form from contractors?---Twenty, sorry, can you - - -

2010.---2010, yes.

And I'll go through in some detail when we get to individual contractors but this is correct, isn't it, that some of the benefits you received in cash?
---2010, maybe it would have been cheques or transfers at the time.

Is your recollection that in early days it was cheques or transfers?
---Potentially, yeah. Maybe. And then shortly after there would have been some cash. Probably a combination of the two.

10 But is your best recollection that, in the early days, the way in which you received benefits was transfers or cheques?---Correct.

And you've indicated already that it was that practice I think that Mr Goldberg had raised a concern with you about - - ?---Correct.

- - - leading to some changes in company arrangements.---Correct.

You've confirmed that you received some cash.---Yes.

20 And it's correct, isn't it, that over the years at times you received quite substantial sums of cash?---Yes.

And is it the case that when you received cash you would keep it at home in a safe or in some other location?---Correct. At home, at home in a safe.

And what address are you referring to?---It was [REDACTED], and then the other one, which I don't want to say on live because of the danger.

30 Well, [REDACTED], was that an address you were living at with your family?---Yes.

And was there a safe located there?---Yes.

And a later location, I won't identify the address for the moment, but that had a safe as well?---Okay, yep.

And you stored cash in that?---Yes.

40 Now, as well as the EFTs, cheques and cash, it's the case, isn't it, that at certain times contractors gave you debit cards, which you were able to use?
---Yes, twice, yeah. On two occasions, yeah.

You can confirm it was two?---It may have been more, but from what I remembered, it was two occasions.

And were those contractors – well, first, sorry, let me withdraw that. You used those debit cards to either withdraw cash or to make payments for things.---Correct.

And who were the contractors you recall giving you the debit cards?---I think from memory one was an ANZ card, which was with Chahid Chahine, and then the other one was with, I think it was St George, with Barrak Hadid.

But provided either by Mr Hadid or Mr Chahine?---Correct.

And you used those quite extensively when you needed things, either needed cash or you needed to pay for something.---Yeah, sometimes, yep.

10

THE COMMISSIONER: Just in relation to the cash, a great amount of the cash, I take it, was secured in, in the safes to which you refer.---Correct.

And the amounts of money, from time to time, in those safes were in very large sums of money, I take it.---Sometimes, yes.

And from your knowledge, what sort of amounts of money were stored in the safe?---It varied from different times. It's hard - - -

20

What was the maximum amount at any one time?---Over a million.

And was that cash delivered to the premises by contractors, the premises where you lived?---Yes.

They'd deliver the cash personally?---Yes.

And then you'd take it from them?---Yes.

And store it in a safe.---Yes.

30

And once the money had been stored, did you, from time to time have access to it?---I didn't really kind of use, I didn't really, yeah, I had to store it, yes.

These safes, to hold such large amounts of money, I take it, were not just ordinary domestic safes, they were very secure safes, is that right?---It's, it's a - - -

40

High security.---High, higher than standard, correct.

Can you describe the type of safe you're now referring to?---It's the sort of safe that is, has thicker walls, fire-rated, just a more secure safe.

And you required to have a safe with that level of security by reason of the volumes of cash that were still there from time to time?---I didn't buy the safe for the, for the money. I had previously bought that safe for firearms. Handguns specifically.

I see.---Okay.

But you did require particular safety precautions given the volumes of cash from time to time located in them.---I couldn't put them in the backyard. It doesn't, but I just had the safe there, so I just used the safe.

10 Plainly, given the amounts of money stored there, you would need to have it well secured so that, given the amount of the money, it should not be put at risk as it were, to somebody else intervening.---Yeah, well, it didn't seem to matter later on but, yeah.

Yes.

MR DOWNING: Commissioner, just so that we are aware of what address that we're referring to, and I note Mr Dubois's concern, it might just be appropriate for a moment that we take that evidence just in closed court.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Just pardon me a moment. Was there a reference to a location?

MR DOWNING: There was. There's been one address that you've confirmed already, and I think you can confirm that again if you could, Mr - - -?---[REDACTED].

In - - -?---In [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. And you say there was a safe there.---Yes.

30 And there were sums of cash that you kept stored there.---Yeah, correct.

And is it the case that with that address, were there large sums? Are we talking about the million dollars you referred to - - -?---No, no, it was less than that there, yeah.

But there was another address which you were concerned about revealing? ---Yes.

40 And it's in respect of that that I'd seek that we just take that evidence briefly in closed court, Commissioner. I think Mr Ishak - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Are you suggesting that it be suppressed?

MR DOWNING: I am.

THE COMMISSIONER: Well, it's a question if that can be identified. But perhaps I'll make a direction under section 112 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act that there is to be no publication or

communication in any form of the name or location of any premises at which the evidence indicates cash moneys were stored by Mr Dubois.

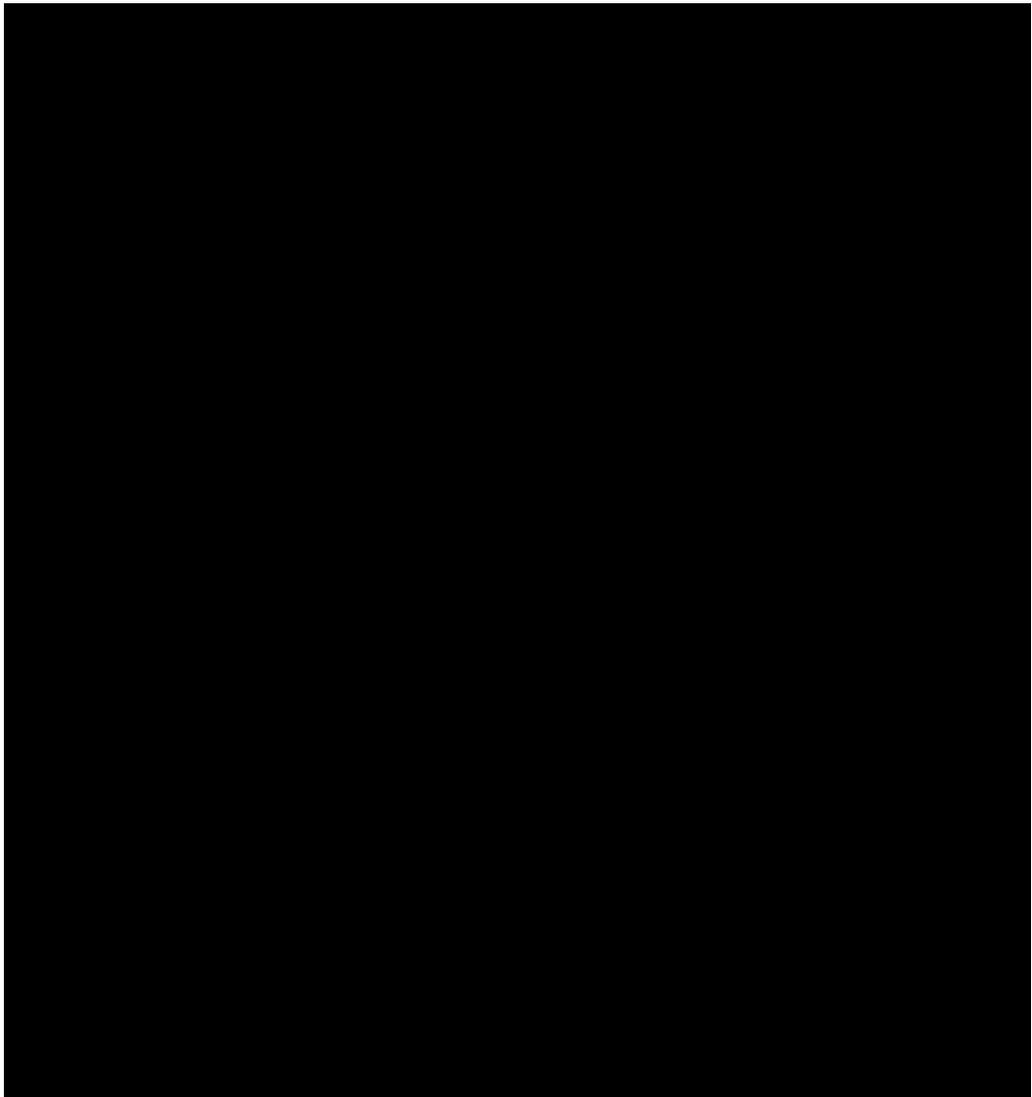
SUPPRESSION ORDER: DIRECTION UNDER SECTION 112 OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ACT THAT THERE IS TO BE NO PUBLICATION OR COMMUNICATION IN ANY FORM OF THE NAME OR LOCATION OF ANY PREMISES AT WHICH THE EVIDENCE INDICATES CASH MONEYS WERE STORED BY MR DUBOIS.

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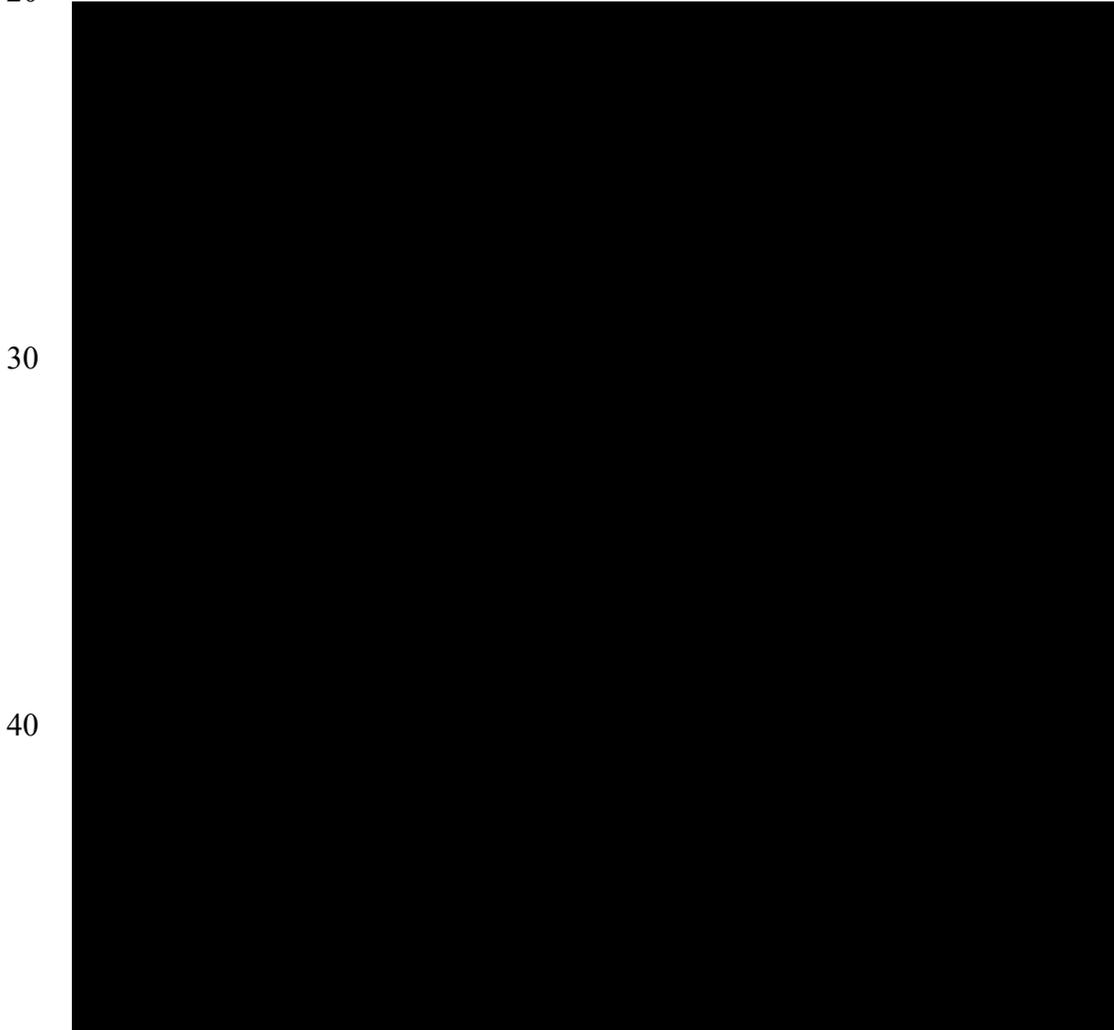


THE COMMISSIONER: Then in the last question and answer, which referred to the location of the premises and the residents or persons named, such evidence is subject to a direction I now make. That is to say that there is to be no publication or communication of any evidence dealing with those matters unless and until further order is made. In relation to both that direction under section 112 and the previous one I made, information of

course can be communicated by Commission officers as may be necessary for the purpose of the Commission's functions.

SUPPRESSION ORDER: IN THE LAST QUESTION AND ANSWER, WHICH REFERRED TO THE LOCATION OF THE PREMISES AND THE RESIDENTS OR PERSONS NAMED, SUCH EVIDENCE IS SUBJECT TO A DIRECTION THAT THERE IS TO BE NO PUBLICATION OR COMMUNICATION OF ANY
10 **EVIDENCE DEALING WITH THOSE MATTERS UNLESS AND UNTIL FURTHER ORDER IS MADE. IN RELATION TO BOTH THAT DIRECTION UNDER SECTION 112 AND THE PREVIOUS ONE I MADE, INFORMATION OF COURSE CAN BE COMMUNICATED BY COMMISSION OFFICERS AS MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION'S FUNCTIONS.**

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.



30

40

Was there also one, though, beneath, one safe under another?---Correct.
There was built into the ground, yes.

So there was one located above the ground and one beneath the ground?
---Correct.

And you've given evidence that you, at some stage, had in the vicinity of a million dollars or perhaps more in the safe?---Correct.

10 Was that at the location that we're now describing?---Correct.

And at what point in time do you say the sum involved was something in the vicinity of a million dollars?---Towards the end.

Commissioner, there are some photographs that I'd like to show Mr Dubois in respect of this, but I would just like a moment to check whether the photographs are marked with anything which would reveal the address, and I want to make sure that they don't.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, very well. We'll take a short adjournment.

MR DOWNING: Could we just have a very short adjournment. I'll make that inquiry just to make sure before anything is shown.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, very well. I'll adjourn for five minutes. If you need longer than that, let me know.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner.

30

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

[3.25pm]

MR DOWNING: Thank you for the time, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Mr Dubois, I want to have you shown a photograph. You've been describing a safe located in the garage area. You also
40 indicated that there was one located on top of another one.---Correct.

So one was built into the floor of the garage?---Yes.

If we could please bring up the photograph. Now, it's a little bit blurry because you'll see it's a still.---Oh, yeah.

But do we see a safe on the left-hand side?---Correct, yep.

Close to where you're standing.---Yep.

And then it looks like am form of cupboard to the right.---Correct.

10 Is that the safe in the garage that you're referring to?---So where the gentleman is standing on the right, there is one safe under, it's, and then the other, where I was standing here, in the robe, there's a safe there and there's a safe underneath that. Now, that safe, they're both gun safes. Actually, no, this one's a gun safe, the one on the left, and there's a safe underneath that that had the money that I'm referring to and then the other one on the right-hand side had a little bit of money in that as well. And that, so the gun safe was installed there by Hassan Alameddine, just underneath there.

THE COMMISSIONER: So the million dollars in cash that you referred to, I take it, was located in the safe beneath the - - -?---Beneath, correct.

Beneath the safe you see in the photograph?---Yeah. And sometimes the other safe on the right-hand side had quite a bit of money into it but, yeah.

20 What sort of volumes of money in that safe?---I think there was 100,000 in there. Sometimes there would be a little bit more, 100, and 260, 200,000.

Thank you.

MR DOWNING: And going through them in order, is it the safe on the left nearest to you that was installed by Mr Alameddine?---The one, the, the standing one, yeah, correct. It was his idea actually.

30 And you say that there was one underneath it into the concrete?---Correct, yep.

Did he install that or did someone else?---No, he didn't install that. That was done, he helped me purchase that actually.

40 Did he give you some advice about installing something in the floor?---I think we were pouring some concrete there, in that section, and it was an idea, I think it may have been an idea for gun safe but he was the one who helped me acquire the safe right-hand side. There was a company that he, he knew of and it was the same company that was used to purchase the safe in the ground that he knew of as well.

And what sort of dimensions was the safe under the ground?---I can't remember now. Maybe, oh, it's hard to tell, maybe 30 centimetres by 30 centimetres. It was a square.

THE COMMISSIONER: And when was that safe put in place, that is the one underneath the floor of the garage?---What year you mean, or - - -

Yes.---Oh, I don't remember what year. It would have been, would have been – I can't remember.

I take it was sometime between 2014 and 2019?---No, it could have been before then, to be honest. I think - - -

I thought you said that Mr Alameddine helped you in some respect acquire one or other of the safes.---Correct.

10 Which safe did he help you?---He helped me – the one on the right-hand side, that safe was the same safe that was at [REDACTED]. So he helped me acquire that safe, the one on the right-hand side.

And do you know when that was?---Oh, when I was at [REDACTED]. Maybe, the period of 2009/10/11, and then I maybe would have moved in '12. Something like that. I would have to check when the rental agreement finished, because we were renting there.

20 Well, going back to the safe which held the million dollars. What had you used that for before you used it for cash?---I was going to use it for firearms but I didn't. I kept the firearms at the, at the, the shooting range and then it was Hassan's idea to, you know, to, to conceal it, or what's the word, conceal it further by putting this safe on top and so he, he actually installed that.

And so I take it that the safe that held a million dollars could only be operated by code?---No, it was actually a key.

30 A key?---Correct, yeah.

Is there only one key?---What do you, what do you mean, sorry?

Sorry?---There's one key, you mean? Just one key, like, as - - -

Is there only one or is there more than one key available to open that safe? ---I think the key, the key, both keys, there were two keys, they were together. So, just - - -

40 And who held those keys?---I did.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner. In order to access the safe that you've indicated was located under the ground and held a large sum of cash, I take it it was necessary to move the gun safe above it?---Correct.

And what sort of weight was the gun safe above it?---I don't know if I can answer that. I don't know how much weight it is, it's heavy.

Well, how many people did it take to move it?---Probably – well, you can do it on your own if you're, if you're able to, but I mean, so I don't know how to answer that question, sorry.

Well, you've told us that you put money in that safe.---Yes.

10 Does that mean then that each time you had money to store in the safe, you had to do something to move the large gun safe above it?---Once that money was in there it was in there. You don't, you don't keep putting money into that safe, to answer that question.

On how many occasions did you deposit money into that safe?---I don't remember. It's hard to answer. I don't know.

When you did it, did you do it on your own or did you require someone's assistance in order to - - -?---I think Hassan may have helped me once or twice or a couple of times, yeah.

20 And in terms of who it was that was providing you with the cash that went into it, can you identify who it was that was providing you cash from time to time?---From what period?

Well, start from when you first got cash and take it through to the end. ---I've already told you who. The contractors that you've mentioned earlier.

All of them or specific contractors?---So you want me to run all through all the contractors now or - - -

30 Simply if you can tell us when it came to cash – I'll come to individual contractors in due course.---Okay, well, this is what I'm asking, yeah.

But are you able to say whether there were certain of them that provided you with cash or was it all of them?---Not all of them provided cash, no.

Which ones provided cash?---That would have been CBF Projects, Areva Corp, then so do you want me to run through all the, all the, all the companies now or - - -

40 Well, it's really the individuals. I mean it was people, not companies that were giving you cash.---Oh, okay, sorry, 'cause it changed, the companies. So Hassan Alameddine, would have been Chahid who was working with Barrak, Towfik, Hussein, or Mr Goldberg, as you like to refer to him, there was a Mark.

Mark who?---Zreika. I think it was Zreika, correct, I'm not sure, I think it is.

Z-r-e-i-k-a?---I think it was, yeah, Mark Zreika, Michael Zreika.

All right.---There was Ghazi on multiple occasions, smaller amounts, and there was, I'm missing someone.

THE COMMISSIONER: Why did you store such large a large amount of money in the safe rather than deposit it in a series of bank accounts?---I don't know, Commissioner, it's just, I don't know, how do I answer that, why did I do some sort of things, looking back, you know.

10 Well, did you prefer to leave it in cash and as it were, locked away, in order to avoid a large sum of money being in your possession, in other words, detected or discovered?---Oh, but you can't put it in the bank, so I think that's why we kept, kept the money in cash.

But you could put it in the banks as you wish. Why didn't you do that?
---I, I don't know.

Was it to avoid detection?---Potentially, yes, yes.

20 When I say to avoid detection, to risk, to avoid the risk of discovery of the corrupt contract system that we've been talking about?---Yes.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner. Perhaps before I forget, and I'm grateful to Mr Ishak for reminding me, I should tender the photograph.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, that will become, I think it's 160.

MR DOWNING: We might be up to 170 I understand, Commissioner.

30 ASSOCIATE: 170.

THE COMMISSIONER: Perhaps if, what is it?

MR ISHAK: It is 170.

THE COMMISSIONER: 170?

MR ISHAK: Yes.

40 THE COMMISSIONER: The photograph of the safe in the garage that's the subject of evidence will become Exhibit 170.

#EXH-170 – PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SAFE IN THE GARAGE

MR DOWNING: Now, before getting into the safe in the photograph, the safe, I was asking about the different forms in which you received

kickbacks, and took you through cheques, fund transfers, use of debit cards, cash, and it's also the case that people purchased objects for you at various times.---Correct.

And cars were the principal form of object that you received.---Correct.

10 But you did identify I think in the course of your evidence that there might have been other things that were provided to you from time to time, computers, things of that nature?---I remember receiving a computer, maybe one or two phones.

Are you able to recall who provided you with those items now or not?---I think it's Barrak provided me with a phone. I can't remember if it was more than once. And, yeah, laptop, but that was probably early in the piece.

Now, going back then to - - -?---And there were some gifts as well, bro, minor gifts, yeah.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: What sort of gifts?---I think I mentioned like it was a jacket, bag, for my birthday, things like that.

MR DOWNING: Some jewellery at some point?---Oh, the jewellery (not transcribable) correct. I forgot about that.

And did that involve him purchasing some jewellery at an auction that you accompanied him to and giving you some of it?---Correct, correct, yes.

30 And I want to then go back a step to, first of all, how it was that you started the process of allocating work to companies that were controlled by friends or family members. I'm just going right back to the beginning of your time at the RTA.---Mmm.

40 How did that first begin?---I can only tell you to the best of my recollection. It was a long time ago, so I, it's pretty vague, but I'll tell you what I somewhat remember. It was, I think I discussed some of this work that I was doing with the TIRTLs, and I'd been friends with Towfik Taha, and Towfik had been involved with some, some form of civil work, whether it be tree lopping, some minor concrete works, and they, he, he was involved in that industry to some degree.

Are you going through this chronologically in terms of how you recall the first discussion about work with someone that you were associated with? ---Yes.

So you think - - -?---Is that, is that, does that answer your question?

It is. So you believe Towfik was the first person?---Could have been. From memory. Could have been somebody else, but that's what I roughly can remember.

And just dealing with Towfik.---Ah hmm.

You knew him and had known him for some time at that point.---Ah hmm.

10 And is it the case that you recall that he was working as a tree lopper and landscape gardener?---Correct, yeah, yep.

So please go on. So you're doing work in respect of TIRTLS.---And potentially other things as well, from memory, like with the maintenance of the heavy vehicle sites. And, and - - -

Do you disclose that in some way in conversation?---Yeah, I guess a conversation because we were friends, and I'd been friends with his brother, so we, we kind of, we saw, saw each other.

20 Sorry, which brother are you referring to there?---Mustafa Taha.

Right, thank you.---And I think he was, he approached me to, or may have suggested that if I can help him with some work. And I vaguely remember, but I may have mentioned to him that he needs to have the right documentation and the right skill sets to do some of the work that I was doing, because it was a little bit more specialised with the TIRTTL installs.

30 Right. Just pausing there, would you accept that, looking at the facts subjectively, Mr Taha didn't really have the skills necessary to do the specialised work required for the RTA assets and programs you were associated with?---Well, I didn't know that. I knew later that he wasn't very good at the steel works, yeah.

Well, you knew he was a tree lopper and landscape gardener.---Which included concrete works, included excavations, so, yeah.

40 But as I understood it from the early period, your works involved installation of these specialised TIRTTL devices specifically in relation to, sorry, was it the Safe-T-Cam program?---Correct. That's what I, I mean, it could have been other things that I was doing, but, so I remembered him asking if I can assist him with some work, and vaguely I remember my response to be something along the lines of it's a bit more specialised, or we needed to have the right skill sets, the right paperwork or, and he promised that he would, he would get up to speed with documentation and do whatever it need, he needs to do to be able to do that body of work, yeah.

And did you then - - ?---Gave him an opportunity, yes.

That is, do you recall that he set up a company and it was that TTK.---TTS, sorry.

I'm sorry, TTS.---Yeah. I don't know if he had the company prior or, you know, or he was using it prior. But then I remembered he, I remembered he, I think he must have made a, that the, the templates or the, the quotation templates and, I don't know if he had the, the brand thing that he used, he had that prior or it was after our discussion, I don't remember that. But I gave him an opportunity, yes.

10

But is it fair to say that you were hoping that he was going to learn on the job, so to speak, when it came to doing RMS work?---No I knew I had to hold his hand throughout the process.

It was open to you at the time to say no to him, correct?---Yeah, but my condition was that he have the right skill sets, whether it be hiring people, which he ended up doing, hiring more specialists, having the right documentation, yeah.

20

So in effect subcontracting the work out to others.---Or getting somebody. He actually ended up hiring somebody that was in the, had a lot of experience in the construction industry to work with him.

Did you assist him in identifying people that he might actually subcontract the work to?---No.

30

But is it fair to say that you understood that by in effect giving him the chance, you were putting yourself in a position of conflict?---At the very beginning, I told you, I didn't really think much about it. You know, like in that sense. Afterwards I, I realised and I knew that it was against the RMS policy.

And you'd acknowledge that that was within the first year of your work? ---Correct.

All right, okay. So Mr Taha approaches you and indicates that he's interested in doing some work and you give him that opportunity.---Correct. That's all I remember.

40

Okay. Then - - -?---Could be, and I could be, but it's a long time ago.

Then thinking about it in order, do you recall whether there were others that came to, you either offered them work or they approached you for work in your early period, that is perhaps in the first year or so at the RTA?---Yeah, I remember running into, the, I mean, I think, I'm not sure who had mentioned to Hassan Alameddine or I had run into him, but I hadn't seen him for a number of years.

And it's fair to say that you'd had a somewhat fraught relationship with him in the past.---Correct. And, but prior to that he asked me, I must have run into him somewhere, and he asked me to do some, he asked me for the money and but he even, I even maybe remember doing a couple of security -
- -

10 Just pause there. Do you say that this is the money that he claimed that you'd owed him some years ago for the phone card?---Yeah, years later, still banging on about the money. And I remember doing a couple, one shift or two shifts security work that he had organised. So the money out of that work, he would take as payment for that money that I, he believed I owed him.

Sorry, are you talking about while you're at the RTA or before?---No, prior to that. Prior to that.

So that in effect he'd got you to do work and pay off a debt you didn't believe you owed him.---Correct.

20 Right.---So when I, I'm not sure who told him. It may have been Towfik 'cause they were friends or I had run into him. I can't remember how that conversation, but he ultimately became aware of the fact that I was working at the RTA.

And does he contact you?---Correct. He will now, all of a sudden reappears in my life and was interested in work.

30 So did he approach you for work?---He asked if I could help him with work, yes.

And based on the prior dealings you'd had with him, you would have had a fair reason to think that working with Hassan may not have been a good idea.---I pushed it away for many, for a number of months, and I said no and you don't have the right skill sets, and I remember he was involved with multiple businesses. At the time I think he was selling boats or at one point selling safes, and I said no to him initially, yes.

40 So in terms of the skill sets, you knew he had a history of working in security because you'd done some work with him.---Yes.

And you'd filled in for him for some shifts and he'd been paid for them. ---Yes.

You knew, as you've just indicated, that he was involved in, was it something to do with safes?---Safes and boats I think prior to that.

Like as in trading them in some way?---Buying and selling boats, yeah.

Well, anything else you're aware that he was involved in?---I think, I think from discussions again, I, from discussions with him, he may have, I think he mentioned to me that he had a coffee place or coffee cart or something like that. Multiple businesses that didn't really succeed.

So would it be fair, to your knowledge, to describe him at that point as a fairly unsuccessful entrepreneur in different endeavours?---Yes.

10 Right, well, from the various endeavours you understood he was part of, it's fair to say, isn't it, that he didn't appear to have any of the skill set that would be necessary for work that you would be responsible for within the RTA?---Correct.

And you say that you, in effect, resisted his approaches for about six months?---Yes.

20 But you then relent and you allow him to quote for work?---That's not how it happened. So basically he, some of the work that was done under TTS for the TIRTLS had received – this is, and this is going back a long time so I just want to state what I remember – that there was a couple of concerns or issues raised with the, the fitting finish, you know, the cleaning of the site and, and tried to raise, and this was raised by CIC Engineering that visited the site to calibrate or check the equipment.

So, sorry, pause there. It's TTS has done some work, so - - -?---Yes.

- - - that is Mr Taha's company.---Correct.

30 You say CIC reports some concern about the work.---They visit the site or they pass through them, so they must have seen some sites that were maybe the, the dirt that was excavated wasn't cleaned up properly or maybe the finish wasn't. I can't remember the exact details, but I raised those concerns with, with Towfik and he attended to those. So he, he kind of decided and repair, to fix whatever he could but it had, it had the, it may have happened more than once, the concerns and raising this, and I don't know, the word got to Hassan Alameddine and he used to always say that I can, you know, "If Towfik can do it I can do it." Or, "I can do it better than he can." Or, "At least allow me to help him to make sure that you don't look bad at the RTA" and he somehow got involved with assisting Towfik in a project
40 management role or - - -

Well, just pause there for me.---Yes.

Breaking that down, you'd originally had some concerns about Towfik based on his background being up to the standard when it came to doing the work?---Yes.

But you gave him a chance?---Yes.

And the result of that chance was that there were complaints about the work?---Yes.

So, one response might have been to not give any more work to Towfik?
---Well, eventually that's what happened but, but along the way Hassan suggested to Towfik, convinced Towfik and, like, I remember how I felt about it at the time, but to help Towfik manage the workload to ensure that none of these issues would occur and, et cetera.

10

But, in effect, you're bringing in Mr Alameddine to - - -?---I didn't bring him in, he brought himself in with Towfik.

Well, you're the one that ultimately makes the decisions though - - -?
---Yeah, but he was rolling out a number of projects that he was already engaged for.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Dubois, just hang on.

20 MR DOWNING: Please just wait for my question.

THE COMMISSIONER: Take it question and answer at a time,

MR DOWNING: At the end of the day, when it came to inviting people to quote and making recommendations as to their acceptance, you're the one that makes the call, correct?---Can I just add to that?

Well, is it correct or not and then you can add to if you'd like to.---Correct. But he had already been engaged for a number of sites to deliver. Again,
30 this is a long time ago. I don't remember the exact details, sir.

I understand but what - - -?---You know, so - - -

But wasn't it the case, putting aside any dissatisfaction with Towfik Taha's work, that you had a number of bases upon which to be less than confident that Mr Alameddine was going to be able to assist you. Would you agree with that?---From the previous past you can say that, yes, but at the time, you know, the, you know – correct.

40 Well, first of all, at least Mr Taha had some background in some form of civil works?---Yes.

Might have been tree lopping and landscape gardening but at least he apparently would know which end of a shovel to pick up?---Yes.

When it came to Mr Alameddine, based on what you knew of him, he had no background at all in civil works.---Okay.

And also, based on - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: You're agreeing? Do you agree?---That he didn't have any background from what I knew, of civil works, yeah.

MR DOWNING: And based on your prior dealings with him, he was also someone that could be trouble for you when it came to his honesty and, I guess, his financial dealings with you?---Correct.

10 So, you solved the problem with Towfik Taha by bringing in, or agreeing to, Hassan Alameddine coming in?---I wasn't holding his hand, bringing him to the site. He was something, but potentially, from memory, this was a long time ago, sir. Over 10 years ago, okay, and you're holding me, you know, to the, to, to the words that I'm saying. I don't remember exactly how it occurred, but from what I remember, Towfik agreed for Hassan to help him manage some of the work and aid him in project managing, and Hassan convinced Towfik and I just basically went along with it. That's what I remember. It could have happened differently but that's what I remember, okay?

20

Accepting that there seemed to have been some behind the scenes dealings between Towfik and Hassan Alameddine, you were in a position to say no to Mr Alameddine doing any RMS work?---He wasn't doing work at the time. He was just helping Towfik Taha, yeah.

Well, do you say he was helping or supervising?---Helping supervise, go to site, meeting the workers, whatever you want to call it, that's what he's - he approached Towfik at the time. That's what I remember and I could be wrong.

30

THE COMMISSIONER: Just stop there, please.

MR DOWNING: You were in a position to say, no, I'm not comfortable with that.---Yeah, oh, yes, of course.

Why did you agree to it?---I just, why did I do the things I did, mate, just stupid and naïve. I let him use me for all those years and it happened again.

40 Well, was there something that perhaps was offered to you by Mr Alameddine at that initial stage that made you perhaps more interested in using his services?---No, I said to him, not at the very beginning, he didn't mention that he was offering me, that came later on.

So initial approach is Mr Taha and then the next approach comes from Mr Alameddine who you say contacts you and indicates his knowledge of some problem with Mr Taha's work.---There may have been - this is what I remember. I've got to be careful how I say things, but from what I recall, this is how the events panned out all those years ago. Could, could, maybe

I, maybe I was just venting. When he came back into my life he wasn't confrontational, he was, you know, he came back in a very friendly manner, you know, so maybe I had vented to him, maybe I had complained about Towfik to him, maybe Towfik complained to – I don't remember how it occurred, but - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Just hold it there, Mr Dubois. You carry on, Mr Downing.

10 MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner. What I'm really interested in though is what it was that motivated you to agree to Hassan Alameddine having anything to do with RMS work, given what you knew of him in terms of his skillset and your dealings with him in the past?---What motivated me to? I don't know. He was assisting Towfik. He came as, offered his advice and assistance.

THE COMMISSIONER: Did Mr Alameddine subsequently become an active contractor - - -?---Yes.

20 - - - for RMS work?---Yes.

And that occurred via you?---Correct.

When did Mr Alameddine start picking up work from, was it RTA or RMS at that stage?---RTA.

When did he start getting a flow of work?---I don't remember the date, but it would have been probably, probably several months after seeing Hassan for the first time.

30

Through what company did he operate?---Areva Corp. Again, I have to explain, this is from what I recall.

MR DOWNING; Perhaps, Commissioner, just noting the time, if I could just finish off on this before we move on to Areva Corp later?

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, indeed.

40 MR DOWNING: Once Mr Alameddine came on the scene to assist Mr Taha with his TTS work, did the work improve?---I remember that I didn't give Towfik Taha any more TIRTL work.

Presumably that's because it wasn't very good.---Potentially.

Well, what is your recollection as to what occurred once - - -?---My recollection was over 10 years ago, sir, so I'm telling you what I remember.

Please, please just wait for my question so you can tell me what you don't remember.---Okay. It's getting frustrating. Yep. Okay.

Once Mr Alameddine was on the scene assisting Mr Taha, what's your recollection as to what occurred as regards the - - -?---I don't remember.

If that's a convenient time, Commissioner. Is that a convenient time?

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. Very well. We'll adjourn and resume tomorrow, 10 o'clock, so if you'd be here at 10.00am in the morning. Thank you.

I'll adjourn.

THE WITNESS STOOD DOWN [4.03pm]

20 **AT 4.03PM THE MATTER WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY [4.03pm]**