



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



QP 0125
01/06
Δ13

Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: 1 Date: 24/10/2010

Statement of

Name of witness: WENT, Veronica Margaret

Date of birth: 11/08/1964 Age: 46 Occupation: Consultant

Police officer taking statement

Name of police officer: ALLAN, Jodie

Rank: Det Senior Constable Reg. no.: 11939

Region/Command/Division: North Coast Station: Maroochydore CIB

Statement:

Veronica Margaret WENT states:-

I am a married woman residing at an address known to the police. I knew Karen MAHLO. I first met Karen when she came into the office I was working, Financial Advisers Australia, which is situated on Sugar Road, Maroochydore.

I worked at Financial Advisers Australia with John HEHIR who is the manager of the company. I had worked at Financial Advisers Australia for approximately 10 years with my recent resignation I finalised my employment with Financial Advisers Australia on the 11/10/2010. In the time I had worked at this company John HEHIR has been the sole manager. I began working for this company as a receptionist and continued to build up my career in the finance industry to where I became the Senior Financial Consultant.

I know that Karen first came to this company and saw John HEHIR in his capacity of a financial advisor. I became aware that Karen was the head of the entire Nambour Hospital and that John HEHIR was going to assist in her financial growth. In this meeting Karen came in with another gentleman and I eventually found out that Karen had married this man to keep him in Australia as he had a daughter to an Australian lady and wanted to stay in Australia to be with his daughter. Karen had told me that he was sleeping in a separate bed to her and that she had married him as a favour.

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After Karen had met with John he then handed Karen over to me for me to be her direct financial consultant in relation to her finances. Basically within this company John meets all the new clients and speaks with them trying to establish how they want to grow their financial wealth. Once John had established how they want our assistance, he then hands this client down to a financial consultant and tells them what he wants done and how to do it, and on this occasion John passed Karen down to me.

I continued to work directly with Karen where I did an *Excelsior* plan (basic plan showing how property can benefit her). Typically John reads and approved the plan and then presents the *Excelsior* plan to the client in which this then leads to the client signing up for a 2 year program fee circa \$7,700. This program includes for the period of your plan (2 years); cash management/monitoring, all tax returns and Wills/EPA are completed and also life, trauma and income insurance are assessed.

John presented the *Excelsior* plan to Karen gave his suggestion on a strategy to go ahead with which was to buy 2 properties up front, House and Land Packages. Karen seems wishy washy about it, it didn't seem to be in any top priority in her life to create wealth. John has amazing skills in getting people to change their mind and convinces them to go in the direction he suggests. Karen agreed to proceed with the 2 year program and the suggested plan of purchasing 2 house and land packages. John instructed me to source the house and land packages for Karen.

Karen said to me and John in the meeting *"Don't bother me with it, I will just sign the contracts when they are available"* and she began to invest in real estate. I know that John also did a financial plan with Karen so that she was also investing money into managed funds as well however this was not an area I took care of this was done solely by John or his securitized investment assistant, Kathy Fraser.

From the dealings with Karen and organising the house and land packages on her behalf I remember that she really didn't want to know much about the documents she was signing, rather trusted John, and when I tried to go through and explain documents relating to the house and land packages she didn't question anything further, rather just signed any documents required without reading. I got the opinion that Karen was too busy and just didn't want to be bothered with all the nitty gritty involved in growing her financial future. I believe that John knew that with Karen's wages and her occupation that she could grow her finances so that she could have a wealthy retirement; however this wasn't a concern of Karen's as she stated numerous times *"I couldn't care less about any of this stuff"*.

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During my time dealing with Karen I found she was a very strong willed and a very smart lady. At some stage we advised Karen to have an account and for her to transfer money into it and lived off that account only, so that the bulk of her wage was going into another account. Karen disagreed with the personal account and wanted to use her credit card and didn't want to conform. She was happy to spend her wage as she saw fit. I never knew Karen to have a holiday as she didn't like them or go away she just wanted to work and live her own life.

In the whole time I worked for this company I have never known John to ring up clients and invite them out for their birthdays or anything like that. Basically the clients were treated as just that 'clients'. They didn't get any benefits for using the company's services in relation to the financial growth. John took Karen out for her birthday the year she became a client, this struck me as odd however didn't give it much thought.

Some time around September 2006 I remember that John had a meeting with me and he told me that he was seeing Karen. I had been finding John a little weird before that time as his diary was always booked up and he was never in the office. Once he told me this it made sense that John was spending a lot of time out of the office and with Karen. At this time John was still married to his wife, Jenny.

After John told me he was seeing Karen she then began to come into the office more regularly. I found this a little unusual because John was still married and living with his wife.

In about November 2006 I remember that John came into the office and told me that he had been kicked out of his house by his wife, Jenny. I remember that day especially as John came into the office complaining that all his possession was in his car and that those possessions were all he had to show for his life. Next thing I knew was John was living with Karen in her home at Moffatt Beach, so I presumed that he got kicked out of his home by Jenny and moved straight in with Karen.

While John and Karen were together John continued to manage her funds and investing money as her financial adviser. I found it strange that John and Karen had started a relationship together, because she just didn't seem like his type. She was very strong headed and so was John. In the time that I knew John, he was the type of person that liked to be surrounded by other people that he could manipulate and

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control. John was very controlling with everyone in the office, and he would often play mind games with everyone in order to have the control over everyone. Please find now a few live examples on what it was like working with John.

Public humiliations – If any mistakes were made John would call a meeting with everyone and publically disclose the mistake belittling you in front of your peers more often than not until you're in tears. This was also a favourite tactic as it showed the others his power. This also occurred during staff meetings when he would single people out seeking the wrong answer then make fun of their inability to answer the question asked.

One against the other – John would often call another staff member, particularly Peta Staatz who was the receptionist at the time and tell her how angry I was at her for over booking me or other made up stories to cause dissention between staff to ensure he remains in control. Peta would every time call me extremely upset apologising for something and I would explain i had not said a word to John about anything and have no issues. We got so sick of this continuous behaviour we called each other every time he would call one of us to confirm the *latest issue*.

Accusations – If something would happen in the office that John didn't agree with he would always jump to a conclusion to who he saw fit to get the blame. This person would get publically humiliated, interrogated, criticized. If you could prove your innocence this would cause more grief to you as John is NEVER wrong and will do ANYTHING necessary to cover any wrong doings on his part.

Criticism – He would constantly pick up every mistake you did and go individually to others offices to show them your mistake. A comment of positivity was extremely rare without it being followed by what you did wrong.

Fear & Intimidation – John got his power using this every day. John use to control people with fear and intimidation, he would find something that he felt was too important for that person to loose and use it. An example of this is when my daughter started working for John he said to her *"Do you know why I have you by the short and curls'...you will never leave as it may jeopardize your mother and brothers futures here."* When someone had different opinion he was like a dog with a bone, he would keep at the

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person until they changed their mind proving he was right and you are wrong. This use to happen so frequently people stopped voicing ANY opinion and only answered what John wanted to hear.

The Poor Me – When someone stood up to John or something external happened he would put on the tears and the “*how could anyone do this*” Example; Someone would say this isn’t a happy environment to work in, he would get angry at the person and then go around to everyone’s office and ask them *are you happy*. To which everyone answered “*yes, John*”

We had training sessions on mostly a weekly basis, Wednesday morning. John would attempt to teach his “lemmings” aka staff the tricks of the trade. John always bragged on a regular basis that he could have mind control over people and make them do whatever he wanted however it was made out to be the client’s idea. John wasn’t the type of person that could handle someone telling him what to do. During my time working there I basically just went with the flow and did what I was told, he use to often tell me how I would be nothing without him and he has taught me everything, on too many a night I would come home in tears. It was only in the last couple of years was I able to stand up to John, particularly in relation to way he handled me and other staff members.

John has a strange way of working, in that if someone does something that he doesn’t like then he manipulates that person and the rest of the group so that everyone will dislike the person involved, and again he is in control of the entire office. I know that John would constantly lie to both his clients and also to the staff that worked at Financial Advisers Australia. His ability to lie was amazing, he can look you in the face and tell you anything and you will believe it, he even believes it. John’s son, Michael HEHIR also worked for the company and he too was becoming to have the same attitude as his father by controlling staff, manipulating and lying to them to be his friend and then turning against them to get them in trouble.

At some stage while John was with Karen, Karen’s daughter Anna came to work for the company. While Anna was employed John played some terrible practical jokes on Anna that just weren’t funny. On one April Fools Day John set up a bloke to come into the office and pretend he was a police officer and he was going to raid the office. At the time Anna was hanging around the “wrong crowd” and rumours were she was experimenting with marijuana. I remember that this guy came into the office and took Anna into the boardroom and interviewed her. Anna was extremely frightened and distressed and ran out of the office crying. At the end John just laughed in Anna’s face. But in fact this had actually deeply upset

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Anna and I told John not to play such jokes again in the work place as they weren't funny and i was so angry that he would do that to Karen's daughter.

John and Karen had been together for quite a while when John came to work and told me he found Karen in the spa with slashed wrists. This was the first time that I realised Karen was unwell and suicidal. I continued to deal with Karen for her financial services, but she didn't come into the office very often rather we did out business via the email. Karen would often email me funny jokes and things like that. Because I hardly saw or spoke to Karen personally I really didn't see any problems in her health.

Karen and John also came to the office Christmas Party in 2007. I remember at the Christmas party she was in a really good mood and really enjoyed herself. Everyone at the party had a good time and I couldn't see any problems in her health or her demeanour.

While Karen was using the service of this company I know that in about [REDACTED] she completed the Performa to have a Will completed. I remember that Peta STAATZ typed the Will up off this Performa and that all Karen had to do was get it signed and witnessed. I remember that within this Will Karen had put John as her executor of her estate, and that he was to get her house at Moffat Beach. This Will then came back to the company and a copy was kept on file.

John put a birthday party on for Karen, she hated parties, and he did it behind her back as a surprise. My husband, Peter, and I went to her place in Moffat Beach for the party. Karen seemed happy as all of her friends were there and John was drunk and disorderly making a fool of himself being unable to walk properly and silly behaviour involving kissing my husband on the lips.

A couple of months after Christmas 2007 John told me that he had left Karen and that their relationship was over. I know that John moved in to live in a unit in the Cotton Tree area on his own. Even while they were split up John and Karen continued to talk to each other on the phone and email.

I remember one day at work after they had split up John told me that he had gotten a phone call from Karen in the middle of the night and that he drove to her house and found she'd taken an overdose of tablets. I remember that John told me that he was never going to answer the phone in the middle of the night if she rang again. John seemed a little concerned with Karen's health and suicide attempts.

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Not long after Karen and John split I know that Karen was re-doing her Will. I know this because John was doing up her financials and working out all her calculations. I would image because John and Karen had split up that she would have been removing him as the executor of the Will and removing him as a beneficiary, but I don't know for sure. I don't remember seeing or hearing of the signed copy of this new Will coming into the office and being placed on her file, perhaps suggesting she had this done elsewhere.

I remember the day before Karen passed away John has asked me to drive him down to Karen's house because she was giving him a motor bike and signing over the registration papers. I basically drove John to Karen's house. John got out of the car and I also got out of my car. I remember that John was placing items in the boot of my car such as motor bike helmets, jackets and other tools that he said were his. Karen wasn't home at the time and he got in through the garage using a key. I remember not long after we had been there that Karen pulled up in the drive way. I said hello to Karen on my way out and then walked to my car and left.

I then stayed at my daughters house in Kawana and this would have been the reason why I gave John a lift to Karen's house as John knew I wasn't driving back to Gympie and would have been available to give him a lift as he was driving the bike back.

At about 4-5am my daughter got a phone call on her home phone. We were told it was the police and that Karen had passed away over night and that they wanted me to go to the house. I was worried I wouldn't find the house again as I had only been to Karen's place on 2 occasions. I remember being stressed about how am I going to get there.

I arrived at the house only a short time later and saw the police there. I saw that John was sitting in his car which was parked out the front of Karen's house. I spoke with John and I could see that he was upset and crying. I just tried to provide John some comfort as I was aware that Karen had passed away. I stayed with John that morning at Karen's house while the police conducted their investigations.

I found John's reactions to Karen's death, I would call unusual. He seemed to be over-exaggerating his emotions being extremely over the top, where as john is typically a controlled person. His crying didn't seem real it appeared to be an act and the sobbing and his outbursts also seemed to be put on. After all

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the years I have worked with John I just didn't understand why he was behaving like this, but you just don't know how people are going to react when someone passes away.

I remember that I was talking to the police with John on the front footpath. I remember that John kept complaining to the police about being cold and was insisting to go inside. I remember eventually a police officer escorted us into Karen's house into the downstairs lounge room. I remember that the police officer told John in no uncertain terms not to touch anything and just sit still.

As soon as John sat down on the lounge in the room I saw him reach out and grab a glass that was on the coffee table and sniff what was inside the glass. I remember John said something like "yeah that would be right she's been drinking."

I remember the police officer got angry with John for touching the glass as the police officer just finished saying don't touch anything and he was again told to just sit still and not touch anything. I couldn't believe that John went out of his way to grab the glass that was on the coffee table when the police officer had told him a few times to just sit on the lounge and not touch anything.

With this the police officer moved John and I out to sit beside the pool. I remember at some stage the police came and asked John was he left or right handed. John replied that he was right handed. The police officer also asked me what I was doing there and I told them that the police had called me earlier to come down and comfort John.

After the police had finished their investigation I was asked to bring John down to the Caloundra Police Station. I was aware that the police were going to see Karen's daughter Anna and tell her the bad news. I found it strange that John insisted that I also drive to Anna's house so that he could be there when the police told her the news.

I followed the police, but again I couldn't believe that John wanted to go to Anna's because I was aware that she hated his guts and he would be the last person she would want to see when being told this terrible news. Anna has also resigned from the company quite a long time before this and hadn't left on good terms with John. We arrived and I stayed next to my car with another police man and John went with the

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Police to Anna's door. All I heard was Anna screaming about her mother's death and then she was screaming at John something like why would you be here or something like that.

I then went to work and then Grant STONE came into the office and he took both John and I down to Mooloolaba for a coffee. We went for coffee at [REDACTED]. I remember that I remained sitting outside with John while Grant went inside the shop and organised the coffees.

The following day I came to work and John was in his office and I went in as he was sobbing and repeatedly said "*I killed her, I killed her*" I said "*how could you have killed her, don't be stupid.*" At this time I was unaware of how she died I had assumed it was an overdose. I didn't find out until a couple of days later, John told me that Karen had stabbed herself in the chest.

Sometime later I remember John telling me that he had gone back to Karen's house and broken in because he had to get something from the downstairs section of the house. I can't remember what this was but I'm pretty sure it had something to do with the computer. However I am unsure.

At Karen's funeral John insisted he spoke at Funeral. Ben and Anna, Karen's children did not want him to. He insisted anyway. At the funeral John was extremely emotional and when he went to do his speech he was sobbing and Amy, John's daughter went and stood beside him for support. Both Anna and Ben walked out when John got up to speak in disgust and I felt sad for the kids as they had to leave because John only cares about himself and it showed he had no thought towards the kids and what they had lost and were going through, it was typically all about John.

After the funeral had finished and everyone was leaving, John was left in there sobbing and was ordered to leave by the funeral directors. It was really embarrassing and caused a scene with the people remaining and I felt that behaviour was over the top and ridiculous.

Anna invited everyone to come back to her place for the wake; she said everyone is invited except for John. John had organised a wake in competition to Anna and Bens again attempting to take control and make a scene. John guilted his employees to attend his wake at the RSL, no one else participated in his wake and he was angry that he had paid for all the food and premises for the wake but it doesn't matter cause the estate will pay for it.

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Due to the issues at the funeral this infuriated John as he was shown up and made the statement that he will fight the will so the kids use their inheritance to fight and he said that the money he spends comes out of the estate so he will take as long as he likes contesting the will. I expressed to John that I felt upset by this as they have just lost their mother and John was not intimately involved with Karen at the time of her death.

After the funeral John was once again sobbing in his office saying *"I am going to kill myself"* and I was so concerned I called my husband Peter and said can I take John out for dinner because I was concerned he would act on it. After dinner John was saying he feels like he could kill himself and I said you never know what is around the corner and think of your family and what it would do to them. Looking back now I realise he was playing another mind game knowing how concerned I would be and knowing what I would say he then turned it around and a few weeks later broke the news of his new girlfriend and saying to me *"you were right Veronica, you said you never know what's around the corner"* and he laughed and I asked him how they met because his new girlfriend lived in Rochdale near Brisbane and he said *a friend introduced them*. I found that hard to believe as he does not have any friends. I found it strange the timing of all this and it made me wonder if Karen kicked him out for the same reason Jenny did.

John's new girlfriend Jill, it started all over again...he was never in the office, always running late for appointments. John prides himself on his skills in divorce settlements and ensuring his clients gets the most possible. It was funny how Jill was still married but separated and John took control of the separation and acting for Jill. I remember my daughter saying how creepy he was over this as she was John's mortgage assistant working under John direction as the Mortgage Broker for FAA at the time and was processing the refinance of Jill and her ex husbands property and remembers John saying how he will get everything out of this guy. The ex husband got paid out and then they used this property, Rochdale (Jill's) to purchase a 1.3M property and then sold Rochdale. I remember this as Jill's children were furious as John was kicking them out of their family home so John and Jill could buy their mansion, which is in debt to the eye ball.

A week before he asked Jill to marry him, he asked his ex wife Jenny to take him back, this was told to me by Jenny herself. Also John did a test for Jill as they had issues and he wrote a letter and put this on her seat in her car as he knew she was going out and he wanted to see her reaction and if it was to his

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liking he would ask her to marry him, if not he said he wouldn't go there. This is the sort of person that plays with peoples emotions. He was happy when she reacted the way he wanted regarding the letter.

John and Jill were married in July 2010, the funniest thing about it was the inconsistency in how they met and when and also the only people who attended from John's side were his Family, Staff, The computer fix it man, the accountant next door and jokes were made at how little they knew them. Grant and Leanne Stone who were Karen's friends also attended.

Jill is now director of FAA Services

John is in my opinion and in many others as well, a master manipulator and mind controller, a compulsive liar and I believe that prior to and on the night Karen died John has manipulated her to the point of her committing suicide. I believe John knows more than what he is saying due to his reactions and inconsistency.

I never knew the grasp he had on me and everyone close until I was free. This has come at a cost as he is revengeful and does not stop until he has won.

Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated **24/10/2010** and contained in the pages numbered 1 to **11** is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

.....Signature

Signed atthis.....day of.....20....

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