

New South Wales Police

STATEMENT in matter of:

Place: Operation Fireweed

Date: 25 March, 1995

Name: COFFEY, William James

Tel No.: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Belvoir Street, Surry Hills.

Occupation: Client Service Officer.

States:-

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

2. My age is 49

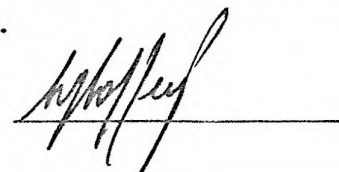
3. I am employed by the Department of Housing as a Client Services Officer. I am presently managing the Northcott Apartment block, Belviour Street, Surry Hills. This complex consists of four hundred and twenty eight units, which are managed by the Department of Housing. I have been with the Department of Housing for the past ten years and have managed numerous housing complexes owned by the Department. I have been the Client Services Manager at Northcott Apartments for the past seven years.

4. I recall having first met Jim MEEK about two years ago when he took up tenancy at Northcott apartments. MEEK was a man who lived alone and appeared to keep to himself. MEEK became a tenants activist involved in local tenancy issues on behalf of the tenants living in the complex. I would describe my relationship with MEEK as being a normal relationship that would exist between a manager and a tenant. I was aware that MEEK was a homosexual and that MEEK was HIV positive.

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5. During my time at Northcott it was not uncommon for me to see MEEK walking around the complex and the Ward park area at various times during both day and night time. MEEK owned two small dogs. MEEK would normally exercise these dogs in the Ward park area. I believe that MEEK use to solicit males in the Ward park area. Ward park is a reserve directly behind the Northcott apartments.

6. I was relayed to me by other tenants in the complex that MEEK was a paedophilia. There had been times when complaints had been made that MEEK was attempting to solicit sex from young male tenants who reside in the complex. To the best of my knowledge I was unaware if MEEK was involved in a steady relationship with a person or persons. I have been led to believe that MEEK would attempt to solicit sex with any young male person that he could make contact with in and about the complex.

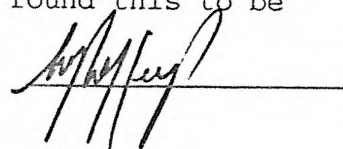
7. I was aware that MEEK would sometimes visit the Shakespear Hotel Devonshire Street Surry Hills. I really don't know any more of his social life. MEEK was unemployed and received a disability support pension. MEEK recently received a large compensation pay out as a result of an incident which occurred when he was previously employed as a security guard. About six months ago MEEK purchased a brand new hatchback car. I am unsure of the value or the model.

8. The last time I saw James MEEK alive was on a Thursday the 2 March 1995 about midday. Jim was living the complex. On Tuesday 7 March 1995 a tenancy meeting which had been organised by MEEK on behalf of the other tenants with my self as the Department of Housing Representatives was scheduled to commence at 10am at the Northcott Community Centre. Neither MEEK or other tenants arrived for that meeting. I found this to be

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unusual as it was unlike MEEK not to attend a meeting that he had organised. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss grievances and problems concerning the complex raised by the tenants.

9. On the afternoon of Tuesday 7 March 1995, Eilleen McCARRDLE a resident of the complex came to my office and expressed concern for Jim's welfare. She was concerned because she had been told of Jim's non attendance at the committee meeting and she had not seen him about in the complex. I informed her that there is nothing I could do. It is departmental policy that when a concern is raised by another tenant or any other person relative to the welfare of a tenant that the person expressing the concern should make an official report to the police. I as the department representative or any of my subordinates employed by the department have no general power of entry into any unit owned by the department. We refer all matters to the police.

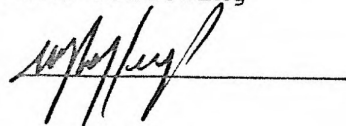
10. On Wednesday morning the 8 March 1995, a tenant Peter LAWRENCE came to my office expressing concern about MEEK's welfare. LAWRENCE expressed similar concern as Mrs McCARRDLE. He stated that he had been to MEEK's unit and could hear the dogs barking and could not get any response. He found it unusual that MEEK had been seen in the complex area and that his car was still parked in the car park. I informed LAWRENCE of departmental policy and suggested he called the police. Later that afternoon about 3.15pm LAWRENCE came to office and told me that he had contacted the police. As I am not in possession of a master key to the units I managed to find a locksmith who already on site performing other work. When the police arrived myself, LAWRENCE and the locksmith went to MEEK's apartment. MEEK reside in ■ block on level 12 unit ■.

11. On arrival at MEEK's front door I made the following

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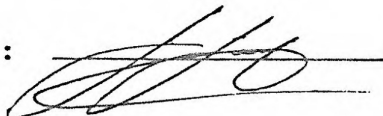
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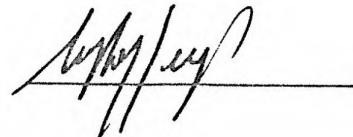
observation. The security grilled door which provides access to MEEK's apartment was closed but unlocked. This was extremely unusual because MEEK maintained a level of concern about his personal security. I was aware that MEEK was a subject of previous attacks against his person and also the security guard of the complex Bob GARRETT that I am aware had developed a friendship with MEEK and had also told me this. Between the security grill and the front door which was closed and locked was newspaper crunched between the bottom of the door and the floor. The locksmith then manipulated the lock so as to unlock the door. Once this had been achieved the police entered the unit. My self the locksmith and LAWRENCE stayed outside.

12. I did not detect odorous smells that one would associate with a deceased person. During my time with the department of Housing I have been exposed to numerous deceased persons who have been dead for different periods of time. On the request of the police I entered the unit. I saw a male person known to me as James MEEK lying on the ground in the entrance hall near the kitchen. MEEK was lying parallel to the common wall between his unit and unit [REDACTED], the unit on the immediate left. MEEK's head was facing up the passage way away from the front door. At the time I recalled MEEK was wearing short and T shirt but I cannot recall the colour. I think MEEK's glasses which he always wore were lying on the floor next to his head. There was a blood trail emanating which has since congealed. Directly below his nasal passage on the floor were his was lying there was blood. His face was discoloured and black in colour. I then identified to the police the body lying on the floor as James MEEK. I had never visited MEEK's apartment before and payed no attention to the general condition of the unit. Once I completed the identifying process to the police I left the unit and returned to my office.

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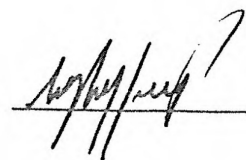
13. Later the police officer came to my office and after I completed a statement of identification and received a copy which I kept for departmental records.

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