

## New South Wales Police

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v305STATEMENT in the matter of:  
James William MEEKSPlace: Surry Hills  
Police Station  
Date : 11 March 1995

Name: Robert Ernest GARRATT

Address: [REDACTED] Bogalara Rd, Old Toongabbie

Tel. No.: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Security Guard

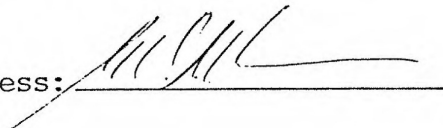
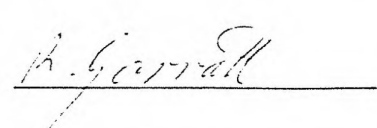
STATES:-

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 anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

2. I am 47 years of age.

3. I am a licensed security guard, sub contracting to AARDVARK SECURITY SERVICES. I have been sub contracting to them for about ten months and perform security services at Northcott Place, which takes in all the unit blocks in the area bounded by Devonshire, Clisdell, Goodlet and Riley Streets, Surry Hills. I patrol these premises seven days a week. From Sunday to Thursday I patrol from 4.00pm to midnight and on Friday and Saturday from 4.00pm to 2.00am.

4. Over the past ten months I have come to know a number of residents of the unit block I patrol, in particular, Jim MEEKS. Jim lives at [REDACTED] of the Northcott Place apartments. This friendship came about because there is a security gate at the end of the unit block on his level that I check is secured every night, four times a night at random intervals. Jim made himself known to me in the first week I was working at Northcott Place.

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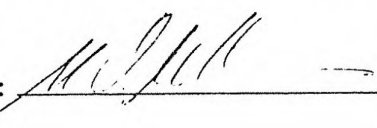
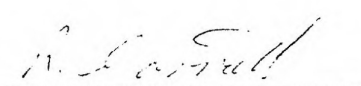
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Over this time it became a bit of a habit of mine to rattle the handle of the security door to his unit to let him know I was up there checking the security gate and usually he'd invite me in for a cuppa. Not every night, but the majority of nights, usually towards the end of my shift.

5. We usually talked when we had coffee, about the committees he was on within the housing estate. In this time he told me all about his life and lifestyle and I was aware that he was HIV positive.

6. The last time I saw Jim was when I left his unit about 10.35pm on Sunday the 5th of March, 1995. I had called up to his unit earlier and had a cup of coffee with him and I stayed and talked for a while. There was a movie on television. K9 I think it was. I stayed there until it finished and then I left his unit and checked the security gate and went about the rest of my patrol. I went over to 'The Pottery' across the road.

7. When I went to see Jim on Sunday night there was a young guy with him about 18 years of age. I've seen him there a number of times before and when I was there I remember him saying something to me, like, " Do they call you 'Bob' or 'Robert' like me? " So I assume that his name is Robert. He was high on drugs, I saw him smoking marijuana in a bottle with a piece of garden hose stuck in the side of it. The bottle had water in it. I didn't see Jim smoke any of it whilst I was there, but he has told me that he has smoked marijuana on occasions. I didn't take too much notice of 'Robert', I mainly spoke with Jim, although I can say that 'Robert' is about 18 years old, 5'-6" to 5'-7" tall, medium build, straight, unkept sandy brown hair, about collar length. He was Australian in

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appearance and spoke in a normal Australian sort of voice. He didn't have any tattoos or identifying marks that I could see. He was wearing a pair of dark grey baggy, knee length shorts that had like a double hem on them and a dark coloured sloppy joe that may have had a logo on the front left hand side of his chest. He didn't have any shoes on when I saw him. I did notice a pair of thongs near the fridge when I walked in, but I do know that Jim wore thongs alot, and usually Jims dogs played with his and I saw the dogs playing with another pair of thongs underneath the table. When I left Jim's unit, 'Robert' was still there with Jim. That was as I said, about 10.35pm. I have not seen either Jim or 'Robert' since.

8. Within half an hour of leaving Jims unit I can remember being over at 'The Pottery' and I looked up to Jim's unit and I saw that the lights in the kitchen and bathroom were off. The kitchen light was on when I left earlier. I was sitting down in front of 'The Pottery' for about 20 minutes and in that time I saw the bathroom lights in Jim's unit go on and then a couple of minutes later go off. This happened twice and it was about ten minutes between the two. When everybody leaves the unit, Jim usually turns off the lights and goes to bed. When I saw the lights in the bathroom go on and off on the two occasions I thought he was a bit sick and thought nothing of it. I then proceeded on my normal rounds and at exactly 11.50pm I left the area and walked down to Railway Square and caught the 'Nightrider' bus about 12.10am to Pendle Hill.

9. On Monday the 6th of March, 1995, I was a bit concerned about Jim perhaps being sick the night before, so I rang his unit about 9.30am to give him a razz, stir him up about the bathroom light going on and off. I rang and there was no answer

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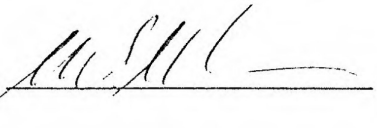
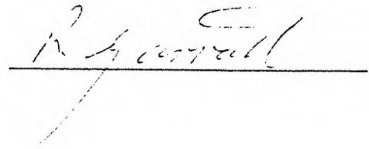
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and left it at that until in the afternoon when I went to work at the units.

10. I got to Jim's unit about 5.15pm on Monday afternoon. The gate at the end of his level is usually the last one I check on my first patrol. When I got up to Jim's unit the security screen door was unlocked and open. There were newspapers stuck between the screen door and the main door. The main door was locked. I'm ninety-nine percent sure that it was the Sunday Telegraph and it was dated the 26th of February, 1995. I know that Jim's usually too lousy to buy a newspaper and got his newspapers from someone else after they had finished with them. He usually got them for the television guide. I found this very strange that the security door was unlocked, as Jim was very paranoid about locking the door, whether he was home or not. Even when he was home when I came past, I would the door handle and say, " You home Meeksy, " and he would have to come and unlock the door to let me in. I was concerned, I was very familiar with his ways and this was out of character, especially seeing that his car was still parked in the carpark and his two dogs were inside the unit. If the dogs hadn't have been in the unit I probably wouldn't have been so concerned. I continued to check his unit during my patrols, looking to see if any of the lights went on or for any movement in the unit, but it there appeared there was still no one home. I completed my shift that night and went home.

11. On Tuesday the 7th of March, 1995, I was very concerned about Jim and rang his unit about 9.15am to 9.30am and there was no answer. I continued to ring his unit every hour, hour and a half and there was still no answer. I went to work at the units as usual and commenced my patrols as normal, finishing the first

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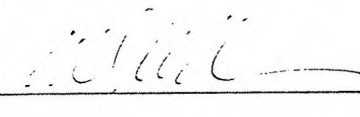
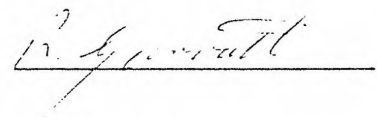
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of my patrols on Jim's level as normal and the security door and the newspaper were the same as the day before. Jim's car was still parked in the carpark in the same position as the day before with the club lock as the day before. By this time I was extremely concerned about Jim and was watching his unit at every opportunity for any sign of movement in there.

12. About 9.00pm I went up to Jim's unit and there was still no one home so I got some sticky tape and stuck three pieces of it to themselves and then put two pieces between the door jamb and the main door on the left hand side and the other on the right hand side so that if the door was opened the tape would fall out and indicate that someone had come or gone from the unit. I then left Jim's unit and went about my normal patrols. Before I completed my patrols for the night, Michael LAWRENCE, a resident of the Northcott units approached me. He said he had just got back from being at the Mardi Gras celebrations from Saturday night. I told him about the tape I had placed between the main door and the door jamb and asked him to keep an eye on it and to give me a ring if anything happened. I then completed my normal patrols and went home as usual.

13. In the morning on Wednesday the 8th of March, 1995, Michael LAWRENCE rang me and told me that the tape was still there. He told me that he was going to see Bill COFFEY in regards to getting a locksmith entering Jim's unit. I told him to make sure he had a witness with him when they entered. About 3.55pm I was just about to start my patrols and was walking to the Housing Commission office in the foyer of [redacted] block to sign on when I saw Michael in the foyer and he told me that they had just gained entry to Jim's unit and that they had found him and he had passed away. Michael was very distressed at the time.


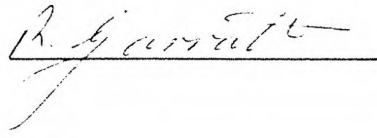
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14. Whilst I have been making this statement I have been thinking about when I saw Jim on Sunday night and I remember when I was there, 'Robert' was going to the bathroom alot and closing the door. Then I remember hearing what sounded like the ceramic, glassy sounding noise of the lid of the toilet cistern being moved around. Then 'Robert' would come out a short time later. This happened a number of times, but I definitely remember the ceramic, glassy sound at least once. I thought that it was strange at the time, it's not usually something someone would do if they went to use your toilet, but I never gave it another thought after that, until now.

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