

New South Wales Police

STATEMENT in matter of:
DEATH OF JAMES WILLIAM MEEK

Place: SURRY HILLS POLICE STATION
Date: 10 JULY 1995 (10/07/1995)

Name: WOODWARD, Robert Anthony

Tel No.: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Mariana Cres, Lethbridge Park

E+L49

Occupation: Pensioner

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. I am 55 years of age.

3. I have known James William MEEK, or Jim as he is known to his friends for approximately 35 years. I first meet Jim when he first started working for Dunlop Australia when they were at Chapel Road, Bankstown. Jim was eighteen at the time and was employed as a process worker. I was his for a while, whilst he was working there. I think he worked there for about a year and then he left and went to driving government buses. I lost contact with him after that and it wasn't some years I ran into him in the street at St Mary's. I found out that he had married and started a family and was living at Tregear.

4. I never saw Jim again until about four or five years ago, when I met up with him again, by chance, near the fountain at Kings Cross. I spoke to him at length and found out that he was living at a boarding house in Elizabeth Bay and had been for some time. He told me that his marriage had broken up and that he had been living with a man for a while. He didn't tell me straight away but eventually he told me he was gay and then that

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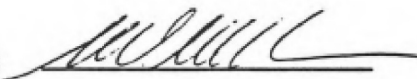
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he was infected with HIV. I eventually helped him to get his Housing Commission unit at the Northcott Flats in Belvoir Street, Surry Hills, where he lived until his death.

5. Since moving to the unit at the Northcott Flats, Jim and I kept in fairly regular contact and I would on occasions stay with Jim at his unit when I had business in Sydney. I helped Jim fix the flat up and the times he wasn't well, I would go over and clean the bathroom and kitchen. I also got Jim the security door for the front door of his unit because he didn't feel safe. Since having the security door fitted I made sure that he locked it whether he was in the unit or not, and I know that Jim would lock the security door even if someone was in the unit with him. Jim also used to keep a metal baseball bat behind the front door for security.

6. My association with Jim remained in good stead up until December last year (1994), when Jim's mother died and I went up to Gosford with Jim to help him pick up some of her belongings. He needed my van to move these things because he didn't have a car. We drove back to Jim's unit and unpacked some of the items before having some dinner. We had Kentucky Fried Chicken for dinner and I ate some chicken, but because I suffer from Diabetes, I couldn't eat the coleslaw as it sometimes makes me sick. Instead I was going to have a piece of cheesecake that we had also bought, but Jim chipped me about not having eaten all my dinner and I wouldn't be having any sweets. Jim was a bit childish at times and this was one of them. I decided that instead of staying the night as planned, I went home to my place. Before I left Jim's unit, he demanded that I return the set of keys he had given me to his unit, which I did. Then I drove home.

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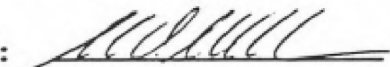
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7. I didn't speak to Jim until about the middle of January, 1995, although he had been ringing around to my other friend's to try and contact me. Jim arrived one day on my door step with the motive of seeing Roger BISSETT, a male that was boarding with me. Roger and his girlfriend Karen HEATLEY moved in with me about a year ago. They would stay with me between travelling to and from Tasmania. He actually came out to see me and show me a new DAEWOO car he'd bought from a compensation claim he just been paid out on. The same day I went back down to his unit and he showed me some other things he'd bought with the money he was paid, including two gold mens dress rings, one with a amber coloured stone and the other with a black stone. He also showed me a gold neck chain, which he told me was 18ct and a dress watch. I stayed with him for the afternoon and then caught the train back home.

8. I didn't see Jim again before his death in March, however I did speak with him over the phone the Friday night before the Mardi Gras and wanted me to come and stay with him and go to the Mardi Gras with him. I told him I wasn't interested, nor did I have the time. Jim did tell me thought that he had met a Mauritian man who Jim said was some kind of priest. This fellow wanted to take Jim over to Mauritius with him. I advised him not to go. That was the last time I spoke with him.

9. I found out that Jim was dead on the Thursday after he was found. When I got home I told Roger (BISSETT), the guy staying with me. Roger knew Jim fairly well through me and also through his girlfriend, Karen HEATLEY. I met Karen through her uncle who lived in the street behind my house. He introduced me to her about four years ago and on and off since then she has boarded with me. She looked after the house for me when I was away on business. Through my association with Karen's uncle I also got to know Karen's sister Christine and one of her

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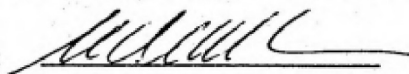
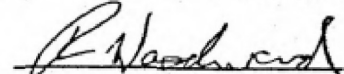
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brothers, Michael. From my knowledge of the family, they used to commute between Sydney and Tasmania, living on and off in both places.

10. Jim MEEK also knew Karen, Christine and Michael HEATLEY, through their association with me. Karen, Christine and Michael used to go and visit Jim at his unit at Surry Hills. Jim only met Michael when he came up from Tasmania late last year. I can remember Jim telling me (over the phone) that he didn't like Michael much, because he was too pushy and arrogant. Jim had also said that he told Michael not to come back to his unit. I remember Jim telling me this before we had gone up to Gosford together.

11. I don't know Michael that well and didn't have anything to do with him. I only tolerated him because of his sister. Michael was hyperactive and would fight with his sisters all the time, abusing them in front of them no matter who was there. I haven't seen Michael taking any drugs but I believe that it would account for his behaviour sometimes. To my knowledge he knew Jim was gay, but when ever anyone mentioned gays or homosexuals, Michael would take offence and say things like 'I'm not a dirty poof'.

12. To my knowledge Michael never slept over at my house, with the exception of two nights in the week after Jim had died. I don't know if Karen had let him stay over when I wasn't there. Michael just turned up on the door step, Karen had gone back to Tasmania, but Roger was still staying with me. Roger told me he (Michael) had no where to go and asked if he could stay. I let him stay on the proviso that he paid his way. It was during this time that Roger told him about Jim being dead and Michael came to me to confirm that what Roger had told him was true. When I asked him to pay his way, Michael said he would never pay

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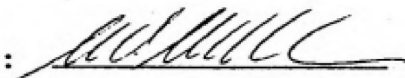
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me, so I kicked him out. Michael got angry with me for kicking him out and threw a cup of tea all over my van. I haven't seen Michael since.

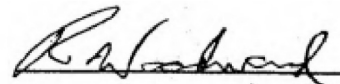
13. On Monday the 10 July, 1995 I went to Surry Hills Police Station and spoke with Detective Sergeant TANOS and detective WALKER. Detective TANOS showed me a gold mens dress ring with diamond shaped markings on both sides of the setting with an amber set stone. I recognise this ring as the one Jim showed me the day he brought the car up to my house and the day I went back to his unit and he showed me the two men's rings, watch and gold chain.

I IDENTIFY THAT GOLD MEN'S RING.

Witness:



Signature:



Witness: _____

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