

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONSECTION 29 HEARING"IN CAMERA"

DATE: 27 MAY 1997

NAME: SCHALK JAN VISSER

HELD AT: JOHANNESBURG

DAY: 1

CHAIRPERSON: ... I am going to be talking in English. So at, I am not sure if you understand English. We have an interpreter available for you. They will be translating from English into Afrikaans and from Afrikaans into English for the benefit of those of us who do not have "suiwer Afrikaans". We would like to welcome you here this morning and inform you that this an investigation hearing in terms of Section 29 of the Act, it is in camera and the only persons who will be present will be our, members of our staff, members of our Investigation Unit and, of course, the interpreters and the person attending to the recording equipment.

We are in the process of trying to establish more facts about the death of Stanza Bopape and the subsequent cover up that ensued afterwards. We are not in the process of making a finding at this hearing and, as you have been advised, you are entitled to have legal representation available to you. This is not

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a proceedings, these are not proceedings where your attorneys, in fact, can answer any of the questions for you. They are there to assist you and, of course, will intervene in the process as they see fit.

Before we begin, I would like you to state your full names for the record please.

BRIG VISSER: My full names are Schalk Jan Visser.

CHAIRPERSON: Could you please place your names on the record, please?

MS VAN DER WALT: Advocate Louisa van der Walt.

MR PRINSLOO: Advocate H J Prinsloo.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Before we begin, may I ask you to stand so that we can administer the oath please.

SCHALK JAN VISSER: (Duly sworn in, states).

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, you may be seated. Thank you

The members of my team, I have Mr Hugh Lewin, a member of the Human Rights Violations Committee sitting on the left-hand side of me. On my right I have Colonel Fanie Killian, a member of the Investigation Unit, Mr Piers Pigou, a member of the Investigation Unit, Mr Kobus Swarts, a member of the Investigation Unit and Mr Malan, a member of the Investigation Unit.

Fanie, will you, before I begin, is there anything that you would like to say to the Commission?

MR PRINSLOO: Madam Chair, before the Brigadier starts, I would like to place on record that the Brigadier had been asked to appear here yesterday, but planning had not been made for the proceedings and for that purpose he has returned today. The Brigadier also, himself, never received a personal notice. We only received a notice regarding the date of the proceedings.

CHAIRPERSON: Okay, thank you. But your client was then handed the document by yourselves?

MR PRINSLOO: Yes, we consulted with the client and that was over the weekend.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I would just like to extend our apologies for not proceeding yesterday. Unfortunately, the interpretation services had not been made available and as you speak Afrikaans and it is our practice to allow witnesses to speak in a language of their choice, we were not able to proceed, but we are very grateful that you have consented to start first this morning. Thank you.

Is there anything else that you would like to place on record as an opening statement?

BRIG VISSER: No, I do not have any questions.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Fanie.

COL KILLIAN: Welcome, Brigadier, I would like to just clarify. This is not a punitive hearing, the proceedings are aimed

at finding the truth behind a certain incident and would you please regard it in that light?

On 04/02/1985 you joined the, 1958 you joined the force and you retired on 30/11/1991.

CHAIRPERSON: Sorry, if we could just in terms of the equipment. Does the Brigadier's remain on all the time or will it switch off?

COL KILLIAN: Do we have to alternate that. When I speak I must press mine and when he speaks, reply ...

INTERPRETER: Unfortunately, yes.

COL KILLIAN: Okay, okay fine, okay, then we know.

BRIG VISSER: I will try and remember, before I speak I will switch on mine again.

COL KILLIAN: Then on 30/11/1991 you retired from the service of the SA Police?

BRIG VISSER: That is correct.

COL KILLIAN: Am I correct when I say that the larger portion of your service was, you were attached to the security branch, security police?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, approximately 25.

COL KILLIAN: That is the greater portion?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, that is correct.

COL KILLIAN: At the time of this incident and the request addressed to you by the retired ex-General Gerhard Erasmus,

were you the officer commanding of the Security Police, Eastern Transvaal Division, as it was then known?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, that is correct.

COL KILLIAN: Could you enlighten us a bit regarding how and what, the how and the what of the request from General Erasmus with regard to doing away with or destroying the body of Bopape?

BRIG VISSER: General Erasmus, Gerhard Erasmus contacted me at my house and he informed me that he was experiencing a problem and requested me to assist him in getting rid of a package.

COL KILLIAN: When he mentioned to you "a package", I accept that you did ask, General, if you are referring to a package, what kind of package are you referring to?

BRIG VISSER: I accepted it, because of the operation of the security branch which is, was primarily concerned with trained ANC terrorists and activists that it had to be a person or, as it became apparent later, a body.

COL KILLIAN: This body, as you understood it, would it have been a body which had been, in an illegal manner, been brought about?

BRIG VISSER: I did not ask for any detail in this regard.

COL KILLIAN: Then did you just summarily accept that you had to get rid of a body without receiving any further notice as to how the body had been brought about?

BRIG VISSER: I made the deduction, I just asked if it was essential for me to assist and he said, yes, if it is, if it was possible, I would have to assist.

COL KILLIAN: What was the situation of confidence between you and the General that you agreed to this without any background as to how this body had come into their possession?

BRIG VISSER: General Erasmus and I had worked together in the security branch for approximately 25 years, we, inter alia, also served on the northern border, the Zambian border doing border duty, we were personal friends as far as this was concerned.

COL KILLIAN: So, there was a particularly healthy situation, personally, between you and General Erasmus?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, it was a sound and healthy situation and relationship.

COL KILLIAN: Would you attribute it to this fact, that he had contacted you to try and save this situation?

BRIG VISSER: That is a possibility.

COL KILLIAN: After receiving this call from you, whom did you contact?

BRIG VISSER: Captain van Loggerenberg, presently Captain van Loggerenberg.

COL KILLIAN: Why in particular Captain van Loggerenberg? At that stage you accepted and realised that you were dealing with a sensitive situation. Why did you select van Loggerenberg in particular to assist you and to become involved in this matter?

BRIG VISSER: Because Captain van Loggerenberg was also known to me personally. Even before the period, when I took over command in Eastern Transvaal.

COL KILLIAN: When you contacted him, what was the message that you conveyed to him, the request that you addressed to him?

BRIG VISSER: I informed him that Johannesburg had contacted me, that they had experienced a problem and that we had to go and assist.

COL KILLIAN: With regard to what?

BRIG VISSER: With regard to the package that would be transferred from Johannesburg to us.

COL KILLIAN: Did you make known to him any further details with regard to what was expected from you and what was to be gotten rid of?

BRIG VISSER: I cannot say that I informed him on the telephone as to anything in this regard, but at the point where we were waiting for the people at, from Johannesburg, I informed

him that I suspected that it was a body that we had to take into our custody.

COL KILLIAN: Why was it essential to travel with two vehicles and not just one?

BRIG VISSER: As Section Commander I had other obligations and that is why I instructed him to come with another vehicle so that he could carry on with the task, so that I could remain available and return to my work.

COL KILLIAN: How long before At van Niekerk, Zielie and the other people who accompanied him with the body at the, before you met at the point in, at, just outside Bronkhorstspuit, how long before that did you arrive there?

BRIG VISSER: It was not long, approximately half an hour.

COL KILLIAN: And in that period you and van Loggerenberg did have discussions regarding what was expected of you?

BRIG VISSER: Well, we did not know exactly what was going on. We were actually totally in the dark as far as I am concerned.

COL KILLIAN: Well, I appreciate that, but at least you had to, you knew that you had to get rid of a body?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, we had to assist Johannesburg with a problem that they were experiencing. I made the deduction that the package could possibly be a person or a body. It was a deduction that I made.

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COL KILLIAN: So, your deduction, you then discussed with van Loggerenberg, probably and you were, while you were waiting for the Johannesburg people?

BRIG VISSER: I believe I did discuss it with him.

COL KILLIAN: Was it discussed how and in what manner this package would be gotten rid of?

BRIG VISSER: Not at all, I did not give any instructions in this regard.

COL KILLIAN: You, nevertheless, realised that it was a sensitive issue and that it could have serious implications?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I was thoroughly aware of that fact.

COL KILLIAN: So, in the light of that I would expect or one could reasonable expect that after the body had been gotten rid of, you would certainly have expected a degree of feedback from van Loggerenberg as to how and where he had gotten rid of the body?

BRIG VISSER: No, I did not expect any full detail. In the light of the security branch working on a "must know" basis, I was satisfied when he reported back to me that he had fulfilled the task successfully and that he was in the vicinity of Komatiepoort, because it was against my principle to do this kind of work and I wanted to, as soon as possible, prevent any further involvement from my own side.

COL KILLIAN: Was it at this stage of the existence of the security branch an attitude that where some or other security branch committed some kind of misdemeanour that had to be concealed, that another security branch would be called in to assist in order to cover up and smear, cover up and hide this sort of event?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I, well, I was never used for anything else like this.

COL KILLIAN: Well, I appreciate what you are saying, but it is strange to me that in this case you were, nevertheless, approached to assist in this kind of deed.

BRIG VISSER: Yes, but that was the only incident where I was approached to assist in this kind of matter.

COL KILLIAN: Where such a particular incident round the Bopape incident was concerned, is this the only event of its nature that you were involved in?

BRIG VISSER: No, I was involved in another incident of a similar nature myself, where I was requested by another, but this is the only one where another department approached me, where I was not involved myself.

COL KILLIAN: Now, this other incident which you refer to, where you yourself were personally involved, from your own insight and own involvement, but not at the request of another security branch, what are you referring to here?

BRIG VISSER: That is correct. Well, it was also a matter that is stated in my application for amnesty and which is presently being dealt with in Durban.

COL KILLIAN: Have you been subpoenaed?

MR PRINSLOO: May I just assist in this matter? This particular incident to which the Brigadier is referring, an application for amnesty has been made and the Durban office has informed us that one of the people involved will have to testify there on six June and we are sure that more evidence will be led in this regard.

COL KILLIAN: No, I do not have any problem in this regard, because I, as a Coloured person would state it, I do not want to trespass on somebody else's field. I do not want to try and elicit answers here which might differ from answers which might be given down there.

MR PRINSLOO: Chair, this is why we are also informing you in this regard, because it would be a waste of time and it is not really the issue at stake here today.

COL KILLIAN: Brigadier, after van Loggerenberg had reported back to you that he had successfully gotten rid of this body, was this matter ever raised again later in discussions between you and van Loggerenberg himself?

BRIG VISSER: In that period?

COL KILLIAN: Well, after getting rid of the body.

BRIG VISSER: No, we never had any discussions or conversation in this regard again.

COL KILLIAN: At what stage did this matter become, was it raised again?

BRIG VISSER: Well, during last year, "X" security branch members and, had a meeting with General van der Merwe on which occasion the functioning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Amnesty Committee was explained and where he recommended that people who had possibly been guilty of offenses had to decide for themselves whether they would apply for amnesty and Captain van Loggerenberg approached me and said that he believed this matter had to be applied for amnesty for and I said I have no objection, I would go with him in this regard and we would apply, I would apply for it myself in this regard as well. I was his commanding officer.

COL KILLIAN: At the stage when this event occurred, Vlakplaas was well known to all security branches?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I believe it was known.

COL KILLIAN: Also to yourself?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, he was also known, it was also known to me.

COL KILLIAN: And Vlakplaas and its staff were in many instances used to launch certain actions at the request, at certain

requests of various security branches against certain individuals?

BRIG VISSER: On my request no actions were launched, but there were actions in my area of control at the request of head office, but I myself did not address requests in this regard.

COL KILLIAN: The governing rules at that time would have been that should a particular security branch from outside were or wanted to act in the area of another security branch, then one would have to acknowledge the commander of that particular branch. Would that be the case?

BRIG VISSER: It was supposed to be like that, yes.

COL KILLIAN: That would be the governing rule, I am sure it did not always happen like that, but was that the rule?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, that was the, but, in fact, it did not always happen like that.

COL KILLIAN: What was the relationship between yourself and Eugene de Kock as persons?

BRIG VISSER: Not too friendly. Due to his actions in my area of command and his actions there. I considered it necessary at a particular stage to parade him at head office and to object to his actions in my area of command.

COL KILLIAN: In his amnesty application and I want to present his version to you and I do not want to claim for a moment that his version is, in fact, correct, but he claims there was a degree

of professional jealousy between yourself and him due to the successes which they achieved and that in a particular instance you, it would be good if you listened to me carefully, I am simply presenting his versions of things, in a particular instance after a successful operation, you claimed the honour for yourself and your staff which brought about certain honours from head office. Do you know of such an instance?

BRIG VISSER: No, I do not know of such an instance and I am sure that I never was guilty for professional jealousy. We were engaged in a war to defend our country, our nation and any successes by anybody would have been accepted by myself. It was, there was no need for me to be jealous of anyone else's success.

COL KILLIAN: I am not suggesting that you are jealous in such a manner, I am simply stating his version and asking your response.

BRIG VISSER: No, nor did I require any acknowledgement for my staff. The only instance in which I requested a medal for one of my staff was after a sabotage attack at Secunda where one of my members killed the saboteurs on the border and I have asked for the recognition by means of a medal. It was not necessary for me to try and gain the honour and acknowledgement of others.

COL KILLIAN: I am not accusing you of this, I am simply trying to present to you the version of another applicant. I am not

suggesting that you are guilty of this, I only wanted your reaction.

At the time of Captain van Loggerenberg's approaching yourself and at the point at which he said to you that in view of certain events and things that had come to the fore, that there was a need to apply for amnesty in view of the time restrictions involved and when he said to you that it is necessary now to apply for amnesty to prevent future difficulties and in view of the presentation by then Commissioner van der Merwe, Johan van der Merwe, to ex-members?;

BRIG VISSER: Yes, the decision was made after that meeting.

COL KILLIAN: Did you make a decision that it would be a good time in certain instances to apply for amnesty?

BRIG VISSER: Yes.

COL KILLIAN: So, where certain individuals felt that it would be necessary for them and in their personal interest to apply for amnesty in good time, was that the decision?

BRIG VISSER: That is the decision.

COL KILLIAN: And that was the cause of your amnesty application?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, because of all of that preparatory events.

COL KILLIAN: Had there not been such a consultation, would you out of your own have applied for amnesty?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I believe that I would have applied for amnesty. I cannot speak on behalf of Captain van Loggerenberg, but I am convinced that he would have applied for amnesty also. Since, in my view, then this is something that was against ones very person and convictions to act in such a way.

COL KILLIAN: At what point in your life did you realise that this particular action of yours was in conflict with ones normal nature and needs?

BRIG VISSER: I realised that at the very time, that this action was against my principles.

COL KILLIAN: Was that at the time of your participation in the incident?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, to be honest, I immediately realised that this was contrary to my principles. However, I was engaged in waging a war and the political circumstances of that time as well as the criticism in the media concerning police detentions and the surrounding problems and since this was general knowledge, I considered it necessary for myself to provide support.

COL KILLIAN: When you, therefore, became involved in the matter of Bopape the political motivation of that time to destroy the enemy, to exterminate the enemy in whatever way possible, that required of you to become involved?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I believe so, there was no other reason. If necessary, I could explain this to you in considerable detail, how

and why, but both in terms of legislation and in terms of policy, it was necessary to do this.

COL KILLIAN: I am sure that your considerations and your motivation is explained in detail in your amnesty application?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, and that which I have stated in that application was my honest motivation.

COL KILLIAN: Captain van Loggerenberg, in his testimony at his appearance on a previous occasion said to us that he had lied during testimony at the hearing of persons in courts, which had led to them being found guilty and given prison sentences. Are you aware of this?

BRIG VISSER: No, I am not aware of any such instances.

MS VAN DER WALT I am sure this has to do with assaults and one has to qualify this.

COL KILLIAN: That is true, I did not refer this to the Bopape matter, I have only said that he has admitted that he had lied during testimony in other cases which had led to certain persons being found guilty and given prison sentences as a result. Whether that would have been assault or rape or any other matter, the fact is that he had lied.

MS VAN DER WALT I do think it is necessary to specify what he had in fact said, because what you are saying could have a variety of meanings. It could mean that he had given false testimony to find people guilty, but this had reference to assault.

He never admitted in court that he had assaulted anyone, that is what his testimony had been. That was his testimony. You are stating his testimony incorrectly.

COL KILLIAN: His testimony was that during the court cases of certain persons he had given false testimony which had led to these persons being found guilty and given sentences and that is the question that I am asking.

BRIG VISSER: I am not aware of any such an instance and I am satisfied in my own heart that I have never had anyone found guilty innocently.

COL KILLIAN: I think that is the end of my session.

CHAIRPERSON: Kobus.

MR SWARTS: Mr Visser, (...indistinct).

INTERPRETER: The current speaker's mike is not activated.

MR SWARTS: Mr Visser, with the meeting at the college where the activities of the Truth Commission was discussed, was van Loggerenberg present?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, he was present.

MR SWARTS: Did you and van Loggerenberg discuss the Stanza Bopape matter?

BRIG VISSER: No, not on that particular day.

MR SWARTS: At what time after that did you discuss it?

BRIG VISSER: Subsequent to the meeting, we were stationed at the same place.

MR SWARTS: Why I am asking is that I am looking at the date of the applications and I wish to determine after, what time after the conversation with General van der Merwe was this matter discussed between the two of you. What amount of time lapsed?

BRIG VISSER: It would have been towards the end, in the latter half of last year. Some time before the first cut off date.

MR SWARTS: The next question and I am referring to the previous Section 29 hearing with Captain van Loggerenberg and I noticed that in the application that you said to van Loggerenberg that he should destroy the body.

BRIG VISSER: That is correct and I mentioned that in my application also.

MR SWARTS: Was there a particular intention? Why did you use the word "destroy"?

BRIG VISSER: I, to make this very clear and to say this very briefly, I wanted him to get rid of the body in such a way that it could not tracked down or found again.

MR SWARTS: Why I am asking you about the word "destroy", as you are aware there had been use made of explosives to destroy bodies.

BRIG VISSER: That is correct, I had heard of that in the past.

MR SWARTS: Did you consider "destroy" in the same sense?

BRIG VISSER: No, I made no prescriptions with regard to method.

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MR SWARTS: Thank you, Chairperson.

MR MALAN: I joined this entire matter at the very last moment and I actually have questions on entirely different matters for you, which has relation to Vlakplaas and related inquiries.

MS VAN DER WALT Could I ask you, would this have relation to the Stanza Bopape matter?

MR MALAN: No.

MS VAN DER WALT I am afraid, and the Chair had made it very clear, I had taken particular care to refer to this, your subpoena is somewhat strange with regard to paragraph three. I understand the honourable Chair very clearly. She had said that this particular inquiry would be related to the Stanza Bopape matter. Article or Section 31, although it is a very confusing article or section, Section 31 reads that my client,

"... would be required to answer any question asked to him with reference to the subject of the hearing."

I want to say to you that the subject of the hearing, in terms of the subpoena and in terms of the words of the Chair, is the Stanza Bopape matter. You would have to maintain yourself, you would have to restrict your questions to the Stanza Bopape matter.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, I think, Francois, if want to ask questions over another issue, we will have to issue a subpoena which will

cover that section. Unfortunately, this hearing is confined to the matters relating to Stanza and, of course, dealing with perspectives.

Piers?

MR PIGOU: Chair, I would just like to ask whether this, we cannot have some leniency on this as we are trying to understand the workings of the security branch and this is an example of how the security branch operated. We have numerous other examples from amnesty applications and I think that the kind of questions that Mr Malan wants to ask are entirely valid, because it gives us a broader scope and an in-depth understanding of the security branch operations of which the Stanza Bopape matter is but one.

CHAIRPERSON: Adv van der Walt, I mean, your client is entirely free to decide that he would want, in a sense, the areas that we cover to be spelt out in a subpoena, but I would ask that you ask your client to answer when it deals with perspectives, motives and activities, in a sense, of the branch for which he was responsible, but I do understand that in the nature of the way these subpoenas are handled, that if they deal with specific cases and not examples, perse, then you are entitled, of course, to say that your client does not want to answer, but I think if we are exploring perspectives and activities, I think in that sense it is quite a general area and I myself would want to feel free to ask questions in that respect.

MS VAN DER WALT We have had the negative experience due to the way in which the Committee has acted, it would appear to us that the Committee wants to throw a (end of tape 1A) ... we have asked for amnesty on behalf of some of our clients and we would rather maintain the requirements of the Act, we would rather restrict answers in terms of the particular matters on the subpoena and, in terms of my experience, this particular subpoena in question three is very vague. You could ask my client anything from his birth until today and we are simply not willing and he would also not be willing, after we have explained the matter to him, to answer any other questions at this point except as that which is particularly referred to in the subpoena and as you have warned him with regard to Stanza Bopape.

CHAIRPERSON: You understand, of course, then the subpoena will be reissued to cover specific areas. Ja.

MS VAN DER WALT: With pleasure.

CHAIRPERSON: I have two questions. The one is in your testimony you talked about understanding that it was either a "persoon" or a "ligaam" which you would have to deal with. Now, you gave instructions for the body or the parcel to be disposed of, but what if it had been a living person and I ask you that, because you used the word "persoon"?

BRIG VISSER: When I was approached I did not know whether this was a person or a body. After Colonel van Niekerk arrived

at the point and after we had determined that it was, in fact, a body I had given the instruction and then we acted in terms of that.

CHAIRPERSON: What if it was a person?

BRIG VISSER: I do not know how we would have acted then. Maybe we would have made an entirely different decision at that point. I cannot explain what we would have done in that case.

CHAIRPERSON: You also (...indistinct) later on about and the words you used is "land, volk en vaderland teen die aanslag".

BRIG VISSER: I did use those words.

CHAIRPERSON: Ja. I would like to explore with you your understanding of what the lengths would be of what you would be prepared to do and I do that, because it has relevance, in a sense, for your amnesty application. You know that recently in the testimony of the former State President to the Commission, he talked about taking responsibility for bona fide actions of lower ranking operatives, but at the level of yourself, the level of the Generals, where actions are unlawful he said he would refuse to take responsibility for that, because he never, in fact, created the atmosphere or gave instructions that unlawful actions and gross violations of human rights should be perpetrated.

Now, given the fact that your involvement in this amounts both to a criminal offence, an unlawful action and a gross

violation of human rights, where did you get the sense that all of this was permitted in the name of "land, volk and vaderland".

BRIG VISSER: As I have already mentioned, the political situation at that time and, in fact, in my entire period of service, was of such a nature that I would have taken extreme steps to carry out my task. We were engaged in a war, we were fending off an onslaught. I was forced to prevent persons from planting land mines and from killing innocent persons, Black and White. I had served on the borders and there, for instance, I was involved in 65 land mine incidents. I had to pick up, on dozens of occasions, the pieces of police officers and return their pieces to the Republic. Sometimes I had to bury the pieces of police officers and in my view the situation was so extreme that I would have taken whatever I found reasonable to defend that which I believed in and to defend what I considered to have been a legitimate Government in this country.

CHAIRPERSON: But even in war, there are rules and in this sense.

BRIG VISSER: I can mention that I believe it was the policy that the Geneva Convention Rules would not have applied in a so-called bush war. For instance, there was no effort to take prisoners of war.

CHAIRPERSON: So, it was killing at all costs?

BRIG VISSER: Defend your country at all costs and counter fire with fire, fight fire with fire.

CHAIRPERSON: How do you feel about the fact that the politicians do not, in fact, take responsibility?

BRIG VISSER: I think it is pathetic. It is my conviction that a climate had been created and I believe that the politicians should take responsibility for trends and a milieu that they had created in that view, in view of that they should take responsibility.

CHAIRPERSON: In a sense, do you think that they should take responsibility for creating this environment where they, in fact, created this milieu where you believed that you could act with impunity, in a sense?

BRIG VISSER: I believe so, yes, they should do that. The circumstances had been created by the politicians of this country. The very well known statement of, and "total onslaught" is typical of the tendency and the milieu that had been created.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Hugh.

MR MALAN: Mr Visser, I wanted to ask you whether Johannesburg had ever asked you whether you would assist to deal with the dramatisation of a so-called escape situation in the Eastern Transvaal?

BRIG VISSER: Colonel van Niekerk did request this, but I said that I have already stuck out my neck and I am unwilling to open

an escape dossier. They would have to sort out any other steps that they had to do themselves.

MR MALAN: Brigadier, at the stage when you received that body, did you know how the man had died?

BRIG VISSER: No, not at all. No explanation was given to me, I did not know what his name was, I did not even see the body, not at all.

MR MALAN: Were you at that particular point aware that it was a body that you were receiving?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, Colonel van Niekerk reported that to me.

MR MALAN: When did you, for the first time, know who that person, indeed, was?

BRIG VISSER: After Captain van Loggerenberg had approached me and we had approached my legal representatives to assist us in drafting an amnesty application. I found out from my legal representatives that it had, indeed, been the Stanza Bopape.

MR MALAN: And that was the first time, that was only recently.

BRIG VISSER: Yes, it was only recently that I heard that it had been Stanza Bopape.

MR MALAN: Did you know at the time that it was a Black or White person?

BRIG VISSER: No, I did not. It was not specifically mentioned to me, but I accepted that it would have been a Black person.

MR MALAN: Did you have any information as to where he had died or how he had died?

BRIG VISSER: I knew that it had been at John Vorster Square.

MR MALAN: Who had stated that to you?

BRIG VISSER: Colonel van Niekerk and them and, of course, General Erasmus who was the Divisional Commander in John Vorster Plain at that stage.

MR MALAN: Did he say how he was killed?

BRIG VISSER: No, they did not give any detail.

MR MALAN: Was that because you could deduce from that that it had been during the person's questioning? Could one then accept that you were aware that this person had been unlawfully killed during his custody?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I suppose we can, one can accept that.

MR MALAN: You knew that when you accepted or you accepted that when you received the body there?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I accepted that was the reason why I was asked to assist.

MR MALAN: So, you also had to have knowledge that the concealment of the body would have been against the Law of the land?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I was aware of that.

MR MALAN: How could you associate these two things, the unlawful action on your side and the onslaught on the country as you alleged?

BRIG VISSER: Well, it was a matter of survival. I took this decision within my conception of what the onslaught was against the citizens of this country.

MR MALAN: But we are talking about a person who had been in custody and from that point, according to the Laws of the country, could have been dealt in accordance with laws. He was no longer capable of planting land mines, launching attacks on the citizenry. Was it necessary to extend the unlawfulness to that kind of case?

BRIG VISSER: Well, I have already mentioned the mass media coverage around the injury and death of people in custody and those were one of the considerations which forced me to assist.

MR MALAN: So, it was a definite cover up of existing deaths, etcetera?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, it was just a matter of casting more suspicion and criticism on the people who were responsible for the onslaught.

MR MALAN: You said it was against your principles to do something like this. Do you still say so?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, without any doubt it was against my principles to get rid of a corpse or to kill somebody, I am a Christian.

MR MALAN: Did you not make it part of your principle to act in this manner for political, for the sake of politics?

BRIG VISSER: Well, there are certain responsibilities one has to accept if one works within a certain situation.

MR MALAN: Did you have an objection in principle against the number of people who were killed unlawfully in custody?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I had an objection in principle against it. I did not believe it should happen.

MR MALAN: You were a Colonel at that stage?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, at that stage I was, I could have been a Colonel, I was possibly a Colonel.

CHAIRPERSON: Sorry, if I may just intervene. This is Mr Wilson Magadla, the Deputy-Director of the National Investigation Unit. This is Brigadier Visser and the two legal assistants.

MR MALAN: Who was the person to whom you reported directly at head office at that time?

BRIG VISSER: I cannot remember whether General van der Merwe was Commissioner at that stage or whether he was Head of Security or whether it was General Coetzee.

MR MALAN: But what rank would that have been?

BRIG VISSER: Well, they were both Generals when they were Chiefs of the Security Branch. I reported to the Commanding Officer of the Security Branch regarding my activities.

MR MALAN: There was one aspect which you mentioned which I would like you to explicate further. You said that you did not request Vlakplaas to come and act in your area, but that some of those requests originated from head office.

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I did not ask for any actions in my area. Vlakplaas was controlled from head office. It was directly in their instruction or command.

MR MALAN: Did it not work in such a way that when you gained information that necessitated action you went to head office, discussed it and they involved Vlakplaas then.

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I did discuss matters with head office, but they would have given the instruction if I had needed it.

MR MALAN: So, you requested Vlakplaas' assistance, but via head office.

MR PRINSLOO: May I just interrupt? Is this matter aimed at Stanza Bopape or is this concerning actions outside the Stanza Bopape matter, because I would like the questioner to state very clearly that this matter involves Stanza Bopape, it is a very wide question.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct) Mr Prinsloo that your client was head of the security branch and he spent 25 years in the security

branch. Now, whilst I will not have them deal with specific cases, in general they can ask questions about your client's time period in the security branch and actions related to his work in the security branch. I will not permit them to ask specific case questions, but I think that they can question him about the workings of the security branch.

MR PRINSLOO: Could he then qualify the purpose of the question, where he is headed with the question? Is it to elicit certain information, is it to use against my client, because then it must be qualified particularly in that manner. If it is specifically for another case then we object against that question, because it is not covered by the notice at all, then a new notice has to be issued to this effect, which will deal with this matter.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct).

MR MALAN: I can answer that. It is simply that the Brigadier did testify earlier on on this topic and as I see it on record, something is not clear. I just want to clarify that one point. So, just returning to his previous testimony, just to explain it to us, because, it is not going to assist us if this testimony does, remains unclear. It is not a further matter.

MR PRINSLOO: Well, I understand clearly, that he had stated clearly that he had not issued any commands to Vlakplaas, that they had their own commanding structure from head office, they

were controlled from there. It was not his function and I think that was a final reply, answer, with respect.

CHAIRPERSON: Frans, move on.

MR MALAN: Yes, I have a last question to you. You may decide whether you wish to reply to it now or at a later stage.

What was the highest rank or even higher than the police cadre which, from your own experience and knowledge, you would have said that man would have known that we were committing illegal acts as part of the struggle or our struggle?

BRIG VISSER: Well, I do not think I am capable of pointing out a particular person. I believe that if politicians were worth their money, they would have been able to know about this, so I cannot point at a particular person.

MR MALAN: That is why I stated carefully and I am talking about rank, was there a general level where you would have said at the level of General, that this person would have known and could not deny knowing?

BRIG VISSER: Well, I believe that people could have known if they were in control of a situation, but I do not think of everything, because there might have been situations they were not aware of.

MR MALAN: Okay, we will probably then be able to take this further at the next occasion. Thank you.

MR LEWIN: Brigadier, if I could just ask, really for your advice based on your very long experience and also based specifically on your own involvement with this case. You know, we are involved, in the Commission with looking at the past, but particularly for the future. In your opinion, if a situation like this arose in the future, do you think you would, if you were in that position, would you act in the same way now, looking back?

BRIG VISSER: I would say that if the perception, the political situation were to be identical and so on and I were to believe that it would be the only way of survival and protecting innocent people, I would quite probably act in the same manner, although it would still have been against my principles.

MR LEWIN: So, you would see that as something that you would have to do, because of the situation?

BRIG VISSER: I believe so, yes.

MR LEWIN: And then, just another point. You made reference to the Geneva Convention, particularly in relation to bush war. Did you see those conventions as applying just in the bush or back at home?

BRIG VISSER: I believe the Geneva Conventions, rules, regulations were more intended for conventional offensive war, like a World War, and that a bush war was something that differs from a normal war.

MR LEWIN: But then in your own words you said that we were at war here, so within the country we were at war. Would those conventions not then apply?

BRIG VISSER: We were busy fighting a total onslaught by trained terrorists on the lives and property of innocent people and that is what we were involved with.

MR LEWIN: Thank you.

MR PIGOU: Brigadier, I am trying to understand at what stage and who makes the decision as to what is legal and, well, as to when you can use illegal conduct or not. It seems to me that, from your testimony this morning, that you had the latitude to make decisions, when to act within the Law and when to act outside of the Law. Is that correct?

BRIG VISSER: I do not fully understand your question, but I believe that there could have been situations which would arise during which one believed that one could act outside the Law in order to achieve a certain end purpose.

MR PIGOU: And did you feel that in this situation, that you had sanction to act outside of the Law because a request had come from a senior officer or because you, without any information, decided that the situation warranted this?

BRIG VISSER: I had already sketched what the onslaught had been at that stage, particularly surrounding the media, the negative information that appeared with this regard.

MR PIGOU: But as far as I am aware you had very limited information, you were asked to dispose of a package, you did not know what that package was although you suspected that it could be a body or a person, you had no other information about where that package had come from, what was the reason for that package coming to you, except that it was coming from John Vorster Square, yet with that limited information you were able to make a decision of that nature and, with respect, I would, you know, I would like to point out that although there was a perceived total onslaught in some quarters, this was not something that was happening everyday, as you have admitted. This is the first time and the only time you were asked to do something like this.

This is a unique situation and yet you are using the argument of total onslaught to justify a decision to break the law.

I am a little bit confused that you can be that specific about total onslaught in such a unique situation.

BRIG VISSER: As I had already stated, I went to that point to meet the people after an appointment had been made with me and there Colonel van Niekerk informed me that it was a person who had been killed or who had died during questioning and at that stage I finally decided to become involved and assist. It was at that point when he made contact with me at the appointed place, but you could possibly regard it as a perception that had been

created, but in the number of years where I had served within the set-up, it was not just a perception that I had, but it was rather concrete, particularly when I had to pick up the pieces of bodies.

MR PIGOU: So, ... (intervention).

CHAIRPERSON: May I follow that up with a question and I have asked you this before. In your own words you talked about a "persoon" or a "ligaam". Now, you had been asked to dispose of a package and you were not absolutely sure whether the package was, in fact, a live person or a dead body and I ask the question again, if it had been a live body, the natural conclusion would have been that you would then have disposed of that body, is that correct, that person?

BRIG VISSER: I had told you that the circumstances would have had to lead me, I, and guide me. If it had been a lively person totally different steps might have been taken.

CHAIRPERSON: But you would have assisted?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, I would have nevertheless assisted, even if it is just to take him across the border.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

MR PIGOU: So, if I am absolutely clear here, the, your experience in the past, picking up bits of bodies and so forth from land mines, etcetera, made you feel that the hiding what had happened in John Vorster Square and actually becoming

complicit in this illegal acts was in the interest of State security and actually, in effect, what you were doing was, was undermining the integrity of the State by doing this, that you were actually assisting the State. Is that correct?

BRIG VISSER: I believe so.

MR PIGOU: Okay. You said that you only recently discovered, last year, that the body was that of Stanza Bopape. Do you remember in June 1988 an urgent communicator, all security branch personnel around the country and as commanding officer, I presume it would have come to you, about the escape of Stanza Bopape?

BRIG VISSER: It is possible that I read about in the papers or that I had received notices to this regard.

MR PIGOU: There was a huge media furore around the disappearance of Bopape in subsequent months and this was brought up again in subsequent years. One year after the event, two years after the event, three years after the event and so forth.

Did you never make the connection that the body that you had actually disposed of was this man?

BRIG VISSER: Definitely no, I did not in any way deduce that it could have been the body of Stanza Bopape. The only, the first time that I took cognisance of the fact that it was his body was when my legal representative gave me the name. Many people

escape in this country of ours and I did not link that body with the name Stanza Bopape.

MR PIGO: Do you not find it ironic that the one thing that you and your colleagues were trying to avoid which was the media furore around a death in custody, actually led to a media furore about a huge cover up, which has now come out?

BRIG VISSER: Times change I suppose.

MR PIGO: No, that is not the question I am asking. I mean, the point I am trying to make here is that what you were trying to do at the time, your motive in terms of preventing the death getting out and the subsequent criticism of the Government and of the security forces and of the security branch, in particular, that this happened anyway, because the version presented by the State and by the security branch simply was not believed by anyone except for a few people inside the police and State structures, so that it actually, your motive, there was no basis for your motive in hindsight?

BRIG VISSER: No, I believe there was a basis for my actions to combat the immediate suspicion that was cast on State policy and actions and at that stage I believe it served a purpose. I do not know what the further developments were.

MR PIGO: Okay. Did you ever receive instructions in written or other form from your commanding officers during your career in, and it could be related to Bopape, to use unorthodox methods

and if you did receive instructions would these be in a written or verbal form?

MR PRINSLOO: Is this question aimed at Bopape, Chair? I do not clearly understand the question.

MR PIGOU: Well, it is actually trying to establish whether or not that the unorthodox instruction or request, because I am not quite clear whether it was a request or an instruction, in the Bopape matter was something which was unusual. I mean, we know that the specific request of disposing of a package was unique, that has been stated, but I am trying to find out whether unorthodox requests were made in other matters, whether that was unique, unorthodox requests, perse.

CHAIRPERSON: I think in your, the point that the question is trying to establish is during your client's period of service in the security branch, this in itself, the, these, the instruction in terms of the disposal of Stanza's body is something unusual. I think what we are also trying to establish is were other such unorthodox requests ever made to you.

BRIG VISSER: No, it was not a general thing. I know of one incident that I reported in my application outside the Stanza Bopape matter.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, but I think it goes to your (...indistinct) of service in the security branch and I think that, with respect, your client should answer that question.

MR PRINSLOO: With respect, this question is so wide, Madam Chair, was this question aimed at whether the request had been in writing or not or whether it was exceptional or not exceptional, those were all included in the question. Is that the question?

CHAIRPERSON: No, I think it was quite clear, Mr Prinsloo. The question is were there other such unorthodox or strange, what is the word, we request, received. Your clients response has been that there has been one other incident and, in fact, he turned to you for a response, but I think he should answer that.

MR PRINSLOO: May I, with respect, clarify this point? It is that the Brigadier has already stated there was another case in which he had been involved and, with respect, he had already submitted to you regarding this matter and that is being investigated by the Durban office and now we are going over the same ground again. It is not aimed at Stanza Bopape, it is outside the Stanza Bopape matter.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, it (...indistinct) beyond the boundaries of the questioning on Stanza Bopape, but all your client has to do is to state on record that he received one other such request, that it, in fact, it is a matter that is being investigated by Durban and I think on that score then, I think he needs to just say that, put that on record, put the name of the incident on record and then we pass on.

MR PRINSLOO: With respect, that question has already been stated. If you want the name, the person refers to is Scorpion. There is some confusion at the Durban office with regard to the name, but a Gail Wannenberg has indicated this might be the person known as Ruben. My client has already applied for amnesty with regard to this incident. He knows this person as Scorpion.

CHAIRPERSON: He has not actually placed the details on record, Mr Prinsloo, and I think that he should answer the question and then we will ask Piers to pass on from that question.

BRIG VISSER: I have already said this, Chair, I know of one other incident and after that I have asked my legal representative to handle it.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct).

BRIG VISSER: The only person, if I want to repeat this and I have a single other incident and the person was known to me as Scorpion.

MR PIGOUE: Brigadier Visser, you have referred to the concern around media hype and so forth about matters connected to incidents in detention. Was this something which you believed was propaganda by elements of the media or left-wing radicals or whatever, but did you believe any or some of the (end of tape 1B) ... result of torture. Could you perhaps shed some light on your feelings about that subject matter?

BRIG VISSER: I am aware of the fact that people were questioned and, in your words, that they were tortured. I am also aware of the fact that people had died in detention. I would have believed, however, that the media of a country in a struggle for survival, in my view, should place less emphasis on certain aspects.

MR PIGOU: Could I ask you, it is a broad question, but could I ask you how you expect the general population of this country to accept laws and, particularly skewed, in my subjective opinion, form of morality that torture and deaths in custody were an acceptable evil in the face of a greater evil. Could you explain to me how the breaking of laws set an example which you expected people to follow?

BRIG VISSER: I do not understand the question entirely.

MR PIGOU: Brigadier Visser, I am trying to understand that you, you set a picture of this total onslaught and that you are acting against, you are using unorthodox methods to fight this, I am not talking about you specifically, but the team that you are working with, the security branch, the military and so forth, the politicians and you are trying to create a situation where a section of the population can survive in this country. I do not understand how the examples that you set by using illegal methods, criminal acts, can actually play into the development of

a stable situation. Did you not see that you were contributing to a spiral that was actually taking you away from a solution?

BRIG VISSER: I am not a politician, I do not make laws and I did not make the Laws of the country. My primary responsibility was to carry out the laws as it stood on the law books. I would admit that in this particular case I acted outside the law by providing assistance in this particular way, in getting rid of this particular body.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct) follow that up with a question. I mean, I think that this is precisely the sort of paradox that we have. You were responsible for the execution of laws. In fact, in a sense, you, as a policeman, are responsible for the protection of people, but what you did actually did not protect people. You, in fact, were responsible for acting beyond the boundaries of the Law and given the fact that there were extreme laws, it was a time of the Emergency, even within that framework, your branch acted outside of the Law and in this particular incident, you went beyond what was just and, I mean, even in a conflict situation where you have a bush war, there are rules that apply.

What gave you that sense of impunity to act the way you did, given the fact that the Laws that, what you talk about as total onslaught, really was the, in truth (...indistinct) and we now come to understand, was a protection of a minority and, in fact, the majority of the people were fighting to be free. Where do

you find yourself within the framework of what I have just outlined for you now?

BRIG VISSER: I had the particular task in my activities to act in a particular way, to protect this country against an onslaught from outside or from some of its inhabitants who were trained terrorists. I believe that in that context I, my opponents also did not keep to the actual rules at times and I believed that in view of that I could act to counter the onslaught.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct) Brigadier, given the fact that these very terrorists are now, in a sense, in Parliament what do you think back about that period. I mean, in a sense, what you were fed was a total lie and how do you justify your actions now given the fact that the very people that you declared as terrorists, now sit in Government?

BRIG VISSER: I entirely accept it. This is a new development which has taken place. I have no objection against, the persons against whom I acted in the past are today members of a Parliament. I entirely accept this and I will accept this.

CHAIRPERSON: There is an environment created in terms of which you act, you are prepared to go beyond the boundaries of the Law to uphold what you think is a particular situation. In fact, in your own words, you were fighting a total onslaught. Given the fact now that most of what you were fed then was a lie,

what do you think right now about your actions during that period of time?

BRIG VISSER: I do not entirely understand what you mean. At the time when I acted I had been entirely satisfied that that which had to be combatted was, in fact, or, in fact, required extraordinary responses. The situation now is entirely different and probably one would act entirely differently under the current circumstances.

CHAIRPERSON: Who gave you that kind of instructions, that you were in this kind of situation and that the end justified the means? Did it come from the top, was that just your general perceptions, how did you come to understand, to be in that framework of mind?

BRIG VISSER: It was a condition in which, had happened to the 25 years of my service in the security branch. It had grown to a particular point, it had developed over that time.

CHAIRPERSON: Who was your superior on this particular issue?

BRIG VISSER: Who was my superior? Either General Coetzee or General van der Merwe, one of the two must have been. The last commanding officers of the security branch.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct)?

BRIG VISSER: I did not report back to them.

CHAIRPERSON: Did you ever (...indistinct).

BRIG VISSER: I did not discuss it with them either.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct) that they knew. Did you know that they knew?

BRIG VISSER: I would not be able to say.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

MR PIGOU: Ja, just a couple of brief questions. What would have been the consequences, Brigadier Visser, if it had been discovered that you had participated in this act?

BRIG VISSER: But it has been discovered.

MR PIGOU: No, no, no at the time, what would have been the consequences for you if it had been discovered that you were participating in this criminal act?

BRIG VISSER: There would have been an inquest, obviously.

MR PIGOU: You would have lost your job?

BRIG VISSER: I do not believe I would have lost my job. I would have been suspended and there might have been a criminal court case and depending on the court case I might have lost my work, yes.

MR PIGOU: Did it not, this is a question that I believe we put to Captain van Loggerenberg. Did it not concern you that by participating in this criminal act, you were actually providing a certain amount of leverage to people who you had owed nothing to, sensibly, apart from a certain sense of loyalty, but you were actually giving them something on you, they were giving you

something, you were giving them information which could be possibly used against you in the future, could be possibly used against you to force you into other acts. Were you not concerned about the implications of this?

BRIG VISSER: I was not concerned at any point that my actions would have been used against me. I am sure you mean, to some extent, that I could have been blackmailed in one way or another.

MR PIGOU: Well, possibly, something like that, but also I am intrigued that you had this sense of impunity, as well, that you could act in this way without any fear of being caught. One of the questions I had down here was, but you already answered it, was whether you contacted Erasmus again to seek some sort of reassurance that you were covered on this issue.

BRIG VISSER: I never contacted him after the incident again. I believe that Colonel van Niekerk reported back to him that they had handed over the package and that it ended at that point.

MR PIGOU: And you never, in your mind, needed to reassure yourself with Captain van Loggerenberg as to where he had put this body, that it had been dumped successfully?

BRIG VISSER: I trusted his judgement since he had proved in the past that he acted in, with good judgement.

MR PIGOU Thank you, no further questions.

COL KILLIAN: Brigadier, could we get your proper home address since we have some difficulties to contact the legal representatives in Delmas, should we need you in the future.

BRIG VISSER: I have got a post box and my recognition has been sent to that P O Box.

COL KILLIAN: Could we get a physical street address, please?

BRIG VISSER: 19 Jan Smuts Drive, Dennesig, Middleburg.

COL KILLIAN: Dennesig would be Pineview?

MS VAN DER WALT There is no difficulty to contact us. Mr Swart had phoned Adv Prinsloo when this fax was sent through and we have taken it up with your colleague that we would want to be informed. You understand how many cases we deal with.

COL KILLIAN: That is why we wanted the Brigadier's home address. Then we can make it available to him personally and then he could contact with his legal representative.

MS VAN DER WALT You are not willing to warn us?

COL KILLIAN: No, we will certainly consider this is as an alternative.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct) arrange the date with you beforehand. Is that your ...

MS VAN DER WALT We would appreciate that since we have to cover the entire country with a variety of cases.

MR PRINSLOO: Chairperson, we also have ... (intervention).

CHAIRPERSON: You see my, our problem, obviously, is the

fact that we also have, as you can imagine, a number of dwindling days ... (intervention).

MR PRINSLOO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON: ... in which to have these subpoena hearings and so, obviously, the date when we recall your client will be at the date which is the most convenient for us.

MR PRINSLOO: Could we just arrange that, with us as well, because we have a lot of Supreme Court matters and various courts and all of that and ... (intervention).

CHAIRPERSON: We, I think ... (intervention).

MR PRINSLOO: I mean, we cannot ... (intervention).

CHAIRPERSON: ... as far as we can, we will try and do that, but, obviously, in the circumstances it will be difficult. What we will do is see if we can try and arrange a comeback date which would suit, perhaps, your client and ourselves and we can probably do it immediately after this, but, unfortunately, we also have an incredibly tight schedule and in so far as we can, we will see if we can fit you in.

MR PRINSLOO: But I think it is the client's legal right to be represented by a person of his choice and, particularly, in this particular instance, we have been dealing with his amnesty application. So, I think that is only proper that one would be consulted and then arrange a date. We are not saying we are not, will not be available, it depends. If we have an engagement at

the Supreme Court we cannot tell the judge we are not going to be present at court to come to this Commission, so why did you double brief. That is why we should arrange a date prior to that.

I think that is the proper way.

CHAIRPERSON: I think, with respect, Mr Prinsloo, I have said that as far as possible we will try and make sure that we arrange a date which will be convenient to both parties. However, I mean, I also would like to draw your attention to the fact that there are, you, I think your client has two legal representatives and I am sure that one of you would be available to attend with him. I cannot see that as an insurmountable problem.

MR PRINSLOO: It depends on our engagements, obviously.

CHAIRPERSON: We will try and sort that out. Frans, did you

...

BRIG VISSER: For Mr Killian's information, there is no street delivery of mail at my house, that is why I made available the P O Box.

COL KILLIAN: It will be physically delivered by hand.

CHAIRPERSON: Frans, did you have any further questions?

MR MALAN: Yes, I have one or two further questions on the Stanza Bopape matter.

Brigadier, should in 1986 you have received a request from some other unit, say Pretoria Murder and Robbery or whomever, and they said to you here we have someone who died in

detention, get rid of this body for us, how would you have handled that.

INTERPRETER: The speaker's mike is not activated.

BRIG VISSER: A request from outside the security branch from someone whom I did not know would have made a difference.

MR MALAN: So, you drew a distinction between the security branch and other police?

BRIG VISSER: Yes, because of the relationship of trust involved.

MR MALAN: How could you have been certain in your mind that this person was not arrested for a murder or a rape or something else?

BRIG VISSER: My deduction was made in view of the fact that this request was brought to me by the security branch and I assumed that this would have been an action within the context of security branch work.

MR MALAN: It could, however, have occurred under a wide variety of circumstances, this death. Is that not the case. Is it not entirely possible that this might have been an innocent person that might have been killed where the security branch officers might have known that this person was arrested mistakenly, is that a possibility?

BRIG VISSER: That is a possibility.

MR MALAN: Nonetheless, you were willing to carry out the action?

BRIG VISSER: That is the request made to me. I assumed at that time that this was a bona fide security branch action and that there had been proper activities prior to this incident.

MR MALAN: Was this simply because they were your security branch colleagues?

BRIG VISSER: Because they were people whom I knew personally.

MR MALAN: That is all, thank you.

Just a last question, Madam Chair. Was Nick Deetlefs at all involved in the Stanza Bopape incident?

BRIG VISSER: I do not have any knowledge to this effect. I know that there was such a person stationed there, but I do not have any knowledge that he was involved. I did not see him.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Is there anything that you would like to add, Brigadier, before we finish this session?

BRIG VISSER: Could you just report, could you just state that again? Not at present, thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: (...Indistinct). Thank you very much.

MS VAN DER WALT What time will that be.

MR PRINSLOO: All right.

MS VAN DER WALT General Erasmus is coming first and then the other two.

MR PRINSLOO: We were given the assurance by Mr Steenkamp yesterday in view of yesterdays arrangements, that the Brigadier would be called first and then du Preez would follow upon him with the view that we would then be cleared before lunch time.

CHAIRPERSON: No, in fact, Mr Steenkamp, in fact, do you want to check that?

COL KILLIAN: Ja, I want to check on that, please.

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Steenkamp, himself, actually said ... (intervention).

MR PRINSLOO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON: ... (...indistinct).

MR PRINSLOO: And he informed us that the person who is to follow was a certain Mr Pretorius and he would be done at lunch time. That was the arrangement.

MS VAN DER WALT Ja.

MR PRINSLOO: So, he was given notice for this morning at nine.