



## CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION

### TRANSCRIPT OF INVESTIGATIVE HEARING

10 CONDUCTED AT LEVEL 2, NORTH TOWER, 515 ST PAULS TERRACE,  
FORTITUDE VALLEY WITH RESPECT TO

File No: CO-16-1664

HEARING NO: 17/0001

DAY 8 - TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2017  
(DURATION: 00HR 17MINS)

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#### LEGEND

PO Presiding Officer – ALAN MACSPORRAN QC  
CA Counsel Assisting – GLEN RICE QC  
30 HRO Hearing Room Orderly – MELISSA LETONDEUR  
W Witness – Kassen ISSA  
LR Legal Representative – N/A

PO Mr RICE.

CA Commissioner, I call Kassen ISSA.

PO Mr ISSA, I think we have a Koran for you to be sworn. Could you do that now, please.

10 W I, Kassen ISSA, knowing Allah Almighty to be present and looking at me, by my faith promise that what I shall say shall be the truth and that without concealing anything I shall speak the truth, the whole truth, and that I shall speak nothing except the truth.

CA Is your name Kassen ISSA?

W That's right.

CA You're known as Isaac ISSA; is that correct?

20 W No. Kassen ISSA. They call me by "IZZA" - it's not. I-S-S-A, sometimes they call me "IZZA", sometimes they call me ISSA, sometimes - and so they start calling me by nickname, "IZZA", ISSA, "IZZA", ISSA.

CA Okay. How do you prefer to be called?

W Well, to be honest, I would prefer to be for my right name, full name. But from mixing with the people all the time, they used to call me that name, "IZZA", "IZZA", "IZZA", by my nickname, by my last name.

30 CA I'll call you Mr ISSA, okay?

W Fine.

CA Mr ISSA, you're attending today in response to a notice to come here?

W Yes.

CA Can I show you this document. Is that a copy of the notice you got to come here today?

40 W That's right, correct.

CA I tender that attendance notice.

PO Exhibit 111.

CA Can I ask you about your business.

W Yes.

50 CA You're a director of a company called Advance Form?

W Not the director. The second director.

CA I beg your pardon?

W The second director, yes, you can say. It's a company been built through the family, a business we running, me and my brother-in-law and the family running this company.

CA Is it an incorporated company?

W Yes.

10 CA Is your brother a director?

W Yes.

CA Is it your brother or brother-in-law?

W My brother-in-law.

CA Your brother-in-law is a director?

20 W Yes.

CA And you, do you have a position in the company?

W In the company position, you can say - I can say yes and no in this company, because I built this company. The way that we - the tradition that we came from, when we build the company as a family, so everyone, even if there's no name in the company, but they can say whatever, they can do whatever they want, in the company.

30 CA Did you fill out any form to become a director in the official records?

W No.

CA You don't think so?

W Not necessary for me, no.

CA You think of it as your company?

40 W Oh, yes, a hundred per cent.

CA Along with your brother-in-law?

W A hundred per cent.

CA And the rest of the family?

W A hundred per cent.

50 CA You have some premises at Underwood, I think, business premises?

W That's the business, yes.

CA What type of work does Advance Form do?

W It's a carpentry company.

- CA Carpentry?
- W Formwork, yes. They do formwork. They pick up for everything named by formwork, that's all.
- CA What do you mean by "formwork", Mr ISSA?
- W Formwork, everything it says by - I'm going to explain it like - let's say if you had a building you were going to build, prefab the formwork to build it, or you had, let's say, the ground floor you're going to prefab it to build it, to work it out with the formwork, with the carpentry. That's our business. It's all about timber and appliance of that.
- 10
- CA So you carry out work, what, on building sites?
- W Yes, sometimes-
- CA What kind of locations?
- 20 W Brisbane. Mitchelton. Newstead.
- CA But are they building sites?
- W Oh, yes, sometimes, yes, like units, townhouses, yes.
- CA How do you get work? Typically who would be your customer?
- W We go into the current market and we price to the market, what's been in the market is important, and that's - we put our price, and that's how we win our job, if we win it or not.
- 30
- CA Who do you do work for?
- W We work for construction group Hutchinson. Too many companies.
- CA Contract work?
- W Yes, subcontractor.
- 40 CA Subcontractors?
- W Yes, subcontractor.
- CA Is your company a builder in its own right?
- W No.
- CA Just formwork?
- 50 W We are a subcontractor for any construction company that they need any work to be done.
- CA How long has the company been operating?
- W Well, it's been for the last, I believe, seven years, seven to eight years, something like that, yes.

- CA Have you been involved with it for that long?
- W Beg your pardon?
- CA Have you been involved for that long?
- W Oh, yes.
- 10 CA From the start?
- W I have.
- CA And your brother-in-law also?
- W Yes.
- CA Do you know the Mayor of Logan, Councillor Luke SMITH?
- 20 W Luke SMITH, of course. He is our Lord Mayor for our area, which is the area that I live, and-
- CA Do you know him in any personal sense, like to speak to?
- W Oh, yes, we are very good friends.
- CA I see. For how long have you been friends, Mr ISSA?
- W For the last two years, two and a half, something like that, around - stuff
- 30 like this, yes.
- CA Do you remember how you came to meet him?
- W Yes, through my friend. His name is Joe.
- CA Joe?
- W Joe RIZK, yes. He's one of the leaders of the communities for the
- 40 Lebanese and the Syrian one.
- CA In the Syrian community?
- W Yes, because I'm Lebanese, too. That's how did I get to meet him.
- CA Through Joe?
- W Yes.
- 50 CA And what kind of contact have you had with him over the last two years since you've met him?
- W Well, over the last two years, it's become as a friendly and like a family-wise, talking, having chat, "What were you up to?", holidays, sort of that, about our lives, you know what I mean?
- CA Do you meet him in person sometimes?

- W Oh, yes, definitely. Like yesterday he visited me and my missus in the hospital. She gave birth.
- CA Right.
- W Oh, yes, we had a good relation about it.
- CA Did you have another baby?
- 10 W Right. I haven't had much sleep for the last two nights.
- CA You have a lot of babies.
- W Yes.
- CA How many have you got now?
- W Number seven.
- 20 CA So Councillor SMITH visited you yesterday at the hospital?
- W Yes, yes. We visit each other. They came to - he comes to our place. We go to visit him, to-
- CA To his house?
- W Yes.
- 30 CA And he comes to your house?
- W Yes.
- CA To socialise, like for a meal?
- W The last time, it was - yes, we had a dinner, yes, yes.
- CA And he-
- 40 W He's my friend, like a friend way, friendship.
- CA You say he's a friend of yours?
- W Yes.
- CA You know that he ran for Mayor in the local government election last year?
- W Yes, I've heard all this. I was sitting here watching everything here.
- 50 CA You probably know what I'm going to ask you. Did you make some donation to his campaign fund?
- W Yes, I did.
- CA Would you explain what prompted you to do that?

W What, sorry?

CA Why did you do that?

W Because, first of all, after we had the good relation with this - with him. Secondly, I like the vision that he wants to create in this area, which is the Logan area. And after we built that relation, I would like to help him. I would like to see him in that position, to be winning, to show us how the area is going to be changed, which is for our family, for our future.

10 CA Did you think of getting anything in return for the money you donated?

W Maybe for my kids, yes, in the future. If what he's talking about is going to create the area, I would like to see my kids growing up in this area, yes.

CA So that's what was in it for you?

W Oh, yes, definitely.

20 CA Did he ask you for money or did you-

W No, actually, it's not about asking. Sort of when he said that he's going to do a lot, me and Joe were talking, we're supposed to help him in his election, sort of, that's all.

CA But whose idea was it to help him in that way?

W "In that way", which way?

30 CA To give money.

W Oh, to give money?

CA Whose idea was it?

W Which is usually my friend Joe, he mentioned it, he said he's going to election, so that we got to help if we can help. Of course we're definitely going to help him. Then I told him, I told him give him - call and introduce him, I'm going to help him for his election.

40 CA You and Joe talked about it?

W Oh, yes.

CA Did you talk about it when Councillor SMITH was present? Was he there for this talk?

W Oh, no.

50 CA Just you and Joe?

W Me and Joe and a couple of the community members back that days, you know.

CA Decided to help-

W Yes.

CA -Mr SMITH?

W Yes.

CA And did you subsequently give him some money for his campaign?

10 W Oh, yes, I did.

CA How many times, do you remember?

W To be honest, not a hundred per cent. Maybe three times, maybe four times. Do you know what I mean? But I remember the amount. It was, like, in between - the whole amount, it was in between, I don't know, 25, 28, something like that, between sort of that amounts.

CA Thousand dollars?

20 W Yes, yes.

CA 25 to 28 thousand?

W Yes, yes, 25 to 28, something like that, yes. Not more. I remember-

CA The money that you gave, did it come from the company or out of your own-

30 W No, it comes from the company and maybe a couple of thousand from my personal account, but most of the money came from the company, which is our company, yes. But exactly which account that came out of, I'm not sure. But I can get it. It's easy for me, yes.

CA You mentioned you gave him money more than once?

W Mmm, yes, I did.

CA Why more than once? Why not just do it all at one time?

40 W Because back that time, that's how much I used to have in my hand, that's all.

CA Well, the money that you gave him, how did you give it to him? What form was it in?

W Money, cash in an envelope, in his hand.

CA Each time?

50 W Yes.

CA Cash in an envelope?

W Yes. We used to have a dinner, sit as a family, sometimes in the restaurant. You know what I mean?

- CA I was just going to ask you, do you remember where you gave him the envelope with cash on these few occasions?
- W Yes, there was a couple of places we used to sit. In Browns Plains, there's a restaurant there. In Underwood, we sat there a couple of times. But to be honest with you, to remember all the spots a hundred per cent where it was - because we sit in many places, to be honest. So every time we used to catch up, we'd have a dinner or sort of that, we'd hang out sometimes, you know, for a coffee sometimes, during the night or during the day, afternoon, it depends what time, but I can't figure out a hundred per cent. But I tell you the spots, yes, it was in Underwood, it was in Browns Plains. In that area, sort of that area, that's all. Logan area, Logan central.
- CA The occasions on which you gave him money, did you arrange to meet him for that purpose or how did it come about?
- W Well, not really. Sometimes we used to contact each other, what he's doing, "Let's go for dinner", or sort of that. "Are you free now? Come down." It's not something, "Yes, come out and I'll give you money" or sort of that, no. Because, to be honest, the first time I surprised him. I remember the first time he saw I support him, I told him that's nothing. You know what I mean? So he said, "Serious? Thank you very much." "Oh, don't worry about it. It's okay. Just I hope what you talk about, what you're going to do, to be happening for our kids' future, that's all."
- CA Did you have to go to the bank to get the cash to give him?
- W Not really, but in the same time?
- CA Each time. There were how many occasions - three or four?
- W To be honest, not each time I have to go to the bank, because what I used to do - always, always, I tried to save a little bit of cash in my house, put it aside, because sometimes, you know, when you deal with cash, you can get a good price when you want to buy something. So always I tried to keep stuff like this. But, yes, sometimes, yes, I used to talk to the right person in the office, "Get me cash from the bank, I need that amount." But sometimes he would - say, for example, sometimes I tell him, "Get me - I need 15,000." Maybe I was going to buy something else too, you know. Not the exact amount, "Yes, this amount, get in cash, I want to give it to him straightaway." No, it doesn't work like this.
- CA Why do you do it in cash, Mr ISSA?
- W Why not?
- CA I'm just asking you, is there any reason in particular?
- W Not really. I like dealing in cash.
- CA Do you often use cash?
- W To be honest, yes, I like dealing in cash. Not often, often. But sometimes when, like, a present or sort of that - you know what I mean? So I buy also the - sometimes I buy stuff, like it's very easy, good price, take it

straightaway, yes, got cash. Yes, I will have it.

CA When you gave the envelope or envelopes of cash to Mr SMITH, did he give you any receipt?

W Oh, no.

CA Did he count the money?

10 W Not really. Never, ever.

CA Did you tell him how much was in the envelope?

W Never.

CA You just handed over an envelope with some cash in it?

W Yes.

20 CA He didn't know how much there was?

W No. Never, ever.

CA Didn't tell him?

W Of course not. If I want to ask him for that, that means I'm making a business with him. If I'm going to get a receipt from him, that means I'm dealing business, which it was not our business way.

30 CA Did you give any cash or any other money to any other candidate in the election or just Mr SMITH?

W No, just Mr SMITH. That's the only friend that I used to know and that's the guy that he was elected to be as a Lord Mayor like that, which is-

CA Okay. You gave the money to him, did you, so that he could use it for his election campaign?

40 W Campaign and other stuff that he needed for his election or sort of that, yes.

CA You knew it was for his election?

W Oh, yes.

CA That's why you gave it to him?

W Oh, definitely I help him with that. Even I help him to put a photo in some of the shops for him, too.

50 CA Did he say anything to you about, since you gave him money, you might have to fill out a form and give it to the Electoral Commission? Did he say anything like that to you?

W No, no. To be honest, no, since he won, even he invited us, I remember, for a dinner or sort of that. Even I couldn't come that day. Yes.

CA Did you know that if you gave him money, like more than a thousand dollars, you should fill out a form giving the details of the amount and the dates?

W No.

CA You didn't know that?

10 W No.

CA You haven't put a form like that in to the Electoral Commission?

W No. Just I knew from you right now, to be honest. Shouldn't be like this? Has to be filled a form - from my side or from his side?

CA Both.

20 W Oh, okay. Seriously, I had no idea about it completely.

CA You didn't know?

W No, not really.

CA That's the evidence, Commissioner.

PO Thank you. You're excused, Mr ISSA. Thank you.