

Enter Record of Interview Craig Hawkins &

OP GRAND

EXHIBIT No. 320
Anna McDonald CLERK

TAPE NO: 1 (of 2)

DATE: 04/10/05

PLACE: Southport

TIME COMMENCED: 14.08 P.M.

TIME CONCLUDED:

INTERVIEWEE: Ian Solomon

INTERVIEWER/S: Craig Hawkins

LEGAL OFFICER: Anna McDonald

RE: Operation Grand

FILE NUMBER: MI-05-2482

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

COPY TAPE 1 OF 2 - RECORD OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN CRAIG HAWKINS AND IAN SOLOMON

LEGAL OFFICER: Anna McDonald

RE: Operation Grand

IS = IAN SOLOMON

CH = CRAIG HAWKINS

SW = STEVE WHITELAW

- 1 CH: The time is approximately uh 2:14 p.m. on Tuesday the 4th of October 2005. My name's
2 Craig Hawkins. I'm an investigator with the Crime and Misconduct Commission uh here
3 at the address of 10 Ferry Road, uh Southport uh conducting an interview uh with Mr Ian
4 Solomon. Just for the purpose of voice recognition, if everyone could introduce
5 themselves by name, starting with yourself, Mr Solomon
6
7 IS: Ian Solomon
8
9 SW: Yeah uh Detective Sergeant Stephen Whitelaw, Crime and Misconduct Commission
10
11 CH: Now as we discussed prior to commencing the tape, uh Mr Solomon we're here to
12 discuss uh any knowledge you may have in relation to the uh 2004 Gold Coast City
13 Council elections and candidates in relation to that um you're happy for the interview
14 today to be taped?
15
16 IS: Yes.
17
18 CH: OK um now as I said, it's in relation to the uh Gold Coast uh City Council elections in
19 2004 uh and some allegations that have been made against some of the fund raising
20 activities for candidates uh and in fact for current councillors within that Council um just
21 to start with, we'll get some uh personal details from you including your full and correct
22 spelling of your name?
23
24 IS: Yes, it's Ian Solomon, S-O-L-O-M-O-N, uh date of birth, 10th of June 1961. (Phone
25 rings) sorry just a second.. hello.. yes it is, look can I give you a call back in about 45
26 minutes? I'm just in an interview. I've got your number, yeah, what's your first name?
27 OK, no problem.
28
29 CH: Uh no middle name?
30
31 IS: Uh no.
32

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

33 CH: And home address?
34
35 IS: Uh street number 26 Norfolk Avenue, Surfers Paradise.
36
37 CH: And contact phone number?
38
39 IS: Uh mobile 0412 754 416, office 5528 5506
40
41 CH: And your uh current occupation?
42
43 IS: I'm a company director
44
45 CH: And what company is that?
46
47 IS: It's a company called Pittwin Pty Ltd and (UI)
48
49 CH: And any other directors of that company?
50
51 IS: No
52
53 CH: You're sole director?
54
55 IS: Correct.
56
57 CH: Now just in relation to the 2004 elections, during that time, I believe you were a member
58 of a chamber of commerce? Could you just inform me where that was and what position
59 you may have held?
60
61 IS: Yes, in 2004 I was the President of Southport Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.
62 It's a voluntary position, uh, I had been in that position for 6 years uh and I've been a
63 member of the Chamber for around a dozen years
64
65 CH: And uh at the time um you were President at that time? Who was your Vice-President?
66
67 IS: Uh there were three Vice-Presidents. Um I'd have to go back to the minutes and see who
68 who they were those those positions change with some frequency but the man who uh
69 man who became president for one year was Alec Watson, he was one of the vice-
70 presidents, and uh he obviously only had one term and there's a new president now.
71
72 CH: OK, so going to the uh...
73
74 IS: I chose not to I chose not to recontest the position after six years
75
76 CH: So when was your last year there?

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

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IS: Uh I finished in July 2004. I'm still on the Committee now. Oh no, I'm a vice-president now. I got elected vice-president in uh July.

CH: So in relation to the 2004 Gold Coast City Council elections, um did you have any involvement at all in relation to those elections with any candidates?

IS: Not specifically with any candidate in particular um for a long period of time, one of the main whole-of-city policy issues which I had particularly been uh keen to promote and actively involved in was what we called City Image um which was actually an initiative that eventually was entrained by our Chamber, a collective of Chambers which met under the banner of the combined Chamber of Commerce, and also it was adopted by the Regional Economic Development Advisory Council as an initiative which should be supported by uh Gold Coast City Council's Economic Development Unit, which concerned the perception of Gold Coast as a business destination, especially amongst the policy and uh um senior public servants in Canberra and institutional investors and investment advisors in Melbourne and Sydney and the capital markets. Uh so that was a major project that I'd worked on and put a lot of time in uh self-funded participation in two trade missions to Canberra, uh self-funded a whirlwind tour of the Melbourne and Sydney capital markets in the company of a local lawyer John (UI) who was then chair of the Combined Chamber and a local business man Lionel Barden who was also the president of or one time was the president of Robina Chamber of Commerce. So that was an issue that was a particular particularly dear to me; I had a view that there was a shallow stereotype about the Gold Coast that it was uh transient and uh wasn't a quality destination to invest and do business and we were able to gather significant material to show that that's not the case and a lot of these initiatives were then adopted by Council and uh a lot of the promotional material that has subsequently been generated uh has dispelled those myths, that we are in fact a very good destination, we have an educated, motivated young population, and it is a very good place to live and do business and uh invest. Um a lot of um my time on Chamber activities was expended uh dealing in a frustrating environment and there were I'd say it was unanimous that uh most of the Chamber presidents were frustrated with some of the decision making that was coming out of the Council the the previous Gold Coast City Council, in particular, a small number of the candidates, um a small number of the councillors, like for example, the local councillor in Southport, uh Councillor Dawn Crichlow, uh she hasn't supported a what would be considered a pro-business policy or initiative for about five years, um trying not to get personal she is a woman with very limited uh experience in at a senior business level uh she's done very little travelling and has a very shallow and narrow band of uh interest, uh you would have seen the (UI) report of her going on national television complaining about a uh mustard-coloured yellow block of apartments (overtalking) she goes for she champions ridiculous causes uh expends a lot of what's called divisional funds, it's a unique funding situation in Gold Coast City Council, where each councillor has some I think the current figure's about eight hundred thousand dollars a year which is called discretionary fund uh I I found that an absolute uh and still have major issue that

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Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

121 that particular discretionary fund is available to councillors to literally spend on a whim,
122 almost without, yeah they have to they have to substantiate the expense, uh in terms of
123 showing where the money went, but they can basically choose to spend it on whatever
124 they like.

125
126 CH: So it's there anyway?

127
128 IS: Correct. And Southport has seriously suffered as in my view Dawn has wasted a lot of
129 that money. She spent a hundred and twenty thousand dollars on some vintage
130 reproduction Munster-type streetlights which are contextually totally inappropriate, and
131 did do nothing to enhance or foster the business environment, and those words enhance
132 and foster the business environment are the pillars of the constitution of our chamber,
133 about making sure that our business environment business community prospers and is
134 vibrant. So, um these frustrations, uh we we had uh we had identified that an
135 organisation called Gecko and a number of other smaller so-called community
136 representative groups had very effectively lobbied Council or caused such publicity in the
137 Gold Coast bulletin which essentially is the only it's the dominant media outlet on the
138 Gold Coast. The tone that is adopted by the Gold Coast Bulletin tends to set the agenda,
139 rather than the other way around, where it is tends to report the agenda, or report what's
140 going on. A number of major important economic development initiatives uh were
141 thwarted through effective lobbying by Gecko and other smaller groups uh to bring about
142 a state of political paralysis at Council level. Uh key projects include uh Nature Link,
143 which was a Cairns Skyrail-style project, proposed for the hinterland, a subsequent uh
144 project similar to that called Ecotrans, um a major study which the Gold Coast City
145 Council uh uh hosted for thirteen months, which I was a member of the committee called
146 Vision 20-20, which uh delved into the resourcing and management of the Gold Coast
147 Broadwater and Southern Moreton Bay and the land use and future of all the surrounding
148 lands, silting of the Broadwater, pollution, conflict of the maritime activities, fishing
149 fleet, recreational users, jetskis, seaplanes, helicopters and the like; a very intensely
150 utilised area but totally unfunded and under-resourced. Uh that was a very
151 comprehensive study, very broad base of community representatives, there were over
152 thirty-four different uh committee members on that committee, and a number of those
153 resolutions that were made were simply noted by the then Gold Coast City Council and
154 went no further, which was incredibly frustrating. We also saw uh in particular Dawn
155 Crichlow champion against a private company, Leighton Contractors building a multi-
156 level hospital annexe on a site in central Southport, adjacent to Gold Coast City Council,
157 which was to include a desperately-needed uh Medivac helipad, uh air bridge across to
158 the Casualty area, a psychiatric hospital and a multi-deck, fully secure carpark. The
159 proposal by Leighton Contractors who had gone through an extensive bidding sorry
160 Leighton Properties, an extensive bidding process because they were going to deliver that
161 to the city at no cost to the ratepayers, and no cost to the state taxpayers of Queensland. It
162 was a win-win for everybody, and Dawn systematically lobbied to kill that project by her
163 uh intransience (sic) over uh a strip of centre parking uh which and I don't remember the
164 exact number but it was generating something like forty thousand dollars of centre

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

165 parking parking fees a year. That was a massive piece of infrastructure that would have
166 been an important catalyst for the uh urban renewal that's taking place in Southport now,
167 and she she went on a almost manic uh campaign to to see that killed on personality lines
168 against her other councillors. Um in this overall climate, there was extraordinary
169 frustration by ordinary business people and at the end of the day, the Gold Coast City
170 fundamentally is made up of small business people. I think there's only twenty-five
171 businesses, twenty-five companies here that employ more than fifty people, but yet it has
172 tens of thousands of small businesses. So we're all ordinary business people, people with
173 families, people with mortgages, we we need our thin and volatile economy to get some
174 deep roots and we weren't getting that type of direction out of Gold Coast City Council.
175 Uh the then mayor, Gary Baidon, a really nice man, but unfortunately a victim of this uh
176 decision-making paralysis; uh it was broadly perceived that he would win the uh win the
177 mayoralty again, so um at the Combined Chamber in particular, we had discussed at
178 length the need to try and balance or neuter the the the negative or the lack of decision
179 making, lack of forward thinking decision making that was coming from Gold Coast City
180 Council. Um in fact a few weeks before the end of 2003, Premier Beattie came and
181 spoke to a combined Chamber cocktail party, and he practically stood up and gave us a
182 gave the business community a bit of a spray, saying how can you have the second largest
183 uh local authority in the country and not have any discipline and rigour in your Council
184 and you business people really, you you need to get behind some candidates, so at least
185 we know where we stand in the in the State Council decision-making process. So I guess
186 all of those things were triggered, we had a combined Chamber meeting in early
187 November 2003 I think
188

189 CH: Chamber of Commerce?
190

191 IS: Combined Chamber yep, combined Chamber meeting and we discussed we we regularly
192 discussed major policy issues and we discussed the fact that we were about we were
193 looking down the barrel of all three levels of government having their elections over the
194 next few months uh federal, state and council, and what was the response going to be?
195 What were we going to do to try and deliver better outcomes for business people with
196 families on the Gold Coast? So we talked about that broadly and generally, and
197 subsequently to that um a group of us had a a quick lunch; it was reported in the paper
198 that it was an afternoon session ,that's not the case at all; it was a plate of toasted
199 sandwiches, hosted by Tom Tate who owns a resort called the Islander in Surfers
200 Paradise; Tom was the president of Surfers Paradise Chamber, and a group of us uh all
201 the names were reported in Saturday's Bulletin met at that lunch, and we sort of looked
202 on a division by division basis, which councillors we knew knew by their reputation and
203 their past work were pro-business and sensible and which were the dickheads, and they
204 were pretty identifiable as well.
205

206 CH: Just for the tape, can I just get you to identify who those who was present at that meeting?
207

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

208 IS: Oh look, I can't quite remember exactly, but Tom Tate was there, uh John Lang, then
209 president of Coomera Chamber of Commerce was there, um I was there obviously, uh
210 Bob Janssen who was then president of Nerang Chamber, he was there, and there were
211 three or four other people, I just honestly can't remember, and I looked in my diary the
212 other day when the journalist rang me up with a blue about it and uh I didn't have the
213 notes on who else was there, um Councillor David Power arrived uh a little later in the
214 meeting, about halfway through the meeting because we wanted to talk to him about the
215 same frustrations, and he would have been well aware of those frustrations. I think it
216 would be fair to say that the sensible pro-business candidates had strong uh connections
217 with their local Chambers of Commerce, as indeed Dawn Crichlow did. I mean Dawn
218 Crichlow, and this is important for you to probably note in your in your in your
219 deliberations, Dawn Crichlow started her political career as an alderman on the old Gold
220 Coast City Council with using the Southport Chamber of Commerce as her power base.
221 She ran a a re-opened the Nerang Street Mall uh agenda and she's remained a vice
222 president of the Chamber of Commerce until only two or three years ago, when her stupid
223 antics simply you know our organisation and our business community simply outgrew her
224 stupid antics. And I put a lot of effort into making sure that the business community and
225 the Southport Chamber had a had a workable relationship with her as the as the local
226 councillor. In fact, she came to my wife and my wedding in calendar year 2000.
227

228 CH: Were were all the Chambers in favour of getting involved in sort of political sense?
229

230 IS: It's a it's a long historic uh set of circumstances that that especially in local council, that
231 Chambers of Commerce had had associations with with Council, it's probably gone back
232 for forty or fifty years. It certainly has been in the entire time I've been involved, that it's
233 the most effective way to bring about outcomes at grass roots level on the pavement, so to
234 speak, especially in the Gold Coast, where there is such a strong link between divisional
235 funds and fixing a problem, so it's quite normal uh and any assertion, or any suggestion
236 that to have the Chambers of Commerce I mean essentially, a Chamber of Commerce in
237 the Australian context exists as a lobbying organisation, to support business people.
238 That's fundamentally what it does. Others might say that it's for networking and having
239 breakfasts where you have a guest speaker and you meet other business people, but I've
240 always maintained and and you know my track record in the public domain is, is it
241 effective lobbying tool, and I used it as a lobbying tool to ensure that Southport Chamber
242 of Commerce was perceived to be a responsible and relevant organisation when it came
243 to policy decision making uh to do with the Southport business environment.
244

245 CH: OK. Now are you aware of the establishment of a fund to support candidates?
246

247 IS: Yep. I'll just get to that. That's what we talked about at the lunch. We we identified
248 which candidates which divisions basically had councillors that we felt that we should
249 were were pro-business and deserved deserved support, and which divisions had
250 candidates that needed to be uh needed to be needed to where candidates who were
251 coming forward could be basically checked out to see whether they were business-

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

252 friendly and sensible and decent people, and if they were uh, we try and encourage those
253 candidates rather than uh the incumbents. And Peter Young, uh Peter Young had a a very
254 uh I don't think the candidate who ran against him was the optimum choice, but Peter
255 Young was very entrenched; sometimes it's very hard to get uh it's interesting that Peter
256 would want to take on on some of the candidates. I believed at the time and I certainly
257 expressed it pretty broadly, and I told Roxanne Scott, who was to run against Dawn, that I
258 didn't think Dawn was able to be beaten, um just to give you some background there, I
259 actually ran for Council in 1994 and Dawn Crichlow was a candidate uh was an
260 incumbent councillor an alderman at the time and also Peter Lawler who's now the State
261 MP for Southport; he was also an alderman, and they both one of them was going to lose
262 and I just thought that they were being pigheaded and stupid and a moderate candidate
263 might be able to run up the middle and scoop the bait. But it was not to be. Dawn just
264 spent a bucketload of money and and she's been re-elected ever since. But I still had a
265 working and and uh cordial relationship with Dawn all all over the years up until about
266 two or three years ago when there were too many issues that I it wasn't worth continuing
267 to spend my time on the relationship. As I said, she came to my wedding in 2000, in
268 2000, the year 2000. Um at that uh at that lunch um uh David Power and myself and
269 Tom and Bob, we all just sort of discussed that rather than do it on a piecemeal approach,
270 if there was any money raised or could be uh solicited from business supporters of a
271 larger um you know larger business people and in the Gold Coast, that generally means
272 the property identities, not always, but clearly it's the property industry that's the
273 dominant industry here, so that terrible word property developers pops up um the you
274 know it would be useful if those moneys were spent on the candidates that could be put to
275 best use. I didn't I I put my view that I didn't think Dawn could be beaten, and it was a
276 waste of money, resourcing and candidates to run against her. And that was about it; that
277 was about the end of my involvement in the uh in the whole of the process.

278
279 CH: In that whole political sort of ...

280
281 IS: Yeah, I noticed Rob Molhoek in Saturday's Bulletin quoted saying that I had a
282 conversation with him where I in a group of others, there were two or three other people
283 there, where I was really putting the pressure on him to join the group; that conversation
284 never took place with me present; and up until it was first reported in the paper, I didn't
285 even know the advertising agency, the Quadrant, or whatever they're called, uh was the
286 advertising agency involved. I didn't get into that degree of detail. But one thing that I
287 did do was we we talked about establishing this this trust and getting a solicitor to
288 administer it, um and somebody of repute was desired to be uh uh the administrator or the
289 trustee, and I suggested Lionel Barden, because I knew Lionel was of like mind on the
290 prevailing issues; uh Lionel is a former Telstra Australian businessman of the year, uh he
291 recently stood down from Robina Chamber and he's a bloody good bloke. Why we liked
292 his track record for service to the Chambers is is transparent. And I regret that, because
293 as a consequence, his name's been dragged through the mud, as was published in the
294 paper, he he was David then approached him, my understanding is and he said yes.

295

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

296 CH: That's um ...
297
298 IS: And that's that's a sad thing for Lionel, 'cause he's had a kick in the guts every every
299 time there's a a you know a disparaging newspaper article.
300
301 CH: So as far as the Lionel Barden trust fund, that's you have no other knowledge other than
302 he was uh it was under his name?
303
304 IS: I didn't learn until afterwards that Tony Hickey, a local lawyer, was the administrator and
305 Lionel was the trustee. But Lionel's taken a terrible drubbing over it and uh you know I
306 had no further knowledge of how much money went into it and who got what, other than
307 what I read in the paper. But what I had been concerned and alarmed about right from the
308 outset was the malicious angle taken by Alice (UI) Jones a very close but long-time
309 family associate of Dawn Crichlow's who was a journalist at the Gold Coast Bulletin and
310 still is, who wrote about this Machiavellian thrust to seize control by a bloc. If Roxanne
311 Scott in my view had received a phone call two weeks after the election and said are you
312 part of a bloc, you know, were you part of the Lionel Barden trust fund bloc, she wouldn't
313 have even known those words. And the whole thing's been a um you know it's then been
314 turned into this mystery of the bloc and does the bloc exist and what is the bloc and you
315 know the whole thing's a load of shit.
316
317 CH: Ok
318
319 IS: Um and in fact, to go on and win a Walkley Award for it just totally undermines your
320 whole belief in merit for effort.
321
322 CH: So in relation to Councillor Power and Councillor Robbins, what dealings did you have
323 with them at all?
324
325 IS: Very little; I've only spoken to Sue Robbins probably ten times in my life and never
326 about this. Never about the uh the collective; in fact I don't think I spoke to any
327 councillor uh about the on-going activity uh or the election campaigns or um I had a
328 conversation with Dawn Crichlow, must have been in the New Year of 2004 when I was
329 talking to her about something else and she was really keen to know whether I was going
330 to run as a candidate; I think in one of those little busy bits or gossipy little columns in
331 the Bulletin of which there are many pages, it was mentioned that I might have been
332 interested in running. Um I've only ever run for public office one in 2004. I am a
333 member of the Liberal Party; uh during '98 through to 2001, I was very active in the
334 Liberal Party, and I did seek pre-selection for the Federal seat of Moncrieff, uh but I
335 wasn't preselected and the current federal member was preselected and subsequently won
336 and has been the member since. Um and at the time I stated that uh I was offering myself
337 on a one-off basis uh I was then forty; I'm now forty-four. I wasn't continually going to
338 become a perennial David Childs-type candidate who runs for every possible public slot.
339

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

340 CH: Slot that's up for grabs
341
342 IS: Yep
343
344 CH: Ok
345
346 IS: I have my own business and my own investment activities and I don't need to get on the
347 public committal of uh public expense.
348
349 CH: I'll just quickly run through some of these points which you've covered broadly anyway.
350
351 IS: Yep, yep
352
353 CH: So the knowledge of the Lionel Barden trust fund is as we discussed; you had that initial
354 meeting with other um Chamber members, (overtalking) discussed that there should be
355 perhaps a fund organised in relation to that and it became the Lionel Barden trust fund.
356 Um did you have any knowledge of how that was administered?
357
358 IS: Uh not prior, or maybe I might have been told Tony Hickey was going to administer it,
359 but I had no idea of you know whether it was by cheque, by cash in a paper bag, I had no
360 working knowledge of it whatsoever.
361
362 CH: And as far as the role of (UI) was, you were just aware they were the they were in charge
363 of running the the fund?
364
365 IS: I'm not even sure and I'm not trying to be vague
366
367 CH: No no
368
369 IS: I don't know whether I even knew that before the election
370
371 CH: OK. Do you have knowledge at all of contributors to that fund?
372
373 IS: Only what I've read in the paper
374
375 CH: So no personal knowledge of it
376
377 IS: No personal knowledge whatsoever
378
379 CH: Uh any knowledge of what candidates accessed the fund?
380
381 IS: Only what I've read in the paper.
382
383 CH: OK what about how funds were disbursed?

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

384
385 IS: Same answer; only what I read in the paper
386
387 CH: Now you mentioned Quadrant before; did you have any knowledge of the role of
388 Quadrant printing other than what you mentioned before?
389
390 IS: No, none whatsoever. I didn't know I didn't know the name I think it was Chris Morgan,
391 something like that,
392
393 CH: I think you might be right
394
395 IS: Chris Morgan – I think I heard his name around the advertising industry ridges, but I
396 don't think I've ever met Chris Morgan. If I have, I don't know him and I didn't know of
397 the name Quadrant until after the after the event.
398
399 CH: OK. Did you meet with any candidates to discuss funding at all?
400
401 IS: Yes, I did. Roxanne Scott came to me, to this office, to elicit um overt support from the
402 Chamber. She came here um Southport Chamber is now the longest historically-
403 established Chamber in Queensland; it's been established for over a hundred years. We
404 have traditionally, for many elections, had uh on the Tuesday immediately preceding the
405 Saturday local government election, we've had all of the mayoral candidates for a
406 breakfast debate.
407
408 CH: OK.
409
410 IS: Um Roxanne Scott came to see me and wanted to be a speaker at that March breakfast
411 slot. I explained to her that that would not be possible, because we had already secured
412 the uh commitments of all the mayoral candidates for the last shootout effectively; it's
413 generally the last time they come together in a debate;
414
415 CH: Debate
416
417 IS: It's a bloody good media event and this year we went all out and that year we had all
418 those little at each table we asked six or eight questions and uh Gary Baidon got an
419 absolute drubbing um and there was a smell in the air for the first time that Ron Clarke
420 might have been actually going to knock him off um interestingly going back to that
421 November meeting, there was a view that Baidon would be re-elected; so we had to have
422 a majority of councillors, not counting him, so that he he'd have enough courage to go
423 with the popular decisions; to go with the majority. So that was the climate um
424
425 CH: So as far as she was concerned (overtalking)
426

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

427 IS: Went down and told her I'd give her an acknowledgement and I didn't give her any
428 money of my own; but I sent her off to see a few people who I know hate Dawn
429
430 CH: Right.
431
432 IS: Um and that was about that. I also went to a uh the launch of Rob Molhoek's campaign
433 which was a bit of a piss-up in the park up at uh Harley Park at Labrador and um that's
434 where he alleges I put all this pressure on him and told him to go to the Quadrant meeting
435 and all that sort of thing. I had no knowledge of any of that activity, so he's either got a
436 little bit confused, or maybe John Lang or someone else was putting him under that
437 pressure.
438
439 CH: Ok
440
441 IS: But certainly, I didn't have that conversation with him. But I don't think there's anything
442 sinister in that I think he's just you know he probably had a hundred and fifty people all
443 there, and when you're running for candidacy, you'll take support from wherever you can
444 get it.
445
446 CH: Ok. So again, just to confirm that there was no funding that you were involved with?
447
448 IS: No
449
450 CH: John Lang, you've mentioned him, what's your relationship with John Lang?
451
452 IS: Uh John's been a bit crook and just retired; John's in his seventies, but I've known John
453 for many years; um he is a true gentleman, and very long-time, long-established old Gold
454 Coast family with a real estate business at Coomera. Um John and I served on the
455 combined Chamber together for many years. We went on a trade mission to New
456 Zealand together, uh just a genuinely lovely bloke, uh we're of like mind on most issues.
457 I haven't seen John for about twelve months. He's stood down from being president of
458 Coomera; he actually had a breast cancer um and uh he's also in a wine club I used to go
459 to on a monthly basis; just a nice bloke who you know who I had a fond affinity to and of
460 like mind on policy issues affecting the Gold Coast.
461
462 CH: OK. Were you aware of uh Mr Lang's role in the elections in 2004? (overtalking)
463
464 IS: Yeah, he was the campaign manager for Brian Rowe. I'm not sure whether I knew that in
465 November 2003 or not. I may have been but it's no big deal whether he was or he wasn't
466 and again this is as I say, lots of Chamber of Commerce people were involved generally
467 on the non-Labour side of politics in in and around local government and state Liberal
468 and state National candidates.
469

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

470 CH: OK, do you have any knowledge of him approaching any other candidates and offering
471 them any financial assistance in relation to those elections?
472
473 IS: No knowledge other than that he was at that same launch of Rob Molhoek as I was.
474
475 CH: Are you aware of him saying anything to Mr Molhoek in relation to ..?
476
477 IS: Not in my presence, other than other than maybe just a general affirmation that it was a
478 good thing he was running. At the time I had my office in the same office building as uh
479 where Rob Molhoek worked in Citibank. He used to work for the radio station RG
480 Capital Radio I think it's called, and I had my office in the same building and I'd see him
481 maybe two or three times a week at the coffee shop or walking in or out of the car park or
482 whatever, so, he's no stranger to me and but I didn't say oh baby, have we got a big bag
483 of cash coming out of this slush fund for you (laughs) you bend over now and take it.
484
485 CH: There was no optional funding with that?
486
487 IS: No, no. I think I bought a hundred dollars worth of raffle tickets, or it might have been
488 fifty dollars worth of raffle tickets, but then that's not atypical. If I go anywhere, I went
489 to a cancer polo day on Sunday, and I think we bought a hundred dollars or fifty dollars
490 worth of raffle tickets in one of those bags, fifty dollar show bags full of crap that you
491 don't use, but it's for a good cause, so that's the sort of thing.
492
493 CH: Bob Janssen uh Janssen sorry, you mentioned him before. What do you know of him?
494 What do you ...?
495
496 IS: Yes, he's more closely related to primates than most human beings. Um Bob Bob's a big
497 mouth. He's he has a small Chamber of Commerce; his credibility's shot to shit um he's
498 been on the combined Chamber for years and years. I don't have a great deal of personal
499 time for him and when I tell him that, he thinks it's uh amusing banter. Um he's a big
500 mouth, he's got this fervent, he's got this extreme view about Gecko and green groups as
501 Alice Jones had about the sinisterness of the bloc. Um he uh he's his statement to the
502 CMC and his immediate gut-spilling that he did last week is purely grand self-promotion
503 um I read in the paper where he received five thousand dollars from the fund to run a
504 dirty campaign against or a component of a dirty campaign against Peter Young. Well
505 fair enough, that's democracy as far as I'm concerned, but you'd think you'd be boasting
506 about it if you'd been successful.
507
508 CH: Mm
509
510 IS: But he was unsuccessful in his bid to unseat Peter Young and why would you be bragging
511 about it? He's a dickhead.
512

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

513 CH: Do you know of any other involvement he had with the Gold Coast City elections at the
514 time?
515

516 IS: He I know he had he has a hatred Peter Young, over various issues that happened out at
517 Nerang to do with there's an old quarry out there that they wanted to put some sort of
518 Hinterland Interpretive Centre or something; I don't know the detail, but he's got lots of
519 issues with Bob Janssen; uh Bob Janssen's got issues with Peter Young and so he's done
520 whatever he can to try and upset (UI)
521

522 CH: Did you have any personal knowledge of that or again, is it just what you read in the
523 paper?
524

525 IS: No, oh, I think he might have you know he might have rung me and talked to me about
526 this. I've got no no detail. I might have I mean I knew he was involved in attempting to
527 beat Peter Young. I don't know what the extent of that was. I certainly had no prior
528 knowledge that he had received that type of funding for a component of the campaign like
529 that.
530

531 CH: OK.
532

533 IS: But had he, it wouldn't have ruffled my feathers either.
534

535 CH: Tony Young of the uh Gold Coast North Chamber of Commerce, do you know what his
536 role was in the elections at all?
537

538 IS: Tony White?
539

540 CH: Tony White
541

542 IS: Yeah, Tony White, yeah. Tony's another interesting character on the stage. Uh Gold
543 Coast North Chamber of Commerce was brought into being as an organisation
544 specifically to attack then Councillor Alan Rickard and wanting to keep this meeting
545 tight, but there were a number of long-established traditional Chambers of Commerce on
546 the Gold Coast, of which Southport was one. When Gold Coast City Council and Albert
547 Shire amalgamated, uh all of a sudden, there was a much lesser access to your local
548 councillor. The importance of having a good pro-business local councillor and getting
549 access to projects and council officers and those divisional funds needed a pro-active
550 Chamber of Commerce. Uh Tony White and Otto Pfeiffer and other people from the
551 Northern Paradise Point end of the Gold Coast obviously saw the successes that
552 Chambers like Broadbeach and Southport had by having a councillor on side, and that
553 Chamber was brought into being specifically to try and give a legitimacy to a campaign to
554 unseat Alan Rickard. Um the rest's public history, what type of lengths he'd gone into
555 that um you know Otto Pfeiffer has backed a candidate against Alan Rickard every local
556 council election I think for years. Tony White got dragged into that, and Gold Coast

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

557 North was brought into being for that purpose um he didn't adopt the view that we should
558 be so pro-active in supporting or not supporting candidates and maybe that was because
559 he chose Tony White chose to support I think David Childs over Grant Pforr. Um there
560 wasn't a lot more I can tell you about it, but I know that he really was campaigning
561 against Grant Pforr for David Childs. I don't know much of a mandate we have to do that
562 or how much dough there was floating around.

563
564 CH: You don't have any real personal input or knowledge of ...?

565
566 IS: No I don't

567
568 CH: OK. Now uh that meeting we spoke of before, you met uh Councillor Molhoek, was that
569 a uh meet the candidates function or was it just a zone?

570
571 IS: That was at his campaign launch.

572
573 CH: OK, did you attend any meet the candidates functions?

574
575 IS: Meet the candidates functions? Not out in the ground; if I've been at a business breakfast
576 where there were candidates that you could meet, then I probably would have met them. I
577 mean I know most of these people, there's very few people that pop up as a candidate that
578 you know we're a small business community, so I can't I'm not being evasive; I just can't
579 honestly remember; I didn't go out to go to a meet the candidates function because I knew
580 them already.

581
582 CH: OK. So any of those functions you did attend, do you recall anyone being asked, any of
583 the candidates being asked if they were funded or they were part of a bloc or a ticket or
584 any members of the public?

585
586 IS: No, not as far as I'm aware.

587
588 CH: OK. Now uh

589
590 IS: I can be more positive than that; I can actually say to you I specifically recall no-one was
591 asked those questions.

592
593 CH: OK. Now were you present at a combined Chamber meeting at Southort around about
594 February 2004 where Tony White asked Brian Rowe if he received funding and belonged
595 to a bloc?

596
597 IS: Do you want me to go and look in my diary?

598
599 CH: Um if you'd like to check, I'll just pause the tape while you go and have a look.

600

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

601 IS: Yeah, turn that off
602
603 CH: Change the tape at 2:53 p.m.

DJK/J:/Misconduct/Special Projects/Op Grand/Interviews/Solomon, Ian Tp1 of 2 04.10.05

Complainant:
Subject(s): Operation Grand
Investigator:
Statement Of:
Legal Officer: Anna McDonald
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

[Enter Record of Interview –CRAIG HAWKINS AND IAN SOLOMON

TAPE NO: 2 (of 2)

DATE: 04/10/05

PLACE: Southport

TIME COMMENCED: 14.55 P.M.

TIME CONCLUDED:

INTERVIEWEE: Ian Solomon

INTERVIEWER/S: Craig Hawkins

LEGAL OFFICER: Anna McDonald

RE: Operation Grand

FILE NUMBER: MI-05-2482

Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

1 COPY TAPE 2 OF 2 - RECORD OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN CRAIG HAWKINS AND IAN
2 SOLOMON

3
4 LEGAL OFFICER: ANNA MCDONALD

5
6 RE: OPERATION GRAND

7
8 IS = IAN SOLOMON

9 CH = CRAIG HAWKINS

10 SW = STEVE WHITELAW

11
12 CH: Uh this is tape 2 of the interview with Mr Ian Solomon at uh Southport um and just on
13 the previous tape, we asked if you were present at a combined Chamber meeting at
14 Southport on or around February 2004 uh when Tony uh White asked Brian Rowe if he
15 received funding uh and belonged to a bloc. Um so you went you've gone and got your
16 diary

17
18 IS: I can see in my diary that the meeting is noted in my diary. If it's in there and I haven't
19 crossed it out, I probably would have gone to that meeting. I probably was there, but I
20 don't specifically remember Tony White asking Brian Rowe if he was a member of a
21 bloc.

22
23 CH: OK have you ever heard uh Brian Rowe state that he did receive funding that was quite
24 substantial and was part of the bloc?

25
26 IS: I've never heard him use those words, no.

27
28 CH: Anything similar to that, getting finances from a bloc or a ...?

29
30 IS: I think by then it was pretty clear that um the candidates those candidates that were pro-
31 business were had been identified and those candidates that weren't hadn't been
32 identified, so I I simply assumed I I assumed from what I'd heard around the ridges that
33 Brian Rowe and I imagined that Brian Rowe was getting the lion's share of the money
34 because Peter Young was um um from my point of view Dawn couldn't be beaten, Eddy
35 Sarroff couldn't be beaten, uh and the candidate we most wanted to not have in was Peter
36 Young because he tended to be uh the most intelligent and the most green-connected.

37
38 CH: And now they're saying (UI) Brian Rowe

39
40 IS: Yeah, Brian Rowe as far as I was aware was the only candidate running against him, so I
41 just automatically made the you know joined the dots and would have expected that Brian
42 would have been getting the lion's share of any funding and effort that was going
43 forwards.

44
Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

45 CH: OK
46
47 IS: But I wasn't, as I've stated before, I wasn't involved in any of the detail of that (UI) of
48 who the contributors were
49
50 CH: OK. Just before going on, I'll show you uh some newspaper clippings and I'll just ask
51 you to comment on them some of them we've already canvassed
52
53 IS: Already canvassed
54
55 CH: Yes, yes, some of them you've already canvassed. But just in relation to your own
56 business dealings, are any of the companies you belong to or you're a director of
57 considered development companies?
58
59 IS: Not in anything like the league of uh of (UI)
60
61 CH: OK
62
63 IS: You know I I have bought and sold a couple of little units and factories and the like, but
64 no, I don't have the wherewithal to make the type of contributions that these uh larger
65 developers have. I have no employees, for example.
66
67 CH: So how is that in relation to you said you might buy the odd hundred-dollar raffle tickets
68 at a function be it for a political party or ?
69
70 IS: Try not to buy a hundred dollars worth (laughs). If they've got fifty going, that's
71 probably more my uh, you know I mean I, it's a personal thing, I think that you know, if
72 you can afford to support charities and organisations, you do. I mean I'm always on
73 various committees and I'm involved in a broad rush of things. It's no secret.
74
75 CH: So during those elections, you didn't make any campaign uh contributions to any
76 particular funds for any candidates?
77
78 IS: Other than if I as I said, I went to Rob Molhoek's, I might have bought I think it was fifty
79 dollars worth of tickets there, um I might have gone to (UI) at another Chamber or
80 something, but you know, those sort of amounts, nothing that I needed to disclose of
81 multiple hundreds or multiple thousands of dollars either in cash or in kind. In fact, I
82 specifically made a point of not doing it during that course of (UI)
83
84 CH: No that's fine. I'll just refer to some of these news bulletins now from the Gold Coast
85 Bulletin. One is uh it appears on the 26th of March 2004
86
87 SW: Are they all photocopies or just transcripts?
88

Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

89 CH: Oh just transcripts uh taken off I think their website. Just to highlight here, there's Mr
90 Molhoek who said he had not taken any money from the trust fund was approached at his
91 campaign launch by Southport Chamber of Commerce president Ian Solomon and real
92 estate agent John Lang, who was acting as campaign director for David (overtalking)
93
94 IS: Yes, I have I have read that, and he subsequently spoke to me about that later, almost
95 apologising for dropping me in it. That was a that is at best a uh sketchy recollection
96 of his account, it didn't I didn't participate in any yeah I might have generally said that
97 there's you know there's going to be some money available, you know, you're a sensible
98 fellow, you probably can benefit from it, but I don't remember the specifics of the
99 conversation. But yeah that may have been how he interpreted it.
100
101 CH: Right, so just I'll carry on here too what the highlighted uh sections (overtalking) the
102 Chambers were concerned about the quality of some of their councillors and I've done a
103 great job uh and would like to support me, I said with or without you, I'm running, if the
104 Chambers want to contribute, there's uh my fund-raising director over there, you need to
105 talk to him. So you don't recall that sort of conversation?
106
107 IS: That type of conversation could have taken place the the last line I don't recall; maybe he
108 said that to John or others who were there, but I don't remember him saying it to me. But
109 those were the sort of words I could have used, and why wouldn't we have supported
110 him? He was a good decent fellow; he's actually proved himself.
111
112 CH: Right that's fine.
113
114 IS: I would suggest that probably the reason he didn't get any money is not that it was
115 forthcoming, is that it didn't look like he was going to be a clear winner with the
116 resources that he had. That's probably more the reality in hindsight than uh the
117 conjecture in the beginning.
118
119 CH: OK. We'll move on the uh a uh Gold Coast Sun on Wednesday the 28th of April 2004,
120 (UI) part of that highlighted, Ian Solomon of Southport Chamber and Bob Janssen from
121 Nerang defeated the concept of like-minded candidates; it then goes on to say if we had
122 our time over again, I think we would have done things differently. Thus said Mr
123 Solomon. That's in relation to attending uh (UI) Gold Coast
124
125 IS: Can I have a bit more of a look?
126
127 CH: Yep, sure. Have a read of that.
128
129 IS: Oh yeah, well I got invited to go into the Council and why wouldn't I, I I always do those
130 sorts of things, I go to the Mayor's Ball, those sorts of things. Yeah probably, probably
131 given the amount of shit the Bulletin's doled out, driven by Alice Jones and lack of
132 intellectual vigour by the editor, um that we probably should have made it a more

Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

133 transparent that it was a pro-business candidacy. Because the whole thing's been beaten
134 up into this you know evil unknown spectre of slush funds to to to oust candidates, that's
135 not the case at all, from from my point of view, if you guys uncover something different
136 and people have been doing things that are illegal, well, no doubt it'll come out over the
137 next few weeks.

138
139 CH: And that's why we come and speak to people; get everyone's point of view (overtalking)

140
141 IS: From where I'm seating, it probably would have been better to have got organised earlier,
142 and actually run an articulated ticket, with policy mandates set, I mean at the end of the
143 day, Gold Coast City Council's budget is bigger than Tasmania's, yet the the Mayor up
144 until Ron Clarke got elected didn't have three dot points written on a piece of paper about
145 what they stood for. You know, what other democratic constituency in the world would
146 have that?

147
148 CH: All right,

149
150 IS: It's just you know

151
152 CH: We'll move on to another one, another news bulletin or news on the Gold Coast Sun on
153 Wednesday the 5th of May 2004, and that's uh relates to I think we might have covered
154 that before um Mr White (overtalking)

155
156 SW: (UI) Western Chambers

157
158 IS: Western Chambers is a term totally coined by Bob Janssen to try and make himself look
159 like he's got a bigger mandate

160
161 CH: And Mr White says here it was reported saying he had a go at Southport Chamber of
162 Commerce president Ian Solomon and Mr Janssen over um (UI) politics

163
164 IS: Oh um I may have seen that I can't remember but he's being totally hypocritical because
165 he was he was you know he was supporting another candidate. I would suggest that he
166 was he was having a go at us because we were because as it turned out uh what's his
167 name Pforr Grant Pforr received money from from the fund and ousted the candidate that
168 uh Tony was backing.

169
170 CH: Ok

171
172 IS: You know he's a perennial candidate and Grant Pforr's actually turned out the work on
173 the ground seems to be pretty solid.

174
175 CH: OK the last one here we've got is October 2005, the Gold Coast Bulletin

176

Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

177 IS: Is that Saturday's?
178
179 CH: Uh yes, I think we've canvassed that already, basically because it reported that uh Tom
180 Tate convened the meeting with David Power now deputy mayor arrived late. (UI) Ian
181 Solomon past president of the Southport Chamber of Commerce uh Bob Janssen,
182 president Nerang Chamber of Commerce was also along for the ride, certainly uh just
183 have a look at that
184
185 IS: Just the tone along for the ride, yeah we were there for perfectly legitimate and
186 democratic reasons. The whole thing was written with a tenor of you know
187
188 CH: Biased?
189
190 IS: Yeah, not biased, but you know yeah I read that on the weekend. Not til Sunday though,
191 unlike Bob Janssen who gets up at half past four in order to go and get his copy of the
192 paper
193
194 CH: So um were you spoken to by the
195
196 SW: Bulletin
197
198 CH: The Bulletin in relation to that?
199
200 IS: Yeah, the editor gave me a ring on Thursday. And she then rang me back on Friday. I I
201 gave her a couple of quotes off the record
202
203 CH: Right.
204
205 IS: She rang me back on Friday and said well look I'm doing the story anyway, so and
206 you've summed it up better than anybody else, so you want to go on the record with it,
207 and I said I'll only go on the record on the basis that you put in there that I was the one
208 that suggested Lionel Barden and explain that I feel sorry for for what happened, and that
209 there wasn't and I said that's strictly you know and you do a little bit of a deal with the
210 journalist that there is no Machiavellian plot and there wasn't (UI). And I think it's
211 actually emerged that there was a bit more balance to this thing than has been reported up
212 to date (UI) healthy.
213
214 CH: So you're quite happy with the quotations there from yourself that they're accurate
215
216 IS: More reasonable than they've ever been before.
217
218 CH: OK now this is one final highlighted part through there uh which again relates to uh
219 Councillor Councillor Molhoek (UI) money from the trust was approached (overtalking)
220 so that's uh inaccurate?

Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :

221
222 IS: It is inaccurate uh as I said I didn't even know of the name Quadrant until after the event
223 until I read about it in the paper so um he's over over-stressing the overt overtness of any
224 approach that I didn't wasn't approaching him, I was simply there to support his his
225 launch um and that was bearing in mind that was a long time after that meeting in
226 November, so um I wasn't aware of that and I didn't have that conversation with him.
227
228 CH: OK
229
230 IS: But I don't think there's anything too sinister to be drawn by that, he was just trying to
231 build as much distance between you know the Lionel Barden trust fund and the people
232 that are associated with it and and himself, to try and maintain that he's totally pure and
233 would be a perfect mayoral candidate in March 2008.
234
235 CH: OK, I think that's all we needed. Are you happy with all that? You got anything Steve
236 you want to anything else you'd like to add before we conclude?
237
238 SW: No it wouldn't be tape recorder worthy. As a taxpayer, it wouldn't be tape recorder
239 worthy.
240
241 CH: And everything we've covered today and spoken to you about today is true to the best of
242 your knowledge and belief?
243
244 IS: Absolutely. My candour is my weakest personality trait.
245
246 CH: I'll conclude the interview at 3.06 p.m. Thank you very much.

DJK/I-Solomon, Ian Tp2 of 2 04.10.05

Complainant: OPERATION GRAND
Subject(s):
Investigator: CRAIG HAWKINS
Statement Of: IAN SOLOMON
Legal Officer: THERESA HAMILTON
File Number: MI-05-2482
Directory :