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### **Zondo commission – Goodson tells Zondo she regrets Trillian run**

Bianca Goodson, the former CEO of Trillian Management Consultancy, has told the state capture commission that she was used as a conduit for the advancement of dodgy contracts involving Eskom and Transnet, and she has regrets for the role she played. She appeared before the commission on Thursday.

Trillian, which she was told was partly owned by Gupta associate Salim Essa, was a breakaway from Regiments Capital Management, and was established in early 2016. Goodson was effectively its first employee, and was later joined by a former colleague from Anglo American, who took up the CFO position. Its modus operandi, she was told by Clive Angel, a business associate of Trillian's leadership, was to attach itself to international companies bidding for state contracts, and to partner with them as their black economic empowerment partners.

But Goodson soon learned that this would not be achieved by entering the competitive bidding space, but instead by using Essa's political connections.

"When I look back, I am comforted by the fact that it was only three months," she said about her tenure at the consultancy firm, which she joined in January 2016. Goodson became emotional when she told the commission that she could have done something to avoid the capture of the parastatals by Trillian. She resigned in March 2016.

She was approached in late 2015 by Angel, who was then a director of Integrated Capital Management, and told that a business associate of his was looking to start a consultancy firm with a black economic empowerment background, and wanted to meet her. Angel went on to facilitate separate meetings with Eric Wood and Mohamed Bobat as well as Essa, all of whom interviewed Goodson, and offered her the post of CEO. She would later learn that Bobat would have held the position himself, but was instead scheduled to move to Treasury as a special advisor to Des van Rooyen when he was appointed finance minister in December of the same year.

In January, when she started at Trillian, Goodson was told by Angel that the company was not established for a long run. It was only set up for the "current dispensation."

"I understood it to be like the political affiliation with our president," she said. Goodson would soon be taken to meetings where she met both the CFOs of Eskom and Transnet, Anoj Singh and Garry Pita respectively. A delegation of representatives from international consultancy firm Oliver Wyman was in tow for the "roadshow" as she referred to it, where the two parastatals shared project objectives from their companies.

From the onset, said Goodson, Angel told her that the bulk of Trillian's work would come from Eskom, and her first task was to establish a sub-contractor relationship with international consultancy firm McKinsey. Trillian was going to be McKinsey's black empowerment partner in Eskom's multi-million-rand Top Engineers Programme, but getting the buy-in of the international partner proved more

difficult for her than she had expected. McKinsey was sceptical about partnering with Trillian, but this changed when Singh stepped in at a steering committee meeting in January in which she and representatives from McKinsey were pitching their ideas, and insisted that she be included.

The contract, which cost Eskom around R1.6-billion, came under the spotlight at the parliamentary enquiry into the power utility in 2017.

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