



**31 August 2020**

**Zondo commission – I hardly spoke to Agrizzi, says Mokonyane PA**

On Monday the commission of inquiry into state capture heard the evidence of Sandy Thomas, personal assistant to former environmental affairs minister Nomvula Mokonyane.

Thomas was summonsed to testify in response to allegations by former Bosasa CFO Angelo Agrizzi regarding the relationship between the company and Mokonyane. Apart from birthday gifts that she and Mokonyane would get from former Bosasa CEO Gavin Watson, Thomas said, the politician received nothing inappropriate from him.

Agrizzi's testimony in 2019 was that Bosasa paid for maintenance services at the Mokonyane home and arranged for food hampers that included bulk meat and alcohol orders to be delivered, on Mokonyane's specifications, around Christmas holidays. Bosasa, he said, also paid cash bribes to Mokonyane in exchange for her protection of the company's business interests.

Mokonyane's and Thomas's birthdays are a day apart, in late June, she told the commission, and upon finding this out, Watson started making a point of gifting both of them regularly. Apart from this, the only time Thomas received anything from Agrizzi was when she was ill and in hospital, and he had found this out when he had contacted her for something relating to Mokonyane.

"Mr Watson would either call on my birthday or the day after my birthday. He would ask for my opinion on whether to buy Mrs Mokonyane flowers, or ask for recommendations."

All maintenance issues at the Mokonyane home were facilitated by Thomas, she said, but generally overseen by Mokonyane's late husband. Often when she would contact him after receiving a report from the housekeeper of something breaking or malfunctioning, Thomas would escalate this to Mr Mokonyane, who could recommend that she contact "Richard" to attend to it. Thomas told the commission that she only learned through her summons documents that Richard's surname is Le Roux and that he was employed by Bosasa.

On Agrizzi's and Le Roux's versions, the latter would be dispatched to the Mokonyane home each time there was a need to maintain services that Bosasa had paid for, including security and lighting features. According to Agrizzi, these would be arranged through Thomas.

But Thomas denied this, saying in the 20 years that she has worked for Mokonyane, she hardly communicated with Agrizzi. She had initially said they had probably spoken once or twice, but when pressed by evidence leader Advocate Viwe Notshe, clarified that by that she meant a few times, which could have been more than twice.

On the allegation that Mokonyane received gifts of food hampers, Thomas said as far as she knew, food hampers arranged by Bosasa were for needy families in Kagiso that would be identified through the help of the Mokonyane family. These would be delivered to the home for practical reasons,

before being taken to Kagiso for distribution. How the distribution would happen and who was involved, Thomas could not say when asked by commission chairperson Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo.

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