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Zondo Commission: Bosasa at Nomvula Mokonyane's beck and call, said Agrizzi

From designing the cake for former president Jacob Zuma's 72nd birthday party five years ago, to supervising the renovations at the Roodepoort home of Minister of Environmental Affairs Nomvula Mokonyane, Angelo Agrizzi was a very busy man.

Agrizzi resumed his testimony at the commission of inquiry into state capture in Johannesburg on Monday. The proceedings started two hours later than usual, at noon, as Agrizzi had to attend to a prior engagement. Before the start, commission chair and deputy chief justice Raymond Zondo announced that proceedings on the day and on Tuesday would go longer by an hour, to 5pm, to make up for the two hours missed on Monday morning. Normal starting time is 10am.

Bosasa, now African Global Operations, was at the beck and call of Mokonyane for the most part, said Agrizzi, even paying for rented cars for as long as three months at a time for her daughter, during her visits from her studies in China. Agrizzi was the company's CFO until the end of 2016, when he resigned. Bosasa has over the years earned a lot of money through lucrative contracts with government.

The relationship between Mokonyane and the company, he said, goes back a long way. Between himself and CEO Gavin Watson they referred to the minister as the "energizer bunny" because of her ability to get things done for them. Agrizzi would later call on Watson to consider cutting ties with her, however, when Bosasa stopped getting their return on investment. "She was powerful, and that's why it went on for so long," he said, relating to the relationship with Mokonyane.

Mokonyane was a registered director and shareholder in Dyambu, the name by which Bosasa traded until the early 2000s. From the time when she was Gauteng MEC for safety and security, Agrizzi remembers being personally responsible for the favours that were done for Mokonyane. Between 2008 and 2009, Bosasa was asked to make a security analysis of all hospitals in Gauteng. This was necessitated, said Agrizzi, by a high number of reported incidents of violent attacks on healthcare practitioners, among other issues. At the end of the exercise, which had an initial cost of R2-million, a report was submitted to CEO Gavin Watson and later Agrizzi would learn from a colleague, Papa Leshabane, that the same report was given to someone who would get the tender, namely Reggie Nkabinde, the current national treasurer of the ANC Youth League.

Again when she had moved on to the Department of Water and Sanitation, Mokonyane requested a similar process to be undertaken to assess the security at the nation's dams. This came at a cost of R1.3-million, and although Bosasa had connected a consultancy firm to the department, Chieftain Consultancy, they did not meet the requirements for the contracts in the end.

Agrizzi at some point got fed up with Bosasa's practice of giving bribes to public officials and getting nothing in return. Mokonyane he said, was a case in point. "She was supposed to speak to Jacob Zuma and take care of the prosecution [in a case of corruption that company executives believed was being

built against them, but had not been made officially known to them]”, he said. In response to a complaint on the topic he made to Watson, he was told that because she carries a lot of clout, they should keep her. Mokonyane got monthly cash payments – often delivered by Agrizzi himself – of up to R50 000. Other favours done for her benefit included the funding of funerals of some of her relatives and Bosasa officials being asked to handle catering services for parties and other functions.

The ANC’s Siyanqoba Rally, held in 2016 ahead of that year’s local government elections, saw Bosasa foot part of the bill, thanks to the influence of Mokonyane, said Agrizzi.

Another bombshell dropped by the heavily guarded former COO was that at the time when Tom Moyane, the former commissioner of the South African Revenue Service, was appointed national commissioner of correctional services, the monthly amount paid by Bosasa to some loyal officials within the department went from R500 000 per month, to R750 000 per month. Bosasa has enjoyed a lucrative catering and security services contract with the department for some years.

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