



27 May 2021

Zondo commission – Mngoma is a liar of note, Gigaba tells Zondo

The battle of the exes continued before the state capture commission on Thursday evening as it heard more of the evidence of former cabinet minister Malusi Gigaba.

He told the commission that his estranged wife Noma Mngoma had a history of embellishing information that can be traced to beyond the start of their relationship in 2009. For that reason, her testimony before the commission will have to be taken with a pinch of salt.

Gigaba denied that he ever discussed work issues with Mngoma while he was minister, and that her testimony that he shared details of a work relationship with the Gupta family, appointments and dismissals of executives in state-owned entities while he was minister of public enterprises, and the receipt of inappropriate gifts and favours, is untrue.

Mngoma lied to him when they first met about coming from a wealthy family and being an IT executive who studied at Vega University, he told the commission. She continued with the lies into their marriage. To that extent, the first time Gigaba learned that it was former SAA chairperson Dudu Myeni who facilitated the couple's pre-wedding trip to Mauritius in 2011, was when Mngoma revealed it to the commission. He had thought all along that she paid for it.

"I think this is the part of the process that I found most difficult. Difficult because in the first instance it involved a person with whom I have been married for six years ... it's a person who would, at the face of it, sound more believable than all other witnesses who have come before the commission," Gigaba said when the attention of evidence leader Advocate Anton Myburgh first turned to Mngoma's testimony.

"Secondly, you're dealing with a person with whom I'm undergoing a divorce, the details of which she has misrepresented before the commission under oath."

He accused Mngoma of trying to extort a favourable divorce settlement out of him in a discussion they had in January this year. Mngoma, he said, made a proposition to him that she would stave off the commission and abandon her scheduled testimony, if Gigaba would withdraw the criminal charges against her for the alleged damage she caused in 2020, in a fit of rage, to a vehicle that belongs to one of his friends.

He told her that withdrawing the charges was not up to him, and he could do nothing about them. For him, the act of opening a case with the police was important for insurance purposes, as the car had been lent to him by the friend at the time of the incident. "It was important to me to demonstrate to the owner of the vehicle that I did not condone the damage of his vehicle," Gigaba said.

He described Mngoma's actions, including making changes to her founding affidavit to the commission, as those of a bitter woman who did not get her way. Gigaba claimed that the changes to

her version of events on her many allegations came after she had sight of his own answering affidavit, and even then she still lied and got many facts wrong.

Her account of events regarding the Gupta wedding in 2013 is a case in point. “The commission must bear in mind that Ms Mngoma’s version regarding this wedding changed significantly over time. She claims that she met people that she identified as members of the Gupta family one or two days before the wedding, then she says I told her I needed to assist their guests at the Waterkloof Air Force base who were arriving from India, which I did not.

“I was never at Waterkloof air base to receive the aircraft. I saw the aircraft landing on TV as everybody else. I was as aghast as everybody was.”

The only time the couple can be linked to the wedding was on the afternoon of the event, when they arrived after the ceremony to join the reception. They left right after dinner, and not in the middle of the night, as Mngoma said.

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