



CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

THE WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday 4th June, 2014

WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

11th Hearing

09:11hrs

4th June, 2014

Commissioners:

Sir. Richard L. Cheltenham, K.A., Q.C., Ph.D – Chairman

Mrs. Jacqueline Samuels-Brown, Q.C.

Mr. Seenath Jairam, S.C.

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Ms. Latchmie Rahamat

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Mr. James Bond

Attorneys for Working People's Alliance (WPA):

Mr. Christopher Ram

Mr. Moses Bhagwan

Attorneys for the Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC):

Mr. Brian Clarke

Mr. Selwyn Pieters

Attorney for Dr. Patricia Rodney, Asha Rodney, Shaka Rodney and Kanini Rodney:

Mr. Andrew Pilgrim

Attorney for Donald Rodney:

Mr. Keith Scotland

Witness:

Mr. Joseph Hamilton

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CALL TO ORDER

Chairman [Sir. Richard L. Cheltenham K.A., Q.C., Ph.D]: We are proposing to start in two minutes so will Counsel get to their stations. I recognise that you are taking your seat Brother Williams, Good Morning, Sir, alright.

Attorney for the People's National Congress (PNC) [Mr. Basil Williams]: Good Morning, Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Morning.

Mr. Williams: ...Madam Commissioner...

Commissioner [Mrs. Jacqueline Samuels-Brown, Q.C.]: Good Morning, Sir.

Mr. Williams: ...Commissioner Jairam.

Commissioner [Mr. Seenath Jairam, S.C.]: Morning to you, Sir.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: You look very well rested today, Sir.

Mr. Williams: I am? Appearances.

Mr. Chairman: I think you are still in the course of cross-examining.

Mr. Williams: You are hoping that I am not.

Mr. Chairman: No, I take it that you are still in the course of doing that unless we hear to the contrary. We will get started in two minutes. Mr. Marshal, we are now ready to invite Mr. Joseph Hamilton to take his place in the stand. Mr. Marshal, make sure that the microphone is properly adjusted.

[Mr. Joseph Hamilton entered the witness box]

Mr. Chairman: Okay, he is being seated. Good Morning Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Joseph Hamilton: Good Morning, Sir.

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Mr. Chairman: May I remind you that you are still under oath. You wear a heavy obligation to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. Commission Counsel, please proceed. Mr. Williams, I am sorry, proceed.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. Mr. Hamilton, could you tell the Commission what the structure of the House of Israel was during that period 1978 to 1980? Perhaps you could acknowledge as I mentioned it. Let us start from the bottom up. The first rung in the ladder would have been a Brother?

Mr. Hamilton: Are you answering for me or you are asking me?

Mr. Williams: No. I said let... You just respond to me. I will start and you decide whether you agree or not.

Mr. Chairman: I take it Counsel that you are dealing with the hierarchical structure?

Mr. Williams: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. You are clear, Mr. Williams?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Williams: The last rung of the ladder was Brother?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes and Sisters.

Mr. Williams: And sisters. Then the next was Student Priest?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Williams: Were you ever a Student Priest?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Williams: For what period?

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Mr. Pilgrim: Mr. Chairman, you understand my concern.

Mr. Pieters: Good afternoon, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Chairman:

Mr. Hamilton: Good afternoon, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: I am counsel for the Guyana Trades Union Congress.

Mr. Chairman: Just give your name again for those who are following from afar.

Mr. Pieters: Selwyn Pieters; P-I-E-T-E-R-S.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: Now, Mr. Hamilton, let me ask you this: Have you ever the book written by Dr. Ranji Chandisingh *Why I Left the PPP, Win with the PNC?*

Mr. Hamilton: I cannot recall reading that.

Mr. Pieters: You cannot recall because your memory is foggy or...?

Mr. Hamilton: No, I cannot recall reading the book.

Mr. Pieters: Very well. You mentioned Lieutenant Omawale so I want to confirm whether it is the Lieutenant Omawale who was a member of the Guyana National Service...

Mr. Hamilton: No. I was speaking about one Abram Mc Alister whose name was Omawale in the House of Israel...

Mr. Pieters: Oh, I see, so Omawale is Mr. Mc Allister, not Lieutenant Omawale?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: Very well. In respect to the Tiger Bay issue where you were sent into to break up that political demonstration; my understanding was that was your first foray into the political arena on behalf of the House of Israel?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

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Mr. Pieters: Would you agree that that was a failed attempt?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

13.08hrs

Mr. Pieters: As well you mentioned that the police came in after you were unsuccessful and breaking up that meeting?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes Sir.

Mr. Pieters: Do you from whom the directions came directing your group to break that meeting up?

Mr. Hamilton: We would have been instructed by the Leader and I think I answered that already.

Mr. Pieters: Very well, so you are saying that the Leader of the House of Israel would have directed you?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: And do you know from whom any directions came from the political...

Mr. Chairman: You are speaking far too quickly, Sir and you are not even waiting for the answer man, do not go so fast. Slow down a little, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am going to take my foot off the gas, as you said.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, a little. He said his first outing and breaking up meetings, he agree, was a failed attempt?

Mr. Pieters: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: And you then asked him from whom the instructions came.

Mr. Pieters: That is right and he said it was the Leader that is correct.

Mr. Chairman: Of the House of Israel that is?

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Mr. Hamilton: Yes Sir.

Mr. Chairman: And that the police came, but I think all of that is a reputation, not whom the instructions came from, but that the attempt failed and that the police intervened and so on. All of that is on record since yesterday or the day before.

Mr. Pieters: Okay, very well and so my question to you is, to the best of your recollection, was the meeting to which you participated as enforcer, a "thug" as you called it, was that a meeting for which a permit was granted by the police or not?

Mr. Hamilton: I could not say, I do not know

Mr. Pieters: And you would agree that at the material time in question and evidence before the tribunal bears that out that the WPA, in the normal course, would apply for permit to hold rallies in any area in which they wanted to speak to the public?

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: I may be mistaken Counsel, and I do not know what the facts are, but as far as I understand, the evidence before us, you require a permit if you are going to use a loud speaker or other Public Address (PA) system, but I do not recall any evidence that needed a permit in order, at that time, to have meetings. I could be corrected, but a distinction was made earlier on in our proceedings. I do not know what the actual situation was, but I am trying to recall the evidence.

Mr. Pieters: Accept that as it is for now. I thought I read that in one of the reports from the Special Branch.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: I believe that there was a later ruling by the Court? Counsel, if counsel of the Commission can speak, they can speak to it.

Mr. Pieters: Maybe we dealt with it in the Linden Commission of Inquiry and the Police Act have not changed that you needed a permit to hold any rally.

Mr. Chairman: Let us hear from Commission Counsel.

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Ms. Rahamat: Mr. Kwayana had given evidence that there was a High Court Action that was filed and a ruling was given that you do not need the written permission as long as PA system was not being used and that is the evidence we have on the record.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you Counsel.

Mr. Williams: I do not know [*inaudible*] that that decision is because we should not allow the Commissioners to leave here thinking that for you to hold a public meeting, you do not have to get permission from the police.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: All I am saying is that I do not know what the Law was at the time, but what I am saying is that the evidence that is before this Commission so far is that that was the understanding. It was tested in Court and that even the Court said that you did not need permission. A decision was taken to advise the police whenever a meeting was being held and some issue arose as to what branch of the police or what department were the proper person or body to advise, I was recalling that. I am not commenting in what the Law was. I am commenting on what the evidence was before us.

Mr. Pieters: And you said, Mr. Hamilton, that you described the office that broke the rally up as wearing khaki pants is correct?

Mr. Hamilton: No. If you are talking about Tiger Bay meeting, I said that there were two mounted policemen on horses.

Mr. Pieters: I see; two mounted policemen on horses very well. Let us deal with alright... and that was the extent to which police was involve in breaking up that rally?

Mr. Hamilton: A meeting.

Mr. Pieters: A meeting?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: And how many persons were at this meeting?

Mr. Hamilton: It might have been a couple of dozens.

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Mr. Pieters: A couple of dozens and the Tactical Service Unit known as the "Riot Squad" was nowhere to be seen?

Mr. Hamilton: No.

Mr. Pieters: No?

Mr. Hamilton: They were not there.

Mr. Pieters: and you described the Police Officers at one of the meetings as wearing khaki pants, correct?

Mr. Hamilton: I said police recruits.

Mr. Pieters: Right, and I am going... very well. Let me suggest this to you. I am going to suggest to you that the Guyana Police Force, the professional organisation in which you seek to tarnish their character, would not send recruits to deal with an unlawful assembly, that they would send the Tactical Service Unit or the Riot Squad which is a specifically trained unit to deal with public disturbances and unlawful assemblies. Do you agree or disagree?

Mr. Hamilton: I am disagreeing with you because it was not public disturbance. So I agree in one sense, yes the Riot Squad, as you know them, if you have public disturbance. I am speaking here about a meeting of couple dozen people gathered together where a speaker speaks or speakers from a political party. So I do not know there were riotous to cause the tactical service unit to be there.

Mr. Pieters: Well I am going to suggest to you that the Guyana Police Force, the professional organisation in this country, that is responsible for the maintenance of the Law and order would not sent any unit out unless it is to maintain Law and order or unless there is an unlawful assembly that requires their intervention.

Mr. Hamilton: I am not agreeing with you.

Mr. Jairam: Mr. Pieters, would you be calling positive evidence to that effect?

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Mr. Pieters: Mr. Commissioner, I can call evidence, Norman Mc Lean who was an Assistant Commissioner of Police...

Mr. Jairam: One moment, is he coming as your witness?

Mr. Pieters: No, he is not coming as my witness, but he is a witness before this tribunal, Sir, and we can ask him that. We can test his evidence against Mr. Hamilton evidence.

Mr. Jairam: I have a little concern. The way as I understand it Counsels role and function you put something positively if you have the proof in your hand, you cannot be speculating.

Mr. Pieters: There is no speculation here about the Guyana Police Force, Sir.

Mr. Jairam: We all know, we are all experienced here that is the police is sufficiently gullible in any State they could be used as an instrument of oppression or instrument of those who carry out the will of politicians. I am not saying it has happened in this case, but the way you have conducted your cross-examination gives me the impression, and I hope that I am wrong, that you have positive proof and you cannot be depending on Brigadier Major General Mc Lean.

Mr. Pieters: I can deal with that; I can call the member of the Tactical Service Unit at the material time if that is necessary. I can do that. That is no issue. I can call Assistant Commissioner of Police, Paul Slowe, or someone else who was there in the Tactical Service Unit or Winston Felix who can give that evidence. That is no issue.

Mr. Jairam: It is not that can call, as I understand the rule you must have...

Mr. Jairam: Mr. Jairam, I have answered your question.

Mr. Jairam: Do not be rude, Mr. Pieters, please. I am trying to get to understand your line of questioning and you are not being courteous to me.

Mr. Pieters: I am being courteous.

Mr. Jairam: I am not being discourteous to you. I am trying to understand your line of questioning.

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Mr. Pieters: I said that Mr. Norman Mc Lean who was an Assistant Commissioner of Police who will be here tomorrow will be questioned on that and as well the other senior members of the Guyana police Force, who are now retired and who are alive and who were members of the service, at the material time can be called, and I am certainly happy to call them since the State has no interest in calling them.

Mr. Jairam: Alright. Proceed.

Mr. Chairman: I have another difficulty though, which I alluded to earlier. The witness is giving evidence of what he did, what he experienced, what he saw. You do not challenge the witness's credibility in terms of what he saw by telling him what would not have been done. He is saying that he saw with his own eyes and was present when 'X' took place and you are saying that the organisation responsible for 'X' would not have done that, but that is not the challenge.

Mr. Pieters: No, but Mr. Chairman, the real test of truth is what is reasonable in all of those conditions and so if the witness is giving testimony that can be implausible or unreliable, he can be tested on that because it is not reasonable in that time, place and all of those conditions.

Mr. Chairman: Well it seems to me that the effective test would have had to come from an eyewitness who would say that I was present and that did not happen, then it may issue a fact for the tribunal to determine.

Mr. Pieters: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: But you do not say what should have happened as a challenge to someone who said I was there and it did not happen.

Mr. Pieters: Well, Mr. Chairman, let us put it this way. Let the witness give us the date and the places of this incidence and let us request particular it from the police. I mean let us put them to the strict proof they are of.

Mr. Chairman: I think we are not meeting, so you proceed. We are like two trains passing in the dark because like we are not seeing one another. You go ahead.

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Mr. Pieters: Mr. Chairman, let me tell you this because I wrote a letter expressing my concerns with respect to the Terms Of Reference Four and the exclusion of the persons who can give evidence with respect to that particular Terms Of Reference with respect to State Organisations. I see there is a truth finding function in respect to this Commission and all relevant evidence that is necessary for the Commission to perform its task, should be put before the Commission and that is why I am asking questions that some people who should be here to ask those questions and who are not.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: I am sorry Mr. Chairman. I just need some clarifications here. Counsel said in relation to Terms Of Reference Four that there was the exclusion of persons who can give evidence. Would he care to clarify who has been responsible for this exclusion? I am not sure where he is putting the blame. Who is responsible for the exclusion of these persons according to you?

Mr. Pieters: Certainly not the Commission. The Commission does not have that responsibility. I am just saying that the... my understanding is that the current regime of the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defense Force (GDF) feel that they do not have to defend historic record of those organisation.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: You will accept though that that is different an exclusion? I do not know if you were here, and I have to speak on behalf of the Chairman when he opened the proceedings indicating the efforts that the Commissioners have made to ensure that all stakeholders and or interested parties were aware of the ambit and our Terms Of Reference, and invited to attend. I think you may also be aware that several notices were posted in the Press indicating the invitation for those interested to attend and I think you may also be aware that a senior officer did attend and give evidence and he is to return. So I am just concerned in making your submission directly to us, you refer to exclusion in case anyone may think, anyone of us, Commissioners or the Commissioners collectively, have barred excluded or suggested that anyone should not attend and give evidence. I am just concerned that that should be made very clear.

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Mr. Pieters: Madam Chairperson, let me join you because my comments were not directed at the Commission, the Commissioners, nor the Commission staff who I know are doing an amazing job to get this Commission flowing as it should.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Just one final comment though before we go on. I am concerned about you are saying that you are asking questions on behalf of others who should be here to do that for themselves. So who authorised you to ask those questions, who are you acting for?

Mr. Pieters: I am acting for the Guyana Trades Union Congress.

13.23hrs

Mr. Chairman: Why are you asking questions on behalf of others who should be here to ask it for themselves?

Mr. Pieters: No. I ask a simple question that is founded in Law.

Mr. Chairman: Founded in Law?

Mr. Pieters: Yes, about the functions of the Guyana Police Force and their *modus operandi* in dealing with the public at the material time, so I tested his statements against that.

Mr. Chairman: When you said you were asking questions for those who should be here asking on their own behalf, I thought you were playing the role of busy-body.

Mr. Pieters: No. I am not playing the role of busy-body.

Mr. Chairman: Very well, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: Everyone knows I have a busy schedule in Canada...

Mr. Chairman: Very well, you get ahead.

Mr. Pieters: Mr...

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Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, before our colleague moves on, I think he has raised an interesting point. Who is he referring to as persons who should have been here to look after the interests of their organisations? Perhaps he could clarify that?

Mr. Chairman: I cannot help you though. You can only ask the question through us, but you are really directing it to Mr. Pieters.

Mr. Williams: I think it is a good point he raised.

Mr. Pieters: State Counsel should have been representing the interest of the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Defense Force, the Guyana National Service and the Guyana People's Militia. These were all State entities that were working for the interest of the State at the material time and the State action in 1979 is not separated from the State action in 2014. The State is the State; it is one collective State regardless of Government.

Mrs. Samuels-Brown: You know, Mr. Pieters, there is a difference of views on this. I have myself participated in Commissions before and I have represented the Police Force of the particular country and the view has been that in the interest of transparency, it is better for private Attorneys rather than a State Attorney to represent these forces in Commissions such as this, so I agree with you. The Commission would definitely benefit from the participation of representatives of these bodies, but it is not necessarily the best thing for the State Counsel to do so but that is a matter for the local Government, but there are divergent views as to how one should proceed in terms of representations in these matters.

Mr. Pieters: Thank you very much, Madam Commissioner, and let me say before I continue; to you, Commissioner Jairam, I mean no disrespect at all to you and I will make sure that I am very circumspect in how I respond to your questions.

Mr. Jairam: I accept.

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Mr. Pieters: In the future.

Mr. Jairam: I accept and may I just...

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed, Counsel.

Mr. Jairam: May I just endorse fully what my fellow Commissioner has said that I then to agree that these different bodies should have had representation and it should come from the private bar. The private bar is supposed to be independent and fearless and give independent advice without influence and fear and so on. Thank you.

Mr. Pieters: Now, Mr. Hamilton, do you know a man by the name of Morris who served as the personal valet to Prime Minister Burnham?

Mr. Hamilton: A man by the name of Morris?

Mr. Pieters: Yes.

Mr. Hamilton: Not that I can remember.

Mr. Pieters: No? Were you a personal valet to Rabbi Washington or a personal aide or assistant?

Mr. Hamilton: I would say sometime after the House of Israel Headquarters was relocated to 299 Thomas Street, sometime in the period after 1982, I worked out of the office there.

Mr. Pieters: Between the material times within the Commission's mandate, 1978 to 1980, you were not a personal aide to the Rabbi?

Mr. Hamilton: No, not at all.

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Williams, in his examination this morning, established that you were on the second lowest rung of the hierarchy of that organisation, correct, at that material time?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes. I think so.

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Mr. Pieters: Yes and so you need to explain how is it that you... I do not think that you explained it satisfactorily for the Commission how is it that you would have been in at those meetings to which you said you were privy?

Mr. Hamilton: Because you are assuming that the organisation in contact, in meetings with PNC, only person who were, according to Mr. Williams, the hierarchical Leadership would have been there. I will give you one explanation, if I am permitted so as to make my point.

Mr. Chairman: I will permit it, but we are retracing an area which Mr. Williams spent considerable time on suggesting that he was too lowly in rank to be there and suggesting to him directly that he was not there; later that he was fabricating his presence on what he heard or did not hear. All of that has been very exhaustively canvassed.

Mr. Pieters: Okay, let me ask you...

Mr. Chairman: Now, I cannot promise you even though I have allowed the witness to answer.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, if I may?

Mr. Chairman: We will be retracing steps already...

Mr. Hamilton: Mr...

Mr. Pieters: Please, do not interrupt when the Chairman is speaking.

Mr. Chairman: ...fully covered but do answer as best you can.

Mr. Hamilton: If I may, Sir, if you follow the logic of Mr. Williams, Mr. Pieters, then Joseph Hamilton should not have been entrusted with Rabbi Washington's, three minor children to take them to the United States of America (USA). The family of the children, mother and father – the father was in prison – had to have great confidence in Joseph Hamilton

Mr. Williams: That is in 1986.

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Mr. Hamilton: ...because they were several persons who were higher according to Mr. Williams, in the leadership structure at that time.

Mr. Williams: That is in 1986. We are talking about 1977, to 1978 - 1980.

Mr. Hamilton: I am trying to make the...

Mr. Pieters: Anyway, I am going to move on, Mr. Hamilton, because you have had the stage to speak and I simply want you to address my question so that other Counsels can finish their questions today so that the tribunal can move on with its business. At any of these meetings, have you taken notes of what transpired?

Mr. Hamilton: No.

Mr. Pieters: Why did you not take notes at any of the meetings?

Mr. Hamilton: Why did I not take notes?

Mr. Pieters: Yes. Why did you not take notes?

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Pieters, the meetings were of the nature of where you were instructed, advised, to go and terrorise and brutalise citizens of this country and you are asking me whether we were taking notes.

Mr. Pieters: Did you make any notations in you diary?

Mr. Hamilton: No.

Mr. Pieters: And why not?

Mr. Hamilton: There was no diary to make notations in.

Mr. Pieters: You are saying there were no diaries in...

Mr. Hamilton: No. There was no diary to make notation in.

Mr. Chairman: The record is showing that he made no notes. The nature of the meetings was not of such that you had to make notes according to him. It was about taking instructions of who

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to go and brutalise, interrupt, disrupt, terrorise. I do not know how much you can make out of it, but that is what he said. Try your best, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Hamilton, do you have any documents at all, of whatever nature with respect to your involvement with the House of Israel between 1978 and 1980? Do you have any documents at home or in any other place that you have control?

Mr. Hamilton: I might have documents. I might have photographs. I suppose my sons might have photographs of the period when I was in the House of Israel.

Mr. Pieters: Can you make an undertaking to provide that to the Commissioner through its Counsel?

Mr. Hamilton: I would if that is the request of the Commission?

Mr. Pieters: This is the request of one of the Counsels withstanding that you make an undertaking to provide it to Commission's Counsel. Counsel can make that request of you, if you have those documents.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, if I can locate photographs of the time that I was in the House of Israel, I will certainly make those copies available to the Commission.

Mr. Chairman: We would appreciate it if you can.

Mr. Pieters: Thank you Mr. Chairman. You provided evidence with respect to the bombing of the House of Israel or the planting of two bombs at the House of Israel in 1979?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: Did you feel frightened and threatened as a result of that particular occurrence?

Mr. Hamilton: I think I recall making the point that the House of Israel started to reassess its engagement, and as I said because of the activities that we were engaged in, we assumed that

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sometime down the road, the WPA would have responded in a certain way. Therefore, in that respect, not threatened so to speak but we were concerned that a day was arriving...

Mr. Chairman: When the WPA will retaliate.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I have that recorded twice now.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: In short, you are going over ground that has already been covered.

Mr. Pieters: Let me ask you this: at that point in time was the House of Israel, at the material time in which the bomb was planted, was this strictly a religious organisation or had it transformed itself into a sort of a paramilitary organisation?

Mr. Hamilton: The House of Israel was never a paramilitary organisation. I think my evidence suggests that the House of Israel was a religious organisation.

Mr. Chairman: But carrying out "thug activities". Is that not correct, Sir?

Mr. Hamilton: That?

Mr. Chairman: But carrying out "thug activities"?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes of economic venture and those kinds of things.

Mr. Chairman: All of that is on record.

Mr. Hamilton: That is in my evidence and the Counsel of the Commission, we went over that, several times.

Mr. Chairman: So that, Mr. Pieters, your late four question really trespass on areas already thoroughly covered.

Mr. Pieters: I am guided, Mr. Chairman, and I am moving on.

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Mr. Chairman: You say that you are guided. I do not think that you will be. Anyhow, you get ahead.

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Chairman, I have a lot of respect for you and I take your comments very seriously.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Williams covered a wide area and some of it he went at two and three times.

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Chairman, I am hopping very quickly. I am a very efficient lawyer who takes guidance so I am hopping very quickly. You give me 15 minutes or so and I will be done. I know the Commissioner will take me very seriously on that.

Mr. Chairman: You get ahead.

Mr. Pieters: This is the evidence that you gave yesterday: the Commissioner, Mrs. Samuels-Brown, asked you this, she say, "Okay, are you able to say in terms of the training received, if it involved detonation of bombs by remote control? The training which members of your organisation received from Mr. Mc Allister..." You said, "It did not reach to that" and she said "Thank you very much, Sir." But I checked through the transcripts last evening and I could not find any information or details from you in respect to the training exactly that you received from Mr. Mc Allister, in respect to making bombs. Can you explain in detail what the nature of that training was?

Mr. Hamilton: As I recall, we were introduced to... the fact that for the first time I learnt that crystals of any sort can make a bomb and there were instructions as to how you utilise crystals in different compounds.

Mr. Pieters: What were the compounds that you were referred to?

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Mr. Hamilton: I think gasoline might have been one of the... petrol substances, kerosene and the combination of crystal and petroleum products could create or make a bomb.

Mr. Pieters: I am going to come back to this in a second. You also mentioned that you had a 9mm Browning pistol?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, for a period.

Mr. Pieters: Who provided you training, in the use of that pistol?

Mr. Hamilton: I answered that question.

Mr. Pieters: Well, refresh my...

Mr. Hamilton: There were persons who were in the House of Israel at that time who were serving members of the Guyana Defense Force, who were serving members of the Police Force and there were persons who were ex-GDF persons and ex-police persons.

Mr. Pieters: So it was not Mr. Mc Allister that provided you that training?

Mr. Hamilton: Say that again?

Mr. Pieters: Was it not Wycliff Mc Allister that provided you with that training?

Mr. Hamilton: You are asking two different questions.

Mr. Pieters: You answer my... Sir, please answer my question.

Mr. Hamilton: You asked about bomb. I dealt with the bomb making and Mr. McAllister and that is my evidence.

13.38hrs

Mrs. Samuel-Brown: But he also wants to know is if in addition to that was Mr. Mc Allister involved in training you in the use of...

Mr. Hamilton: No. I am saying no. My evidence says that....

Mrs. Samuel-Brown: Okay and you have answered

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Mr. Pieters: So you are saying Mc Allister was not involved in training you in the use of firearms?

Mr. Hamilton: No. not at all

Mr. Pieters: I am going to suggest to you that your evidence before this tribunal that Mr. Mc Allister trained you in the use of bombs is false, patently false.

Mr. Hamilton: Well I am denying that it is false

Mr. Pieters: I am going to suggest to you, and the evidence could bear that out, that Mr. Mc Allister was a Skill-at-Arm expert in the Guyana Defense Force at the material time and not a bomb expert.

Mr. Hamilton: I do not know in what capacity Mr. Mc Allister functioned in the Guyana Defense Force.

Mr. Pieters: Well I am telling you...

Mr. Hamilton: I do not know. I am saying I know Mr. Mc Allister was an officer at that time, but as to what capacity functioned in; I do not know and could not say.

Mr. Pieters: You mentioned that the first time you saw that the Guyana Defense Force was provided with high power weapons was when you met with Commission Counsel and he showed you the requisition.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: Well let me ask you this: why would you have been left out of the circle of knowledge that the House of Israel posed high powered G3 riffles capable of firing 7.62 rounds of ammunition? Why would you have been left out that circle?

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, again, when that document was shown to me, I indicated that as far as I know nothing, except for Browning pistols, and I could not say... for that matter let me say this, if I refresh my mind, the document presented to me by Counsel spoke to 1979, I think, the 24th of June with the arms and ammunition. In my statement, I spoke to Browning pistols

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transferred to the House of Israel in 1978 so I indicated to the Counsel that the hand writing, contents and all the other things on the document I did not recognise. I cannot... I will say categorically, they were never ever, as far as I know, in the possession of the House of Israel.

Mr. Pieters: And you testify that the House of Israel had a large Agriculture venture at Glock Island in the Essequibo River?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: You also know that at the material time in question Venezuela was asserting sovereignty over the Essequibo.

Mr. Hamilton: I suspect that all times since I was born Venezuela asserting sovereignty.

Mr. Pieters: Right and you know that it reached to a fevered pitch around 1978/1979

Mr. Hamilton: I would believe so

Mr. Pieters: You were in Guyana at that material time, were you not?

Mr. Hamilton: If what?

Mr. Pieters: You were in Guyana at that particular time in question were you not?

Mr. Hamilton: If I was not...?

Mr. Pieters: You were here

Mr. Hamilton: Between 1979 and...

Mr. Pieters: 1978 to 1979.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: You would know in Guyana – I, as a child, recall that – they were selling defence bonds in that particular time as well to assist in the defence of Guyana sovereignty.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes

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Mrs. Samuel-Brown: I did not hear the question. Could you repeat the question they were self...

Mr. Pieters: I told him I was here as a child. I came here in 1976 from England.

Mrs. Samuel-Brown: What I want is the question.

Mr. Pieters: Were you aware that in 1978 Guyana was selling defence bonds to assist the Government to raise revenue to defend Guyana against Venezuela?

Mrs. Samuel-Brown: Thank you.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes I recall House of Israel bought thousands of dollars of bonds

Mr. Pieters: And that Guyana was encouraging citizens to be military trained and trained to use arms in order to defence sovereignty.

Mr. Chairman: What is the relevance of all of that to our Terms, I am anxious to give you latitude you know, but what is the relevance to all that

Mr. Pieters: Well you wanted to know about the conditions that existed in Guyana at the material time and that are part of the narrative

Mr. Chairman: Alright.

Mr. Pieters: And that could be an explanation as to why the Guyana Defense Force released those firearms from its stores to the House of Israel who had large tracks of land in the Essequibo River.

Mr. Chairman: Now you see you are speculating because you find yourself in a doubtful ethnical position of defending organisations that gave you no instructions. You are in a very serious position. I want you to reflect on it the ethics of claiming to represent people that you say openly to this Commission have never instructed you.

Mr. Pieters: Now I am not representing organisations. I am putting propositions that are reasonable to the witness.

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Mr. Chairman: Yes but you are speculating yourself because 'that might explain'. You do not know that that explains because you do not have any instructions from them anyhow you go ahead.

Mr. Pieters: Could it be possible that those weapons were issued for that purpose.

Mr. Hamilton: I reiterate again that the weapons in question on the requisition, as far as I know, as far as I recall, were never given to the House of Israel. The two sets of weapons I spoke to Browning pistols and the .38, I said I did not recognise the items and the requisition.

Mr. Pieters: Now on the day that the arson five appeared at the Georgetown Court you testify that you were in Buxton.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: Right and you later travelled to Georgetown after things died down somewhat so you were not an eye witness to most of the events that took place

Mr. Hamilton: That is when things were staring, not dying down. The Court had concluded

Mr. Pieters: The Court had... You were in Georgetown when the real action began.

Mr. Hamilton: If you want to categorise it as "real action" yes

Mr. Pieters: The extent to which you were involved in it was to take Father Darke's camera after he was stabbed.

Mr. Hamilton: I never said that at that time Father Darke was stabbed. I could not speak to when he was stabbed. My statement said and I repeat that I saw a white guy who had a camera with Mike James who I knew stumbled somewhere in the vicinity of Ministry of Home Affairs. His camera was released when he stumbled that camera was handed to me by a brother that I named. So I never said that I saw when Father Darke was stabbed.

Mr. Pieters: I am going to suggest to you that with your "thuggish" mentality at the material time you were the one that robbed Father Darke of his camera so you can sell it to make a quick dollar.

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[Laughter]

Mr. Chairman: You see you are speculating now because you have no instructions from the agencies.

Mr. Hamilton: You cannot suggest that I was in any bad economic position to sell a camera. No part of my evidence suggested that so I would ask, Mr. Commissioner, that Mr. Pieters withdraw and refrain from suggesting that I sold some camera

Mr. Chairman: Order, order!

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Chairman, the witness in the box answered my question so I am prepared to move on to my last question.

Mr. Chairman: He rejected your suggestion, yes.

Mr. Pieters: That is right and so I am prepared to move on to my last question.

Mr. Williams: How much did he get if for?

[Laughter]

Mr. Pieters: Now the last question is much more interesting. Now, Mr. Hamilton...

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Pieters: Yesterday you were questioned by Commission Counsel and at page 67 and page 68 of the transcript... I will read it to you and then I will pose my question. The Commission Counsel asked you, "Mr. Hamilton, do you regret your involvement in the activities you were involved in, in relation to the House of Israel, between the period 1978/1980?" and your response was, Mr. Hamilton, "I will address the question this way. A 60-year-old grandfather sees the world differently to a 23-year-old young man and therefore if the 60-year-old grandfather would be speaking to his 23-year-old young son what he will say is that you made a bad choice, you made a bad decision and your decision caused great harm to people, so yes, there are regrets." And you continued. "I continued to live with the past. It is here with me and so I have no difficulty presenting the past as I know it, as I participated in it. As I said, I think when I

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came to the Commission the first time, I think, Mr. Hanoman asked the question about whether I am prepared for this. I indicated to him that the only hurdle I had to cross is having a conversation with my wife and children and once they indicated that they are prepared to have me stand public scrutiny, what any other one said about what I am doing, it matters not to me." I am going to suggest this to you yesterday 89 year old Eusi Kwayana was sitting in the audience watching you give your evidence, Mr. Roopnarine was in the audience as well, Mr. Kwayana is no longer here because he had return to the United States why did you not stand up yesterday look at Mr. Kwayana who you heard testify about the suffering he and his colleagues encountered at the material time and say you were sorry. Why didn't you express that remorse?

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman and Commissioners Mr. Pieters is pre-empting me it was my intension when I am concluding to speak to the specific matter that he has raise and other things.

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Kwayana is no longer here. You were asked that question.

Mr. Hamilton: I did not know about Mr. Kwayana schedule. This is being steamed lived around the world and therefore, what I have to say on that specific matter Mr. Kwayana I am sure would have access to it.

Mr. Jairam: Mr. Pieters I am not interrupting you, but I know you are very good on the computer. What you have read from, in the printed transcript, is at pages 63-64.

Mr. Pieters: I see I have the electronic...

Mr. Jairam: Yes of course you have the soft copy version.

Mr. Pieters: Oh very well you are just getting the records synchronised.

Mr. Jairam: Yes.

Mr. Pieters: Mr. Chairman, I have finished asking my questions of this witness

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Sir, who is batting next as it were

Mr. Pilgrim: I think I will try to prop up the middle order briefly, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: You have demoted yourself man...