

Document tendered by
 Mr. Brendan Bullock
 Received by
 Sharon Onnesorge
 Date: 07 / 11 / 2016.
 Resolved to publish ☒ Yes / ☐ No

'Police Impact Statement' an insight to police suicide.

*'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is **not** about what's wrong with the person; It's about **what happened** to the person.'*

At the commencement of my career in the New South Wales Police Force, I swore an oath to protect and serve the people of New South Wales. During my career I performed my roles with honor and diligence. I was tenacious in seeking the truth and committed to upholding the rule of law with the expectation of dealing with victims of crime, perpetrators of crime and human suffering. What I didn't expect, was the impact that such expectations would have on my psychological health and future.

From the onset of my career, I was exposed to extreme acts of violence, suicides, homicides and traumatic incidents of significant human suffering. Little did I know, each traumatic incident I witnessed, I stored away in my subconscious mind. This place was my 'Book Shelf', a place in which, I shelved each incident as a non-fictional book of memories. As my career progressed, my 'Book Shelf' began to fill with disturbing stories of human suffering and death. These stories were never forgotten. Without knowing, my 'Book Shelf' became full as I continued on with 'Getting the Job done'. I became haunted by these memories, yet maintained my resilience and acceptance that, 'It's part of the job'.

Early in life I developed into a strong and thick skinned individual. I wouldn't allow myself to be exposed as a person of weakness. I battled on, constantly triggered back to my 'Book Shelf' by what seemed to be insignificant daily occurrences.

On the 8th of October, 2011 I was the first response officer to a domestic dispute. Completely unaware and unprepared, I walked into a horrific crime scene. I found a women deceased with horrific stab wounds. This was to be my last non-fictional book, however I had no room to shelve it.

Days after the incident, without any respite from what I had witnessed, my 'Book Shelf' toppled over. All my non-fictional books stored away in my subconscious mind now occupied my conscience mind. Unaware, I was experiencing unrelenting symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I was totally consumed by trauma, unable to sleep, continually anxious and incapable of communicating with my wife and young children. This was the start of what I termed to be, 'Extreme Ways'.

I had the sense to recognise that I needed help. Reluctantly, because of my concerns regarding the 'police culture' towards psychological injury, I 'put my hand up' convincing myself that I wasn't 'giving up'. I progressively became worse, unable to explain my thoughts and feelings, growing further and further distant with my wife.

Living day by day and not limited to 'Extreme' depression, guilt, fear, anxiety and panic I tried to cope with alcohol and prescription medication to dull my psychological pain; causing me to become more distant from my wife and children and with an inability of being able to 'live within the moment'. Our relationship began to dissolve, neither of us knew how to overcome it.

Many admissions to psychiatric institutions assisted in the demise of my relationships. I was distant when present, and forgotten when away. Each admission provided limited relief from my condition yet aided to what would inevitably be a marriage breakdown. The stress and pressure of living with a family member suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder took its toll.

My ability to ever return to active duty seemed ominous and eventual I had no choice but to leave the job I lived for. My prognosis was poor and I met the definition of having a Total and Permanently Disability. I made application through the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme for compensation and a further claim through my superannuation scheme for the Police Blue Ribbon Death and Disability payment. Little did I know that these applications would ultimately lead to my total demise.

As part of due process, insurance companies Employers Mutual Limited and Metlife conducted what is known as a 'Factual Investigation'. This investigation required me to appear before other psychiatrists for an independent medical examinations (IME) including the use of private investigators to conduct intrusive and relentless surveillance upon me. This made me feel like a criminal and that my integrity was being questioned or somehow was in doubt despite the overwhelming evidence of numerous medical reports eight admission to psychiatric institutions, attesting to how sick I was.

Being highly skilled in the art of physical surveillance and performing this role for many years, I was able to easily identify such surveillance activities. This was problematic in itself as it exacerbated my symptoms making me further hyper vigilant and imprisoning me in my own home. I became a recluse, afraid to leave my home.

At times when I did leave home, I was constantly on guard, conducting anti and counter surveillance techniques. When I detected teams of Private investigators following me, I would entrap them and approach each operative with uncontrollable rage and hostility, even threatening them with their lives.

My life had become a misery. Charged with a concoction of prescription medication and alcohol, I couldn't make rational decisions. I was hopelessly locked down deep in depression with no forethought of ever being able to escape. I was frustrated and felt an immense sense of guilt that I had placed so much stress upon my family. I irrationally justified to myself that I had to end my pain and the pain I had caused my wife and children. I believe suicide was the only course of action.

On the 14th November 2013, just weeks before Detective Sergeant Ashley Bryant made a telephone call to '000' and ultimately took his life in Northern New South Wales, I hanged myself in the back yard of our family home. I was found by my wife and young children clinically deceased. The horror they witnessed was indescribable. A vision that had occupied my mind for years.

A neighbor, a former Special Response Ambulance Paramedic was quick to respond to my wife's terrifying screams for help. I was resuscitated and transported to Wollongong Hospital in a critical condition. Bedded to tubes and monitors in the Intensive Care Unit to keep me breathing, I was placed in an induced coma for four days. Joined by my family members who never left my side, I remained in the coma with uncertainty if I was ever to recover to a normal state, or a state of irreparable neurological damage. I was brought back to life four days later with a second chance, however the collateral damage my illness caused family and friends left deep scars.

Some say I have been given a second chance at life and to take it with everything I've got. I believe I have been given a second chance to continue my struggles, pain and suffering from my debilitating psychological condition and the injustice I have been subjected to by Insurance companies. To this day, I now suffer from an added condition known as 'Survivor Guilt'. Having to be responsible for the devastating effect my condition has caused others so dear to me.

My marriage has ended with no chance of recovery. My wife and children have suffered and required psychological therapy. To this day, Insurance companies Metlife and TAL are in dispute as to who is liable for my full entitlement of my TPD. The matter remains unresolved and my financial future is on hold. I have been robbed of my Identity. I struggle to support myself financially and will never hold down a stable and fulfilling occupation. I remain dependent on prescription medication. My destiny is unknown.

This is a short description of what happened to me, not what's wrong with me.

~~Brendon~~ BULLOCK

14 December, 2014