

Neville Els1. Neville Els (“Els”) testified that:¹

- 1.1. He joined the SAP in 1952 and between 1966 or 1967 he was recruited into the SB. When he joined the Security Branch (SB) he was initially stationed at the Gray’s building but later relocated to John Vorster Square after it opened. His office at John Vorster Square was on the ninth floor, close to the entrance. While at the SB he did a specialised course in identification and destruction of explosives, VIP protection and decoding of coded messages.
- 1.2. In 1971 he held the rank of Warrant Officer and by the time he left the SAP in 1979 he had ascended to the rank of Captain.
- 1.3. After Essop and Timol were arrested Els was asked to identify the documents found in the boot of the car. He was the SB officer on duty at Newlands that day. Although he could not recall the nature of the documents, he recalled that these documents were like those distributed by small explosive device at the time.
- 1.4. After he identified the documents, he then called a senior SB member to inform him what he found. The SB member who came and took over from him was Dirker. When Dirker came he also took Timol. His role in the Timol investigation ended there and he claimed he was never involved in the assault or interrogation of any witnesses.
- 1.5. While still with the SB he never witnessed any assaults on detainees and he never took part in any assaults. He does not recall ever seeing any injured or distressed detainees in custody. As far he could recall detainees were never tortured and he only heard of torture allegations through the media.
- 1.6. He never interacted with Timol and as far as he knows Timol committed suicide by jumping out a window on the tenth floor. When he was still at the Gray’s

¹ Transcript, Vol 9B, p II (673).

building there was a detainee who also committed suicide. He could not recall this detainee's name.

- 1.7. He is not aware of any cover-ups at John Vorster Square. He did not witness these, and he did not hear about any cover-ups.
- 1.8. All police officers did basic first aid training at the time, and it was common sense that one does not move a seriously injured person. He would have been surprised (back then) to learn that police moved a fall victim without first waiting for help.
- 1.9. It was surprising to him to hear that Timol was left alone with an officer who only did administration work. This did not make sense to him.
- 1.10. He conceded that sleep deprivation was used to ensure that detainees provided information. Although he would not consider sleep deprivation as torture his view is that depriving a detainee of sleep for four to five days would be too long. He is not aware if detainees were kept up for that long though. The longest he ever kept a detainee up was for 8 hours.
- 1.11. Of the various methods of torture that were put to him as per exhibit C14 he only conceded to being aware of sleep deprivation, solitary confinement and keeping detainees standing for a prolonged period (in his view 1 – 1.5 hour). He did however say that he would not classify any of these three methods as torture.
- 1.12. Forcing detainees to stand for prolonged periods was not uncommon. He is not sure how others did it, but he kept detainees standing for about an hour or an hour and a half.
- 1.13. Detainees would be interrogated for information, but he is not aware of any roster system that was used when detainees were interrogated.
- 1.14. He was part of the people who interrogated Naik, but he could not recall seeing anyone torture Naik in anyway. After he interrogated Naik he withdrew from the case.