



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE  
STATEMENT OF WITNESS

QP 0125  
01/06  
A14

Occurrence #: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement no.: 1 Date: 20/01/2011

**Statement of**

Name of witness: WARBURTON, Martin Craig

Date of birth: [REDACTED] Age: [REDACTED] Occupation: Self Employed

**Police officer taking statement**

Name: ROLPH, Shayne Gerard

Rank: Detective Senior Constable Reg. no.: 14007

Region/Command/Division: Southern Region Station: Toowoomba CIB

**Statement:**

**Martin Craig WARBURTON states:**

1. My full name is Martin Craig WARBURTON. I currently reside at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with my wife Janelle Elizabeth WARBURTON and our son Matthew Liam WARBURTON. My home phone number is [REDACTED] and my mobile phone number is [REDACTED].
2. I am also the owner of Marnell Fuels (which stands for Marty and Janelle) situated at 28 Anzac Avenue, Grantham. This is the local Petrol Station and Workshop in the Grantham Township and I have owned and operated this place for the last 18 years.
3. The Petrol Station operated like a small convenience store and automotive accessories and we would also do bulk fuel deliveries to local famers and truck companies.

[REDACTED]

(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

[REDACTED]

(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

4. The manager who looks after the Petrol Station is Chris SHORT and he has been working for me for about the last 3 years.
5. I actually don't do much with the Petrol Station as it is all looked after by Chris SHORT. The only thing I actually do is balance the books and do the paperwork for the business and basic day to day administration.
6. I have lived in and around the Grantham area for the last 20 years after I married a local girl and I know most people in the area.
7. Since I have lived in Grantham, I can recall numerous flooding events in the Grantham Township and I know exactly how the town floods.
8. The Lockyer Creek starts flowing and the Sandy Creek comes down through Grantham, and depending on the water level of the Lockyer Creek, the Sandy Creek gets backed up.
9. As a result, the stormwater drain on the west side of William Street near the edge of Sandy Creek (at the intersection of William Street and Gatton Helidon Road and goes under the road to Anzac Avenue) fills up with water from this Creek which then comes out of a stormwater grate outside the old National Bank in Grantham which is basically the start of Anzac Avenue.



(Witness's signature)


(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)



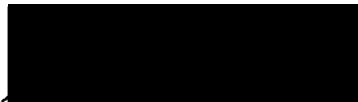
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

10. This water starts flooding the town of Grantham and the back up of water from sandy Creek then bursts over the road and really floods the town causing it to flow through the main road.
11. It is really hard to explain so I have drawn a map of the Grantham Town to show it a little better and exactly what I mean.
12. I can recall numerous flooding events since living around Grantham area as far back as 1996.
13. On the May Day long weekend in 1996, the flooding in Grantham came up and went down quite a few times and we were stuck at the Petrol Station for about 3 days as we couldn't get out.
14. We had quite a lot of rain during that time and I think over the 4 day week from Monday to Thursday there was about 10 inches of rainfall. This made everything wet and the ground and catchments were full and on the Friday we had a big dump of rain which I would say was about 6 inches during the day.
15. On this occasion, water came up into the Petrol Station about knee deep and it was the first time I had a flood into the Service Station.

  
(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
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(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

16. I took over the Service Station on Anzac Day 2003 and the previous owners warned me that when Grantham flooded the Petrol Station shop would get water in it.
17. They also advised me that it was easier to clean the shop out when the flood water was going down as you could just hose everything out with the receding water.
18. I'm not quite sure of the month, but in the year of 1999, Grantham again flooded and it came up into the shop about ankle deep which is about 3-4 inches. I can't remember the weather at this time but I'm pretty sure we flooded because of a big dump of rain in the area.
19. Again in 2001, there was another flood in Grantham and it wasn't as bad as previous years as the water just came into the workshop of the Petrol Station and not the actual store.
20. Again, I can't remember the weather at this time but I'm pretty sure we flooded because of another big dump of rain at the time.
21. Since the year 2001, we have not had any flooding in Grantham due to the drought until the 27<sup>th</sup> day of December 2010.
22. On this day, I was on the internet checking out the Bureau of Meteorology site for the weather and creek levels.

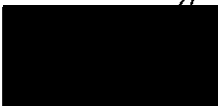
  
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(Signature of police officer  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

23. We were having a lot of rain and everything was just so wet and I hadn't seen anything like it since 1996.
24. At about 3:00pm-4:00pm on this day, I left home and went into the Petrol Station at Grantham and parked my ute up on the railway line as I was worried about the water rising.
25. I then went and opened the shop up but at that stage there was not even any water running down the street.
26. I started lifting everything up from two shelves off the ground or below and I got it all as high as I could. After I did this, I basically just started waiting for the water to come in because I knew from experience that the water was coming.
27. I waited about 1 hour and at this stage my mate Tim PICKERING from Gatton came and gave me a hand to move everything to higher shelves.
28. We waited and waited and after about 1 hour the water started coming into the shop.
29. The water kept coming into the shop and it stayed in the shop all night until the water started going down at sunlight the next morning.
30. We then stayed there and we were able to clean the shop out.

  
(Witness's signature)

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(Signature of police officer  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

31. I have taken photographs and videos of this flood on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of December 2010. They include photos from within my shop and also looking along Anzac Avenue west towards Helidon and east towards Placid Hills.
32. I have since provided these to Police.
33. There was nothing special about this flood and it was pretty normal for the Grantham area. On that occasion the water in the shop only came up to shin height which I would say was probably about 1 foot.
34. Since the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2010, we have had another 3 floods in Grantham before the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011.
35. I think it was on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of December 2010, we had been having a lot of rain and as a result all the creeks and catchments were full. This caused the water to just run off and not soak into the ground.
36. On this occasion the flood water only just came into the my shop and it hardly affected us.
37. I also took some photographs and videos of the floods on this day and have again provided these to Police.



(Witness's signature)

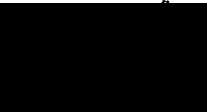
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

- 38. I can then recall I think it was Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011. This was again like the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 as the water only just came into the shop.
- 39. I remember I was at home and I received a phone call from Chris SHORT who was at the Petrol Station.
- 40. Chris told me that the Petrol Station was going under again, so I came into the Petrol Station and helped Chris get prepared and also with cleaning up after the flood waters receded.
- 41. I can recall taking photographs of this flood and again I provided these to Police.
- 42. At about 5:30pm on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, I was closing up the Petrol Station and the water started flowing down the road outside the shop. I immediately thought here we go again but the water didn't come into the shop.
- 43. On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, I contacted Chris SHORT and told him not to come in to work as I decided to leave the Petrol Station closed.
- 44. I thought we would get flooded again as there was more rain coming and I was sick of lifting things up and putting them back down after cleaning up.



(Witness's signature)

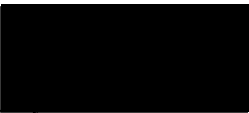
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

45. At that stage, I was just going to keep the Petrol Station closed until Monday morning to see what was happening with the weather.
46. I can recall that on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011; I was monitoring the Bureau of Meteorology website all day keeping an eye on the weather radar image and the river catchments and rainfall levels.
47. I know that when the website shows Sandy Creek reaching 1.6m, I have to get going from home to Grantham as I will not get into the town to look after the shop if it gets any higher.
48. I think it was about 5:30pm-6:00pm, when I decided to head into the shop at Grantham and it was raining heavy at times and it was just constant rain.
49. At about 8:00pm, the flood water started coming into the shop and it again lasted all night. On this occasion the water was actually very high in the shop and it peaked 2 inches higher than the 1996 flood level in the shop.
50. I again took photographs and videos on this occasion and I have provided these to Police.

  
(Witness's signature)

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

51. The flood water eventually receded out of the shop at about 8:00am-9:00am on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011.


52. I started cleaning up the shop but it was continually raining all day and I thought what was the point. I just decided to stop cleaning and wait and see what the afternoon was going to bring.

53. The shop wasn't open, so at about 10:00am, I decided to go for a walk around Grantham and check out the creeks.

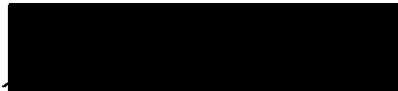
54. When I did this, I could see they weren't over and there was no water coming up onto the roads but it was still very close. The water was lapping the top of the culvert on the bridge over Sandy Creek on the Gatton Helidon Road. You drive over this bridge as you enter Grantham from Helidon.

55. At about midday, I then went to the Grantham pub to have some lunch. Before I left, I helped the Publican Lance RICHARDSAN (I think that is his surname) unload his stock that he had just gone to Toowoomba and bought.

56. After this, I went for another walk down to the main Bridge of Grantham. This time I could see that there was a lot of debris backing up against the culverts under the bridge.

  
(Witness's signature)

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(Signature of police officer  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

57. I then walked to the railway line and could see water over the road and there was no way you could drive your car on the road under the railway line as it was just too deep.
58. I could tell by the levels there and the flow of the flood water, that it was about to start coming up from the drain outside the old National Bank so I started making my way back to the shop.
59. I think I started walking back to the shop at around 3:00pm-3:30pm, and it was at this time I got a phone call from Tim PICKERING [REDACTED]
60. Tim told me that water was lapping the bridge at the park on the Warrego Highway near Helidon. I know this park as [REDACTED] as do all the locals in the area.
61. Tim told me that the water was backing up over towards the strawberry farm behind this park and nearly reaching the Helidon Pub.
62. At the time of that phone call, I was thinking to myself that it was physically impossible as Helidon was so high up the river bank. I knew that Tim was lying to me and I knew there was a lot of water coming my way.
63. Tim told me to get out of Grantham as there was a big wall of water coming and that Grantham was going to go under water big time.

[REDACTED]  
(Witness's signature)

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[REDACTED]  
(Signature of police officer  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

70. I started making my way to the front of the shop in an attempt to get out and at this stage I was actually treading water and couldn't stand on the ground.
71. I then took a deep breath and duck dived into the water and through the front door and out of the shop. As I did this the current of the water smashed me up against the door and I started floating away with the water.
72. When this was happening, I managed to grab onto a roof beam of the shop and the water has just flung me around and I managed to get both hands onto the beam and hold on.
73. The water just kept rushing past me and I was holding on for dear life. I then remember seeing a little air gap between the water and roof so I managed to pull myself along this enough to get to a spot where I could get onto the roof.
74. I managed to get onto the roof of my shop and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The water was lapping the roof and as far as the eye could see there was water flowing as fast as it could.
75. The amount of debris in the water was like a dump had been washed away. I was seeing shipping containers, fridges and even cars just floating past.

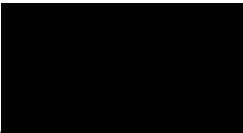
  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

64. After talking to Tim, my wife Janelle rang me and she told me that Ma Ma Creek was banking up as well as Flagstone Creek. She also told me that the Lockyer Creek was about to burst it's banks and I knew then things were serious.
65. I then started running back to the shop and when I got back into the Petrol Station, I grabbed some stock to try and get it higher.
66. At this stage the water was waist deep in the shop and it was the highest I had ever seen it in the shop before.
67. I then decided to walk out the front of the shop to have a look. When I did this, I saw shipping containers floating past me along Anzac Avenue towards Placid Hills. These containers were moving past so quick I would say they were doing about 60kph.
68. At this stage, I decided to get back into the office and grab my personal belongings but I didn't have time to do that as the water was rising so fast.
69. I can remember at this time everything just went black as if the sun had just disappeared. I realised that a massive wave of water was hitting the town and it was like someone had just turned out the lights. The water was just funnelling through into the shop and was filling really fast.

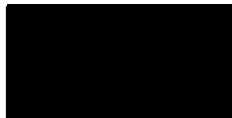
  
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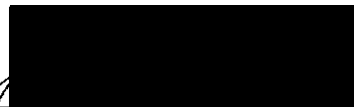
CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

76. I started taking photographs and video footage of what I was seeing and as I was standing there I saw two human bodies floating past. I stopped taking photographs when this happened.
77. The first body that floated past and all I can remember seeing was arms flaying everywhere and grey hair. I actually didn't see a face and I can't even give you any better description than that as the water was churning the body up that much.
78. I tried to grab the body as it floated past but it was moving to quick and I just couldn't reach it.
79. About 20-30 seconds later, I saw another body floating past. I thought this body was a male and I managed to see the face but I couldn't give you any better description than that. The face just looked disfigured and I again tried to grab the body but it was exactly the same as before, the water was too fast and I just couldn't reach.
80. I am convinced that both the bodies I saw floating past were obviously dead. After the image of the second body, I knew that anyone coming past was already dead so I decided to get as high as I could and I got onto the peak of the roof.



(Witness's signature)

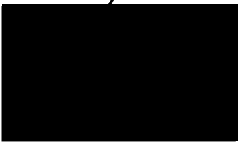
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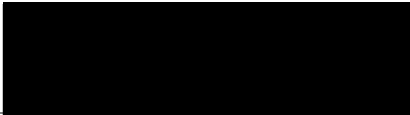
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

81. Whilst I was sitting there on the roof, it was still daylight but I'm not quite sure of what time it was.
82. I then saw a car float past and all I could see was the white roof of the car. There were two people sitting on the roof of this car being a male and female. They were both in their early-mid 20's and were caucasian and they were yelling out, "Help, help us".
83. The car was floating past and whilst I was looking at them the car just disappeared completely under the water and so did the two people and I never saw the car or them again. I didn't know who these people were and I had never seen them in the town of Grantham ever before.
84. A couple of minutes after this, I saw another car float past which from memory was pretty small and I think it was white but it may have been silver. I saw a single male person on this car and he was very well dressed wearing good slacks and a dress shirt. Again I didn't know this male and I had never seen him before.
85. I would describe this male as Caucasian and probably in his late 30's. He was clean shaven with brown short back and sides hair. He was kneeling on his hands and knees onto the roof of the car and I can really remember his big brown eyes.

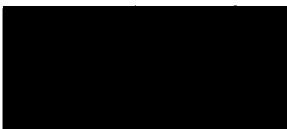
  
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(Signature of police officer  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

86. This male was looking at me yelling, "Help, help, help".
87. I didn't say anything to him as I was in absolute shock but I remember seeing the fear in his eyes and I could hear it in his voice.
88. He floated past and his car disappeared in exactly the same spot as the previous car with the couple on the roof. Again, I didn't see him or the car again and I never saw any of them re-surface.
89. I have been thinking about it since that day and I can think of nothing that was there that could have made those cars disappeared under water. The only thing it could have been was a log or something else submerged in the flood waters.
90. Where the cars disappeared under the water was actually on Anzac Avenue, just past my shop towards Placid Hills.
91. When the second car disappeared, I scurried to the back of the shop roof where the workshop shed wall was and I just sat there as I didn't want to see anything more.
92. Whilst I was sitting there I saw that the timber house near the pub on Anzac Avenue just float across the road and I managed to video record this on my phone.

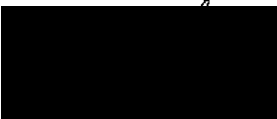
  
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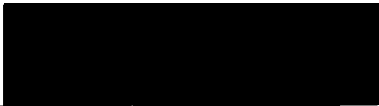
  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

93. I watched this house float across the road and into Derrick SCHULZ paddock and it must have got caught on something because it stopped and I could hear people inside the house screaming for help.
94. I didn't know what to do so I rung the Mayor, Steve JONES from the Lockyer Valley Regional Council on his mobile phone. I don't know his mobile number off the top of my head but I had it stored in my phone for some reason.
95. I told him to get some help and he started freaking out and he said he was going to call '000'.
96. I hung up the phone and I saw numerous News Helicopters flying around so I took my Drizabone jacket off and started waving it around in the air to get their attention.
97. Not long after the Channel 9 News Helicopter hovered over this house until the rescue chopper came and winched the people to safety. I can't remember how many people were winched to safety but I know it was a few.
98. I took some video footage of this chopper doing the rescue but my view was obscured by some trees and the footage wasn't good.

  
(Witness's signature)

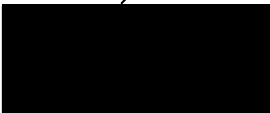
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

99. I don't know what time this was but it was getting pretty dark and I knew he shouldn't be in the sky flying a chopper. After the people from the house were rescued I didn't see another chopper in the sky that night.
100. I just sat on the roof thinking I was going to get saved by the SES or something so I just lay down on the roof and waited.
101. My mobile phone had gone flat so every couple of minutes I would flick my lighter on so people could see me.
102. I was getting pretty tired from the previous nights when I had no sleep at the shop so I then clipped myself to the roof with some clips I have on my belt. I remember I was falling asleep but trying to stay awake at the same time.
103. I don't know what time it was but it was dark and for all I know it could have been 9:00pm or 2:00am in the morning but it started raining heavy again and there was lightning so I decided I had to get off the roof.
104. I looked down to the ground and could see the water was still waist deep but I needed to get off the roof. I managed to grab a hold of the guttering and was going to climb down the drain pipe but the guttering gave way and I fell into the water.

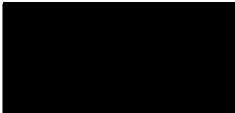
  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **WARBURTON, Martin Craig**

105. The next thing I remember was getting dragged into the house a few doors up by the occupants and I then had a smoke before being rescued by the swift water rescue team.
106. They managed to walk us out to the railway line and we managed to get up to the local Grantham School where we met up with all the other locals and we got dry and had something to eat.
107. All of the photographs and video footage I have taken of the floods in the previous days and the major incident on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, have been given to Police.
108. I have managed to place these in folders according to the dates they were taken and to be honest I have already provided some of these to Channel 7.
109. On Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, I also did a media interview with Sally EELS from Channel 7. I don't have any footage of this interview but I am aware if you contacted Channel 7 you would be able to obtain this footage.
110. Since the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, I have been staying at home trying to recover until we were allowed to get back into Grantham late this week.
111. Once we were allowed back into Grantham, I have just been trying to clean up my shop and help the locals with incoming donations and other stuff.

  
(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
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(Signature of police officer  
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112. On Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, I attended the Gatton Police Station and voluntarily provided this statement to Detective Shayne ROLPH.

**M. C. WARBURTON**

**Justices Act Acknowledgement**

**Justices Act 1886**

I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 20/01/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 19 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.



.....Signature

Signed at Gatton this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011

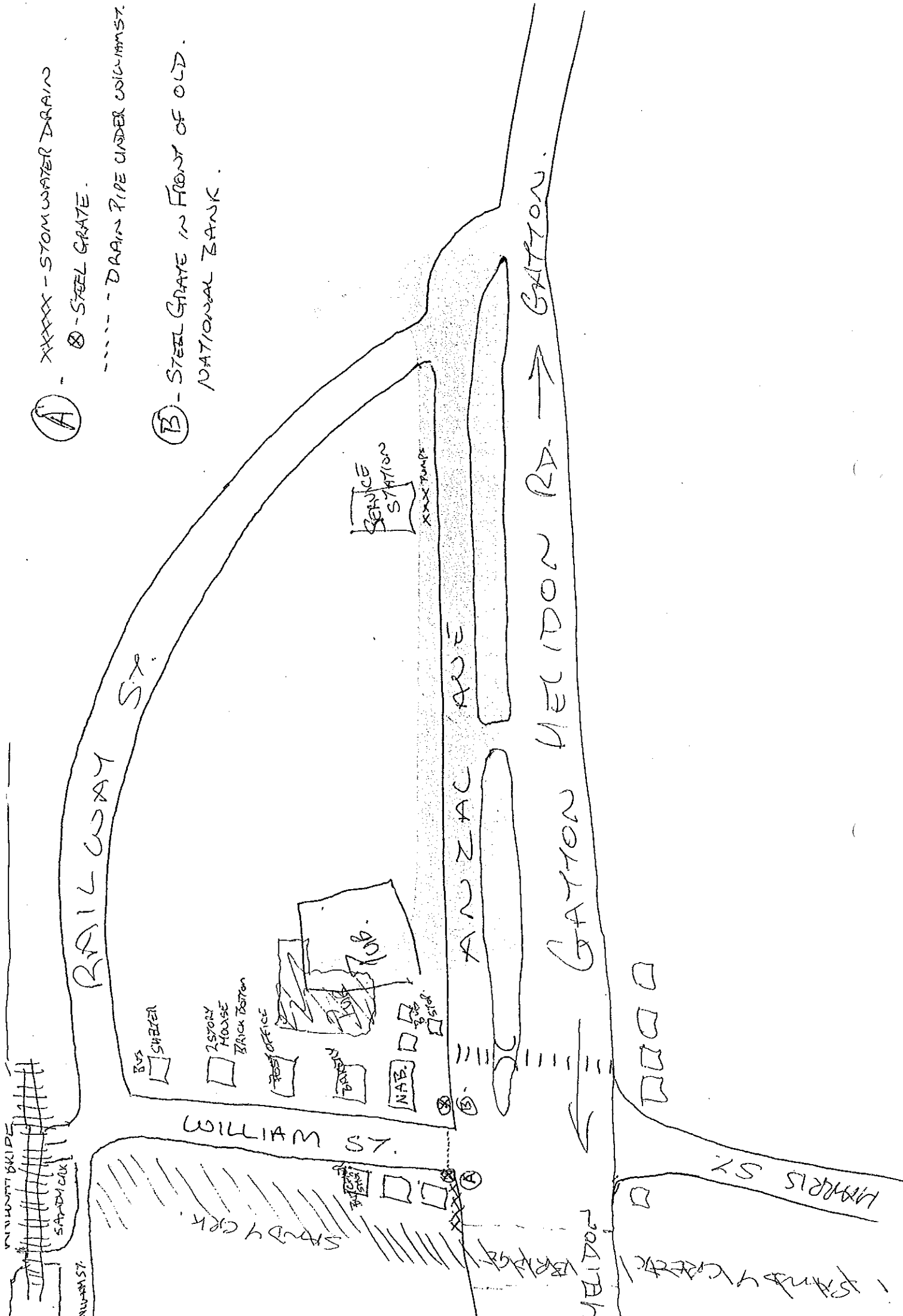


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(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)



A - XXXXX - STORM WATER DRAIN  
 ⊗ - STEEL GRATE.

----- DRAIN PIPE UNDER COUCHMAN ST.

B - STEEL GRATE IN FRONT OF OLD NATIONAL BANK.

RAILWAY ST.

SERVICE STATION  
 XXX PUMP

ANZAC AVE

GATTION RD. → GATTION.

WILLIAM ST.

MORRIS ST.

WINDMILL SKIPE  
 SANDY CRK

SANDY CRK

SANDY CRK

MELDON RD.

SANDY CRK