

ANNEXURE 'L'

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KREJCIR'S R400K LOAN TO TOP COP

amaBhungane

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A top detective on Johannesburg's East Rand received a R408 000 loan from a company allegedly controlled by Czech fugitive Radovan Krejcir.

Evidence seen by amaBhungane shows that Colonel Francois Steyn, the head of Germiston's organised crime unit, received the loan from a Krejcir-linked company, Groep Twee Beleggings, in January 2010.

Groep Twee is one of several companies at the centre of a probe by the South African Revenue Service (Sars) into Krejcir's tax affairs. AmaBhungane reported last week that Sars has obtained a court order placing all Krejcir's assets and those of his wife, Katerina, and several of his close associates under the control of a curator. Sars claims that Krejcir owes at least R60-million in unpaid taxes and penalties.

Although Katerina is the sole listed director of Groep Twee, Sars said in its court application that almost all the company's business dealings were conducted by Krejcir himself.

This week Steyn confirmed taking the loan but claimed he had not known at the time of Krejcir's connection with Groep Twee.

Speaking in the presence of his attorney, Gary Mazaham, Steyn said the money was part of a "financial commitment" he had made to the late security consultant and underworld figure Cyril Beeka.

Start-up capital

Steyn said Beeka approached him "in mid- to late-2009 with an opportunity to get involved in a security company". Steyn said Beeka said he would "arrange a loan" for him through Groep Twee Beleggings, which would serve as Steyn's share of the start-up capital.

According to the policeman, Beeka also said that he would service the loan “up until such time that the proposed company is operational and then you can pay back the loan”.

Beeka took the colonel to see a lawyer acting for Groep Twee Beleggings to sign a loan agreement on December 1 2009. Groep Twee’s lawyer agreed on a loan of R300 000 to Steyn. He claims that he assumed the company was a “loan/investment company” and he “had no idea and no reason” to think that it belonged to Krejcir or “to anything bad”.

Steyn “categorically denied” knowing that it was linked to Krejcir until after the murder of Teazers boss Lolly Jackson in May 2010.

“I never took possession of the money. I never saw the money. This money, as far as I could gather, was handed to Cyril Beeka. The loan was meant to have been from 1 December 2009, to be repaid on 28 February 2010,” Steyn said.

Beeka was among the first people with whom Krejcir acquainted himself on his arrival in South Africa in 2007. As a Cape Town security expert and alleged former Umkhonto we-Sizwe operative, Beeka appeared to have access to strategically important people. He was killed in a drive-by shooting in March 2011.

‘Professional relationship’

According to Steyn, he had a “professional relationship” with Beeka, who was the national risk manager for Ram Hand-to-Hand Couriers. Steyn said he was introduced to Beeka by a confidential informant in “about 2007 or 2008” to discuss issues Ram was experiencing with truck hijackings. Steyn was made unit commander for organised crime in Ekurhuleni, in eastern Gauteng, in 2006.

Steyn said Beeka approached him in 2009 with the “opportunity” to get involved in a new security company. By that stage Beeka was a security consultant to Krejcir and the two were in talks about going into business together.

Self-proclaimed family man Krejcir has been linked directly or indirectly to 12 people who have been killed since 2007. Among them are Jackson, Beeka and German supercar conversion specialist Uwe Gemballa. But last week, Krejcir distanced himself from the criminal underworld and denied that he had any involvement in “any of the killings that the media have been so freely speculating about”. But at least one source close to Krejcir’s network told amaBhungane that local police were perceived to be in his pocket. Steyn confirmed that, as head of organised crime in the area, he did become aware of Krejcir “when things started popping up in the media and the like”. However, Steyn said, those investigations were handled by the Hawks’ head and provincial offices, so he had nothing to do with them.

Steyn denied that he had any personal dealings at all with Krejcir until July this year, when Steyn was asked to assist with investigations into an alleged assassination attempt on Krejcir outside his gold and money-lending shop, Money Point, in Bedfordview.

Heart attack

Steyn told amaBhungane this week that the loan repayment date of February 2010 “came and went”: “No one approached me for the money ... When I questioned Cyril about it, he told me he was servicing the loan and that I should not worry about it.”

Steyn said he became aware of the links between Krejcir and Groep Twee on May 4 2010, a day after Jackson was shot and killed, allegedly by Krejcir’s right-hand man, George Louca. Steyn assisted in “profiling all possible suspects”, including Krejcir, although he noted that he was only involved in the case for “the first 48 hours”. It was then, he said, that he discovered Krejcir’s connection to Groep Twee.

“I literally had close to a heart attack when I put two and two together. I saw that one of the property addresses was registered to Krejcir and the second was reflected to be in the name Groep Twee Beleggings,” he said.

Steyn said he called Beeka and demanded: “What the hell have you done to me?” Beeka told Steyn not to worry and that he was “taking care of it” and servicing the loan. Steyn did not disclose the loan to his superiors.

A few days after Beeka was shot and killed in March 2011, Steyn received a summons to repay a R400 000 “debt” owed to Groep Twee. Steyn said at that stage he felt “scared” because he had “never” been involved in a civil matter.

Blast

He said he explained his predicament to a “businessman and friend of 16 years”, whom Steyn refused to name. According to Steyn, his friend was owed “close to R400 000” by Krejcir. On the strength of that, Steyn’s friend suggested he would approach Krejcir through an intermediary and have the debt owed to him set off against Steyn’s debt to Groep Twee.

Steyn’s debt to Groep Twee was settled by November 2011. The final amount understood to have been repaid to Groep Twee was R400 000. The total loan amount was apparently for R408 000, although Steyn claims he signed for only R300 000.

Krejcir’s lawyer, Eddie Classen, declined to comment.