



MEDIA STATEMENT

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BRANCH

July 22, 2009

09-08

Special Prosecutor Appointed

Victoria - The Criminal Justice Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General today announced the appointment of Kris Pechet as an independent special prosecutor to take conduct of the prosecution of Vidyulata Klassen in Provincial Court in Abbotsford.

Ms. Klassen is alleged to have engaged in criminally harassing behaviour directed at the Honourable Michael de Jong, Attorney General for the Province of British Columbia, and an Information charging her was sworn and filed in Provincial Court in Abbotsford on June 30, 2009.

Mr. Pechet, a senior New Westminster lawyer, was appointed on July 20, 2009 by Jennifer Power, Q.C., Acting Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Justice Branch, to review the Report to Crown Counsel prepared in connection with events alleged to have occurred between December 2, 2008 and June 14, 2009 in Abbotsford, conduct an independent charge re-assessment review of the current charge and to take such further steps as he deems appropriate in the independent exercise of his prosecutorial discretion.

Special Prosecutors are appointed under the *Crown Counsel Act* when there is a significant potential for real or perceived improper influence in the exercise of prosecutorial responsibilities, including charge assessment. The decision of a Special Prosecutor is final subject only to receiving written directions from the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General or the Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Justice Branch. In such an event, those directions must be published in the B.C. Gazette.

As this matter is now before the court, it would not be appropriate to comment further on the circumstances of the case at this time.

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