



MEDIA STATEMENT

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BRANCH

November 9, 2011

11-19

Special Prosecutor Approves Charge

Victoria - The Criminal Justice Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General today announced that independent Special Prosecutor Kris S. Pechet has approved a charge against Hedley Christopher Johns, a prosecutor employed by the Criminal Justice Branch.

An information charging Mr. Johns with a single count of assault was sworn in Provincial Court in North Vancouver on November 8, 2011. A first appearance on the matter has been scheduled for January 4, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. in North Vancouver Provincial Court.

Mr. Pechet, a senior New Westminster lawyer, was appointed by Acting Assistant Deputy Attorney General Joyce DeWitt-Van Oosten, Q.C. on September 22, 2011, after the Criminal Justice Branch received an investigative report from the North Vancouver R.C.M.P. in connection with an incident alleged to have occurred in North Vancouver on August 23, 2011. Given Mr. Johns' position as an employee of the Branch, Ms DeWitt-Van Oosten concluded that it was necessary to appoint a Special Prosecutor.

Mr Pechet's mandate included:

- Conducting an independent charge assessment review of the recommended charge based on the Report to Crown Counsel submitted by the investigative agency and making the charging decision he deemed appropriate in the exercise of his independent prosecutorial discretion.
- Offering such legal advice as is necessary to the police in the event that further investigation by them is required;
- Providing a written report to the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, with the results of his review and the reasons for his decision;
- If in his view a prosecution was warranted, conducting the prosecution and any subsequent appeal.

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In keeping with the mandate granted, Mr. Pechet will now continue with conduct of this prosecution.

The Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Justice Branch appoints Special Prosecutors pursuant to the *Crown Counsel Act* when there is a significant potential for real or perceived improper influence in the administration of criminal justice.

The decisions of Special Prosecutors are final, subject only to receiving written directions from the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General or Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Justice Branch. In such an event, those directions must be made public by publishing them in the Gazette.

As this matter is now before the Court it would not be appropriate to comment any further or provide additional details of the alleged circumstances at this time.

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