



MEDIA STATEMENT

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BRANCH

July 13, 2016

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Charges Approved by Special Prosecutor

Victoria - The Criminal Justice Branch (CJB), Ministry of Justice, announced today that Special Prosecutor Dirk Ryneveld, QC has approved charges against Marnie Ruth Offman for offences allegedly arising out of her employment with the Swan Lake constituency office in Victoria.

Ms. Offman has been charged with:

1. defrauding the Swan lake constituency office of monies in excess of \$5000, contrary to section 380(1)(a) of the Criminal Code;
2. theft of money in excess of \$5000, contrary to section 334(a) of the Criminal Code; and,
3. uttering forged cheques contrary to section 368(1)(b) of the Criminal Code.

All offences are alleged to have occurred between March 24, 2009 and November 28, 2015 at or near Victoria, British Columbia.

Mr. Ryneveld was appointed as a Special Prosecutor by Acting Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Peter Juk, QC on June 8, 2016. Ms. Offman was formerly employed to do constituency work for MLA Robert Fleming at the Swan Lake constituency office. In light of this fact, Mr. Juk concluded that a Special Prosecutor should be appointed to avoid any real or perceived improper influence in the administration of justice.

Mr. Ryneveld is a senior lawyer in private practice in Victoria. His mandate as a Special Prosecutor includes:

- Offering such legal advice to the investigative agency as may be necessary in the circumstances;
- Conducting an independent assessment of a Report to Crown Counsel and making the charging decision he deemed appropriate in the exercise of his independent discretion.

The announcement of the appointment of the Special Prosecutor was delayed out of respect for privacy interests during the charge assessment process, and to avoid any possibility of interference with the work of the investigative agency. This is in accordance with Branch practice when dealing with investigations that are not a matter of public record.

Branch Vision

Courageous, Fair and Efficient – A Prosecution Service that has the Confidence of the Public.

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Ms. Offman's first appearance on these charges will be today in Victoria Provincial Court, file number 168962. As all charges arising out of this matter are currently before the Court, neither the Branch nor the Special Prosecutor will be making any further comment on these matters. It is important that the integrity of the court process be respected and the matters be allowed to unfold in the ordinary course.

For general information, CJB's policy on Special Prosecutors and a related Information Sheet can be found at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/crown-counsel-policy-manual/spe-1-special-prosecutors.pdf>

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/information-sheets/role-special-prosecutors.pdf>

To learn more about B.C.'s criminal justice system visit the British Columbia Prosecution Service website at:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bc-prosecution-service

The Charge Assessment Guidelines applied by the CJB and Special Prosecutors in reviewing Reports to Crown Counsel are established in Branch policy and are available online at:

www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/crown-counsel-policy-manual/cha-1-charge-assessment-guidelines.pdf

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