

Maree in terms of the agreement entered into with Ms. Maree in terms of the contingency fees act. I am advised that if need be the agreement will be tendered for inspection, and a copy will be furnished upon request to the Court.

### **Ad paragraph 106**

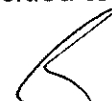
172

172.1 The respondents admit that their former client Ms. Maree has via Millar challenged the fees charged to her. They have no knowledge of what Ms. Maree's expectations are and dispute that she is entitled to any money whatsoever. Ms. Maree who was most satisfied with the outcome of her case which was handled exclusively by RBP Attorney Ms. Valente, was incited by former RBP employee Ms. Cora van der Merwe to challenge Ms. Valente's fee as also the fees of the respondent 's correspondent's Pretoria Attorneys Messrs Friedland Hart Solomon Nicolson. The Respondents believe Maree was touted to Millar by Ms. Van der Merwe, who represents her in a number of matters, and co tweets with Millar malicious attacks on the directors and staff of the respondent.

172.2 Consequent upon Ms. Van der Merwe's conduct, her ex husband was obliged to obtain a protection order against her, and which is still in force. Similarly RBP employee Ms. Joan Burger was likewise obliged to obtain such an order.

172.3 Van der Merwe was initially an independent contractor who approached respondents to draw and tax their bills of costs. At her request, she subsequently became employed as an in-house costing clerk / cost consultant, and subsequently after her persistent requests, was registered as a candidate attorney with the firm. She operates under various names in the social media including Cora van der Merwe , Cornelia van Niekerk and Cortjie.

172.4 Consequent upon strange behaviour on van der Merwe's part, including the disappearance and re-appearance of files and documents entrusted to her, as also reports made by RBP staff as to her bizarre behaviour, which included complaints by her that she constantly heard voices in her head, would wake up paralyzed and wholly unable to move or speak and so on, it was decided to instruct forensic investigator Mr. Paul O'Sullivan.



BD

172.5 Van Der Merwe confessed to O'Sullivan on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 that she had stolen and emailed the confidential and proprietary information of the respondents, to Beamish and that she had done so at the instance of Beamish, with whom she had formed a conspiratorial relationship,. She also admitted that the electronic files she had sent to Beamish, freelance journalist, were the confidential and proprietary information of the respondents. She further admitted that her letter of appointment contained a confidentiality clause and that she had unlawfully breached this.

172.6. In August 2014 she purported to confide in me that by virtue of her training as an employee with the South African Navy in counter espionage, and also by virtue of her studies at a Russian university, she was skilled in manipulating people into trusting her and thereafter confiding in her. She claimed to have used these skills in developing a relationship with Beamish and consequent thereto he had forwarded to her an ongoing stream of many emails, "whatsapp"s and messages and emails that she had received from other persons.

172.7 She volunteered to make whatever was available on her phone to me and to bring into the office her laptop on which she said there was more material, as well as her other phone which was in for repair, and which had also contained communications with Beamish. True to her word she immediately forwarded and printed numerous communications between her and Beamish. An indexed file of these communications has been prepared and will be made available to the Court if so requested.

172.8 Reliable information has been made available to the respondents that Beamish was at one stage living with van der Merwe, and it is a matter of record that she subsequently assisted him in the production of the biased and malicious Carte Blanche attack on me and RBP. As I mention subsequently, Beamish at the time had taken up employment with Carte Blanche for the very purpose of this attack.

