

From: Jo Allan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 1:42 PM
To: Angus Llewellyn <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Myles Farley <[REDACTED]>; Tasha Smithies <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: link for transcribe
Attach: Brittany - Part Two.docx

Hi Angus hope you're having a good day. Here is part two, the next hour of the file. I'll have the final 20mins to you this evening. Chat soon,

Jo Allan

Scribewriters Transcription

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From: Angus Llewellyn <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2021 2:18 PM
To: Jo Allan <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Myles Farley <[REDACTED]>; Tasha Smithies <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Fwd: link for transcribe

Hi Jo

Here's the link for transcription.

If you can please ensure, for legal security reasons, that when you reply with the various segments of transcription that you REPLY ALL to this email.

Both Myles and Tasha are our network lawyers and they need to be included in these emails please.

cheers

Angus

Begin forwarded message:

From: Peter Mullins <[REDACTED]>
Subject: link for transcribe
Date: 3 February 2021 at 2:09:10 pm AEDT
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

--

Regards,

Peter Mullins

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Brittany

1:00:37.7 PART TWO BEGINS

1:00:37.7

Lisa:

Would she have known that you were traumatised at that point?

1:00:41.1

Brittany:

I assume so, I mean I feel like it's any reasonable person. I was crying, I was quite upset.

1:00:47.0

Lisa:

But she got you to sign this document that you, don't know what it was?

1:00:50.4

Brittany:

I have no idea. I'm sure she explained at the time. But you know, I think when you're in sort of the, in the aftershock of an immediate sort of trauma you're just a little bit all over the place to be honest.

1:01:05.1

Lisa:

Did she tell you what happened to your senior male colleague who had just left the office?

1:01:10.3

Brittany:

She said that she had fired him. She didn't say why she had fired him but that he had been, yeah let go. And that he wasn't coming back. And that sort of didn't quite compute, why was he being fired, and she'd already fired him but. I don't know, I just, I was kind of confused at that point in time. Sort of, it felt like she either, she sometimes it felt like she knew what had happened and then other times it sort of switched tense and it seemed like she was sort of playing dumb, like she didn't know. And I thought that was really confusing at the time.

1:01:44.6

Lisa:

So, you had just told a senior advisor to Prime Minister Scott Morrison that you had been raped on Minister Reynolds' couch in her private office.

1:01:56.1

Brittany:

Yes.

1:01:57.2

Lisa:

That's a serious crime.

1:01:58.6

Brittany:
Yeah.

1:01:59.6

Lisa:
Did she call the police?

1:02:03.1

Brittany:
She said, internal mechanisms were already at play.

1:02:06.6

Lisa:
What does that mean?

1:02:08.1

Brittany:
That I think there'd been a security breach and that during that process, and the, so in Canberra, inside of Parliament House, it's its own unique AFP unit. And so, that act independently from the ACT Police and they're a branch of the Federal Police apparently. And they had been notified in this process of Minister Reynolds' Chief of Staff being notified. It was this automatic sort of series of events that had been triggered on the basis that there'd been a breach of security in the Minister's office.

1:02:43.4

Lisa:
Did she ask you if you wanted to take this to the police?

1:02:46.6

Brittany:
Not at that point no.

1:02:49.2

Lisa:
Did that seem strange to you?

1:02:51.4

Brittany:
In hindsight yes, yeah.

1:02:56.3

Lisa:
What support were you given by Fiona Brown?

1:02:59.9

Brittany:

We have an employee assistance program. And I remember she gave me a brochure for the Employee Assistance Program. And I think she told me that day that I could take the rest of the day off and I did.

1:03:14.8

Lisa:

So you went home with a brochure?

1:03:17.2

Brittany:

I did.

1:03:18.2

Lisa:

Not having spoken to any police?

1:03:20.1

Brittany:

No.

1:03:22.9

Lisa:

Did Fiona Brown ask how you were physically?

1:03:29.2

Brittany:

I don't recall her going into much detail about how I was as a person. Whether it was physicality or emotionally. I think it was kind of, ok, you've got this, you've signed your code of conduct, just go home. Just, I was a wreck and I think she just sort of, was like ok, this, we have to get this person out of the office, yeah.

1:03:53.4

Lisa:

So, what was in the brochure that you were left with?

1:03:56.0

Brittany:

A phone number. I did call it. I think it was like a two-month wait to speak to a psychologist. I knew I would be hopefully in campaign mode at that point, so I didn't take them up on it. Because I didn't know where I would be in the country.

1:04:12.5

Lisa:

Did you let Fiona Brown that you couldn't see someone for two months courtesy of the brochure she'd just given you?

1:04:18.1

Brittany:

She enquired if I had called the number and I said, yes but there was like a long wait time. And then she was like, oh sometimes it's like that. And that was sort of the extent of our exchange about support beyond the event.

1:04:29.9

Lisa:

So, she didn't offer any assistance for you to see a counsellor of any type?

1:04:37.8

Brittany:

No real counsellor. It was all very much, you've got the EAP and at that point it sort of became and moved more into what I was going to do with this sort of event. Whether I was going to be, whether I wanted to proceed with it, whether I wanted to go onto the election, and it became a conversation about where I was taking this.

1:05:03.9

Lisa:

Was she at all concerned that you couldn't see a counsellor for two months?

1:05:08.2

Brittany:

It didn't seem like it. She didn't, it wasn't really a priority for her. I think she was already in campaign mode. She was going to be based in CHQ which is in Brisbane and she was going to be running a lot of things. So I think more she wanted to know, was I taking this to police. Was I going to be in WA for the election campaign, or was going to go home and take a payout?

1:05:33.4

Lisa:

Ok, well let's go through that. When she asked you, were you going to take this to the police, what did you say?

1:05:40.3

Brittany:

So I said I would speak with the police and I did. I did on the Wednesday. So I immediately on the Wednesday I was met with the AFP Canberra Parliament House Unit. I went down and I, it wasn't a formal statement, but I gave them sort of, I sat down with them and I went through all the events. I let them know about when I came in, what time I left, I ran through everything.

1:06:05.8

Brittany:

And at that point, they decided that they would elevate it to the Belconnen AFP Sexual Assault Crimes Unit. And they had jurisdiction over that sort of crime in the region, I guess. But there was obviously a bit of a time difference between when they originally referred it and when I could go in and speak to those officers. So I was proceeding down that route. Absolutely.

1:06:29.9

Brittany:

I don't know, I think the fear of reprisal from the senior staffer was kind of gone and so I was starting to move in that direction of, ok this is just what happens next.

1:06:39.8

Lisa:

If I can just go back, so –

1:06:51.7

Lisa:

So Fiona Brown sacked your senior male colleague. Did she say that she knew you had been raped?

1:07:00.4

Brittany:

No, she was very careful around all of her words. I don't think she ever wanted to confirm that the assault had happened. I don't think she wanted to confirm, it was all sort of political jargon. You know how you sort of distance yourself from the actually meaning of the word. It was all kind of dancing around the subject.

1:07:21.5

Lisa:

Did she give you any indication of what this senior male colleague had told her had happened in that office that Saturday night?

1:07:29.8

Brittany:

She mentioned that he said that he was coming up to grab a bottle of alcohol or something. And that was his reason for coming back to the office after hours. And she said that he had stated that he hadn't been drinking that night. And that's where I got that information from. Beyond that, that was all she sort of told me specifically about what he said during that meeting.

1:07:55.3

Lisa:

So, you received this request to meet with the police unit that's within Parliament House, can you tell me more about that meeting?

1:08:04.9

Brittany:

Yeah, so they came up to the Minister's office and obviously it's a little strange. I remember a colleague in my office commenting like that's pretty strange, the police are here. And I went with them and you sort of have to go down into the bowels of Parliament and it's like two levels down underground and they walked me through, and I sat with two women, two lovely officers and yeah, at that point they just wanted a verbal statement from me recounting the event.

1:08:36.8

Brittany:

They just wanted to ascertain broadly what had happened and they were taking notes throughout. So they had a casefile open, they'd been notified of it through Parliament House security.

1:08:46.5

Lisa:

So these women, these police officers are part of the AFP? External to the Parliament House policing unit?

1:08:54.4

Brittany:

Sorry no, these are that Parliament House policing unit. So they were notified by security, they had sort of the broad details of what had happened, they just needed me personally to fill in the blanks so that they could refer it to another AFP. It was very bureaucratic, it's a bit of a nightmare when you're going through a trauma, it's quite hard to manage.

1:09:19.4

Lisa:

What did they tell you they had been told to investigate?

1:09:23.3

Brittany:

A sexual assault.

1:09:40.5

Lisa:

So at any point, did you ask to see the CCTV footage of you on that Saturday night, into the Sunday morning?

1:09:50.3

Brittany:

Yeah. I became weirdly fixated on it personally. Because I didn't have so many of the details of that night, I really wanted to sort of contextualise it for myself. I just wanted to see it so I could understand it. And if I could understand it, then I could process it and just you know, emotionally sort of deal with it.

1:10:08.9

Lisa:

Because at this point, you knew that quite a few people had seen this CCTV?

1:10:13.5

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah I knew that Fiona had seen it, I knew that sort of, one of my other colleagues had seen it from Defence. And so it was this strange thing where it felt like everyone had all this information on my own assault, and I didn't have any. And I had no idea sort of what was going on. I felt like I was getting second hand information. I was kind of getting palmed off all the time to all these sort of different people in the process.

1:10:37.8

Brittany:

And it wasn't even, I didn't even feel a part of my own sort of assault somehow. Like it was being case managed by a number of other people and they were ten steps ahead of me. I didn't see it and I desperately wanted to. I asked at least half-a-dozen times to see that CCTV and she always said no.

1:10:58.3

Lisa:
Who's she?

1:10:59.6

Brittany:
Fiona.

1:11:00.5

Lisa:
So who were the people that you asked to see the CCTV footage?

1:11:04.7

Brittany:
Fiona, she was my Chief of Staff, she was the only person realistically that could report to. I know down the track the police were trying to also get a copy of the footage.

1:11:15.7

Lisa:
Well, let's not jump forward.

1:11:17.1

Brittany:
Sorry.

1:11:18.4

Lisa:
So when you asked Fiona Brown for access to that footage, what did she say?

1:11:25.0

Brittany:
She kind of just rebuffed it. It was, because I did ask a number of times and it was never a flat no on the basis that I think she was sort of trying to protect herself. But she clearly didn't want me to see it.

1:11:38.2

Lisa:
Why?

1:11:40.0

Brittany:
Because apparently I was very, visually intoxicated and I think it was incriminating.

1:11:46.7

Lisa:

To who?

1:11:48.1

Brittany:

I don't know whether it's to the security guards, whether it's, I think it wasn't even, they weren't trying to protect the senior staffer, I think they were just trying to broadly protect themselves from any liability or blow-back. That's how it felt.

1:12:02.6

Lisa:

So everybody else got to see this footage, but you?

1:12:05.8

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:12:06.8

Lisa:

How did that make you feel?

1:12:10.6

Brittany:

It hurt, it really hurt. It felt like a betrayal kind of. I don't know how, but it just felt like, you dedicate so much of your life and your time when you work in politics and the people you work for. And for them to sort of withhold this one really small thing that I needed just personally for myself to process, to move on, or just to understand what had happened to me. And knowing that everyone else who really broadly didn't have any vested interest in seeing it, had witnessed it. It was just, it was really hard. Yeah, really hard. I don't know why, it really upset me.

1:12:55.7

Lisa:

Do you know how far into the Minister's office that CCTV followed you?

1:13:05.0

Brittany:

It, it went from the very front entrance of where the taxi would have stopped all the way through, going through security, all the way up to the suite. So they've got cameras all the way up. And they would have seen when he left, what time he left and I think just, they just sort of had sort of all the pieces that I was kind of missing in my own personal sort of recollection. Not recollection, but just understanding of the events so I could contextualise it for myself.

1:13:52.6

Lisa:

So when did Minister Reynolds speak to you about what happened?

1:13:55.8

Brittany:

So, I let them know that my dad was going to come down just to sort of support me over that weekend. He sort of knew of an incident that had happened, he knew that senior staffer had been fired and he broadly knew that it was an assault. But I didn't give him any of the details. So my dad came down and I let them know that my dad was coming down.

1:14:14.5

Brittany:

And I think at that point it kind of made them nervous. Because beyond that, I'd only been speaking to them and I didn't have a support network in Canberra, I'd only lived there for a few months and everyone who I'd know had been fired recently. So I think that made them nervous. So I got a WhatsApp from Fiona Brown indicating that Minister Reynolds would like to have a meeting with me and Fiona on the following Monday.

1:14:38.1

Lisa:

So you'd been working in Minister Reynolds' office all of that week?

1:14:43.0

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah.

1:14:45.0

Lisa:

After the assault on the Saturday night, where had she been for that week?

1:14:48.4

Brittany:

In WA, in Western Australia.

1:14:51.5

Lisa:

Was she coming back specifically to see you?

1:14:55.6

Brittany:

I can't remember if it was a sitting week or not. I think maybe she was, yeah.

1:15:01.8

Lisa:

Can I just check one thing with you, going back to the CCTV, did you ask the police unit within Parliament House if they had seen the CCTV footage?

1:15:10.8

Brittany:

I didn't specifically ask them, but they seemed to, they had enough facts and figures that I assumed they had seen it. They sort of knew when we came in, time, logins, like they had that sort of information that made me feel like they had already seen it.

1:15:24.5

Lisa:

Did you ask them if you could see it?

1:15:27.8

Brittany:

No I didn't ask them if they could see it, I only asked Fiona.

1:15:30.9

Lisa:

Ok. So you had a meeting with Minister Reynolds, did you have any idea what that meeting was going to consist of?

1:15:41.2

Brittany:

I sort of, I knew she'd that she'd want to sort of speak about what had happened in the office. I wasn't sort of given an agenda or anything, I didn't specifically know. But yeah, I just remember that it was first thing and I kind of expected to walk into Fiona's office where we'd been having all of our other meetings and we actually went into the room where it happened.

1:16:07.9

Brittany:

And it was just like a whiteout in my mind. Because it's the first time I'd ever had to go back there. And so, we had this sort of this round table in the corner of the Minister's office and the Minister was sitting there and Fiona was sitting on the other side. And between sort of me and their table was the couch. And I just remember feeling so, I'm sure they were saying words but I barely remember a single word they said during that entire process.

1:16:38.7

Brittany:

Because I was just so cognizant of, this is where its happened, it's right there. That's exactly where it, and it was just this loop playing in my mind of this trauma that I'd just sort of come to terms with and I just thought it was unfathomable that they would put me in that space again.

1:16:55.2

Lisa:

Did Minister Reynolds know that that was the couch that you allege the rape happened on?

1:17:00.1

Brittany:

There's no way she wouldn't, she knew it was in her office.

1:17:05.2

Lisa:

So what did she say to you?

1:17:07.5

Brittany:

She was apologetic. She was nice, she did say nice words. She was apologetic, she asked how I was. And then pretty quickly the conversation turned to sort of, the police. And if I chose to go to the police, we would support you. And it was this sort of, it felt like a weird sort of, HR ticking a box moment that they sort of could fulfil that quota. That the minister said that to me on record and that I would then, it didn't feel like a real conversation. They were kind of talking to me for like a real human being.

1:17:45.8

Brittany:

And then it kind of switched into, ok, we have to say this, this was said, done. And then successively, all their actions following that, made it very clear that that wasn't anything that was actually a real feasible thing for me to do.

1:17:59.8

Lisa:

How traumatic, sorry. How traumatic was it to be back in that room, looking at that couch?

1:18:07.7

Brittany:

I can't even fully put it into words, but it was just, it was kind of like all of the sound went out and I couldn't hear anything, and I was just so cognizant of it being there, it was, I felt like I was reliving it, every second of being in that room.

1:18:26.1

Lisa:

Did she, did Minister Reynolds or anyone else in that meeting apologise of the inappropriateness of that location being where this meeting took place?

1:18:35.8

Brittany:

No, I don't, it was never acknowledged, it was never brought up. It was just sort of like this weird sort of side feature of this meeting, yeah.

1:18:48.1

Lisa:

Was there any mention of police being called in and this becoming a full police investigation?

1:18:55.3

Brittany:

No, it was very much it felt like it was like, if it was like an independent side project of mine. If you choose to, we won't stop you essentially. And that was sort of the tone. It was like very flippant, it wasn't an office involved thing, it was more, if this is something you do, go for it.

1:19:14.7

Lisa:

Did Minister Reynolds ask you if you had seen a counsellor at that point? We're a week or so after the alleged rape?

1:19:21.8

Brittany:

No, no.

1:19:24.7

Lisa:

Did Fiona Brown ask you at that point if you had seen a counsellor?

1:19:27.6

Brittany:

No.

1:19:29.3

Lisa:

The same Fiona Brown who gave you the brochure a week before?

1:19:31.8

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:19:34.3

Lisa:

So what support was offered to you at that meeting?

1:19:37.3

Brittany:

I think it was more just like a verbal confirmation of them saying, we're sorry that this happened to you. That was sort of the agenda and then the sort of, once that was done then the next thing was, if you choose to go to the police, we won't stop you. And those were the sort of the two issues that were broadly covered. And then at that point, I mean I'd only met Linda Reynolds probably three times at this point.

1:20:03.5

Brittany:

So it was, it was a strange dynamic of this person who suddenly just viewed me as a liability and it kind of, I felt that shift in tone. I felt like a liability in her office pretty much immediately.

1:20:19.3

Lisa:

Were they the words that they used? If you go to the police, we won't stop you?

1:20:25.1

Brittany:

Yeah, I think so. I mean it was, it wasn't, they weren't supporting me or encouraging me. They didn't tell me, you should go to the police, we will support you, like let's do this. Like it wasn't, it was conferred as, if this is your sort of choosing to go down this path, we're not going to stop you, you can do it.

1:20:43.4

Lisa:

If you [1:20:44.3] was there any talk of what would happen to your job?

1:20:50.0

Brittany:

It was never sort of, overtly stated but every time I sort of talked about sort of long-term sort of any sort of mental health leave or when I spoke about needing time off to go speak to the officer, it always became quite a different sort of issue in the office. I could tell that it made Fiona uncomfortable. I could tell that –

1:21:15.9

Lisa:

It made Fiona Brown uncomfortable if you brought up anything that referred at all –

1:21:20.7

Brittany:

To the incident.

1:21:21.1

Lisa:

To the alleged rape?

1:21:22.7

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah. And so, it became a topic that was really hard to raise with her. And she was sort of my only point of contact in terms of HR or anything. She was my only sort of person I could go to. The minister clearly didn't want to hear about it anymore. She didn't broadly want to see me anymore. And so, Fiona was like my sort of, the only person I could talk to. And it was dismissed, it was played down, and it was made to feel like it was my problem.

1:21:53.2

Brittany:

And so I would, sorry. And so I would try and raise it and I would try and bring it up and it was always, it always sort of came back to sort of being a me issue. And if you can't deal with it, then you can leave. Yeah, and that was difficult to contend with because obviously they've been around the block in Parliament for a really long time. Especially Fiona, she's been around since the John Howard era.

1:22:28.2

Brittany:

And so, they never overtly would say no, but it was very clear that they didn't want me doing these sorts of actions. And it was, it was always difficult trying to take any steps forward.

1:22:56.6

Lisa:

These are two very powerful women and they're talking to a junior staffer who's alleging that she's been raped. They've given you a brochure, at any point, was there any suggestion that they could

fast-track some counselling. That they knew people and they could have organised help that would have made a difference to where you were emotionally at this point?

1:23:29.7

Brittany:

I mean it just didn't fundamentally feel like it was their concern. It felt like this was my, if I independently wanted to seek assistance, I could go do it. If I independently wanted to try and go down the police route, they would not stop me. It was this sort of, either you're a part of the team and you're moving forward with the team, or you're going to focus on yourself and we're going to leave you there.

1:23:52.6

Brittany:

And that was sort of the rhetoric that continued to come up, time and time again, every time I brought it up. Whenever I asked for the CCTV or to see it, it was never an explicit no, but they would, they obviously never showed me. It's just, it was sort of this round a bout game where I felt like I was chasing things and they were just sort of putting me on the backburner for as long as possible.

1:24:15.0

Lisa:

There was an election coming.

1:24:16.3

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah.

1:24:22.3

Lisa:

So at that stage you were only dealing with the internal Parliament House police unit. Who called in the AFP?

1:24:30.5

Brittany:

The internal Parliament House decided to elevate it to them. So, that's when the Belconnen Sexual Assault Crimes Unit got involved.

1:24:41.1

Lisa:

Was Minister Reynolds or Fiona Brown alerted to that fact?

1:24:46.5

Brittany:

I believe they were alerted. I didn't explicitly tell them myself. But they knew I was starting to progress down that line.

1:24:54.4

Lisa:

So when did you first speak to the sexual assault investigators?

1:24:58.1

Brittany:

It was probably about a week or so after the actual event itself, or two weeks about. And they actually came and picked me up from Parliament House. And so they, that was the first time I had a real counsellor. So I had a lady from the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre there with me. And I met her for the first time, and I had two officers there.

1:25:24.0

Brittany:

And they were very proactive. From the onset, they had already sort of started acquiring footage from the venues we'd been at earlier in the night. She already sort of knew who was at the event at the start of that day. And so, this officer was already starting to get information together but immediately she raised the fact that she was already having difficulty with Parliament House getting copies of the CCTV footage.

1:25:51.4

Brittany:

And that was sort of another sort of way it was confirmed to me that, you know, they would say to my face that they were supportive, but when it came down to it, it was tooth and nail trying to get anything from them to help me in any way. Either A, process or B, go forward.

1:26:09.9

Lisa:

Do you know who was knocking the AFP back on getting that CCTV?

1:26:13.9

Brittany:

I don't personally know who she was speaking to, but yeah, she was going through the appropriate channels I guess.

1:26:20.7

Lisa:

And that police officer elevated it to their senior superintendent to try and get access to the CCTV?

1:26:31.6

Brittany:

Yeah, so at one point during the election campaign, I ended up ultimately going. I was pretty resigned to the fact that this was going to be, sorry –

[Interruption 1:26:51.0]

1:27:06.0

Lisa:

So footage that could have gone some way to supporting your allegation of your rape was not available to you and was now not available to the Federal Police.

1:27:18.1

Brittany:
Yeah.

1:27:18.6

Lisa:
Did anyone tell you why?

1:27:20.5

Brittany:
No, no.

1:27:23.4

Lisa:
Did anyone tell the police why?

1:27:27.5

Brittany:
No, but she didn't seem surprised that they were having difficulty getting this footage. She said that this would be a bit of a battle. She didn't know if she'd be able to get it.

1:27:37.9

Lisa:
And she was so concerned she elevated it to her superior.

1:27:42.1

Brittany:
Yeah, that's correct.

1:27:43.4

Lisa:
And did her superior have any luck getting that CCTV?

1:27:46.5

Brittany:
Not to my knowledge.

1:27:47.7

Lisa:
Same knockbacks.

1:27:48.9

Brittany:
Yeah.

1:27:57.7

Lisa:
The question then remains, who are the police within Parliament House, who had control over this footage, answerable to, if not the Australian Federal Police.

1:28:13.1

Brittany:

I have no idea. I mean –

1:28:15.0

Lisa:

Who is more powerful than that? Policing unit or the AFP?

1:28:21.1

Brittany:

It is a strange relationship I can't even begin to comprehend; I have no idea, I don't understand the pecking order and I don't understand the flow of command. But it's, it's deeply complex and interwoven and yeah. And they have direct sort of, conversations with the minister's office and it's strange the way that that system works.

1:28:45.9

Lisa:

It's been two years since this all happened, have you been able to get access to that CCTV yet?

1:28:52.4

Brittany:

No, no I don't think I'll ever see it.

1:28:54.6

Lisa:

Do you know if it still exists?

1:28:56.5

Brittany:

No. I have a friend I was talking to sort of about it who works in policing and he sort of politely sort of brought me back to reality and said that he assumes it was quietly destroyed at some point. It's yeah, it was lost.

1:29:18.0

Lisa:

So this all happened just weeks before the Federal Election of 2019 was called. And I believe that Fiona Brown from the Prime Minister's office gave you two choices on how to proceed.

1:29:30.9

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:29:31.3

Lisa:

Once this was all out in the open with her and Minister Reynolds, can you tell us what those choices were that you were given?

1:29:38.6

Brittany:

Yeah, so essentially, I could go home. They'd pay me and I could just sort of take leave and I could just sort of process what had happened to me and I could just go home.

1:29:49.3

Lisa:

So pay you out and leave their employment?

1:29:52.5

Brittany:

Yeah, I would technically be employed but I wouldn't be doing anything, I would just at home.

1:29:57.8

Lisa:

So just disappear for the course of the election?

1:30:00.8

Brittany:

Essentially.

1:30:01.8

Lisa:

Would you have a job beyond the election?

1:30:04.1

Brittany:

That was what my question was. I did want to take leave for myself to sort of process, to see a therapist, to I don't know do any sort of self-care to sort of deal with what had just happened.

1:30:15.1

Lisa:

To try and heal.

1:30:16.3

Brittany:

Yeah. And I asked, so what's the process of coming back. And she said, well you wouldn't. And that was the really clarifying moment for me where I fully sort of internalised that this is a political issue, my job is on the line for this, I don't really have a choice.

1:30:39.4

Lisa:

So you were just continually being seen as a problem?

1:30:41.5

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:30:43.6

Lisa:

Not as a woman who alleged that she'd been raped in a Federal Minister's office?

1:30:49.2

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:30:51.0

Lisa:

So what did you choose?

1:30:54.5

Brittany:

This was my dream job; I had worked my entire life to get here. You know, these people weren't just my colleagues, they were sort of my social network at this point, I regarded them as sort of extended family to an extent now. I'd become sort of so ingrained in it.

1:31:13.9

Lisa:

Some family.

1:31:15.8

Brittany:

Yeah, and so I just I saw, I wanted this future, I wanted to be a part of it for my entire sort of working life. So yeah, I went to WA.

1:31:34.5

Lisa:

What was in WA?

1:31:36.7

Brittany:

I was sort of just a part of Minister Reynolds' sort of WA based team, we were helping in the seats of [1:31:45.3], Canning and Swan. And we were just coordinating media releases and events and opportunities, and it was pretty much hell. It was a horrible, horrible six weeks.

1:31:57.6

Lisa:

Why was that?

1:31:59.5

Brittany:

Mostly because I didn't know anyone there.

1:32:02.4

Lisa:

So you were isolated.

1:32:04.1

Brittany:

Yeah, I was by myself for six weeks in this, up in a hotel room but we were sort of working seven days a week pretty much. If we weren't, if we weren't sort of in office we were at events and campaigning and so, I was just, I was pretty suicidal to be honest at the time. Because you're just alone, it was really hard.

1:32:30.6

Lisa:

Did you think it was a curious option to send someone who just alleged rape to the other side of the country with no support network around her at all?

1:32:41.4

Brittany:

Yeah. I thought it felt intentional. Sorry –

1:32:53.3

Lisa:

How did Minister Reynolds treat you during those six weeks?

1:32:57.0

Brittany:

I mean she was never outright rude to me, but she did sort of actively try and avoid me as much as possible. She didn't like me coming to her events. She didn't like me going to things with her. I think I made her uncomfortable. And I sort of, I gathered that pretty quickly and so I just kind of stayed out of her way, I tried to do as much as I could for other people in other seats, but I was kind of kept at an arm's length indefinitely.

1:33:22.1

Lisa:

Did she ask you how you were?

1:33:24.6

Brittany:

No, no.

1:33:24.4

Lisa:

Did she ask you if you'd seen a counsellor?

1:33:27.6

Brittany:

No.

1:33:29.0

Lisa:

Did she ask you how the police investigation was going?

1:33:32.2

Brittany:

No, no it was never raised again. Beyond that one time in her office, she never spoke to me directly about the incident ever again.

1:33:40.7

Lisa:

Why did you decide not to pursue the case with the AFP at that point?

1:33:46.3

Brittany:

Because we were already coming up with so many blockades and I realised my job was on the line. I didn't feel like I had a choice.

1:33:55.0

Lisa:

Who did you tell that you were not going to pursue the case?

1:33:58.5

Brittany:

The officer who had been really helpful to me, I let her know. I sent her an email and I thanked her and I just said because of work, because of my current work demands, I just can't do it.

1:34:10.4

Lisa:

Did you feel pressured in any way whatsoever not to proceed with the case with the police?

1:34:18.9

Brittany:

Oh absolutely, I mean there is a strange culture of silence in the parties, and you just, you don't, the idea of sort of speaking out on these sort of issues especially around a campaign is just, it's like letting the team down. You're not a team player, like it's just, it's this culture where, it's, everyone's, yeah, yeah, sorry.

1:34:51.8

Lisa:

So you would have been seen as somebody who wasn't supporting the party had you proceeded with that police case?

1:35:01.4

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:35:03.9

Lisa:

After the election why did you leave Minister Reynolds' office?

1:35:07.0

Brittany:

My contract immediately as soon as we get into Government, we all lose our jobs again. So, I realised pretty quickly given our past history she wouldn't want to keep me on. So I immediately started going around to everyone I possibly could, trying to get another job. But yeah, I knew she didn't want me there.

1:35:26.2

Lisa:

The man that you allege raped you, was a favourite of hers, did she ever discuss him with you after she found out what had happened?

1:35:36.2

Brittany:

No, I think honestly on some social media platform, she still follows this person. I think that, I think she believed me to the extent in which she had to, but I don't, she still kind of, still sort of friendly with his [human? 1:35:55.1] I guess to an extent. And I felt like I was like an imposition, or an issue or a problem this entire time. And I just didn't feel like she really didn't like me afterwards.

1:36:12.9

Lisa:

Even though Minister Reynolds didn't offer you a job after the election, plenty of other ministers did, who offered you work?

1:36:21.3

Brittany:

I was offered a job in Minister Cash's office, Minister Cormann's office and Minister Robert's office, yeah.

1:36:28.1

Lisa:

Were you surprised you got so many offers?

1:36:30.4

Brittany:

Yeah, I was. I was fretting about whether I'd get even one, so to get three was pretty overwhelming.

1:36:36.7

Lisa:

And you took a job with Minister Cash, how did she find out about the assault?

1:36:41.5

Brittany:

So she didn't know for a really long time. So she didn't know until October of 2019.

1:36:50.1

Lisa:

So about six months after the assault?

1:36:52.3

Brittany:

Yeah. And she found out because Minister Reynolds called my new sort of Office Manager about a journalist enquired about an assault in Minister Reynolds office. And so, she decided that it was information that my current boss needed to know, and she called him. And that's how they found out.

1:37:20.1

Lisa:

How would a journalist find out that a sexual assault had taken place in Linda Reynolds' office?

1:37:24.3

Brittany:

I have no idea, honestly. There's, some people think that maybe the AFP maybe tipped them off. Or maybe other people in the security kind of got frustrated. I don't really know. But it was a really small circle, like I barely had told my family at that point. They knew an incident had happened, they knew that I'd been sort of, they knew I'd been assaulted. But they didn't know the ins and outs and the complications of it all. So it was a really small circle of people.

1:37:57.3

Lisa:

Seems to be a growing number of people within Parliament House who knew about it thought.

1:38:01.9

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah. naturally it's sort of like a strange little, I'm going to use the bubble analogy, it's like a bubble and it's very gossipy. And so, people that I hadn't told, knew about it and would sometimes broach it with me and that was obviously distressing.

1:38:19.7

Lisa:

What did they say they knew?

1:38:21.2

Brittany:

They said that they knew that I'd been sort of assaulted and that don't worry, people won't find out, like the media will never know and that was sort of seen as being supportive or placating me. Like oh, don't worry, it's fine, it will never get out. And that was the way it was always framed to me. Like it was my dirty secret. And I had never spoken about it with people because I was made to feel like I had to be silent on it.

1:38:49.1

Brittany:

I never let my friends know, I never really let my family know. Because it was this weird, it's this culture of silence. And it felt like it was mine. It was my issue.

1:39:00.0

Lisa:

So it wasn't that people within this Canberra bubble, inside Parliament House, wanted to know if you were ok, they wanted to assure you that your dirty little secret wasn't going to get out?

1:39:10.4

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah.

1:39:13.4

Lisa:

You know that's not healthy?

1:39:14.4

Brittany:

No, no.

1:39:15.5

Lisa:

You know that's not normal, you know that's not the way that real life works?

1:39:19.0

Brittany:

Yeah, it's just hard when like, this is kind of your primary sort of working experience, you sort of accept these things as, maybe this is just life, maybe this is just working. So I didn't, I don't really have another scope of vision to compare it to. But yeah, no I understand that this is strange.

1:39:37.7

Lisa:

So it wasn't their concern, was how you were dealing with this and whether this was going to end up as a police matter, it was how this would affect you professionally within Parliament House?

1:39:51.5

Brittany:

Yeah, very much so.

1:40:00.2

Lisa:

So once Minister Cash knew the detail of what had happened, did she or anyone in the office suggest that this should return to being a criminal investigation?

1:40:13.0

Brittany:

No, no at that point it was squashing the story. It immediately became about squashing the story. Who was the leak, how do we stop it, it was a week before estimates, senate estimates. And so, that was the primary focus. There was no discussion about anything else.

1:40:32.8

Lisa:

Was there a concern at that point that you were going to speak to the press?

1:40:36.2

Brittany:

I think primarily they thought I was the person who had told people about it. That I'd gone to the Canberra Times, sorry, the outlet, or the journalist about, about the incident.

1:40:51.7

Lisa:

So you were feeling pressure that they were looking sideways at you –

1:40:56.2

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:40:56.0

Lisa:

Thinking that you were going to possibly let the party down?

1:40:59.5

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:41:01.0

Lisa:

And talk about an alleged rape?

1:41:03.3

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:41:07.4

Lisa:

Tell me about the staffer who suggested it would be wise for you not to talk about this.

1:41:15.6

Brittany:

She's actually very nice. It's shocking. It's just, she sort of likened it to the Rochelle Miller Four Corners story and said that you know, we could always tell that she was going to talk, but we know you never will. That it's, don't worry we just know that you would never talk about it. And I don't think it was coming from a bad place, but it reinforced that idea that somehow this was my problem, my secret, my fault.

1:41:45.3

Brittany:

And it was coming all the time, every time it would be raised or any time that there would be an issue related to the, sort of going back to the, to the assault. It was always the onus was, this was

always my issue. My fault, I was brining it into this office. It was, now I'm tarnishing anther office. And so it was this reinforcement of this idea that somehow this thing that had happened to me was sort of, I was bringing it in.

1:42:10.7

Lisa:

So was the suggestion, if you want to survive in this place, you keep your mouth shut?

1:42:14.7

Brittany:

Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

1:42:19.2

Lisa:

So how open were you with Minister Cash about the difficulty that you had dealing with what happened to you?

1:42:27.9

Brittany:

I didn't go in depth sort of about how I felt about how the issue was handled. I told her all about the assault. I told her about sort of the ins and outs of what had happened that night. But I didn't tell her how I felt about how the party handled it. I just, I knew that you know, it's, these people will talk and it's poor form if I have, I state openly kind of how I felt about it, I just knew it would get back to them so I figured I didn't need to give her that part.

1:43:01.5

Lisa:

Did you at any point get the impression that she was concerned you might speak to the press?

1:43:09.6

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah. I think every time sort of a similar sort of story came out or any time sort of anything even, anytime I even took extended leave. There was always this sort of hypersensitivity of checking in on Brittany. And this was a systematic thing that would happen all the time. Anytime I'd sort of take a day off, everyone would check in. And it wasn't in a concerned tone.

1:43:34.4

Brittany:

Because as evidenced by minister's offices, they're not broadly concerned about their staff. So it was strange and it was weird that I was getting all these strange check ins from people every time a Liberal sort of woman issue story would pop up.

1:43:50.9

Lisa:

Minister Cash was in fact asked by the press in the middle of 2019, there were other, sorry. Minister Cash was actually asked by a number our journalists in the middle of 2019 about other allegations, staffers being assaulted. And she said those women should report whatever happened to the appropriate authorities. You did that –

1:44:18.7

Brittany:
Yeah.

1:44:18.7

Lisa:
And it go you nowhere?

1:44:20.1

Brittany:
Yeah, I was actually down the hall from her, when she'd said that, I was in the press gallery at the time. And yeah, it was hard to hear that because I knew it fundamentally wasn't true. I knew that you know, even if you go down the right pathway, they're not going to, the party isn't willing to help or support you.

1:44:43.3

Lisa:
And there's processes in place that will in fact block you.

1:44:47.0

Brittany:
Yeah, they systematically discourage you from it on the basis of your career.

1:44:52.8

Lisa:
Did Minister Cash have any advice for you on how to deal with the trauma that you were going through?

1:45:01.1

Brittany:
Not really, I mean, she would check in when I would take days off. And I, originally, I really, I thought that she sort of was doing it out of a nice place. And I guess over time I realised, oh maybe it's not as wholesome as I kind of genuinely thought. But no, it was never really, never any guidance or assistance or, it was more just sort of kind words and if I took a day off then I'd get a check in message but that was about it.

1:45:35.1

Lisa:
When we spoke the other day, you said something about her saying, you've just got to suck it up, or you've just got to deal with it.

1:45:41.3

Brittany:
Yeah. Yeah, yeah of course.

1:45:45.4

Lisa:

Did Minister Cash have any words of advice on how you should deal with the trauma that you were going through?

1:45:50.9

Brittany:

Yeah, I was having difficulties actually coming through the entrance at Parliament House. It was that same entrance where the incident had happened and so I felt every time I walked through it, I'd get quite panicky and I'd sort of, said that I was having difficulties just coming in. And at that point she was like, well you're just going to have to sort of suck it up essentially.

1:46:09.7

Brittany:

And it was, it's that same idea of, you deal with it or you leave. And it was, it was the exact same rhetoric that I'd gotten before. It was like, it was played back on a tape essentially. It was the exact same thing, you deal with it or you leave. It was my issue.

1:46:29.4

Lisa:

This was the Minister for Women?

1:46:32.2

Brittany:

Yeah, former, yeah.

1:46:36.2

Lisa:

So this is the former Minister for Women?

1:46:38.4

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:47:09.6

Lisa:

So, apart from Fiona Brown, has anyone else from the Prime Minister's office been in touch with you over the assault?

1:47:17.5

Brittany:

Yeah, so I've had Yaron Finkelstein sort of, broadly in proximity around it. During the actual week after the event, we'd had sort of his Chief of Staff and the Chief of Staff's Assistant in and out of the office and everyone thought that that was strange as well.

1:47:36.2

Lisa:

Who is Yaron Finkelstein?

1:47:37.6

Brittany:

He is the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister I think is his official title. But essentially, he just like the fixer, he fixes problems. Not just people but other issues but he's the fixer.

1:47:54.6

Lisa:

So when Yaron Finkelstein turns up, if he's a fixer, were you a problem?

1:48:00.4

Brittany:

Yeah, yeah. Yep I'd known that the entire time.

1:48:07.9

Lisa:

How did he fix your problem do you think?

1:48:13.8

Brittany:

I think he was obviously advising Fiona how to handle my situation. They never outright said no, they never, it was always this, they just made it difficult and they just made it clear that I wouldn't have a job. And so it was this sort of systematic process over about four weeks of, of making it clear without ever having to say it, that this was my job. My job was on the line. And I think he was part of that process. Sort of advising, sort of Fiona about how to handle me.

1:48:55.5

Lisa:

So your job was on the line, why?

1:49:03.2

Brittany:

Because I'd caused an issue. Because I had caused damage, political damage, I guess. And you know, my fundamental job as a media advisor I guess, is to make the government look good. It's like the antithesis of what I'm employed to do. And so I think that was broadly what was sort of conveyed to me. But yeah, this was, this was my job.

1:49:28.2

Lisa:

As the Prime Minister's problem fixer, do you think he had any idea that you couldn't get access to the CCTV?

1:49:38.5

Brittany:

I'm, I assume so. I mean, I don't think that's a decision that Fiona would make out of hand by herself.

1:49:48.0

Lisa:

Do you think as the Prime Minister's fixer, Yaron Finkelstein would have made sure that he saw the CCTV?

1:49:54.8

Brittany:

I assume so, he's pretty hands on with everything.

1:49:58.9

Lisa:

So he has to know all the details of every problem –

1:50:02.7

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:50:02.7

Lisa:

That arises in order to be able to fix it.

1:50:04.9

Brittany:

Absolutely.

1:50:10.3

Lisa:

Did you hear from Yaron Finkelstein after that initial period?

1:50:15.0

Brittany:

I did, I did. It was just like a strange sort of check in essentially. But those happened to me kind of pretty regularly.

1:50:23.4

Lisa:

What was the timing of that check in?

1:50:26.8

Brittany:

There was some sort of story about, I forget whose story, but it was another sort of Liberal women issues, Four Corners potentially.

1:50:36.4

Lisa:

The Canberra bubble story on Four Corners?

1:50:38.3

Brittany:

Yeah that's correct.

1:50:38.5

Lisa:
So he called you when?

1:50:42.0

Brittany:
I'd taken a week off following that story. I'd been unwell and he called me in the middle of that week.

1:50:46.9

Lisa:
And what did he say?

1:50:48.9

Brittany:
Just checking in.

1:50:51.4

Lisa:
Is it normal for a junior staffer to get a call from the Prime Minister's chief fixer?

1:50:56.7

Brittany:
No, no it's not normal.

1:50:59.7

Lisa:
What did you think that phone call was about?

1:51:02.3

Brittany:
I understood it to be about my assault, I think –

1:51:10.9

Lisa:
Did he mention the assault at all?

1:51:12.3

Brittany:
No, no. No one talks about it, no one ever explicitly discusses it. I'm the only person who will ever even call it an incident or an assault. No one will ever even name it.

1:51:24.4

Lisa:
How did you feel getting that call?

1:51:29.5

Brittany:

Just confused. I'd already gotten a couple of sort of check ins at that point from Minister Cash and I genuinely was, wasn't well. And so it just sort of reinforced this thing that I always knew was that they viewed me as a ticking timebomb. Or an issue, or something that was poorly managed. Or I think they always fundamentally knew there was something wrong that had happened here.

1:51:52.6

Brittany:

And so, I think it was just this sort of following up process, just making sure this hadn't triggered something or I wasn't a part of it or yeah.

1:52:04.1

Lisa:

How many people in Parliament House including all the security guards and within the Liberal Party, know about what happened to you?

1:52:18.1

Brittany:

At least, sort of twenty-five or so people probably. Maybe more that haven't directly addressed it with me. But at least twenty-five that I know of.

1:52:29.3

Lisa:

Canberra's a pretty gossipy place.

1:52:31.0

Brittany:

Yeah.

1:52:36.2

Lisa:

How does it make you feel knowing how many people in Parliament House know about what happened to you? From security guards to the internal police to senior staffers, to cabinet ministers. They not only know your story but have also possibly seen this footage of you. On that Saturday night. That you yourself cannot access.

1:53:00.2

Brittany:

You know, it's, it hurts a lot. It's hard because I used to idolise people, like Julie Bishop and all these women that I kind of just wanted to be just like. I wanted a career in this. I wanted this to be my life and I so whole heartedly believed and supported and so to have them sort of, systematically shut you out and not support you in a time when you really are vulnerable, and you need it. It's this betrayal and it hurts. Yeah, it feels like a betrayal.

1:53:46.4

Lisa:

Did you watch the Four Corner's, did you watch the Four Corner's bubble story?

1:53:53.7

Brittany:
Yeah, of course.

1:53:55.0

Lisa:
How was it for you watching it?

1:53:57.6

Brittany:
Strange, really strange. I only just missed Rochelle Miller in my office by a very short period. We only just missed each other. And so, it was –

1:54:32.8

Lisa:
So did you watch the Four Corner's Canberra bubble story?

1:54:36.6

Brittany:
I did.

1:54:37.3

Lisa:
How was that for you?

1:54:38.6

Brittany:
It was strange. I'd only just missed Rochelle Miller. Our sort of, we didn't quite crossover, but she had been in Minister Cash's office at the end of sort of her tenure. And I had, obviously was working when the Four Corner's story broke. And I was working with people who used to work with her. And so, hearing their commentary about her personally, and the story and, it was really difficult for me because not everyone in that office knew about what had happened to me.

1:55:14.5

Brittany:
So some people took sort of, weren't as cautious about what they were saying about the Four Corner's story to me as others were. And yeah, it was this sort of, all the feedback was that she wasn't a good staffer, that she you know, just wasn't coping at Parliament. And there was all this negative reinforcement about her. And so, I just, it hit me particularly hard because this was my story essentially in some way or another.

1:55:44.8

Brittany:
Yeah and so, just hearing it and hearing how they viewed it, it was, it was difficult, it was painful.

1:55:54.3

Lisa:
So the judgement was on the women in those stories, it wasn't on the behaviour of the politicians involved in those stories?

1:56:02.2

Brittany:

No, no not at all. It was always about sort of the credibility of the women and why they were coming forward. And what they were getting out of it and that she wasn't a very good staffer and she was rejected by [Star? 1:56:13.9] Chamber and that's why she was mad. And so that was the commentary that was just flying around sort of the building.

1:56:20.1

Brittany:

And I'd lived that and I'd experienced sort of my own iteration of her story and I just felt like it was so wrong and so gross and just I was, sort of an anger I never quite sort of managed to shake. I just was, I think it vile the way she was treated. And I think it was horrible the way that they talked about her afterwards.

1:56:43.8

Lisa:

Did you recognise all of the scenarios that you saw play out on that episode of Four Corners?

1:56:48.4

Brittany:

Oh absolutely, it's the same story over and over. It's the same issues, it's the same power structures, it's the same silencing. And it's the same sort of silo effect of, where do you go when things go wrong.

1:57:01.2

Lisa:

Is Parliament House a safe place for women to work?

1:57:05.2

Brittany:

Honestly, that's the only reason why I'm even here today. I just, I needed to internally know that you know, I knew that I couldn't, I just couldn't feel right within myself if I didn't say something. Because I don't know that it's not an ok place for another person. And I just, I barely feel like I made it out of this. I'd just hate for someone else to have to go through it too if I didn't say something.

1:57:36.3

Lisa:

When you couldn't get the CCTV footage, you tried other ways to gather evidence that you would be able to take to the police. What did you do?

[Interruption 1:57:57.5]

1:58:18.7

Lisa:

More recently, to possibly take these allegations of rape further, you started taking some screenshots of some WhatsApp messages –

1:58:27.7

Brittany:
I did.

1:58:28.8

Lisa:
Interactions you had with people who knew what happened. What happened to those messages and those screenshots?

1:58:34.5

Brittany:
I lost them all. I don't exactly sort of know what happened but yeah, my WhatsApp sort of crashed and even though I've swapped handsets before, it lost all of my previous sort of memory.

1:58:53.2

Lisa:
Your phone, what inexplicably died?

1:58:56.5

Brittany:
Yeah, yeah it's gone. So, and I don't know what to chalk that up to personally. But it's just the timing of it and the fact that I've lost all these conversations with these senior people about specifically the assault. I find it strange.

1:59:12.9

Lisa:
Was this a phone that was yours? Did you own this phone?

1:59:16.3

Brittany:
Yeah, this was my phone.

1:59:18.1

Lisa:
Did anyone in the office that you were working in, have access to that phone?

1:59:23.4

Brittany:
No, no they shouldn't have, I mean they all, all of our parliamentary devices have data, they've got like their own apps and stuff installed so that they've got the ability to access pretty much anything on it. And it had that in it. But beyond that, they shouldn't have had access I guess to anything else.

1:59:51.6

Lisa:
So, what's happened to the man that you say raped you, on Minister Reynolds' couch?

1:59:57.2

Brittany:

He's fine, he's, he's working in, can I say where broadly? Sydney?

2:00:05.4

Lisa:

Yeah.

2:00:07.1

Brittany:

Yeah, he's fine, he's working in Sydney, he's got a good job. Everyone, people don't know why he left, and I don't think he's been, I don't think he's suffered any consequences for it at all. I think he just kind of got to keep going.

2:00:26.3 PART TWO ENDS