

31-July-2026

Statement from Mahmood Fazal, Former ABC Reporter

I reject the allegations put to me and I will not speculate about the motivations of a source after they've been outed.

I note that the allegation that a source was paid to fabricate their story has already been retracted. I ask that any further reporting accurately reflects that fact.

The suggestion that I needed this story to "cement" my position at the ABC is false. At the time I was already contracted by the ABC on a permanent ongoing basis.

The allegation that I told anyone my wife was pregnant in order to encourage participation in the program is false. My wife was not pregnant at the time.

Both programs were subject to the ABC's established editorial processes, including editorial review, fact-checking and legal review, based on the information available at the time of publication. Both programs were subject to extensive editorial, fact-checking and legal review involving multiple senior editorial staff.

As a matter of longstanding journalistic practice, I do not comment on specific confidential sources or the circumstances in which anonymity is granted. Decisions regarding anonymity are made carefully and only after editorial consideration, taking into account the public interest, the access a source may provide and the value of their contribution to the reporting.

During the research and reporting of *Cocaine Nation*, we spoke to and assessed numerous potential sources. There was no shortage of sources to film. Contributors were selected because they offered diverse experiences and perspectives, not because we were seeking someone to "play a role" or because we lacked other options.

I reject the suggestion that I fabricated, staged or knowingly published information that I believed to be false. I stand by the integrity of my reporting and the editorial processes that underpinned both programs.