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STATEMENT OF WITNESS

(Criminal Justice Act 1967, ss 2,9/M.C. Rules, 1968, r.58)

Statement of : Jakob Augstein

Age of witness (if over 18 enter 'over 18') : Over 18

Occupation of witness : Journalist

This statement, consisting of 5 pages signed by me, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signed Jakob Augstein Dated the Feb. 12th 2020  
Signature witnessed by Anne Dohlestein

I have been working as a journalist since 1992. I have been with the daily Süddeutsche Zeitung and the weekly Die Zeit. For several years I have been regular contributor and columnist for Der Spiegel and Spiegel Online. Currently I am publisher and editor in chief of the german weekly Der Freitag.

I have been asked to provide my recollection of a number of events in 2011 concerning Julian Assange.

An article outlining these events published at the time, on August 25th 2011, appeared in Der Freitag, a weekly newspaper published in Germany of which I am and was at the time Publisher and Editor. The article detailed and commented upon a constellation of circumstances involving the Australian national Julian Assange (and the organisation WikiLeaks) and a German national Daniel Domscheit-Berg (and an organisation Open

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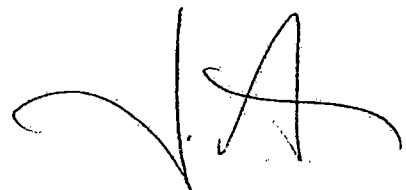
Leaks). It described information of which Der Freitag had become aware and subsequent interactions prior to the publication of the article, including interaction on my part with Julian Assange.

I confirm that that the information I and Der Freitag were aware of at the time was correctly reflected in the article of August 25th 2011. We did not identify the original source for the information that led to our investigation but confirm we were satisfied that what we were being informed of was an authentic account.

The article describes a "leak at WikiLeaks". The question drawn to our attention had been the security of the platforms upon which data previously considered to be disclosable only via a closely guarded password, had become vulnerable. As a result of the information we received, and the investigation we thereafter conducted, we discovered that an obscure file on the internet containing US State Department documents that had come into the hands of WikiLeaks in the previous year was exposed in its unedited form to potentially universal access since, as Freitag reported, "The password required to decrypt the file can also be researched via the internet". The article pointed out that the separate password was available and could be identified by "those who know the subject". The further comment by the article's author was "This is exactly what should have been prevented; an uncontrolled opening of highly sensitive data". The background having been that "WikiLeaks had co-operated with major international media in the publication of the Embassy cables last year. Spiegel, the Guardian and the New York Times were supposed to guarantee that no one would play fast and loose with the sensitive information. So far, only filtered data sets had been published, in which references to persons whose life and limb could be in danger are missing."

In commenting that this leak at WikiLeaks had rendered this backup obsolete, we outlined the previous history – that the answer to the question of responsibility lay "In the thicket of WikiLeaks past" since in the autumn of 2010 a named individual, the German

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national whose name is cited above, Daniel Domscheit-Berg amongst others left the whistleblower platform and "In their luggage they take the electronic mailbox with all its contents" which we described as "A treasure trove of data of immense value for any disclosure platform – potentially of course for Open Leaks."

We summarised the history we understood, of serious disagreements, attempts and/or offers to have the data returned to WikiLeaks, the intervention of a "mediator" and the provision to that individual of a backup copy of the WikiLeaks file server, shortly after which, "This data was found on the internet for download". The article contains a description of a refusal by Daniel Domscheit-Berg to lawyers acting for Assange to hand back the materials again.

The above summarises the background and circumstances of which I and colleagues had been made aware and which we considered appropriate to outline for public consideration. I believe it to have been the knowledge, before the publication date, of our intended publication of the article, that led to a telephone call to me from Julian Assange - in the week preceding August 25th 2011. I confirm the account in the article is correct; that the purpose of the telephone call from Mr Assange was as a result of what he had learned was the imminent publication in Der Freitag and as the article described, "The reason for the call and its emphasis by Assange was that he "feared for the safety of informants"". I in turn, as was reported, assured Assange that Der Freitag would not publish any information that could be dangerous to American informants and asked him to comment publicly on the events described in the article, which invitation he declined,

It was as a result of that exchange the comment was made in the article "The concern of the WikiLeaks boss was not entirely unjustified" and in the phrasing in the sentence that follows, relating to Der Freitag's discovery of the existence of the file and of the existence of the password required to decrypt the file.

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(C.J. Act, 1967 s.9; M.C. Act 1980, s.102, M.C. Rules, 1981, r.70)

Signed Jakob Augstein

Signature witnessed by Anne Ballestrem

Signed J.A.

Witnessed by A Ballestrem

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