

Unclassified proof

MOD FORM 284 (UNLINED)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Statement of Witness

C J Act 1967 ss 2 & 9; M C Rules 1968 R 58

NAME Thomas Glanmor HUGHES
ADDRESS HM Naval Base, Devonport, Plymouth
Police
TEL. No. (if any) OCCUPATION Officer DATE OF BIRTH Over 21
RECORDED AT MOD LONDON BY SELF

This statement (consisting of 12 pages each 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.

DATE August 1984 SIGNED M.G. HUGHES

I am a Detective Chief Inspector in the Ministry of Defence Police stationed at HM Naval Base Devonport Plymouth. On Wednesday 1 August 1984 I attended at the offices of the Ministry of Defence Whitehall London, where I took possession of the following documents from Mr. Arthur RUCKER:

- a. Draft letter consisting of two pages addressed to Tam DALYELL MP (Exhibit 1).
- b. Loose Minutes consisting of three pages - subject "House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee - South Atlantic ROE" signed on last page "J.M. LEGGE Head of DS11." (Exhibit 2).
- c. Plain white envelope addressed to Tam DALYELL MP House of Commons, London SW1 (Exhibit 3).

On Friday 3 August 1984, I handed these documents to Mr. Paul BOARD, Head of Questioned Documents Division, Laboratory of the Government Chemist, Cornwall House, London.

Sgd T.G. HUGHES

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

On Wednesday, 8 August 1984 in the presence of Detective Inspector Robert BROOME, I saw Mr. Clive Sheridan PONTING in his capacity as Head of Defence Secretariat 5. I told him the nature of my enquiries and explained that it would be necessary to interview members of his staff. I produced to him the two documents, EXHIBITS 1 and 2, and said it would be necessary to take possession of the photocopying machine in the Registry of DS5.

On Thursday 9 August 1984, with Detective Inspector BROOME, I examined various files from DS5 and DS11, Main Building, Ministry of Defence, Whitehall. From a "float" file in the office of the Personal Assistant to the Head of DS5 I removed a Minute (Ref D/DS/5/9/9/46/2-85) dated 9 May 1984, on the subject "BELGRANO", which was marked "PA Float" and bore the enclosure reference E34. Attached to this minute was a draft letter to Tam DALYELL MP, marked E32, and a draft letter from P/S Secretary of State to No 10 marked E33. (Exhibit 4) I took possession of this Minute.

In another DS5 main file we found a Loose Minute originating from DS11 (Reference D/DS11/10/6/7) on the subject of "House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee: South Atlantic ROE". I noted that this document had been date stamped as received by the Head of DS5 on 9 July 1984, and initiated by him on that date. It also bore a stamp on the top right hand corner to the effect that it had not been received in DS5b until 16 July 1984.

Signed _____

T.G. HUGHES

Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Continuation of statement of Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

I took possession of this document (Exhibit 5). I later handed these documents (Exhibits 4 and 5) to Detective Constable Norman TUCKER.

At 2.53 pm Friday 10 August 1984, I again interviewed Mr Clive Sheridan PONTING in the presence of Detective Inspector BROOME in the Main Building, Ministry of Defence, Whitehall. The following conversation took place:

DCI HUGHES: We saw you on Wednesday Mr. Ponting and our enquiries have progressed successfully since then. I want you to listen carefully to what I have to say. I have good reasons to suspect that you are involved in passing Confidential documents to Tam DALYELL MP. I showed you the documents on Wednesday. For that reason I am going to caution you. CAUTIONED.

PONTING: Good God, you don't suspect me.

DCI HUGHES: I will explain to you. In the first place we are in possession of the documents sent to the MP. You have known this since Wednesday. (Detective Inspector BROOME then produced Exhibits 1 - 3). You will note that both documents are photocopies and I can tell you that they were copied on a "KALLE/INFOTEC 8036 machine. You have an 8036 in your department and you will recall that I told you we were taking it away for examination.

PONTING: Yes you told me about it.

T.G. HUGHES

Signed _____ Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

DCI HUGHES: Will you now look at the document (Exhibit 1),
which is a draft of a letter addressed to Tam DALYELL MP

PONTING: Yes I drafted it.

DCI HUGHES: May I now show you the outline of a punch mark
on the top left hand corner. Do you see that the outline
of the punch hole dissects the top of the letter "T"
in Tam.

PONTING: Yes I see that.

DCI HUGHES: Now then Mr. Ponting I can tell you we have
had to search far and wide to find the original draft
which has this peculiarity. You can take it from me
that we have checked all the other files and there is
only one that corresponds. I will now show it to you.
(DI BROOME produced Exhibit 4). You see that it is
marked on the right hand side E32. The covering minute
is marked "PA Float - E34".

PONTING: Yes I see.

DCI HUGHES: Where did that file come from Mr. Ponting?

PONTING: I assume from the writing - my PA's Float file.

DCI HUGHES: To which only you and your PA, Mrs. RITCHIE
have access.

PONTING: Generally speaking - Yes.

DI BROOME: Do you recognise Mrs. RITCHIE's writing?

PONTING: Yes, I think that's Chris's writing.

DCI HUGHES: Let us now turn our attention to the second
document that was sent to Tam DALYELL (DI BROOME then
T.G. HUGHES

Signed _____

Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmoir HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

produced Exhibit 2). This is on the subject of "House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee - South Atlantic: ROE" and is a DS11 minute from which the top and bottom of page 1 have been cut away. Similarly, the top and bottom of pages 2 and 3 have been cut off but the Confidential stamp remains on the head of these pages. Are you familiar with this document?

PONTING: Yes, Michael LEGGE did that.

DCI HUGHES: The top of page 1 has been cut away and I would have thought that this is obviously to make it more difficult to trace the source.

PONTING: Yes, it could be.

DCI HUGHES: The important point is that when we were going through the DS5 files we found this one. (DI BROOME produced Exhibit 5). You can plainly see there the date stamp - "Received by the Head of DS5 on 9 July 1984". If you look at the top of the sheet you will see that it was not received in DS5b Registry until 16 July 1984.

PONTING: Yes.

DCI HUGHES: It is significant Mr. PONTING that the document received by Tam DALYELL MP is post marked "Paddington 16 July 1984" (DI BROOME produced Exhibit 3).

PONTING: Yes, I see that.

DCI HUGHES: That indicates to me Mr. PONTING clearly that you had possession of that file in the period immediately

Signed T.G. HUGHES Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

before it was copied and sent to the MP.

PONTING: Yes, I see.

DCI HUGHES: Will you next look at the distribution list on the minute (DI BROOME then indicated to the title "Head of DS5 on Exhibit 5). Are those your initials Mr. PONTING?

PONTING: Yes.

DCI HUGHES: What date had you put there?

PONTING: 9 July

DCI HUGHES: We have talked about two documents and I have also mentioned that we have taken possession of your copying machine. The results of expert examination confirms that both documents were copied on the 8036 in your department. Further, this one (Exhibit 1) was copied on that machine from this one (Exhibit 4) and this document (Exhibit 2) was in all probability copied from this one (Exhibit 5). I have tried to explain the significance of the documents to you and I must say it points directly to you being responsible.

PONTING: (Delayed for nearly two minutes) I can see gentlemen there is a strong circumstantial case against me but honestly I did not do it.

DCI HUGHES: Who did it then Mr. PONTING?

PONTING: Well, the DS11 document was discussed with my son. I am trying to remember back what views they were putting forward. My working pattern is not to

Signed _____

T.G. HUGHES

Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

keep papers in the tray. I discussed this with Margaret and Nick. I went upstairs and gave it to her. I am sure of this. I think so. I think we had a chat. I must have. I took it by hand. Yes that's it.

I assume the date stamp in the Registry was put on later
DI BROOME: I find you rather difficult to follow Mr.

PONTING. I have made a point of studying your handling of papers and in most instances documents are received in your department and dealt with the same day or the next day at the latest.

PONTING: Yes my normal method of working is in and out the same day. I may have taken this with me.

DCI HUGHES: Are you talking about the DS11 minute by Mr. LEGGE?

PONTING: Yes - my basic principle - don't leave papers about.

DI BROOME: Who else handled the DS11 minute?

PONTING: My PA - Chris.

DI BROOME: Let's summarise this then. You say that **Margaret ALDRED, Nick DARMS** and your PA Chris RITCHIE might have had it copied.

PONTING: I don't know. It may have been somebody upstairs before it was put away and filed.

DI BROOME: Come Mr. PONTING, are you saying that an important document like this could have been left about in the offices upstairs on the 8th floor for any

T.G. HUGHES

Signed _____

Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

Tom, Dick or Harry to copy at will.

PONTING: Well I suppose it could have happened.

DCI HUGHES: To be more specific Mr. PONTING you named your Personal Assistant, your Principal and your HEO. Are you blaming one of them?

PONTING: No, of course not. I have no grounds.

DCI HUGHES: Isn't it a fact that the DS11 file was clearly in your possession for much longer than usual and it shows as clear as daylight that it was not passed to Margaret ALDRED until 16 July. Look yourself at the initials "MA" and the date put on by the registry clerk.

PONTING: No reply.

DCI HUGHES: Let me now return to the place where Exhibit 4 was found - your PA's Float file. Who had the opportunity of copying documents from that file. Can you seriously tell me that you can blame Margaret ALDRED or Nick DARMS for that.

PONTING: No, I suppose it was either Chris or myself.

DCI HUGHES: I can tell you this Mr. PONTING, I have interviewed that young girl and I would put my pension and a bit more beside on the fact that she didn't do it.

PONTING: Well, working copies of that document might have been made.

DI BROOME: Perhaps, but you see there is a copy of this file already in the registry. Mr. HUGHES has already pointed out to you the punch hole on the main file

Signed T.G. HUGHES Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Continuation of statement of Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

does not correspond with the one we showed you.

(Exhibit 1).

PONTING: I can see the conclusion; the circumstantial evidence is strong, I can't deny that.

DCI HUGHES: You were good enough to tell me on Wednesday about your change of faith. Has this affected you in any way?

PONTING: No it hasn't changed my view about the BELGRANO business - if that's what you mean. I made my point of view clear in my advice to the Minister. This country has nothing to hide, so why hide it. Most of the information is unclassified and the whole thing has been blown up out of all proportion.

DI BROOME: I am pleased to hear you say that. When your advice was turned down did you feel strongly enough about it to pass this information to DALYELL.

PONTING: That is not something I would do. I cannot see what there is in these documents of consequence. If I was going to send something, I would obviously have chosen something far better than that.

DI BROOME: Such as what?

PONTING: There was a major review done in May for the Secretary of State. We all came in on a Sunday and got the information on the ship together. This file was classified "TOP SECRET". If I were sending something that is what I would choose. Its hypothetical of course

Signed T.G. HUGHES Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Continuation of statement of Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

DCI HUGHES: You haven't really answered my question about your change of faith. Isn't it also true that you have applied to leave the Ministry of Defence and is this because of your change of faith?

PONTING: I am not good at putting this sort of thing in words really. I don't want to be specific. It goes back to the 1970s. I have been reading a lot from an 18th century German philosopher. I just made up my mind when I was staying at Weston-Super-Mare that I didn't want to spend the next 20 years in MOD. I discussed it with my wife; very personal but that's the way I feel.

DCI HUGHES: You are not happy in your job are you?

PONTING: Well, the pay is very good, but I pay about 50 per cent of it in tax and there we are. I am not particularly ambitious. I have to work long hours sometimes in extremis. Yes I have applied for another job.

DCI HUGHES: I have come to the point Mr. PONTING where I would like to summarise. You acknowledge that the circumstantial evidence against you is strong.

PONTING: Yes I do.

DCI HUGHES: Have you understood my explanation of the documents and their significance?

PONTING: Yes you have been most fair.

DCI HUGHES: Thank you; but I must tell you that your explanation about the DS11 document is totally

Signed

T.G. HUGHES

Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

Continuation of statement of _____

unconvincing. To put it bluntly you were thrashing about like a fish out of water and almost incoherent. The implication from your replies is that a member of your staff may be responsible for sending these documents. Is that what you want me to understand?

∟No reply.∟

DCI HUGHES: Can I put it to you like this. For reasons best known to yourself you passed these documents to the MP. So far as I know it may be a point of conscience or principle. You may be a martyr for a cause - I don't know. Do martyrs lie Mr. PONTING?

∟No reply.∟

DCI HUGHES: I think you have something you want to say to me Mr. PONTING.

PONTING: Yes; Can I first see my wife.

DI BROOME then made certain arrangements and Mr. PONTING conferred privately with his wife. He later left my presence after making a request to see senior management. PONTING returned at 5.55 pm when he again conferred briefly with Mrs. PONTING. She then left the room and the following conversation then took place in the presence and hearing of DI BROOME.

DCI HUGHES: You have had the facilities you wanted Mr. PONTING. Is there anything else you want?

PONTING: No thank you Mr. HUGHES. You have been most kind.

T.G. HUGHES

Signed _____

Signature witnessed by _____

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Continuation of statement of Thomas Glanmor HUGHES

DCI HUGHES: I propose to continue with the interview and remind you of two things. The first is that my investigation concerns a criminal offence and I have cautioned you. The caution still applies Mr PONTING.

PONTING: I understand fully. I used to work in DS15.

DCI HUGHES: The second thing is this. I cannot make any promises to you and I cannot be bound by any undertaking or agreement which might have been arrived at outside this room. If you worked in DS15 I think you appreciate that in the final analysis the decision to prosecute or otherwise will be made by the Attorney General.

PONTING: Yes of course. I have already been advised.

Any confession I make is unconditional.

DCI HUGHES: Do you wish to make a statement?

PONTING: Yes.

DCI HUGHES: You may write it yourself or I can write it for you.

PONTING: No you write it please.

At 6.05 pm I commenced a statement at PONTING's dictation which was completed at 6.15 pm. I now produce the statement (Exhibit 6).

DCI HUGHES: Further enquiries will be made and you will be seen at a later date.

T.G. HUGHES

Signed _____

Signature witnessed by _____