

Rui Pinto Hacker or Whistleblower?

An ethical analysis

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May 16, 2022

1 Description of the case

Rui Pinto was born in October of 1988 and raised in "Mafamude", a small town in the North of Portugal. Since very early in his life, Pinto was very invested in football, he was especially fanatic for FC Porto, a football club established very close to his home town.

"*Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto*" is where he cultivated his education, where he studied History, and where he enrolled in the Erasmus program to study abroad in Budapest, Hungary.

While being abroad, in 2013, Pinto was involved in several cyber attacks to the *Caledonian Bank* which had the objective of transferring **264** thousand dollars to the *Deutsche Bank* but was ultimately discovered by the authorities and detained before the transaction was actually completed.

With help from his lawyer, Aníbal Pinto, he was saved from a bigger sentence that lead in 2014 to the decision from the "*Departamento de Investigação e Ação Penal do Porto*" to archive the case and settle for an extralegal accord between Rui Pinto and the Bank, out of which resulted a **100** thousand dollar fine.¹

Football Leaks self declares itself as an attempt to expose the real nature of football and its organizations. With these ambitions in mind, <http://football-leaks.livejournal.com> was created on the 29th of September 2015. John was the name behind the publications on the blog, posting thousands of confidential documents, making public several contracts and transactions, which expose multiple tax evasion schemes committed around the world.

Until today, Rui Pinto is the only one that has publicly claimed ownership of the famous website.

The crimes that Rui Pinto is accused of by the Public Ministry of Portugal on September of 2019, after being arrested by the Hungarian authorities (16th of January 2019) and brought back to Portugal to be kept in preventive arrest, are

¹[14-05-2022 14:25] <https://desporto.sapo.pt/geral/artigos/football-leaks-rui-pinto-apresenta-queixa-contra-portugal-na-uniao-europeia>

147 in total, 70 violations of correspondence, 75 of which involving illegitimate access, one of attempted extortion and one of computer sabotage.

Doyen Sports is the football investment fund that accused Football Leaks of persuading several big Clubs like Sporting, which in particular had the contract of his current coach, "Jorge Jesus", and documents related to the renovation and transaction of the peruvian player "André Carrilho" publicly posted on the alleged website.²

The european whistleblowers prize was awarded to Rui Pinto while he was in prison, alongside Julian Assange and Yasmine Motarjemi on the 16th of April 2019.

The Cooperation between Rui Pinto and the authorities from France, Belgium, Netherlands and even with "Polícia Judiciária" from Portugal has been very productive as confirmed by Luís Neves (Director at "Polícia Judiciária") in court, he stated: *"There is that effective collaboration..."* and *"...many disks had not been opened"*.³,

2 Ethical analysis

What is a Whistleblower? A person who reveals information regarding illegal or immoral activities performed by a certain organization. Whistleblowers can use internal or external channels to communicate their information, often putting their safety at risk, due to the possible retaliations that the organization in cause can apply, for example: if the Whistleblower is an employee at the organization their contract often gets immediately terminated.

2.1 Primary Ethical questions

During the whole process, Rui had no professional obligation to abide by, except the moral rules and laws that every citizen is placed under.

By accessing the internal servers/services of Sporting Football Club and obtaining confidential documents, even if done with a good intention in mind, is still breaking the privacy of the referenced Club and all the people that these documents mentioned. Beyond being a privacy breach, we have to question ourselves on how did Rui Pinto actually gain access to these documents, he was not an employee of Sporting, he himself did not have personal access to the system, so he had to, at one point or another, breach the security of their system. By persuading and promising his silence to the Big Football clubs

²[15-05-2022 13:16] <https://observador.pt/2015/12/17/football-leaks-acusada-tentar-extorquir-dinheiro/>

³[15-05-2022 16:19] translated from *"Há essa colaboração efetiva"* and *"muitos discos não tinha sido abertos"* in <https://observador.pt/2021/05/12/diretor-da-pj-confirma-que-rui-pinto-esta-a-colaborar-com-a-justica-e-ja-o-fez-varias-vezes-depois-de-com-ecar-a-ser-julgado/>

regarding their confidential documents in exchange of money he committed a very severe crime of extortion, manipulating the organizations to do what he wanted, holding these documents as a way of making them kneel before his will. Here we have in question the main goal of Rui Pinto, was it to actually create a better Football scene and environment like the website auto-proclaimed or is it for self benefit?

Is it Ethical to "hack" into someone's email, essentially break their privacy, to know if that someone is involved in some sort of bad deed, some sort of corruption or law breaking? Is it right to break a law in order to find who is breaking the law? On the other hand, should privacy laws protect us so much that we have the freedom to hide unlawful acts behind it?

2.2 Ethical knowledge and sensibility, harmed entities

Rui Pinto, at a first glance of the facts does not seem like a super righteous person, even before the case of Football Leaks he was involved in cyber attacks to the *Caledonian Bank*, allegedly trying to transfer a big sum of money, possibly to be used for his own personal needs, serving as a precedent for his extortions surrounding Football Leaks, we can conclude that the betterment of the Football scene was not his only goal. Which again comes to the limelight when the people affected are referenced, countless careers and lives were impacted by the publications of the website.

When he was put in prison and extradited from Hungary back to Portugal, Pinto's life was put on hold.

2.3 Systematic analysis

2.3.1 Professional Standarts

2.3.2 Involved Actors

The involved actors are primarily Rui Pinto and his anonymous team on the Football Leaks website, his lawyer, and on the other side of the stick there is all the impacted organizations, such as FC Sporting, its team coach, Jorge Jesus, Cristiano Ronaldo, which was involved in a leaked case on the website.

2.3.3 Politics and legislation

2.3.4 Normative theories of Ethics

3 Bibliography

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