

'Karl and the Press' [on hacker Karl Koch]

Friends of Karl Koch

Camille Akmut (trans.)
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Karl and the Press

Karl's relationship with the press had two sides ['zwiespaeltig']. On one hand he hoped to gain a certain protection from State security authorities ['Staatschutz'] through publicity, on the other he intended to sell his story. And that at the time when he barely had his daily affairs under control. First he confided in the German Press Agency [dpa] journalist Jochen Sperber out of Hanover. The two had known each other for years. Together they planned to publish a book on the topic of hacking.

1988, likely through Sperber, a contact with NDR ['Norddeutschen Rundfunk', lit. Northern German Radio] was established. Thus Karl ended up coming into contact with the youth radio journalists Axel Lerche and Bernd Scheunemann. Both sensed after a few seconds they had stumbled onto the story of their lifetimes, as for protecting their source this was less of a concern. In their dealings with State security institutions they showed complete inexperience. In addition their technical understanding in matters of computers was very limited. Based on a document ['Fernschreiben'] from the State criminal office Munich which Karl presented to them, they scoured the entirety of relevant authorities in order to ascertain it is real/authentic. In the end, they not only receive confirmation of its authenticity, but also a visit from the Bavarian State police ['LKA'¹]. The rooms of the NDR and the private rooms of Lerche and Scheunemann are searched; although without result, at the latest now the authorities have been alarmed of the situation. Of a prudent handling of an informant there can be no talk. Karls predicament and health condition are being ignored, additionally.

Nonetheless: Lerche and Scheunemann incite him to engage in hacking. This is documented ['belegt'] by the testimony of a witness. Karl lets himself be filmed in the act, and gives interviews. For the "hottest story" of their lives, they promise to give him 10.000 DM, of which he will never see anything.

¹trans. note BKA : bundes-... meaning federal, LKA : landes-... meaning State police.



'NDR journalists Lerche and Scheunemann'

Recordings of the hacking sessions and reconstituted filming ['Videoaufnahmen'] are deposited in a train station box in Hamburg. When they - supposedly - forget to pay the box' fees, the station's police open the locker and the documents land with State Security agencies ['Staatsschutz'].

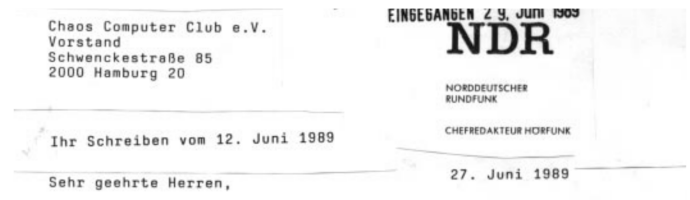
Likely due to so much dilettantism, Panorama - the editors in chief of the NDR in Hamburg take over the case through Wagner, Lehnhardt [sic] and Ammann².



The Panorama directors pursue their own interests, namely that of a tell-all, exposure story ['Enthuellungsstory'] and promise Karl money

²t. note : these should be : Joachim Wagner (Panorama chief), 'Prof. Dr. Matthias Lehnhardt' (Panorama collaborator, whose media production visit card is included in the documentation), and Thomas Ammann (Panorama collab.).

and legal help. Ultimately this turns out so : Wagner establishes contact with State Security ['Verfassungsschutz'] through his friend Christian Lochte, chief of the Hamburg branch, based on the vague premise of no punitive measures in exchange for testimony. The authorities however reserve themselves the right to start an inquiry, such that they now have him as a docile informant in their hand. Promises of help with regard to a suitable therapy place, or expressed understanding or sympathy had only for purpose to make the cooperation easier/more efficient, and to gather through him information about the [hacker] scene.



Answer of the NDR, sent to the CCC :

Sehr geehrte Herren,

We reject with the utmost firmness claims which you have raised in a letter dated 12th of June, against the NDR employees Lerche and Scheunemann.

Neither Mr. Lerche nor Mr. Scheunemann have promised Mr. Koch in Mai 1988 against information a sum of 10.000 DM. Mr. Koch merely received the usual honorary. Mr. Koch at no point was incited to commit punishable acts. We do not have even the slightest cause to doubt the account of our collaborators. Thus the connection that you create between Mr. Koch's health condition and his involvement with Mr. Lerche or Scheunemann are also false. Other workers who dealt with Mr. Koch, in the context of the ARD 'Brennpunkt' program of the 2nd of March for which they produced research, also firmly reject your accusations.

We recommend you cease making such claims in the future. Otherwise the NDR will see itself forced to start legal action against you.

Kind regards,

Gernot R

Ref.

— "Karl und die Presse". *Dokumentation*, "published by friends". 68 pages.

— Der Spiegel. 1989. [All great anarchists die on the 23rd.] "Alle großen Anarchisten starben am 23."

According to a deposition of Koch for the Federal Police, quoted here, hacking conducted in the apt. of one of the journalists targetted the Pentagon - Optimis database; witness, participant was Pengo.