

## **'NURUL IZZAH WANTED TO BUY DATA'**

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**By Admin-s**

(NST) – Details of investigations into the case of former PetroSaudi employee Xavier Andre Justo, including from his written confession made on his own free will and volition, have revealed that Nurul Izzah Anwar was keen on buying data on 1Malaysia Development Bhd he had stolen in 2011.

The Lembah Pantai member of parliament (MP) was, however, not the choice potential buyer for Justo, who confessed to being consumed by greed. He had wanted US\$2 million (RM8.7 million) for the data in cash.

When Nurul Izzah offered to pay him instead with contracts that would come in if the opposition succeeded in taking power from Datuk Seri Najib Razak's administration, Justo balked and turned it down, the confession suggested.

Justo claimed that Sarawak Report editor Clare Rewcastle-Brown was acting as his broker and that she was the one who brought Nurul Izzah into the picture.

"Around September 2014, Clare contacted me and invited me in (sic) Bangkok. She said the daughter of (Datuk Seri) Anwar Ibrahim was interested in buying the data.

"I declined as Nurul wanted to pay US\$2 million in future government contracts when they come into power, instead of cash. I declined the offer as I saw no purpose for it."

The *New Straits Times* called Nurul Izzah repeatedly to get her reaction but could not get through. WhatsApp messages went unanswered.

She (Rewcastle-Brown) tried a few buyers, including the entourage of Anwar Ibrahim, but wasn't successful, Justo said in the confession he made to Thai authorities on June 26.

He said Rewcastle-Brown, who had told him that he would make a few million from this, then contacted him in February to say that she, together with Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua, had arranged the sale of the stolen data to The Edge media group owner, Datuk Tong Kooi Ong, and that a meeting would take place soon.

Pua's name cropped up several times in Justo's written confession and transcript of the three-month long WhatsApp conversations involving Rewcastle-Brown, Justo, Tong and Ho Kay Tat, who had allegedly set up the thread.

These conversations were also traced to the Thai authority's investigations into Justo's case of blackmailing and extorting his former employer.

The transcripts suggested that when Tong and Ho appeared to be stalling the payment of the US\$2 million promised to Justo, Rewcastle-Brown told him that she would get Pua to come in.

According to the transcript, on March 19, at 8.12am, Rewcastle-Brown, in a private WhatsApp chat with Justo to discuss the stalled transaction, had told him that “I am seeing Tony Pua this evening. He is a very influential person in their community and was the person who put me in touch. He will give me an insight into what is happening...”

Justo, in his confession, spoke about payment agreements that had been reneged on because Ho and Tong were shifting goalposts.

According to details of the investigation, in the WhatsApp group named “Meet”, Justo had, on March 19 at 7.12am, retorted to Ho: “So you are telling me that you are not going to pay me as agreed in the bank that i have because you feel that this will expose you? I will then have no choice that to (sic) expose the truth.”

The transcript suggested that Ho had responded with, among others: “That exposes us and that makes it difficult for us to do a direct transaction... especially in Abu Dhabi, of all places!!”

Justo, in his confession made from the Bangkok remand prison, said the four used codenames in the WhatsApp group. “Fullerton” was Justo, as that was the name of the hotel in Singapore where he met Tong and his associates, and handed the stolen data with the promise of being paid later.

Rewcastle-Brown’s was Athene Ban (for the Athene Bangkok hotel) because that was where she and Justo met for the first time. Justo claimed that the name “Ho Kay Tat” registered in the group referred to both Tong and Ho, saying they were using Ho’s phone to communicate with him and Rewcastle-Brown.

It was not too long before Justo was picked up by Thai authorities that everyone in the group agreed that Justo would be paid through Rewcastle-Brown.

“It would involve Tong paying her US\$2 million in the United Kingdom, and her paying me a monthly amount disguised as a consultancy fee via the Sarawak Report, which she owns.

“She proposed that I open a newsdesk for the Southeast Asia region for which she would pay me US\$350,000 followed by another US\$1.25 million later.

“I am aware and fully acknowledge that this would constitute money laundering. However, I have not received any money.”

In the investigation documents, Justo had allegedly said Rewcastle-Brown had asked her UK lawyers to make arrangements for that purpose and that he was arrested while waiting for the payment to come through.

Justo had said that he had no idea if Rewcastle-Brown eventually got the money. The Swiss national, who confessed to being remorseful, said he had told Rewcastle-Brown that he would be breaching confidentiality undertakings in his settlement agreement with PetroSaudi by selling the data.

Rewcastle-Brown allegedly responded that she was experienced in handling stolen data without anyone finding out.

He also claimed in the written confession that Rewcastle-Brown had declined payment from him for being the broker, saying she wanted to bring down the prime minister (Datuk Seri Najib Razak), and that “would be payment enough”.

When the NST contacted Pua yesterday by phone, just after noon, he asked that he be contacted via SMS or WhatsApp.

Pua, who sat in the Public Accounts Committee looking into the 1MDB investigation, did not respond to the NST’s questions on his alleged involvement and if he stood by his past statements where he said he had never heard of Justo, until the Thais arrested him in late June.

The details of the investigation also suggested that Tong and Ho were not agreeable to the payment channels that Justo had suggested, saying that dealing with these financial institutions would expose them.

The parties concerned later came to an agreement that Tong would buy a stake in Rewcastle-Brown’s Sarawak Report.

Yesterday, Tong and Ho issued a statement denying any involvement in any conspiracy to topple the prime minister.

The duo said neither they nor The Edge Media Group had any political agenda when they published articles on 1MDB, adding that none of their articles contained any political spin.

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