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### **How did you find out you were under surveillance?**

You know, I had no idea I was under surveillance. The first time I heard about this was when Mr. Kaminski - at the time he was still not yet minister, he was the future interior minister - was speaking in parliament. And he told everyone there on the record that that the government, the Civic Platform, PO government, was eavesdropping on journalists and he mentioned my name. And he said I'm one of the journalists that the government was eavesdropping upon. Then later on, I was asked by the prosecutor's office in Krakow to be interviewed by them, and I went to Krakow to be interviewed and then I got a letter that the questioning was over. And that's it. That's what happened. The investigation was over. And you know, that's the last time I heard from them.

### **What details do you know about the case at the time, about the journalists under surveillance?**

Mr. Kaminski published a list of journals. They were supposed to have been eavesdropped upon by the previous government. I'm on the list, but there are many other journalists on the list as well.

### **Did the prosecutors give you more details when they questioned you?**

The prosecutor's office didn't say a thing. They just asked some questions and there was very short interview. They asked me if I knew anything, and I said no. Did you know you were being eavesdropped upon? No. Did you ever notice anything? No. And that was the end of the interview.

### **Do you think the surveillance was connected to your reporting?**

The period that was under surveillance was when I was working at 'Rzeczpospolita'. At the beginning of my term as deputy editor-in-chief, there was no editor-in-chief. So I was in charge of the newspaper. And even after the new editor-in-chief came in, I was still deputy editor-in-chief and I was in charge, among other things, of the investigations at 'Rzeczpospolita'. So I think that was the reason to eavesdrop. All the people at 'Rzeczpospolita' who were doing the serious political investigations were eavesdropped upon.

So at the time I was there, 'Rzeczpospolita' was doing a lot of stories and was covering all the big scandals involving the government, there were many stories that we were interested in.

When government eavesdrops on editors, not on the authors of investigations, but on editors who run them, they want advance information. They want to know what's going to happen. What does the newspaper know, when will it be published? And is there something they will not be publishing or is there something they are keeping for later? You know, I think editorial discussions are very important for them to know about. And that I think that was the reason why they eavesdropped on us.

### **What kind of information were the secret services collecting about you at the time?**

You know, we found out about Pegasus [spyware] much later, we know that the previous government didn't have it. But obviously, you know, [they could] follow the billing records, and in Poland, it's very easy to get the records for phones from [mobile phone] companies. Everyone knows it's easy. And I had several cases in my life when people who were not supposed to know where I was at a certain time did know and you know what, from the billing records, you have no idea what people are talking about, but you know when they are talking and where they are at certain times.

So I'm certain, for sure, that they were looking for informers because when you compare the records from two phones then you can find out if people get together. And so I'm pretty sure they went after the records - if they went after the phone calls or text messages, I don't know.

### **Why do you think the prosecution never completed the investigation, despite the big scandal PiS made out of revealing the surveillance at the start of its term?**

There are main two reasons why this government didn't finish the investigation or finished it without any outcome. Reason number one is they didn't know how to do it. They weren't professional enough. Reason number two is they're do the same thing. And probably using the same people because the experts are the experts and you know if they worked for the previous government, they can work for the new government as well.

There's this very famous saying from an old Polish movie every state needs their dogs. Which basically means when you're an expert on eavesdropping, even if a new government comes to power, they will still need you.

Of course they understood that they wanted to go after the same journalists, after the same investigations. And also they bought Pegasus. So you know, they upped the game, you know, now it's even worse.

**We haven't have had any scandals about the surveillance of journalists under the Law and Justice party, even though the secret services have had their surveillance powers increased under this government. Do you think journalists are safe today in Poland?**

Now, first of all, you have to remember you don't have to eavesdrop on journalists. Now if you know who talks to them, it's enough to eavesdrop on people who talk to journalists. Because when you eavesdrop on a phone call, you listen to both sides. You don't need to listen, to eavesdrop on both phones. It's enough to tap one phone, you know.

It's true that we don't know so far if Pegasus has been used against any journalist in Poland, but I'm pretty sure it has. It's difficult for me to imagine that it hasn't. You have to remember one thing: we don't have any judicial control or any parliamentary control over the security services in Poland anymore.

The only people who control them are not even government people, these are the political party people and that control the security services. We have no idea what's happening there. Nobody can ask them and therefore, anything we know, we know unofficially. And I'm not sure if and when we will find out for sure.

The problem is that the only people who can actually get the documents from the security services and get people to talk, they work for the prosecutor's office. And the prosecutor's office in Poland is run by politicians from the government.

**Do you take precautions against surveillance as editor-in-chief?**

Well you know I'm lucky enough to work for a very big company, and our publisher has very good security people. So we take a lot of security precautions.

We have professionals who help us to do it. Obviously I'm not going to talk about this but we do it all the time. And you know, on one hand, you have to be careful, and on the other hand, you know, we are not the security services, everything we do, we are proud to do it in the open, you know. So even if they listen to us, to most of the staff, it's in the newspaper later on, you know. And the staff who don't want them to know in advance - we know how to do this, you know.

**So you work with the assumption that it could be happening anytime.**

Well, it's not an assumption. We know it's happening. So that's how we act.

Interview by Claudia Ciobanu, 2023

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