

Football Leaks: Whistleblower or Thief?

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Torrent of revelations





In October 2015, one of the international football businesses whose confidential information had begun appearing on the internet called in cyber security experts.

Hunt for the Mole.



The experts quickly assessed that an unknown hacker had gained remote access to the client's computers from an IP address in Hungary.



It was not clear when the first breach had occurred, but once inside the client's systems, the hacker gained access to all its incoming and outgoing emails and confidential attachments, sending them to an email address hosted in Russia.

The hacker makes contact



At the beginning of October the hacker calling himself "Artem Lubozov" made contact with a well-known football agent who had been involved in some of the leaked transfer deals.



In an email exchange "Lubozov" warned the agent that he had numerous confidential documents in his possession and wanted payment, €500,000, for their safe return.



Further discussions then took place between the hacker's representative, Portuguese lawyer Anibal Pinto and the agent's lawyer.



In mid-October the Portuguese police were called into investigate the alleged extortion.

Identifying the hacker



On 21 October 2015, the football agent and his lawyer meet the hacker's lawyer, Anibal Pinto, on the forecourt of a Lisbon petrol station.



The meeting takes place under surveillance by the Portuguese police.



During the meeting a payment of €300,000 is discussed and Anibal Pinto lets slip that he knows the hacker personally and had represented him previously when he was accused of hacking into a bank in the Cayman Islands



A search of Portuguese court records identifies a case in 2013 in which Anibal Pinto represented a young Portuguese student, Rui Pinto, accused of stealing money from a bank in the Caymans.





Who is Rui Pinto?

- Rui Pedro Goncalves Pinto was born 20 October 1988.
- Home town: Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal.
- Mother Maria died when he was 12.
- Studied History at the University of Porto but did not graduate.
- Fan of trance music and Porto football team.

Caledonian Bank Hack

- On 19 September 2013, €34,658.67 was transferred from a bank in the Cayman Islands into the account of Rui Pedro Gonsalves Pinto, born October 1988.
- Before that date, the account contained €31.67.
- On 23 September, Pinto withdrew €981. No additional cash was paid in during the period. Did Pinto plan to go overdrawn or did he know he had received from the Cayman Island's bank transfer?
- On 11 October a further €227,332.80 was transferred into Pinto's account from the same source in the Caymans.

Data Movimento	Data Valor	Montante	Descritivo	Saldo
3-Set-13	2-Set-13	-20,00	LEV. METRO PORTO - S. BENTO PORTO	41,67
5-Set-13	5-Set-13	-10,00	LEV. PC CARLOS ALBERTO, 105 PORTO	31,67
19-Set-13	19-Set-13	34.627,00	TRANSFERENCIA REF486211	34.658,67
23-Set-13	21-Set-13	-20,00	LEV. AV DA REPUBLICA,2531 VL NO	34.638,67
23-Set-13	21-Set-13	-981,00	TRF.AV DA REPUBLICA,2531 VL NOV	33.657,67
11-Out-13	11-Out-13	-1,00	I.SELO REF489260	33.656,67
11-Out-13	11-Out-13	-25,00	GASTOS TRANSFERENCIA REF489260	33.631,67
11-Out-13	11-Out-13	227.332,80	TRANSFERENCIA REF489260	260.964,47
14-Out-13	13-Out-13	-15,00	PAG VODAFONE: 912104636	260.949,47
15-Out-13	15-Out-13	109,00	TRF.EX-010205490 DE UNIVERSIDADE DO	261.058,47
18-Out-13	17-Out-13	-40,00	LEV. AV FRANCA,52 PORTO	261.018,47
21-Out-13	21-Out-13	1,00	ANULAÇÕES REF490225	261.019,47
21-Out-13	21-Out-13	25,00	ANULAÇÕES REF490225	261.044,47
21-Out-13	21-Out-13	-227.332,80	DEVOLUCAO REF490225	33.711,67
4-Nov-13	1-Nov-13	-40,00	LEV. HOSP S. ANTONIO-R ROSARIOPORTO	33.671,67

Mistaken identity?

- Investigations showed that someone using an IP address based at Porto university had accessed the Caledonian Bank's Mimecast backup server in Jersey in the Channel Islands.
- The server contained copies of all emails sent by the bank in real time and included details of usernames and passwords to allow administrator access to the bank's systems.
- Using this information, cash was transferred into Pinto's bank account in Lisbon.
- The Bank filed a criminal complaint in Portugal with Rui Pinto named in the case papers as the prime suspect.



Rui Pinto's move to Hungary



Porto University Faculty of Arts confirmed Rui Pinto had been a history student but had never graduated.



He had begun his three year course in 2008 but was still there in 2013 – five years later.



During the year — as he faced the bank hacking investigation - university records confirm he transferred to a course in Budapest, Hungary.



Budapest was known to be the source of several of the hacking attacks on football businesses.



Tracing Rui Pinto

- Rui Pinto was still registered as a student at Budapest's ELTE university.
- He still had a valid student visa
- He had been part of the International Meeting Point group, a student society aimed at expats and new arrivals in Budapest.
- Student Union social media pictures showed him with a group of friends at parties.
- However, he had now deleted his social media and stopped attending classes

Closing the net – using social media

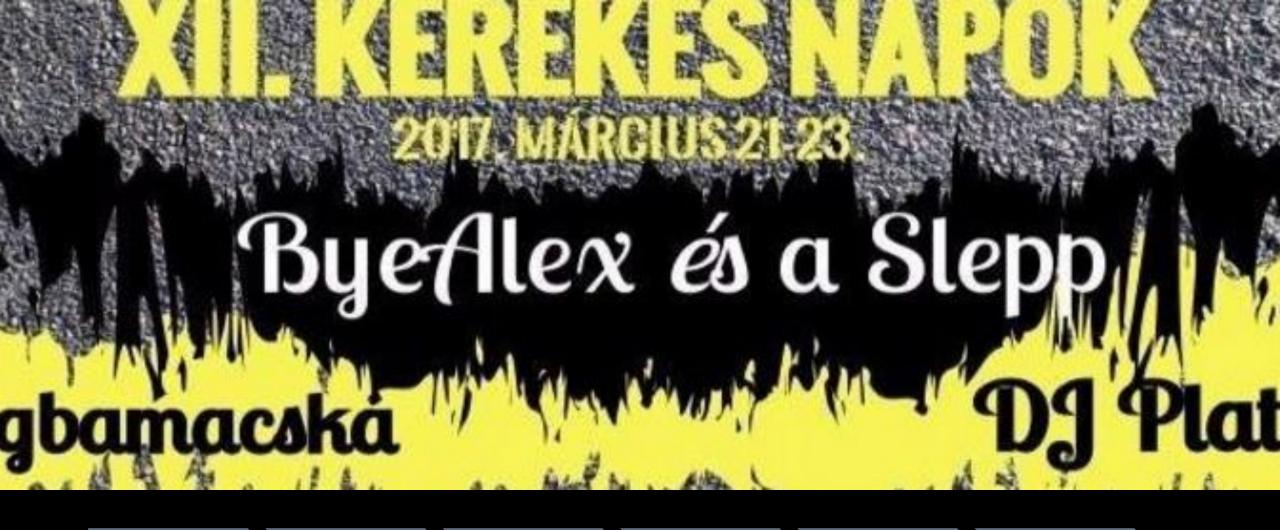
 However, while Pinto attempted to delete his social media – his new friends weren't so cautious – helpfully "tagging" him on nights out.











Social media painted a very detailed picture of where Pinto worked and how he spent his free time.

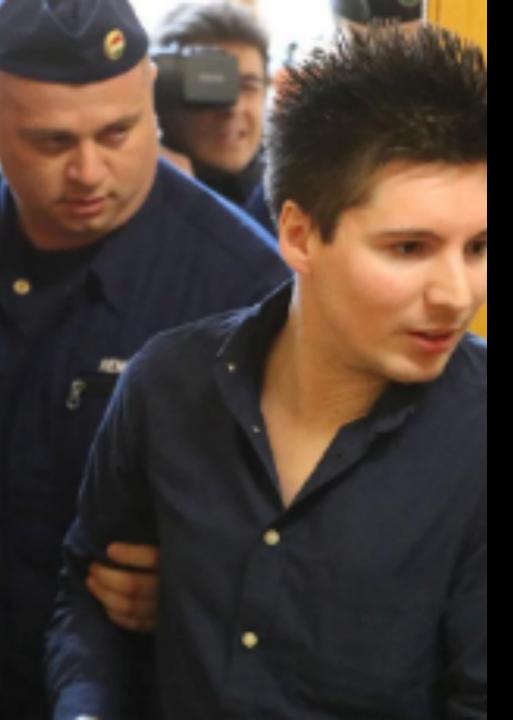
We now had a very good idea of his network.

A key individual was an amateur DJ We learned the DJ was due to play at a St Patrick's Day party

The question was:

Would Pinto turn up?





Pinto's arrest

- Rui Pinto was arrested on 16 January three years after we traced him in Budapest.
- Portuguese prosecutors accused him of "aggravated attempted extortion, illegitimate access and theft of data from some institutions, including the state itself". He denies the charges.
- He was extradited to Portugal in March.
- He has formally been accused of 147 crimes by Portugal's Public Prosecutor's Office.
- He faces 75 charges of illegal access to data, 70 of violation of correspondence, one of computer sabotage and another of attempted extortion.
- His former lawyer, Aníbal Pinto, has also been accused of one count of attempted extortion.

Whistleblower?

- William Bourdon, Rui Pinto's lawyer, claimed the only reason he is behind bars is because he is in Portugal.
- "In Germany, France, England or Italy, Rui would never be arrested on these charges," he argued.



Thief?

- He is not an insider.
- For all his revelations, he did not simply spot wrong-doing and set out to expose it.
- He is a hacker. "A computer genius", as he has been described.
- He broke in and stole money from a bank.
- He broke in and stole documents.
- He asked for cash for their safe return.
 "Blackmail", as The Guardian has termed it.
- So is he a hero? Or is simply a modern day cat burglar.

