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Dear Mr Watkins,

Tortoise Media, a UK based news organisation, is producing a multi-part investigative podcast series for Audible. It is currently scheduled to be published in August 2021.

The series sets out to explore who the online figure behind the conspiracy theory QAnon is and who is writing the Q posts. Furthermore, the series examines the development of the conspiracy theory - from the first Q posts on 4Chan in 2017 to its influence on politics and society in the following years. The series features contributions from people close to the QAnon movement and individuals who have been impacted by its spread.

We are writing to give you the opportunity to respond by way of a written statement to material in the podcast we intend to broadcast.

## **BACKGROUND**

A focus of the podcast series is the identification of the author/s of the Q posts on 4Chan/8Chan/8Kun. During our investigation, allegations have been made in relation to your involvement in the Q posts and the wider QAnon movement.

## **MATERIAL FOR BROADCAST REQUIRING YOUR RESPONSE**

Based on the circumstantial evidence gathered in the reporting for the podcast series, it is our belief that you are the person most likely to be the author of the Q posts and/or have involvement in the persona referred to as Q. And that as administrator of 8Chan you had the ability to reveal the true identity of Q and dispel the conspiracy theory that they were a US government insider.

Based on the allegation that you are involved in Q and the QAnon conspiracy theory, it is our belief that you bear responsibility for the impact Q and QAnon has had on politics and society and the evolution of the conspiracy theory into its current state.

We interview people who know you and/or have reported on your businesses. We would like

your response to the following evidence and allegations, which we will fairly and accurately reflect in the podcast:

- 1) That you, or someone controlled by you, took over control of Q in early 2018 when Paul Furber started his new Qanon board on 8chan (/CBTS) and that only you or Jim Watkins have the ability to take over the writing of Q posts. Alternatively, that you or someone employed by 8Chan, directly or indirectly compromised the Q account allowing another 8Chan user to post as Q.
  
- 2) **Nicky Woolf:** *There's that trip code again. Jim is claiming he doesn't have the password for it, and that without the password he can't post with the tripcode. But Fred alleges that's not true - that as the owner of 8Chan Jim doesn't actually need the password to post, though it's difficult to know for sure.*

**Nicky:** *"what is preventing you from faking a trip code in theory, or somebody with administrator access..."*

**Jim Watkins:** *"Knowing the password .... it's like, [clapping sounds] has to clap. If you have the password, there's no clapping. If you have the website that they posted on, that's the other hand, but together you can do this. I don't know the password. I can't make the trip code "*

The allegations relating to the above statements:

(1) That as the administrator of 8Chan/8Kun you or someone with administrator access would be able to post using the Q tripcode without knowledge of the necessary password to create the tripcode

- 3) **Mrs Lively:** *"I obviously think that they [the creator of QAnon/author of Q posts] are inherently evil"*

The allegations relating to the above statements:

That the creator of the QAnon conspiracy theory and the person/s writing the Q posts - who some have alleged to be you - is/are 'inherently evil'

- 4) That your motivation for writing your message on Telegram (dated January 20 2021, which starts "We gave it our all"), in which you encourage your audience to 'respect the constitution', was written, in part, due to a fear of either personally or in connection with 8Chan/8Kun, being investigated by law enforcement agencies.

- 5) Fredrick Brennan tells us that he believes that the use of a watch as an identifying marker by the person posting as Q, suggests your involvement due to your watch collection hobby.

*Frederick Brennan: "Q does another kind of verification where he posts a certain watch and a certain pen And this is not really, like the big Q believers they don't take this as verification, they see it as just helping the normies as they would call it understand. But I mean a watch and a pen like to me that screams Jim and Ron. Ron collected watches - big time"*

- 6) We report in the series that thousands of people's lives have been ruined by the QAnon belief system and that whoever is behind the Q posts has whipped the QAnon movement into an inferno, leading to the events of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021. As one of the people suspected of being Q and / or behind the posts, the responsibility for these events would fall to you.

We are approaching the end of our edit and we require your response to these allegations by 30 June 2021 so that we can fairly reflect your response in the podcast.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Marshall  
[Producer]