

PR Manager

Testimony of former PR Manager Jana Hilz

#Wirecard #Munich



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Yesterday, April 11, 2024, former head of Wirecard's PR department Jana Hilz was questioned in Munich Stadelheim court.

She was in frequent contact with former CEO Dr. Markus Braun and acted as an intermediary between the management board and the many media inquiries.



Witness Hilz was questioned conspicuously long and exorbitantly by the presiding Wirecard judge. Was she directly involved regarding the annual reports? Not in detail, but she was of course informed about these matters by the board of directors and other managers.

For her, the focus was more on key new customers, e.g. in the retail sector, such as when large corporations like Lidl and Aldi could be acquired by Wirecard as customers.

The Wirecard witness mentioned that her focus was also messaging some of the "high margins" with some customers, which the judge immediately questioned intensively.

J. Hilz was asked whether she knew about the third-party business in particular.

She answered that she of course messaged what had been explained to her at various levels at the executive board.

The judge questioned her conspicuously often and repeatedly, trying to ride around on the subject, visible for everyone in the court room. Judge seemed to try getting something out of the witness that could not have been.

Regarding Third-Party-Partners, Marsalek oftentimes had the Wirecard answers for the media forwarded to her by him personally.

Sometimes, such media answers were assembled in larger business group meetings, naturally.

There was also an investor PR department, as a sister department, so to speak, where she was less involved. Both departments coordinated their messaging, of course.

The presiding Wirecard judge also tried to squeeze something out of witness Jana Hilz regarding her PR reports on the company's so-called 'Vision 2025' future prospects.

As a PR representative, she was of course also here informed by others - in a way that was advantageous to the company in order to get the message out to the public.

It was similar with questions regarding the Zatarra report from 2016 on, Project Ring, the Hermes matter, Rajan-Tahn report, the Softbank deal.

The Wirecard judge is now open-aggressively trying to get out of the witness Hilz that she was forced to falsify PR reports in a criminal manner by deliberate misrepresentations, especially by her former boss Dr. Markus Braun.

The judge seems never to have worked in a large corporation, it is precisely the duty and task of PR managers to present a positive image of the company to the outside world.

Various Excel lists with Wirecard financial data were discussed, which were published by the @FT from mid-2019 on - partly even openly downloadable on the FT website starting October 2019 or so.

Wirecard witness Hilz explained how the answers of the management board, also by Dr. Braun and Marsalek, were that the lists and documents mostly published by the FT - steadily and suspiciously increasing in number and quality over time - were displayed as "incorrect and false".

In this context, it was somewhat bizarre how later in court, one of the two assistant judges questioned the witness regarding a request from Dan McCrum dated April 25, 2019, in which FT's hero-journalist McCrum pointed out to Wirecard employee Zitzmann that, quote, "your lists are incorrect".

The Wirecard witness JT goes on to explain how, towards the end of 2019, she was increasingly confronted with so many leaked lists and documents by the mainstream media that she no longer wanted, nor could, any longer continue to carry out her work.

In particular, she was confronted with damage limitation attempts by the management board, where they continued to insist that the increasing stack of publicly disclosed documents and lists were "not authentic".

To her, this justifications became no longer acceptable under the external mass media pressure, particularly when the leaked document quality increased gradually.

She took leave of absence at the end of 2019 and was transferred to Wirecard's marketing department at the beginning of 2020.

The Wirecard judge conspicuously asked in response how former CEO Dr. Braun reacted to her decision to quit her job at the end of 2019.

That must have "hit him like a hammer, did he say something like: Just leave then ?" , the judge asked JT.

Witness Hilz answers calmly and in a consistently friendly manner, saying that on the contrary, Dr. Braun had tried to persuade her to stay with the company.

The judge also seemed a bit overly aggressive and threatening, when he mentioned that after the Wirecard witness had discussed with Susanne Steidl(?) to move to the marketing department, she then received a bonus payment of several 1000 euros sometime at the beginning of 2020.

It was also somewhat bizarre when another one of the two Wirecard assistant judges asked witness JT what happened when Munich's very own Sueddeutsche Zeitung made an inquiry in September 2019.

She reports how the answer was delivered to the SZ by a spokesperson for Jan Marsalek, she was bypassed.

The assistant judge then asked whether she remembered this spokesperson for Jan Marsalek as a certain 'Enderle'. Hilz replies in the negative, saying she had no knowledge of this external Marsalek PR spokesman or -woman.

Dr. Braun's defence lawyer then asked the Wirecard witness how she experienced Jan Marsalek on a personal level.

She answered: "reserved, friendly, correct expression was always important to him, which is why he was oftentimes involved in formulating texts."

Dr. Braun's defence lawyer asked Wirecard witness JT as well how she saw Ms. Stoeckl's statement that Marsalek "wanted to build a new Wirecard".

Hilz says she hadn't heard much about it, she had only noticed from 2019 onwards that Marsalek was increasingly often at the company headquarters, whereas before he had been traveling a lot.

However, he was rarely to be found in his office, and was apparently "always busy with something else".

Her feeling and general impression was that he lived more in a parallel world, he often had contacts with people outside Wirecard who provided him with information, according to JT.

Another lawyer then asked the witness about the time after Wirecard's insolvency in June 2020.

Jana Hilz was employed by Wirecard until October 2020, she was working in the internal communications department and was therefore one of the last to support and inform the company's own employees after the insolvency.

She was asked whether she received information about the collapse of the company, how she saw the catastrophe in the months following the insolvency, whether she requested or received information, whether she or others questioned the collapse of the company in any way.

Wirecard witness JT answered that, like everyone else, she only received information about the collapse of the company from the [mainstream] press.

In addition, it was the peak of the COVID time, home office was obligatory for most of the remaining Wirecard employees, they did not work side-by-side in one single office building.

Finally, it should be noted that, as experienced with other witnesses before, there were considerable differences of the written witness interrogations from years before that were read out in court from time to time, and live statements like those from yesterday.

The written testimonies assembled by Wirecard police commissioners and/or public prosecutors from Munich mostly from around 2020 on the one hand, and on the other hand the impression of the witness as a person, as well as her statements here in court years later were partly extremely distinct.

<https://www.sun24.news/en/pr-manager-testimony-of-former-pr-manager-jana-hilz.html>