

ENVIRONMENT VS. SHELL

THE ACCUSED: Royal Dutch Shell

THE CRIME: Continuing to colonize the world through ecocide

ACCOMPLICES: The Dutch government & Dutch people in allowing this.

DEPOSITION - 88345

THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT

My name is [REDACTED] I was born on the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the Netherlands.

I am here today, making this deposition as a part of the Dutch government. I have been in service of the Dutch government since 2015 and so can speak mainly to this period. My role over the past year has been to deal with Freedom of Information Requests on behalf of the Ministry of Security and Justice. As 17 Freedom of Information Requests, or 'wobjes' as we like to call them, were submitted concerning the Dutch Government's relationship with the enterprise Royal Dutch Shell, this has taken up most of my time over the past year. 17 doesn't sound like a lot, but it's over 1200 pages of paperwork that need to be divided and investigated. So I suppose you can see why I saw myself relevant to make a deposition, when I heard you were investigating Shell for Ecocide and continued colonialism... I mean, I don't want to be seen as some kind of martering whistle-blower or anything like that. But with the recent news about [REDACTED] the Dutch Ambassador in Nigeria and his ties with ShWell, it seems we need to get real with this Shell business in the Netherlands. You know the man was a colonialist and representing the us! Did you hear he decorated the dining room of his Abuja Embassy with puppets of black servant girls? The scandals seem to be coming at us from every corner... And you know the Dutch Public ends up paying for it too. We're pouring billions into cleaning a large oil spill in Nigeria, just off Bodo, Bonny Island as we speak. And you know, maybe if I'd had a different boss, this would be more out in the open anyway.

So yes, I was not the first person to deal with the Shell wobjes. The last person dealing with these Freedom of Information Requests turned out to have shares in Shell, or a school friend who worked there, or something like that and so wasn't the most impartial person to be assigned these requests. It would be quite interesting by the way if anyone was able to ever do an internal assessment of just how many civil servants and Ministers have ties with Shell. For instance there was the suspicion that the only reason [REDACTED] [REDACTED] let Shell, basically force him into the almost political suicide that cancelling the Dividend Tax was, is because he is hoping Shell is where he can go after his terms as Minister-President. And in our society right now, it makes sense right? Where else is up from being Minister-President of a whole country than being a cog in one of the world's richest and most powerful companies? The UN I guess... but I don't think that's his interest. Shell had been lobbying the government since 2007 and only with the current coalition did it seem to be gaining traction. Anyway that's mainly a rumour isn't it, but there have been also the more blatant cases. Like the civil servant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who left her job as an advisor to the D66 party in parliament to go work for Shell's marketing department. Oh you didn't see the tweet? Yeah it caused quite a ruckus.

OK, so, working on these 17 Shell Wobjes has in full honesty been a complete nightmare. I guess they thought I would be a good person to work on these requests, because of the time I spent with Shell back in 2016. I didn't work for them or anything, but at that point I was working for the Ministry of Trade and International Development in

quite a more 'hands on' role which meant I coordinated the different trade missions and tried to keep "the customers" happy. So one of the trade missions I was a part of was to Mozambique, which executives from Shell joined too. It was a weird experience. On the one hand we were there as the Dutch government looking at how development aid was being spent on fighting poverty, and on the other hand we were walking around 'untapped natural resources' seeing how Shell, as a Dutch company, could make money on it.

Yeah, sure I can explain. A new gas field had been discovered in Mozambique and our role together with the Dutch Embassy there was to help Shell acquire it. And that negotiating with a Mozambican government that was still under investigation for a billion dollar fraud scandal... Anyway obviously on that trip I got to know Shell and the way the Dutch government likes to treat them... So they assigned me to the team dealing with the 17 Shell wobjes and like I told you, it's been a complete nightmare. I've just been under so much pressure to do my job and, how to phrase it, uhm 'not' get the job done.

So the wobjes were submitted by this journalistic platform and they are requesting all the emails, memo's, policy briefs, even WhatsApp messages that were received by the Dutch government from Shell, were sent to Shell or that concern Shell. You don't even want to imagine how much work will go into digging all of that up. Well you might not have to, cause I'm not sure the journalists will ever get what they asked for. You see, we're supposed to answer these requests for information within eight weeks, but have been able to stretch it for over a year now.

How? Well getting every department to slow down every request, from the Ministerial, to the Provincial to the municipal level. We were able to stretch the initial request phase from eight weeks to 37 weeks before rejecting the request. We're now stretching the phase of the journalists making an official objection from 18 weeks to over 22 weeks. Then they can appeal, for which the official wait is up to a year and then the final appeal which again is up to a year - all in all the journalists will be waiting at least another two maybe three years. By then their attention and funding may run out, or so I think the hope is. Believe me, no one has any intention of giving heed to these requests. And to be completely honest, I'm fed up of it. It's a complete random fluke that I've started to become one a Shell's inside man types and this is not why I went into government service. Sure we should keep information secret that will harm the public or bring risk to the Dutch economy and society, but this. It's just the more I get involved in trying to bury these secrets, the more secrets I'm uncovering and I don't think we can continue like this.

END DEPOSITION