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REPORTED OUTCOME:

**INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED
COMPLICITY OF HEROIC
PLAYERS IN SPECTATOR BUG
EXPLOIT**

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Section A: Summary of Investigation and Results

1. Circumstances Triggering the Investigation

- 1.1 On 2nd September 2020, ESIC made its first public statement about exploitation of a spectator bug in CS:GO. Among the first three coaches sanctioned at the end of August 2020 was then Heroic coach, Nicolai "HUNDEN" Petersen ("**Mr. Petersen**"), who was banned for his exploitation of the spectator bug during professional play.
- 1.2 On 24 August 2021, ESIC issued a further sanction against Mr. Petersen for conduct that breached the ESIC Integrity Program.
- 1.3 On 4 September 2021, Mr. Petersen, following on from allegations he made publicly on Danish television several days before, sent ESIC information which he alleges provides evidence that the players who were playing for Heroic at the time of Mr. Petersen's exploitation of the spectator bug were complicit in his exploits.
- 1.4 Mr. Petersen's referral of 'information' which he stated supports his allegations ("**Allegation Referral**") included:
 - A written statement from Mr. Petersen laying out his allegations.
 - Screenshots of text and messenger conversations with various individuals related to the team.
 - Screenshots of a contemporaneous text conversation with an anonymous individual known as "*Robert*" around the time of the original spectator bug bans of September 2020.
 - A voice recording and transcripts of Mr. Petersen's conversation with Nikolaj "niko" Kristensen ("**Mr. Kristensen**").
 - A Non-Disclosure Agreement (unsigned) relating to the spectator bug incident that would, if signed, have prohibited the players from disclosing information publicly about the incident.
- 1.5 Despite the fact that the allegations brought forward by Mr. Petersen in his Allegation Referral are contrary to previous public statements Mr. Petersen has made, ESIC opened a formal investigation into the matter on 6 September 2021.

2. Individuals Impacted by ESIC's Investigation

2.1 The five players that were impacted by ESIC's investigation as a result of Mr. Petersen's allegations include:

- Nikolaj "niko" Kristensen (now OG), referred to in this report as Mr. Kristensen,
- Rene "TeSeS" Madsen (Heroic), referred to in this report as Mr. Madsen,
- Casper "cadiaN" Moller (Heroic), referred to in this report as Mr. Moller,
- Johannes "bORUP" Borup (Mad Lions), referred to in this report as Mr. Borup, and
- Martin "stavn" Lund (Heroic), referred to in this report as Mr. Lund.

3. Summary of Investigation Carried Out

3.1 Upon preliminary examination of the Allegation Referral from Mr. Petersen, the Commissioner took the view that the information provided to ESIC justified the opening of a formal investigation into the allegations and the affected players were informed.

3.2 On 6 September 2021, a formal investigation was opened by ESIC and a public notice was displayed on the ESIC website.

3.3 By 10 September 2021, ESIC's Commissioner had finalised his investigation plan which included:

3.3.1 The review of the evidence in detail in concurrent conduct of formal interviews through video conference with:

- Mr. Petersen (in the presence of a nominated support person)
- Mr. Madsen (accompanied by a legal representative)
- Mr. Moller (accompanied by a legal representative)
- Mr. Borup (accompanied by a Mad Lions representative)
- Mr. Lund (accompanied by a legal representative)
- Nicolai "hani" Hansen (Heroic staff)
- Troels Robl (Heroic staff)

- 3.3.2 Further interviews and correspondence with other relevant persons who could shed light on different aspects of the case, including the anonymous witness “Robert” put forward by Mr. Petersen.
- 3.3.3 Further interviews and correspondence with current management and ownership of Heroic, OG and Mad Lions.
- 3.3.4 Various correspondences with CSGO experts, and,
- 3.3.5 Most crucially, significant correspondence with Mr. Kristensen’s agent representing Mr. Kristensen throughout this investigation along with Mr. Kristensen’s mother who was also included in most correspondence exchanges.
- 3.3.6 In addition, the Commissioner relied on a review by a native Danish speaker in interpreting some of the verbal and written information provided in the course of the investigation.
- 3.4 By 6 October 2021, the Commissioner had finalised all lines of inquiry and began formalising his report into the matter. This report contains ESIC’s findings.

4. Summary of Conclusions

- 4.1 A summary of the conclusions arrived at by ESIC and explained in this report in more detail can be found below:
 - 4.1.1 **No case to answer for:** Rene “TeSeS” Madsen, Casper “cadiaN” Moller, Johannes “b0RUP” Borup or Martin “stavn” Lund.
 - 4.1.1.1 Upon investigating the conduct of these individuals, ESIC was unable to find anywhere near enough evidence to reasonably conclude that these four players were guilty of any offence under the ESIC Integrity Program.
 - 4.1.1.2 This includes the Allegation Referral made by Mr. Petersen, which lacked substance in proving (to a standard of the balance of

probabilities) the allegations made by Mr. Petersen against these individuals.

4.1.1.3 Accordingly, ESIC concludes that these individuals are to be deemed innocent of the conduct which are the subject of Mr. Petersen's allegations.

4.1.2 **Mr. Kristensen** has admitted his complicity in the cheating exploits of Mr. Petersen and is, therefore, guilty of breaching the ESIC Code of Conduct Articles 2.4.4 and 2.4.5 (level 4 offences).

4.1.2.1 The relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct are set out below for ease of reference but can also be found on the [ESIC website](#).

2.4.4 Cheating or attempting to cheat to win a Game or Match.

2.4.5 Where the facts of the alleged incident are not adequately or clearly covered by any of the above offences, conduct that brings Esport, the Game, Event, ESIC or a Member into disrepute.

4.1.2.2 As a result of his breach of the ESIC Integrity Program, Mr. Kristensen has accepted the following sanction under a plea bargain agreement with ESIC (the apparent leniency of which and the exceptional circumstances leading to this conclusion will be explained later in this report):

- 1) A severe public reprimand for his behaviour
- 2) A warning as to future conduct with severe consequences for any future breach of the ESIC Integrity Program.
- 3) Mandatory attendance at two one on one education sessions with the ESIC Commissioner of minimum 30 mins duration each
- 4) A minimum 15-minute check in with the Commissioner every month for a minimum of six months to ensure he has understood and is complying with the ESIC Integrity Program and to offer him support for any issues he might be having in this respect.

4.1.2.3 Mr. Kristensen has been advised that any failure to abide by the conditions of the plea bargain outlined above will result in a minimum 30-day ban from all ESIC Member events.

Section B: Background

5. Relevant Context Regarding the Spectator Bug

- 5.1 Exploiting the Spectator Bug does not need the support or assistance of any other party in the game.
- 5.2 This means that the factual competitive environment at the time of Mr. Petersen’s exploitation was such that it was completely probable that the players were competing with no knowledge of their coach’s in play environment.
- 5.3 Accordingly, the proposition that the individuals that are the subject of this investigation **must have known** that this Mr. Petersen was engaging in exploiting the spectator bug is flawed and inconsistent with the factual realities of the competitive environment.
- 5.4 Accordingly, in considering the allegations of Mr. Petersen, ESIC must look beyond this surface level conclusion in examining the reasonable probability of the truth of the allegations.

6. Mr. Petersen’s Prior Dealings with ESIC

- 6.1 On 2 September 2020, ESIC issued a statement sanctioning Mr. Petersen with a ban for a breach of the Articles 2.3.3 and/or 2.4.4 of the ESIC Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 On 24 August 2021, ESIC issued a further sanction against Mr. Petersen for conduct that breached the ESIC Integrity Program.

7. Mr. Petersen’s Allegations and Referral to ESIC

- 7.1 Mr. Petersen’s Allegation Referral to ESIC included information that he believed supported his allegation that, at the time of exploiting the spectator bug, the Heroic players knew that he was using the spectator bug and were complicit in and supportive of his cheating.

- 7.2 It is noted that Mr. Petersen did not include **Mr. Borup** in his allegations against his former team’s players.
- 7.3 While some of the information contained in the Allegation Referral had already been put in the public domain by Mr. Petersen, there were also additional materials that have not been made public. The Allegation Referral included the following:
- A written statement from Mr. Petersen laying out his allegations.
 - Screen shots of text and messenger conversations with various individuals related to the team.
 - Screen shots of a contemporaneous text conversation with an anonymous individual known as “Robert” around the time of the original spectator bug bans of September 2020.
 - A voice recording and transcripts of Mr. Petersen’s conversation with Nikolaj “niko” Kristensen.
 - A Non-Disclosure Agreement (unsigned) relating to the spectator bug incident that would, if signed, have prohibited the players from disclosing information publicly about the incident.

8. Changes in Heroic Management

- 8.1 ESIC importantly notes that the ownership and senior management of Heroic has changed significantly since the spectator bug scandal in 2020.
- 8.2 Accordingly, it is important to distinguish this statement’s indication of failings and poor decisions by the previous management administering the organisation at the time of the spectator bug scandal from the current ownership and management team.
- 8.3 Finally, ESIC notes that Heroic management have fully and proactively cooperated in both this investigation as well as the investigation resulting in ESIC’s statement on 24 August 2021.
- 8.4 During the course of this investigation ESIC was not obstructed in any way by Heroic ownership, senior management or staff during what was observably an emotional and difficult period for the organisation and,

particularly, the three players remaining in the employ of the organisation that were the subject of this investigation.

Section C: ESIC's Investigation

9. Opening the Investigation

- 9.1 The Commissioner took the view that, on a preliminary examination, the information provided in the Allegation Referral justified opening a formal investigation into the allegations.
- 9.2 Upon making this determination the affected players were notified of ESIC's intentions to investigate.

10. Conduct of the Investigation

- 10.1 The Commissioner reviewed the information in detail and conducted formal interviews through video conference with:
- Mr. Petersen (in the presence of a nominated support person)
 - Mr. Madsen (accompanied by a legal representative)
 - Mr. Moller (accompanied by a legal representative)
 - Mr. Borup (accompanied by a Mad Lions representative)
 - Mr. Lund (accompanied by a legal representative)
 - Nicolai "hani" Hansen (Heroic Staff)
 - Troels Robl (Heroic Staff)
- 10.2 The Commissioner engaged in additional lines of inquiry via correspondence with other relevant persons who could shed light on different aspects of the matter under investigation, including the anonymous witness "Robert" put forward by Mr. Petersen.
- 10.3 Upon verifying the identity of the anonymous witness, the Commissioner concluded that the witness was known to ESIC as a credible witness.
- 10.4 The Commissioner also engaged with current management and ownership of Heroic, OG and Mad Lions, CSGO experts (more below) and, most crucially, Mr. Kristensen's agent representing Mr. Kristensen

throughout this investigation with Mr. Kristensen’s mother copied in on most correspondence exchanges.

- 10.5 Mr. Kristensen provided, via his agent, a witness statement and several written answers to additional questions put to him by the Commissioner through the course of the investigation.

11. Utilisation of Experts

- 11.1 ESIC also engaged a native Danish speaker to translate the recording of Mr. Kristensen’s July 2021 phone conversation with Mr. Petersen in order to appropriately account for tonality, context and emotional emphasis in the course of investigating Mr. Kristensen’s alleged involvement.
- 11.2 In addition, the Commissioner received the specific allegation that Mr. Madsen acted in contravention of ESIC’s Integrity Program in knowingly ‘boosting’ Mr. Petersen into the camera position he occupied, thereby enabling Mr. Petersen to exploit the bug in the match against Spirit in 2020.
 - 11.2.1 In response to this allegation, ESIC engaged with a credible and well respected CS:GO expert in analysing Mr. Madsen’s behaviour and determining its pertinence to the allegation made by Mr. Petersen.
 - 11.3 The two full matches in which the bug was exploited in 2020 were also watched several times by the Commissioner and CS:GO experts to see if there were any obvious instances of communication that indicated that the players knew more than they should have in normal circumstances or that any of the players knew Mr Petersen was exploiting the spectator bug. It is noted that no conclusive evidence was observed that outlined any substance to Mr. Petersen’s allegations in this regard.
 - 11.4 Finally, for reasons that will become clear in Section D below, the Commissioner is grateful for the guidance and resources provided by the ADHD and Asperger’s Team at the National Autistic Society and the ADHD Foundation.

Section D: Mr. Kristensen's Exceptional Circumstances

12. Mr. Kristensen's Exceptional Circumstances

- 12.1 This section will outline the unique and special circumstances which have been considered by the Commissioner as *exceptional*. **It is noted that the information disclosed herein pertaining to Mr. Kristensen is disclosed with the permission of Mr. Kristensen communicated to ESIC via his agent:**
- 12.1.1 Mr. Kristensen has ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome. Upon consulting with the ADHD and Asperger's Team at the National Autistic Society and the ADHD Foundation, ESIC was informed that this would have significantly impacted his ability to know right from wrong, make values-based decisions on his own and communicate effectively in a conventional way.
- 12.1.2 Mr. Kristensen is heavily dependent on the people he trusts. He is naïve and, by his own admission in conjunction with the objective evidence collated in the course of the investigation and enquiries (see 13.1.1) into the implications of his conditions, trusts too easily.
- 12.1.3 Mr. Kristensen trusted and respected Mr. Petersen implicitly and Mr. Petersen observably deliberately fostered and then exploited that trust at a timing that was convenient to him.
- 12.1.4 Mr. Kristensen, aware of his limitations in conventional day to day life, did not want to stand out as contrarian in any aspect of his life as a CS:GO professional at Heroic and so willingly went along with whatever Mr. Petersen proposed, without understanding the full implications or seriousness of what was occurring.
- 12.1.5 Mr. Kristensen naivety extended to believing both that the exploitation of the spectator bug was no big deal and humorous and that all his teammates must know and be complicit in the same way he was. It turns

out he did not know this as a matter of observable or ascertainable fact at all, but purely as an assumption.

12.1.6 Mr. Kristensen elected not to talk to ESIC directly but instead interacted with ESIC through his agent. While this was a cause of concern for ESIC, appreciating Mr. Kristensen's exceptional circumstances, the Commissioner nonetheless received full answers that were corroborated by other factual observations.

12.1.7 It was apparent to the Commissioner that all parties acting on behalf of Mr. Kristensen were acting in good faith and openness. This included OG's full cooperation as an organisation and their commitment to full disclosure despite the possible consequences for them as an organisation that was not involved in the incidents giving rise to this case.

12.1.8 With respect to Mr. Kristensen, the Commissioner makes the following Comment:

"I have found myself increasingly sympathetic to Mr. Kristensen's position in this matter in light of his conditions and personality. In particular, I believe that the much-publicised text and phone conversations in July 2021 with Mr. Petersen demonstrates that Mr. Kristensen was ruthlessly manipulated and set up by Mr. Petersen in an attempt to force Mr. Kristensen to verbally commit to a position which would incriminate both himself and his former teammates. The transcripts, when read in isolation, are damning and were, to a high degree, the basis on which I initially decided that the information provided by Mr. Petersen to ESIC justified an investigation.

However, it is not just the words said during the conversation, but the timing, tone and intent that comes through when actually listening to it that are compelling for me. This conversation, initiated by Mr. Petersen and recorded by him in July of this year (after Mr. Petersen became aware that ESIC was investigating his sharing of Heroic's data) without Mr. Kristensen's knowledge or permission, shows only two things of relevance to me: First, that Mr. Kristensen is being set up to aid Mr. Petersen's agenda to cause harm to Heroic and, second, that Mr. Kristensen assumes, without knowing, that his former teammates knew about the spectator bug at the time of those matches more than a year

earlier. This is not, in my view, a basis for concluding that they actually knew.”

Section E: Commissioner’s Conclusions

13. General Comments About the Spectator Bug

- 13.1 ESIC has examined the spectator bug issue in detail over the last few years, reviewing many matches and engaging with many coaches and players about the issue.
- 13.2 Consequently, the Commissioner sets out the following general observations regarding the Spectator Bug:
 - 13.2.1 For a coach to successfully exploit the coach bug, the players do not need to know or be complicit in the cheating. It is therefore arguably counterintuitive to need to co-opt the players into the exploitation.
 - 13.2.2 Of course players, if they know about the existence of the bug, might guess that their coach is using it if he provides regular highly accurate coaching during a round.
 - 13.2.3 If the players do not know about the bug, it follows that they would not suspect that their coach was acting in an adverse manner. In such a case, it is actually to the coach’s advantage that their team’s players do not know that they are cheating.
 - 13.2.4 ESIC has not found the common trope that “everybody knew about the bug” to be true. The Commissioner is of the view that many people at the top of elite CS:GO, in fact the majority, knew nothing about the bug until it was exposed by Michal Slowinski, ESL and ESIC in August of 2020.
- 13.3 The common community sentiment that “the players must have known” or “how could the players not know?” seems to be emotionally rather than rationally considered opinions that actually carry no weight when carefully examined under the burden of evidence.

- 13.4 This is not to say that, as a matter of general principle, there were no players in any team that were complicit in their coaches' cheating. It is evident that it might help in some teams to have the players involved. If the coach effectively becomes the in-game leader and calls all moves, then knowing they are doing so because they can see things, they shouldn't be able to see would smooth the process. However, in this matter there is no evidence that this has occurred. There is certainly no collation of evidence that would establish that this was the case on the balance of probabilities
- 13.5 In light of all of the general conclusions above, the Commissioner approached the evidence in this case warily, especially as Mr. Petersen had a strong motive for trying to cause harm to the Heroic organisation for what he perceived to be their wronging of him in both the data sharing case and, before that, by forcing him, in his view, to "take a bullet for the team" in the spectator bug scandal.

14. Results of This Investigation

- 14.1 Dealing specifically with this investigation, it is important to set out the following points so that ESIC's reasoning in reaching its conclusions is clear.
- 14.2 This is a nuanced and complex matter and it centres around a nuanced and complex character – Nicolai "Hunden" Petersen. The Commissioner believes that Mr. Petersen may have thought that the players knew he was cheating despite the fact that this does not correlate with ESIC's findings except in the case of Mr. Kristensen.

Introducing the Idea Casually to Gauge Reactions

- 14.3 At the time of the cheating, Mr. Petersen had been at Heroic a little over a month. It is clear that almost all knowledge of the spectator bug's existence amongst the Heroic players (and other staff where relevant) was created by Mr. Petersen himself. This was done in light conversation in a joking way, using banter and was strategically introduced and spread thinly amongst multiple other jokes and banter across numerous topics as he created a light and playful atmosphere in the player group in his first month with them.
- 14.4 This is a common tactic of match-fixers and cheaters as they try and gauge how their peers feel about the proposed corrupt behaviour, their appetite for it and willingness to be complicit in it. This is how corruptors find their allies as it allows them to laugh it off as nothing more than a joke if they get called out on it. All of the evidence available to ESIC sets this out clearly. However, despite his efforts, it is clear that the only ally Mr. Petersen found through this initial period was Mr. Kristensen – the reasons for this have been explained in an earlier section within this report.

Singular, Motivated Information Source

- 14.5 All of the "evidence" that ESIC was provided in order to sustain an accusation of player complicity was generated in one way or another by Mr. Petersen.
- 14.6 For example, whilst "Robert" is known to ESIC and is an entirely credible witness, he has admitted that he has no idea whether the players were complicit outside of what Mr. Petersen told him. As he is a friend of Mr. Petersen and trusts him, he believes him. However, in the Commissioner's view, this is evidence of little other than Mr. Petersen's view that the players knew (whether honestly or maliciously), not that they actually knew.
- 14.7 This presents a serious detriment to the ability of the information provided to ESIC to contribute to the balance of probabilities required in finding truth to the allegations.

Allegation Against Mr. Madsen

- 14.8 Regarding Mr. Petersen’s allegations against Mr. Madsen as it pertains to boosting into the camera position in the Spirit match, ESIC has concluded that it is most likely that Mr. Madsen had no idea what Mr. Petersen’s ultimate purpose was in being asked to be boosted into various positions in the map pre-match.
- 14.9 Again, the assertion that Mr. Madsen knew *why* Mr Petersen was asking to be boosted comes from Mr. Petersen and is not independently verified by any other evidence and is strongly denied by Mr. Madsen.
- 14.10 In a case like this, and in the absence of any objective evidence otherwise, ESIC must choose between what one witness says against what another witness says.
- 14.11 The Commissioner found Mr. Madsen to be a credible witness in the interview process and has not identified any evidence indicating that Mr. Madsen believed that his coach’s requests in the server 20 minutes before the match were anything other than normal engagement.
- 14.12 On the other hand, Mr. Petersen’s version of events, when placed in the context of this matter, originates from a seemingly embittered former employee with a serious grudge. Accordingly, these two accounts cannot be afforded the same weight in the consideration of their substance in settling the balance of probabilities in respect to this allegation – particularly in the absence of any external objective evidence.

Systemic Failure in Evidence Provided by Mr. Petersen

- 14.13 The text conversations with others involved reveal a similar pattern – the assertion by Mr. Petersen that the players knew and the acceptance, in some cases, by the other person that his baseless assertion must be true.
- 14.14 ESIC observes that in no case is there a person who, independent of Mr. Petersen, knew what the players knew or did not know.

- 14.15 Even the NDA process, whilst misguided and damaging, was indicative to the Commissioner of nothing more than a desperate attempt to put a lid on a PR disaster for the organisation.
- 14.16 In any event, it is clear that the players refused to sign the NDA and the matter quickly faded away without coercion. Accordingly, ESIC is not of the view that the mere existence of an unsigned NDA supports an argument that the players were complicit in Mr. Petersen's cheating or that anyone in the organisation (aside from Mr. Petersen's assertions) knew they were.
- 14.17 ESIC does not take Erik Askered's (former Heroic management) actions in this instance as trying to cover up anything, but rather to control a situation of great threat to the organisation he owned and controlled. The Commissioner regards this to be poorly judged in retrospect but notes his recollection of what a fraught time this was for everyone involved. Conclusively, the Commissioner observes that poor managerial decisions are not proof of actual knowledge of complicity.
- 14.18 There was evidence that, after the Astralis match, the first time the bug was used in "officials", three of the players did "know" that Hundén had used the bug during the game (to what effect remains a mystery as Heroic lost the match). There is evidence of a post-game TeamSpeak conversation involving Mr. Moller, Mr. Kristensen, Mr. Lund and Mr. Petersen where Mr. Kristensen asserted that Mr. Petersen had been in the bug during the match.
- 14.19 Mr. Kristensen says he knew this because Mr. Petersen had messaged him telling him he was in the bug. Mr. Moller and Mr. Lund did not apparently believe Mr. Kristensen at first until he insisted and, whilst still sceptical (because of the loss and no obvious instances pointing to the fact that Mr. Petersen was using the bug added to those player's knowledge of Mr. Kristensen and his credibility with them on serious matters of this nature) made a clear stand against cheating. Unfortunately, this brief conversation was never reported to Heroic management and was too easily glossed over by the players involved; but this was not enough, in

the Commissioner's view, to sustain any charge of complicity in Mr Petersen's cheating (except in respect of Mr Kristensen as explained).

Concluding Remarks

14.20 With respect to this investigation, the Commissioner states:

"I expected a flood of "evidence" of other teams' players being complicit in their coaches cheating with the coach bug, but this has not happened. I believe I have explained why I think this is: that the players did not need to know, but I also accept that there were players that, like niko, did know and should have come forward, but didn't.

I hope this changes in future as people know that ESIC will investigate fairly and sympathetically in the best interests of esports. Competitive integrity is key to the sustainability and increased commerciality of professional elite esports. If people lose faith in the product, it is the players that will suffer most and I hope all players accept that we are all in this together and that ESIC is here to protect them."

END OF REPORT

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