1 THE HIGH COURT OF SIERRA LEONE

HOLDEN. AT FREETOWN

THE STATE

VS

Gr. Thompson for the State M. S. Bangura with L Jenkins Johnston for the Accused JUDGMENT

> The Accused Francis A. Gabbidon stands charged with 1.68 counts of Misappropriation of Public Funds contrary to Section i2(1) of the Anti Cor rup t ion Act 2000 (as amended). The charges ar e laid under Section 12(1) of the Anti Cor rup tion Act 2000 which provides that "any person who misappropriates public revenue, public funds or proper ty is guilty of an offence. " Secti on 12(2) states that: "A person misappropriates public revenue, public funds or property If he wilfully commits an act, whether by himself, with or through another person, by which the Government, a public corporation or a local 6uthorit y is deprived of any revenue, funds or other financial interest, or propert; y belonging or due to the Govern meent, the public corporation or local aut horit У".

The substance of the charges is that the Accused as the former Om budsm an of Sierra Leone misappro'priated public funds to the tune of sevent y million, two hundred and twenty six thousand, six hundred and forty two Leones

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(l e7,0, 226, 642.00). It is alleged, on each of the said 168 c ounts that the Accused, on a date unknown between a two month period, being the Om budsm an, misappropriated a particular sum which had been entrusted to him for payment to eit her Christopher Peacock or Melron Nicol Wilson as monthly salary having falsely represented that they were both employed by the Office of the Ombudsman.

The charges were put to the Accused and the 15th plea taken on the day of July 2008. Thereaf ter,, this Court made an Order as cour se for trial by Judge alone instead of by Ju dge and Jury pursuant to an application in writing - made by th Attorney-General Mini\$ter of Justice under Section 144(2) of the Criminal Procedure Act NO. 32 of 1965, as repealed and replaced by Section 3 of the Crim inal Procedure Amendment Act N0.11 of In the circumstances, therefore. throughout the trial, this Court proceeded both as a Tribunal of Fact and as a Tribunal of Law.

Howeve r, before the trial itself commenced, cert ain preliminary matters had to be dealt with as can be seen from the following sequence of proceedings. On the 18th day of July 2008, Ms Glenna Thompson made an opening statement for the Prosecution outlining the method of execu tion of the Prosecution case. Then Couns el Mr. J. S. Jenkins Johnston, who led the defence team, applied for an adjournment on the basis that the defence team had not had enough time to study all the papers served on them only within the past forty eight hours. The application was grant ed and, taking into consideration the long vacation of the Court, the case was

adjourned to the 18th of September 2008. On that day aforesaid, Dr.Jabbl, who now led the defence team, raised a preliminary jurisdictional objectior1 prernised on the ground that the entire action covering all the 168" counts is entirely and absolut elytime barred in terms of Section 2, subsections (1) and (2) of the Public Officers Protection Act, Cap. 172 of the Laws of Sierra Leone. • .: Submissions were made by

both Dr. Jabbi and Ms Glenna

Thompson and the mat t er

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.wa s re\$erved for Ruling. Oh the 9th day of Oct ober 2008, this C9urt delivered a Ruling dismissing the pr elimin ry jurisdict iona I objection ground, Inter alia, that the Accused on th.e can not take umbrage under the statutory protection given to public officers under Sect ion 2 subsections (1) and (2) of the Public Offi cer s Prot ection Act, Cap. 172 of 1960 as amended by the Limit atio n Act, No. 51 of 1961. Thereafter, Dr. Ja q bl announced their intention to appeal aga in st the Ruling and craved the Court's discretion to grant a stay of proceedings as to the trial pending hearing and determinat io n of the appeal. Needless to say, the State vehemently opposed the said applicat ion on the ground that the High Court does not have an

inherent jurisdiction to grant a stay of proceedings in criminal matters. •O the 16 th day of October, 2008 I deHvered a Ruling refusing the - defence application for stay of trial proceedings and I ordered that the case against the Accused Francis A. Gabbidon on charges of misappropriat ion of public funds cont_rary to Section 12(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act , 2000 as am ended, shall proceed forthwith. Therealter, the ·Pr psecut ion began leading evidence on the said 16 day of Octobet, 2008.

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I is the State which bri this case and it bears ng s

the burd n of proving beyond a reasonable cfoubt ever ye_lement of the off ence with whi h the Accused is charged and it is for tfie St at e to s?tisfy t he. Court so that it is sure of the Accused person's guilt. This burden of proving the guilt of the Accused rests with the State and continues throughout.

The leading authority is the case of <u>Woolmington v, DPP</u> [935] A.C. 462, HL wherein it was stat'ed that "throughout the web of the English criminal law one golde nthread Is always to be seen, that It Is the duty of the prosecution to prove the prisoner's guilt (subject to

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_the qualification Involving the defence of insanity and to any statutory exception). If at the end of and on the whole of the case, there is a reasonable doubt, created by the evidence given either by the prosecution or the prisoner, as to whether (the offence was committed by him), the prosecution has not made out the case and the prisoner is entitled to an acqult tal. No matter what the _charge or where the trlal, the principle that the prosecution must prove the guilt of the prisoner is part of the common law of England and no attempt to whittle it down can be entertained." (per Viscount ankey LC. at pp. 481--t:182).

On the st a n d ar d of p ro o f, Denning J. in Miller v.

Ministe r of Pensions [1947] 2 All E.R. 3'72 at pp.

373-374 st9ted that: "It need not reach certainty, but it must carry a high degree of probability. Proof beyond reasonable doubt does not mean proof beyond the shadow of doubt. The law will fail to protect the community if it admitted fanciful possibilities to deflect the cours€ of justice. If the evidence is so strong against a man as to leave only a remote possibility In his favour which can be dismissed with the sentence 'of course it is p.ossible but not the least probable', the case is proved

eason able doubt, but nothing short of that will suffice".

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To prove its case the State has relied on the evi dence of 9 witrJesses as follows:

. PW1 - Sheku Kamara

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PW2 - Issa Dauda Kanu-

PV1/3 - James Kamara

PW4 - Haroun Al·r asch id Sherfff

PWS - Alieu Badara Gibril

PW6 - Marie Elaine Dumbuya

PW7 - M. elr on Nicol Wilson

PW8 - Christopher James Peacock

 $p_w\ g$ - Victoria Aminata Mansaray

The State also tendered in evidence various documents such as Exhibits. Al-A161:The

r-ecord ed in terview given by the Accused; Exhibit s B1-B 12: Status Report on the office of the Ombudsman of Sierra Leone; Exhibit C: Letter of Appoint mentas Om budsman; Exhibit DI -D3: urriculum Vitae of Christopher Peacock; .: Exhibit E: Accoun.tant General Vote Serv(ce Ledger; Ex hibit .F: Letter addressed- to . Mr. M Nicol Wilson Re: Appointment as an I ovestiga or ; Exhibits G1-G62:Salaries of Staff -The Office of the Ombudsman: Exhibits H1-H3: .Acc,ountant General's Department - Payment to t t1-e. Office of the Om budsm an; Exhibit s J1 -J18: Account nt General's Department - salaries . verfficati on and approval Form; Exhibit P: Letter wr•itten by Christopher J. Pe a co ck to Peep N ws Magazine; Exhibit Q: Letter from Francis Α. Gabbidon the Spectator to Newspap er ; Exhib i.t R: Peep Magazi ne dated Friday November 9, 2007; Exhibit -S: Letter from C.J., Peaco ck Esq. to Frari¢f.s..A . Gabbidon Re: Demand for a written 'd fscl aim er in a - local tabla.id having wide

rrculat i on and readership -- Reply tO Letter dated 7th December 2007; Exhibit T: Letter from

Francis A. Gabbidon to CJ.Peacock; Exhibit U:The \$pectator News Paper dated 21-11-07; Exhl b.i t V: Awoko Newspaper dated Friday November 16, 2007; Exhibit W: Peep newspaper dated Friday D cember 14, 2007; Exhibit X: Recom mendation made by Francis A. Gabbidon on behalf of C.J. Peacock and Exhibit DD which js a Letter from NASSIT to the Ombudsman dated 19thAugust 2005 Re: Non Registration of E:m ploy ees for Social Security.

The facts of this case as presented by the Pr osecut ion can be seen through the evidence of PW4, PW5, PW6, PW7 and PW8 together with this triangle Ai -58, B, E, F, G1-62, H and J. Briefly f.) Ut, it is the prosecution's ca_se that Exhibits G1-621 which are the paid-up salary voluchers, were sign ed month after month from 2001 to 2007 with the names of Messrs Christopher Peacock and Melron Nicol Wilson who were said to have been employees at the Office of the Ombudsman

and with ifn insc'ripti on to acknowledge receipt of the said salaries; that at the end of each month, the Accused will claim to have paid -9. $\dagger p$ Fe aco k and Mr. Nicol Wilson who tte had . presented to Government were employees of the Office of the Ombudsman; that the Accused would sign the paid up salary vouchers, thereby att esting to that fact and by so doing triggering -the release of quarterly funds to his Offic;::e. Both Messrs Christopher Peacock and Melron Nicol Wilson denied ever having seen the vouch ers let ato ne sig ning the set so far as it was put o the Accuse de that the signatures were put there by hin1, the Accused denied it but went on to state . th the believed they were the signatures of Messrs Nicol Wilson and Peacock.

PW4 Haroun Alraschid Sheriff testified that he is a civil servant attached to the Accountant General's pffice and he confirmed that since the inception of the Office of the Ombudsman sometir:ne around 2001, it received quart erly a llo cations from the Goy er nm ent of Sierra Leone through his department. He produced in evidence the salary verification and approval forms (Exhibits JI-18) and the -records of payment to

: • · · the Office : of the Ombudsman (Exhibits HI-3). He stat ed further that payments were paid into Sierra L o'ne Comm ercial Bank account number 10092.92 which is the account of the Office of the Om budsman. He said these payments made on quarterly basis but sometimes when there is a cash prob'lem in the country they pay on a monthly basis. He further testified that in 2006 all four quarters totaling Le129: 000,0.00.00+ were paid and in 2007 for the first three quarters, the sum of Le108, 139,308.00 was paid as salary grant to the Office of the Om bud sm an. He gave evidence of other similar payments ma e since 200-1. This evidence shows cat egoricall y that the money used for salaries was from the Government of Sierra Leone. Further i'n his evidence he was able to explain to the Court. the process involved in getting the salary alloc; ation from government. referred o Exhibit J6 and- he stated as foll ows:

"There are names o_n that document. Under Accountant the first name is Mr. Chr istop her Peacock a d a basic salary of Le1, 650,000 is stated. Deductions were m ade and the net payment is for Lel, 574,313. The name Immediately below -retired civil servant is Mr. M. Nicol Wilson and his basic salary is

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Le1, 099,998 and deductions were rrrnde and the net was Le1,188,062. Below Mr. Peacock's name the designation is "Lawyer" and below Mr. Nicol Wilson the designation is

It is pertinent to note that PW4's evidence was not challenged by the Defence at all as he ws not Cross examine d.

PWS was 'Alieu Badara Gibril the Accountant in the Office of the Ombudsman. He was able to .9ive ari overview of how the accounting system worked in the office. He stated that the office by the Accused ru0 who was. was the vote controller and under whose instructions he operat:eq. He said his responsibility was to sign cheques, prepare- payment vouchers, prepare cornmitment forms and write up payment vouchers for other charges to be taken to he Acco unt ant. General's department. He said he signe d the cheques together with the Accused

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and that at times the Accused instructed him to just sign blank cheques. He stated that salaries were p_aid to the staff by the Accused and they were asked to sign on the paid up vo.uchers and

that the names on the vouchers were never reject ecj by the Accountant General's depart ment because the procedure was followed and they did the frect presentation to the Account ant General's of fice. He referred to Exhibit GI as the

pa n vouche r the month of March 2003. He said he recognized his name and that he hc;td signed against it. He then stated as follows:

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"TI)e .n-ame after that Is Mr. Peacock with a basic salary of LeS00,000 and a net pay of Le408,333.

There is a signature against Mr. Peacock 's salary and it implies that he has already received his salary. Number 4 is Mr. M. Nicol Wilson with a basic-salary of Le333, 333. His net pay is Le283, 333 and there is a signature there. On the next page the computation for March 2003 amounts to Les, 687,500. I prepared it and it was approved by the Ombudsman Mr. Francis Gabbidon..."

Testifying further, PWS said there were 12 names on the v ouchers every month and those vouch ersincluded the names of Christopher Peacock and M. Nico I Wilson. He said he did not know these two as staff members in the Office of the Om bu dsm an. He said he had never seen Mr. Nicol we ilson or Mr. Peacock in the Office of the

Om buds m an al th oug_h he knew who they- were.

He stated that neither Mr. Peacock nor Mr. Nicol Wilson operat ed from their office nor did either of them have any relationship with the office. In fact, unde r cr o.ss examination he stated that he knew their names from the salary paid up vouchers. He denied ever taking salary to Mr. Nicol Wilson or ever telling the accused that Mr. Nicol Wilson had declined his salary and had instead asked for it to be paid to charities. When the Accused put it to him that every month during the pe,riod in quality is given him

monies to give to Mr. Nicol Wilson as salaries, PWS em phatica II y yelled out the words "No, not in my life". He went on to state that he prepared vouchers with their names on it but that it was the Accused who made all the payments and whenever the Accused paid salaries, he would claim that he was going to pay the other staff c.1t

thefre various places of work. He referred to
Exhibit G58 and after pointing out the names of
Mr Christopher Peacock and Mr. M. Nicol
Wilson and their salaries he read out the
following
words:

"and I hereby certify that each of the above positions exist during the period stated and the employ ment was duly authorised by the Ombudsman".

pws explained that this was the endorsement before the words "approved by Francis Gabbidon". Heat hen refer red to Exhibit G59 and he said the name son number 2 and number 4 are Mr. Chr1stopher Peacock and Mr. M Nicol Wil.son respectiviily. Their sign atures are attached and these words appear:

"Also we [ler by certify t_hat each of the above named persons have been emp/oyed in the capacity and during the period stated and that the employment was duly authorised. We will personally be held liable_if a Name in the voucher is not a genuine Staff".

PWS said the endorsement was signed by himself and M·r. Francis Gabbidon. He said he signed first and later it was approved by the Accused. He emph-asi zed that the procedure for approval is that one pannot take these vouchers down to the

Accountant General's department without both of the m si'gning and the Accused approving after ensuring that each member of staff h s signed for his/her salary. HE. confirmed that this was the pattern followed since 2001 to date.

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Under cross examination, by the Accused in person, PWS m-aint ained that Mr. Peacock had no relations ip with the office. He said he only kno ws that Mr. Peacock's name and that of Mr. Nicol Wil on's were on the vouchers and that that . . ad been the case for the past eigh t years. He

categ oricall y denied the suggestion by the Accused that every month he had given him monies to give to Mr. Nicol Wilson and that Mr. Nicol Wilson had always said he would rather give the alaries to charities.

Let us pause at this stage and take a brief -look at Exhi_bits G1 - 62. and .the endorsement at the back .of each voucher. The following words appear.:

Below these words appear two signatures: "Prepard by A. Gibril" (PWS) and "Approved by . . F. Gab.bidon" (the a<=:cused).

This the prosecution submitted shows clearly that it was done on the instructions of the Orn bulds man whose approval not only appeared but was the most import nt signature there. PWS worked under the direction of the Ombudsman and therefore the vouchers were prepared under his directives.

Pw6 was Ms Marie Dumbuya. She was the Con Ad ent ialSecretary, first to the Accused guring his legal practice and she was later

subsurTied: into the Office of the Ombuds man. she said she started working for the Accused in 1980 and in April 2000 the Accused switched over her appointment to the Office of the Ombudsman. She testified that she was never given a letter of appointment by the Office of the Ombud_s.m an even though the Accused had given

.her letters of appointments, including hers, to type. She -st at ed further that salary vouchers for

ty'ping we-re given to her by Mr. Gibrll to whom they had been passed by the Accuse d. As far as she could recollect, since the Office started in April 2 00 0she could remember the staff as follows: Mr. Francis Gabbidon was the head of the Offi c.e and the Vote Controller, Mr. Gibril was Accountant, she was the Confidential Secretary, Mr. Saidu Bangura the messenger and one Mr. Isdand Baimba whom she said left between 2003 -2004. She said when Mr. Baimba left there we re only three members of staff until May 2008. PW6 went on to state that she is aware o'f the close personal relationship Accu sed, has with both Mr. Nicol Wilson and Mr. Peacock, but she m aintained that they were not employee s of the Office of the Ombudsman. She said she was not aware that monies were sent to Mr. Nic:0.1 Wilso n and Mr.' Peacock on a monthly basis from April 2000 to December 2007, PW6

identified Exhib it G3 and then went on to state inter alia:

\I see Exhi bit G3. My name is there. No 2 is Peacock and No 4 is Nicol Wilson; Of the 12 nam es I recogni ze Mr. Gibr il the Accountant, Saidu Bangura the Messenger, Isdand Baimba the other Messenger and my name as Confident ial

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Secretary. These are the people I recognize as being staff members of the Office of the Om budsman. I see sl-gnatur es against their names 6ut these two, i.e. Peacock and Nicol WJI son, to my knowledge, were not staff members"

She was rand_omly showed different other .Exl)ibit s .such as G30, G59, Gl , G60, G2 and G3 and she sa.id these were the sort of vouchers that

they signed month after month on the receipt of salaries. She further testified that in each case, eyery month she would see 12 names on the list.

She said that she typed the salary vouchers and sl,e 9ot he information through Mr. Gibril who in turn •had got the information from the Accused.

Under cr0\$S examination the witness confirmed tl at ·t he- office was very tight' and she recalled that lette rs had been written asking for She said she could recognize Mr. Nicol Wilson and Mr. Peacock; that Mr. Nicol Wilson normafly wen t to the office during the period Accused was Om b. udsm an; that as far as she could recollect Mr. Peacock only came to the office twice; 'that she could not recollect the Accused seri'ding people to Mr. Peacock dl,. Jring his period as Ombudsman although he drd so when he was a: lawyer. When pressed further by the Accused PW 6 retorted that the Accused had sent mat ters that were riot within their jurisdiction Peacock. On being questioned about the relation ship between the Accused and Mr. Nicol Wilson she said "being the Director of LAWCLA anct'y.ou being the Ombudsman I believe that was • the relationship you had wi h Mr. Nicol

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• w i!"son. I don't recall your r la ionship with Mr. Peacock."

On-this point, in her closing Address, Ms Glenna Thon1pson for the Pr osecu t i on submitted that even if Messrs Nicol-Wilson and Peacock were employed by the Office of the Ombudsman, but due to short age of space had to work elsewhere, both Mr. Gibril and Ms Dumbuya wo.uld have.

nown about it. In eight years they must have tome across it, di_scusse.d it or at the very least heard about it. Counsel further submitted that it is no t a criminal offence to have such an arrangement and if it did exist there would have been no reason for any of the witnesses to conceal. /t or deny its existence. She submitted that this arrangement imply did not exist and has be n put forward as an explanation by the Accu\$ed to explain away his crim in alit y.

PW7 Melron Nicol Wilson is one of the persons the Prose cut ion says was falsely inserted as an n1ployee by the Accused and by doing SO misappropriated funds belonging to Gove rn m en t of Sierra Leone. PW7 categorically denied any suggestion that he ever worked for the Office of the Ombudsman. He had never seen any 9f Exh ib i ts GI-62 nor signed any of them. He denied that the signature which appeared against his **na** me was h is . He said he did not receive any payrnents from the Office of the Ombudsman and that he did not have a relationship with Mr. Gibril or any of her person- working in that office. I ndeed; even in cross examination by the Accu-se d, he stated that he was never specifically asked to investigate any matter by him. The Accused has strenuously sought to explain the inclusio'n of Nicol Wilson as a staff member

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such matters with high priority and on a probona basis and so the question of payment never arose.

The Accused has tendered in evidence the Annual Report 9'f LAWCLA 2()03 (Exhibit N) in which the Otfice of the Ombudsman is listed amongst the "funders of LAWCLA." This Mr. Nicol Wilson explained was a printing __and should read error

"those LAWCLA cooperated with".

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The accused asked for the statement of this witness to be tendered and it was tendered as Exhibit K. I have perused the said statement and

I ffnd that there is no I.nconsistency between the stat em ent and the evidence given in court, nor ... wa-s that put to the witness. Mr. Nicol Wilson both in his statement and his vidence before the Court described the relationship he had with the Accused as a "professional relationship for many years" and not that of an employee/employer . r-etationship.

. .'

Under cross exan1ination by the Accused PW7. 9enied the suggestion that monthly payments were made to him through Mr. Gibril for the ervice rendered.

He said "monthly payments wer e not made to me by any official working in

the Office of the Ombudsman for services rendered, to that Off ice, "He also denied the sug gestfo n by the Accused that whenever monies were paid to him he would decline to accept them but rather make them as donations to char i ties . He said he did not recall having such discussions with the official whohas Gibril referred to as-Mr. and working as Accountant in the Office of the Om budsman. He concluded by stating that the Accused has been very supportive of LAWCLA but that there has never been any fi nancial transaction between the two institutions.

Next to take the stand was PW8 Mr. Christopher Peaco c . He gave.evid.ence and, like Mr. Nicol

. Wilson, he denied ever being an employee of the Office of the Ombudsman. By way of backgr ou nd, the Prosecution tendered various newspaper articles and exchange of letters between the Accused and Mr. Peacock. These are

Exhi bi t s P to X. The laccused has sought to main t ain that payment was made because he sent cases to Mr. Peaclock. Mr. Peacock denied ever receiving cases from the Accused and went on tt> say" that he was consulted and his services paid for by the clients. He gave a narrative of his reaction and what transpired alter he became ware_via a newspaper article that his name had been used as an employee of the Office of the Om bu dsm an. This culminated in the letter of disclaim err written by the accused. This letter was ad1Tlit ted in evidence as Exhibit P. The Accused in

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his tj f nce explained that Mr. Peacock was annoyed because he had broken a promise he.

m_ ade at the time of employing him that he will no reveal that he, Peacock, worked for the Office of the Ombudsman. The Prosecution subm! tted that even allowing for the possibility that this statement might be true, how practical was it if the accused sent "many cases" to Mr. Peac_oc k in secret. Surely, those people who were

referred to, him would have known that Peacock was working for him. Secondly, it is not a crime to work, so why would Mr. Peacock ask for the gr eement to be kept confidential. "Prosecution further submitted that the Accused would have included that in Exhibit P because wit hout it, it gave the impression that there was som e dishonest wrong doing on the part of the further Accused. Counsel submitted that the Accu sed would not have left himself open to a crif0inal charge to honour- a confidentiality agr eem.ent he made with Mr. Peacock. Like PW7; PW8 also denied ever seeing Exhibits Gl-62 or ever signing any of the vouchers. He did not recognize the signature appended against his name. PW8 was very emphatic in his denial and he had this to sav:

form of emolurnents from that office in the form of salary, wages, honorarium, consultancy fees, retainer ship fees or allowances or end of service benefits.

• 1 have never signed any form of documents as a recipient of any form of moneys relating to that office.

I have never part icipat ed in any form of activities organized by the Off ice of the Ombudsman."

In his- submissions to the Court the Accused has

as k_ed the Court to believe that Mr. Christ opher Peacock was an employee of the Office of the Ombudsman. He said that this arose by an agreement betwe-en him and Peacock. He

submitted further that as the Office of the Ombudsman generally operates on the principle ofconfidentiality and in order for Peacock's cHent's generally not to know, and also for tax avoidance reasons, it' was agreed for it not to be in writing or formal. He said that this might be improper but it was not ill egal or crim in al.

It is pertinent to note that the Accused himself conducted the cross examination of PWS Alieu Badara Gibril, PW6 M rie Elaine Dumbuya, PW7 Melron Nicol Wilson and PW8 Christopher James Peacock. In my considered view nothing in the cross examination by the Accused could dent thes witnesses' evidence. They all came across as credible and reliable witnesses and the Court accept s -their evide nce. In any event, it se ms to me, and my view is buttressed by the questions put to these witnesses by the Accused, that the cross examinat ion was reduced to get ting the witnesses to confirm the good relationship they had enjoyed with the Accused and the fact that .. he had always been good to them had help d them to further their careers.

The last witness for the Prosecution was PW9 Vi.cto-r-ia Am inat a Mansaray, a NASSIT Of fi cial who gave evidence on the 15th January 2009. She conffrmed that the Office of the Ombudsman did not register its employees for NASSIT payment.

She pr'oduced and tendered Exhibit DD which she said was a let ter written formally to the Office of the Onib d rnan after several oral reque\$ts to hem to register their employees and to regist er their \nstitution. Under cross examination the Accused put it to the witness

that they never

: i ec eived Exhibit DD. She answered that they did and to this letter was attached the registrat io n form for the employees.

Α nds: by t the • The Court has no jurisdiction to try the case. The proper forum for this matter С n П should be a Tribunal appointed by the wa President to investi gat e allegations of 0 S misconducts, to wit, acts of a-ll eq e q S un corrupt ion and misappropriation by him е re as the fon11er Ombudsman. pr matter . of public 110 As a policy, the t es when Ombudsman, like a Judge. h ent performing his functions should not be е ed sued or prosecuted In the Courts of Law.) No consent or fiat has been proved in P on Court as part of the p roceedings. r th е. 0 In the Prosecution's response, Counsel Glenna 29^t S Thori)pson pointed out that the issues which form h. е the basis of the submissions of the Defence are a С da repeat of the issues contained in the submission s u У the Accused at the 111ade by Counsel for t of beginni-ng of this trial in their preliminary i Ja jurisdictio nal objection, the subject of which is 0 th e basis of an appeal before the Court of Appeal nu and an application for a stay of proceeding n ary Supr eme Court. s befor e the 20 Counsel further 09 S ma de 19 С a a no S ca е se SU bm Α is С ion С pr U em S ise е d d on the (foll W OW h ing 0 gr ou

s ubm itt ed that in no case submissions the g idelines laid down In the case of R v. Galbraith

(73 C_. Ap p. R. 124, CA) sho-uld be used and since those guidelines have not been the subject o_f t h i s n.o case submission, it should be taken that the Defence does not challenge the facts of this case as being capable to be put before the Ju'dge to det er m in e guilt or innocence.

Suffice it *to* say that after careful consideration of II the submissions made by the Accused. as "Defence Reply to close- of Prosecution's case" I delivered a Ruling on the 9th day of February 2009 in which I held- that the Accused has a case

On the .11th day of February, 2009 the Ace used was put to his election in accordance with the provisions of Section 194 of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1965. He was also informed of his cright to Cal witnesses on his behalf, irrespective of which ever option he chose in presenting his case: The Accused elected to give evidence on

oath and to call witnesses. On that day th /.\ccused . was represented QY Counsel Leon Jenk ins Johnston.

to answer.

The Accused testified that he is a Barrister and Solici tQr with 37 years post call experience having been called to the Barrat Gray's Innon he 2nd day of July 1972. He gave a brief overview of the vear ious positions he has held; name-ly, that he is a member of the Sierra Leone Bar: Association of which he was President twice; a member of Commonwealth Lawy ers Association; the first Sierra Leonean to be a rnern ber of the International Barrassociation of which he was an executive member; also a

(f) em ber of the West African Bar Association; a Notary Public; a Commissioner of oaths; the Chairm an of the Committee of Lawyers that draft_ed tt)e Legal Practitioner's Act; that he was

also te-aching at the Sierra Leone Law School and he al-so taught Media Law Et hies and Law of Intetnational .Property at Fourah Bay College for four: ano a half years w•thout salary b t that he was asked to stay away until after this case ends. He stated that being a Notary Pu blic ent ails nota ri zing documents and affidavits especially those used outside the country; that in the case of being a Com missioner of Oaths when the appends his signature and notarizes these documents it means everything has been properly and regularly done and that it is a mark of the fourth of the signature.

The Accused further testified that he was ppointed as Ombudsman in April 2000. Prior to that he said he had been informed by the then Government of Sierra Leone that they wou_ld like to promote him to the Bench or make him the first Ombudsman of Sierra Leone. He said he opte8 be first Ombudsman because he felt it was a challenging job. He identified Exhibit C

. as his appointment tetter and he stated that even though it. was dated 21s ^t De cem ber 2000 he act uall y_ start ed work on 1st April 2000: He referred to the 2nd paragra ph of Exhibi t C where there is reference to office accomm odation and **he** said there was no office all ocat ed to hin1 and so he had to resort to using his own priv ate office at No. 84 Dundas Street, Freetown. He said this was unlike the Human Rights Commissio n the ACC and the IMC which were

provide.d with offices. He said he complained

about this on severally occasion\$ yerbally and in writing but they sHd n ot h i n g virtually. He produced and tender ed a'l etter dated 10/5/1001 by one

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Mr. Wellington who was? Cting as Permanent Secretary at the time he was complainting about accommodation and office spac the said letter was a9mitted as Exhibit EE. The Accused also tendered as Exhibit if FF a letter dated 1/10/02 which he had written to the then Minister of Housing. He said it was a not orious fact that his office was the ONLY one that was not given the seriousness that it deserved.

Various oth r issues which the Accused brough t up in his d fence can be summarized as follow s:

- That the Office of the Ombudsman was not provided with space by the Government of Sierra Leone;
- That the Office was not provided with staff by the governn1ent of Sier ra
 Leon e;
- That the office was inadequately funded by the government of Sierra Leone:
- That neither PWS nor PW6 ever complained or put any disclaim er on any financial matter;
- That he used to help both PWS and PW6;
- That the office was never que simed by Parliament or by the Accolunt ant
 General's Office;
- That there was no Permanent Secretary;
- That there was no Vote Controll er;
- That PW6 left his employment In 2008

 That he was not sworn in as Ombudsman after the first term can1e to an end in 2004 and that since there was a violation of the Om budsm an 's Act and the Parliamentary Procedure and Approval, all acts and things done by him after that period was unconstitutional, void and of no effect.

It is my view, however, that none of these issues raise diaddress the fundamient all question of whether the accused is guilty of the offences charged. Moreover, the Court has take nijudicial notice that, notwfthstanding the fact that he had not be nisworn In, the Accused at all material time is acted as Ombudsman (including signing cheques and letters from the Office). Uncler cross exan'll night ation the accused accepted that he was on misudem and for the entire period. He continued to perform the functions of On1budsman, to refer to himself as such and to answer to the title. He annot how, out of convenience, claim not to

The Accused also tendered a number of documents namely:

Exhibit K: The recorded interview given by

have been Ombudsman at the mat erial time. J

the Rep blic of Sier ra Leone and I so Hold.

find that he was at all times the Om budsm an of

Melron Nicol Wilson

Exhibit L: Letter from Francis Gabbidon to

Melron Nicol -Wilson

Exhibit M: Eighteen Month Report - Lawyers

Centre for Legal Assistance

Exhibit N: Annual Report 2003-The Lawy

ers Centre for Legal Assist ance.

Exhibit O: Donation to Cent refrom Peter Harrison

Exhibit Y: Peep Maga zi ne dated

Wednesday November 21, 2007

Exhibit Z: Handwritten Pro'file of CJ .Peacock . Exhibit AA: Writ *pf* Summons attached to lett er from C.J. Peacock to Mr. Gabbido

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Exhibit 8B1- 8B2: Letters from C. F. Peacock dated 24lh January, 2002 to the Attorney General.

Exhibit CC1-CC2: Let ters. from C.F. Peacock dated 27thAugust 2001 Re: Sale of Blue Mercedes Benz 230

to Mr. Lansana R_ogers
Letter from the Ministry of

Presidential Aff airs to Francis

Gabbidon dated 10/5/01

Exhibit Ff: Letter from the Om budsman

to the Mi.nist er of Hous.ing and

Environment dated 1/ 10/ 02 Exhibit GG: Letter from the Ag. Permanent

Secretary to the

President dated 11/2/02

Ex hi it HH: Letter to Mr. Fran cis Gabb

idon

From Ms Marie Dumbuya dat ed

Exhibi t JJ: 20/5/08

Letter from the Secretar y to Ombudsmar\ to the Financial

Secretary .dated 4/6/01

Exhib it .KK1 - KK2 : Om budsm an Annual Rep ort

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Dated 1/1/02 and 1/ 1/ 03

E.xhibit LL: Letter from Mathias Tumwesigye

Director Education & Prev ent ion of Cor ru pt io n, Ins pe cto rat e of

of Gov er nment , Kam pala,

Uganda

I hav e perused all of t em and wish to st ate that, for an intent and purposes, the majority of these docu.m ents were intended to show the constraints wnd 'r which the Office of the Ombudsman worked. The Accused has put a lot of emphasis on Exhibit LL which is a letter dated 26 June, 2002 from a Co0sult ant sent by the Commonwealth Secr etariat to assess the office of the Om bu dsn, an. his . clo ing .argu m en t s, the Accused . s ated that he . Report of Mathias Tumweslgve clearly • stated that there were t wo Lawyers in the staff of the Office of the Ombudsman in Sierra Leone. He two Lawyers submitted that thereferred are

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Chri st opher' Peacock and Melron Nicol Wilson and that they had to work elsewhere. In any event, none of this was put to either Mr. Nicol Wilson or Mr. f: e acock. Counsel for the Pro sec ut ion has urged t11e Cour t to conclude that the contents therein of E_xhibit LL could only have come from the Accused

hirn self and, is further evidence of the elaborate and expansive web he weaved in order to deprive the \$\text{state} and now deceive the Court.

The Accused has denied all 168 counts against him and -h e said he did not r:nisappropriate public funds because he had no reason to do so. He said he paid both Mr. Nicol Wilso n and Mr. Peacock for work they did for the Office of the Om bu dsm an. He testified that the Office of the Ombudsman started off with abotJt 5 - 6 st aff and then increased to about 12. He said spol e to Mr. Nicol Wilson and Mr. Peacock about the possibility of working t oget her with then1. He also said that he enjoyed a good and excellent

re; lationship with both Mr. Nicol Wilson and M.r. P.eacock and that they did work and co-operate toget her . T he. Accused explained that he was the Chairm an of LAWCLA and if there were complaints . . n ot within the mandate of the Offi.ce of til e Ombuds an they sent them to LAWCLA. He said there was no money involved in some matt er s b ut they paid Mr. Nicol W.ilson for other matters but Mr. Nicol Wilso n never took any cent from them and t ia t I, h ad to ld them he was doing it pro bono and that I) e always said the n1oney was to be given to cl1ari ies. The Accused further testified that k ows that Mr. Nicol Wilson never took the money ,b t i t was Mr. Gibril, the Accountant, who handled t,he issu e o the payment to charit ies such as the Amputees and the Blind. ie said the staff was paid by ca sh. an d. that there were no payments by .'Ch e ques • except for his own s alary. He stated that when all the staff had been paid Mr. Gibril would p: , @ are a return form for the next salary pay n1en t and he would enter everybody's nam e and then e:itll er Mr. ibril or himself would tak e it for the

staff to append their signatures to show they had been paid previous salari es. He said if this is not done then the next salaries would not be paid.

It is not e worthy that the accused has atterr,pted to lay the bla! The at the door step of Mr. Gibri!. The at: cused in his e v iden ce s t ated that all the vouchers were prepared by Mr. Gibril and that Mr. Gibril set the salary and the reviews of each salary. I find this ur, i true and I so hold. For a start, the accused by his own admission stated in cross examination that Mr. Gibril work ed runder his direction and that he, the

ac used, was the l,ead of the office. This negates any notion put forward by the accused that offences complained of were the fault *bf* Mr.Gibril. Indeed it make s nonsense of the claim by the accused that Mr. Gibril was responsible for setting the salary levels of Messrs Nicol Wilson and Peacock.

.In the case of Mr. Peaco k, the Accused said he knew Mr. Peacock for tt1e first time in 1998 when the was his student at the Law School where he lectured him on the Law of Evidence. He stated that when he became Ombudsman he told Mr. Peacock there was provision for a Law yer/ Legal / Adviser in the Office of the Ombudsman and he asked hirr1

whet her he would be interested. He said Mr. ·Peacock said "yes" but then told him there were difficulties because he would not like it to be made that the relationship and confidential because he would not like his clients or .tax p eo ple tb be made aware of this. The Accused said Mr. Peracock did accept the work and that he received salaries monthly which started off wit h LeL00,000 - Le250,000 and then increased toabout Le350,000. He was shown Exhibits Gl-62 and he identified them as payment vouchers. He -\$aid he had nothing to do with those vouchers; that he did not sign besides Mr. Peacock's name and that he was not the Vote Controller. Under cross e x am inat i on the Accused was shown Exhibit G39 which • bears the figure Le524,771 agai nst .Mr . Peacock's r.ame and he was asked whether he stood by the amount of Le350,000 he had talked .a, bout earlier. He replied that he did not stand by that amount but he maint ained that "Christopher :,-P acock and Melron Nicol-Wilsonwer e 'bona fide' .em:ployees of the Office of the Om budsm an and t hey were regularly paid their salar ie-s of LeSOO, 000 . 00 and Le333 , 333.00 respective ly".

ac,cused accepts that the name of Mr. Nicol Wilson arid Peacock were inserted as employees. He insist s that the y w re employees and that he recruited, the m. It is inconceivable that either or both of these two gien lemen could have been employees of the office of the Ombudsman from 2001 to 2007, yet no one, except the accused himself, knew that they were employees. The prosecution has submitted that this assertion by the accused is completely untrue. I am inclined to believe so and my examination of the following pieces of evidence confirms this:

- **a.** The evidence of PWS, 6, 7 and 8
- b. The inconsistencies contain ed in *t he* Interview (Exhibit Al-58)
- C. Status Report (Exhibit B1-12)

1 h e. accuse called a Mr. Abdu l Babatu nde Gill en to gl 1e evide_nc On his behalf Mr. Gillen's evidence is t ha t h e is a Civil Society acti vist and was part of t ile

B 1d get .Ove 1ght Committee. The role of the .Comm_ itt e was to monit_or various government

pr.ojects and the government budget at the time of alfocation; when Ministries, Departments and Agencies would have to justify their budgets in order to receive their allocation. The Ombudsman would attend such meetings annually and woul

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have to j ust if y the activities that he had stated. He would be accompanied by Mr. Gibr il, the Accotrnt ant. The Importance of Mr. Gillen 's evidence i.s. that he stated that there was no investigation of what was told to them. He said they depended on the documents given to them and if they were dissatisfied they would ask for more documents.

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The'y did not seek to look beyo that which was _d presented _t them.

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Under cross examination he stated that they did spot checks during the year, but only to check that acti vit ies were being carried out as planned. If) the cas_e of the Ombudsman they visited his office to obtain mo.re copies of his annuar report and decided to E;:h eck his book. He saw his staff list which co'nt ain ed a lot of names but could only recall Mr. Gib r:-il and Ms Dumbuya, and he only saw a total of

- * 1 staff in t e office. They did no investi gation as to bow t he. money allocated was being spent. To n1y m_in.d,th s evid ence. shows that the accused has

been_ present ing his illflated .st af f ,li st .for government allocation year after year and had been using t his as a cover to perpetuate the fac;ade that l, e ran an office which included Mr. Nicol Wil son and Mr. Peacock, This inflated list was a m eans to being allocated m or e money than the office needed in order that he could m isappropriate and spend at hts whim.

t-o t an Accused to be convicted of an offence under section 12(1) of the Anti-Corrupti on Act 2000 as amended, the prosecution must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the funds were public funds, public revenly or property; that the Accused must have acted, wilfully, whether by himself with or through another person and that by his act ions. he has deprived the Government of such funds, rev nue or financial interest.

I shall now turn to examine all the elements of the offence which the Prosecution must prove.

Were the funds public funds ? -- There is no doubt that they were. In the first 1 ce the Office of the Ombudsman Is a public om e as can be seen from section 2 (2) of the Offi budsm an Act 1997 ... which states as follows: The Office of the Orn budsman shall be a pubii t office but shall not form .part · of the public seJVice". Further that s ame Ac t in section 20 stipul tes how the office is to be funded, which is by government f4nds. The administrative expenses of the Office of the including salaries. allowances. Ombudsman pensions, 1**İ** gratuities and anv. of Ombuds1T1an and his staff, Sfi'all be a charge on the Consoli dat ion Fund." Aisd section 1 of • tile Cor ru pt ion Act 2000 as amended (the interpretation section) deffnss public funds as

"any monies paid fro.m the .fUhti s appropriated by Parliament from the Conso't, Idated Fund or any fund und r subsectiop (2) of - se ction 111 of the Constitution." The e?idence given by P\N4 - Haroun Alrashid Sheriff - from the Accountant Genera'l's Qepartmer:t also ma es it clear that the Offi ce of the Ombudsman is and has always bee_n fully funded by the Government of Sierra Leone. This has been proved by the State.

Therefore, it logically follows that money misappr opriat ed .is always a loss to the Government of Sierra Leone. The definition of " misappropriation" i ; to be read in accordance with the case of R v. Gom ez (1993) 1 All ER 1. This case involved the delivery by the owner of eiectrical goods to 21 third party; paid for stolen cheques. to the .knowledge of and niachir:1ations of was Go,m ez. It held that ... "app ropriat ion" in the circ umstances of that case involves the assumption of the rights of the



owner by the Accused. It follows therefore that the wilful commission of any act which results in the owner losing funds belonging to it, amounts to misappropriation. The consent of the owner is irrelevant as was pointed out by the House of Lords in Lawrence v. Metropolitan Police Comniissioner (1971) 2 All ER 1253.

Was the act complained of wilful? Generally, it has been held that the act which causes deprivation of funds must be wilful. In the leading case of R.v.Sheppard (James Martin) [1981] A.C. 394 HL, the majority held that a man \wilfully" fails to provide adequate medical attention for a child if he either (a) deliberately does so, kriowing that there is some risk that the child's heal h may suffer unless he receives sue!, attention; or (b) does so because he does not care whether the child may be in need of medical treatment or not. The majority equated "wilfully" with common law recklessness. Lord Keith wl10 was in the majority had this to say:

"w- ilfully is a word which ordinarily carries a pejorative sense. It is used here to describe the mental element which, in additionto the fact of neglect must be proved....The primary meaning of 'wilful' is \deliberate'."

In the 2002 Edition of Blackst one's Criminal

Pr ctice, the Learned Editors have at paragraph . A-2.8 described 'wilful' as "a composite word to cover both intention and a type of recklessness".

Jt fol lows therefore that there must be proof theat the act was deliberate. The State has submitted that there is ample proof that the acts complained of were not a mistake but systematic

acts deliberately" planned and executed to deprive the Government of Sierra Leone. I agree entirely with this submission and it appears to me that the evidence of PV1 3 James Ka_mara and the Exhibits he tendered fully illustrate the deliberate acts being alleged by the Prosec ut i on.

- Fir stly there is the Vote Serv ic e Ledger { Exhibit E) : PWS, Alieu Badara Gibril was able to shed some light on this book. It contains the amounts given by Accountant General's Departn1ent with the signature of the accused appearing on The accused various pages. himself in his cross examination admitted the signatures to be his.
- b. Secondly, is Exhibit F which is the appointment purportedly given to Mr. Nicol Wilson. Mr. Nicol Wilson denied ever bein g given this letter. Also PW6 Ms Dumbuya had testified that she was never given a letter of appointment Office by the of Ombudsman even though the Accused had given her letters of appointments, includin9 hers, to type. The accused himself confirmed that both Mr. Nicol Wilson and Mr. Peacock given letters of were never appointment. This he stated in his interview (Exhibit Al - 58) and in crossexamination. The Court can only conclude

therefore, that Exhibit F was drafted and kept by the accused to give a semblance of legitimacy should he ever be investigated.

Was the act done by himself or through others? From the lotglity of the evid no eadduced I am satisfied that the Prosocution has proved beyond, reason able doubt that the act was done by the accused and through others, i.e. Alieu Gib_ri I and Marie Dumbuya,

who were used as instruments to further the grand plan. In Exhibit Al-58 (the interview of the acc ed at question 42) the accused said . "We ..utilized the services of Mr. Chri stopher Peaco ck who was employed by me on behalf of the O'ffice of the Ombudsman whereby he gave legal advice or second opinion if yVhen- necessar y." I answer to question 47," t h e accused stated that "Mr . Melron Nicol Wi.lson also helped with investigati ons especially in complaints and because I worked him Chairman of the withas of Directors of LAWCLA we he!p each. other if and

of PWS, It was put to him that he, PWS, took salary every month to Messrs Peacock and Nicol W-il son and that Nicol Wilson oonated it to charitis. This PWS denied in its entiret y. At the end- of each payment voucher is an official endorsement of the Office of the Ombu dsm a-n which was shown to- the accused In his i-nt erv iew at question 83. Here aga in the

accused confirmed that it was the official sta mp and h is signature and that it signified "that I m satisfied with the documents as presented to me by Mr. Gibril." Furtller the accused in cross examination accepted that he signed exhibits Gl-62 and that it signified that he approved of the information contained therein.- That signature at the back of each salary p ayment voucher goes ar beyond mere appro va I., Without it, the Accountant General's depar tm ent would not release the next trancll of the money due to the depart ment. The evidence of PWS also supports the prosecution 's ca\$e that the accused acted by . himself • and through others. PWS .stat ecJ that the names on exhibit Gl-62 were supplied .to 11in1 by the accused. That evidence went nchalien.9ed . These pieces of ev iden ce show that the accused acted by himself andby instructing ot hers to do so. This requirement of the Act is therefore satisfied.

Interest ingly, the Accused himself submitted in his dosi11g arguments that MS Dumbuya and Mr.: Gibril assisted him in the work at the office and t hey all worked voluntarily AS a team wit hou t any dissents or disapp ro v al; that they both were aware of what was going on in the Office; that Ms Dumbuya agreed to type their names on the Pay Sheet for nearly 8 years witho.ut qny objection, waiver or disclaim r; that Mr.: Gibril, the Accountant prepared the Pay Sheet with all the names, signed the document and other documents r elat ed to it and regularly took them to the Accountant-

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General's office of the Ministry of Finance verifyin-g that these doc ments were all in order, to receive orbe paid their respective is laries by the Accountant-General. The Accu_sed further submitted that they both had an qbligation to report any wrong doing, if there wa_s one, but that they failed or refused to do about that they should have been charged

joi_nt ly with hi'm as conspirators. Is this an admission of guilt? I must say that I find it difficult to decipher what defence the accused has put forward. To my mind, the fact that neither. PWS nor PW6 ever com plained does not mean the accused is not guilty as charged nor does that absolve the accused of his responsibilities as Ombudsman of Sierra Leone. fact they Were less likely to complain he was their Boss and he was given the due pect as. Head of Office.

Thot;tgh dishonesty is no specifically stated to be an element of the 9ffence under Section t 2(1)-, I am of the considered opinion that it would be inconceivable to convict the Accused of this offence in the absence of proof of dishonesty. The authority here is the decision of the English Court of Appeal (Crim-inal Div ision) . in the case of R.v. Ghosh (1982)' 2 ALL ER 689. It was held that the test wc1s first whether according to the ordinary standard of reasona.b le and honest people what was done was dishonest. "If it was not dishonest by thos e standards .then that is the end of the matter and the prosecution fails. If it was dishonest. by those standa rds, t hen tribunal must consider whether the defendant him:self. must have realized that what he was

doing was by those standards dishonest. In most cases where the actions are obviously dishonest by ordinary standards, there will be no doubt about it. It is dishonest to act in a way which he knows ordinary people consider to be pishonest, even if he asserts or genuinely believ es that he is morally j ustifi ed in acting as he did."

Judging from the facts of this case the accused acted in a dishonest manner. He knew that what he :was doing was wrong and indeed in his cross examination of Messr s Peacock and Nicol Wil?on he was more co-ncerned for them to ccept that they wer allfriends and he had

at on_e point done them favours and that now

heir evidence was a sign of ingratit ud e. He never once sought to challenge that the signatures on the paid up vouchers we_re those of the two witnesses as opposed to t he forgery which t he prosecution say it is.

On the issue of whether or not the Accused was a public officer the Prosecution submit ted that it is n ot necessary under sectio n 12 of the Ant i Corrupt ion Act 2000 as amended for the accused .to have been a public off icer at the , time of the commission of the offence. Be that as it may, the prosecution C0 8tends that the acciised was a public officer at the tim e of the commission of the offence, a fact that he himself has admitted to in the submissions made at the start of the trial on the basis that as a public officer he enj oyed immunity from prosecution by virtue of Cap.172 of the Laws of Sierra Leone 1960. If we were to look at the interpretation Act 1971 section 4, public office meanings given to it has the by

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Cbnstltution. Section 171 of the Constitution says that public office includes an *off ice* the emoluments attaching to which are paid directly ,from the Consolidated Fund or directly - u t of the moneys provided by Parliament. Th_i is supported by section 20 of the

Omqudsman Act aforesaid. Also evidence led in this trial by Haroun Sheriff (PW4) and the cross examination of Alieu Badara Gibril (PWS) prove 'that the entire budget of the office comes from the Consolidated Fund. Further a public qfficer is a holder of a public office, same as that contained in the Anti Cor rup tion Act 2000: The Ombudsman is therefore a public officer as he holds a public office.

The State has submitted that the accused has told a number of untruths in this case and these should not be reduced to merely an ad verse reflection of his credibility, but that these should be seen as evidence of his guilt.

the Court ought to be reminded that

Althoug h

people may lle to bolster up a just cause, out of shame, or out of . a wish to disgraceful behaviour, as per the directions in the case of R v. Lucas (1981) QB 720, 73 Cr. App. R. 159 CA these lies were deliberat e and were not told for an innocent reason. evade justice. The ratl.er to continually lied in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary that Messrs Peacock and Nicol Wilson were members of his staff. He forged documents to bolster that had falsehood and sought to bully wit nesses into accepting. his falsehoods by reminding them of all the good turns he had once done for them and the fr endship they had on<:e enjoyed. Also his explanations for their inclusion In his staff

list were very fluid and shifted - employ m en t, engagement and in his words °" qu asi-employee" . No questions were put in cross examination to any prosecution witness to suggest that the signatures were those of Messrs Nicol Wilson and Peacock. **Further** there has been no evidence put before Court to support the assertion by the accused that they were employees who were paid the paid-up monies stated in the vouchers. Judging from the totality of the evidence adduct before this Court 1. am considered view that the signatures are for geries -for which the accused is responsible

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devised an d that they were to give of legality and proper record appearance keeping for an' illegal act. Indeed in exhibit Al-58, in answer to question 83, wherein the paid up vouchers were put to him, the accused stat ed that the nc,1mes of all those listed on the vouchers payment were employees employed by the office of the Ombudsn1anat the time He further stated that "thernonies against the names were the

salaries and/ allowances they were entitled to receive during the period listed in the payment voucher. All amount listed

against their names were paid to them".

The entir'e account given by the accused is untr.ue. It is beyond belief that; the accused would be so alt ruistic that he would put himself through the humiliation and expense of a serious criminal trial because he wanted to honour some agreement with a lawyer much Junior to him and to whom he owes nothing, for a start the agreement was not illegal, so why was so much secrecy needed to

the point of subjecting oneself to the ordeal of a criminal trial with its attendant risks.

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SIm llar ly, the idea of donating one 's wages to e.h arities s ch as Amputees and the Blind should not have posed any problems if in deed

hat was what transpired. I nstead what the -Accused .w and ts this Court to believe is that Mr. Nicgl Wil son donat ed his wages to wort hy Causes but has now decided to deny his. Mr. Nicol Wilso n of cour se in evidence stated that he never received, salarie s nor did he donate them to any charities and furt her does not kno w Mr. Gibril who It was sai9 delivered his salary monthly. Mr. Gibril him.self denied ever taki ng money to deliver neither to Mr. Nicol Wil son nor of deliver ing money to' any char i ty. It is worth noting that the accused had said th at he would send Mr. Gibri I to Mr. Nicol Wilson each month whilst he stat ed in the witness.- box tha\ M!. Gibril took it there himself. This line .of. defence sim ply does not ma e sense. The 1 accused himself could not proquee any record to show that the monies were paid to charities and/or to whom. He could not even get the list of the charities straight. His account was vague, lacking in. detail and devoid of all credibility. The accused would like the court to accept that all the wit nesses of fact have all decided to come- to court to lie. It is as if there is a grand conspl acy by all the wit

court and commit perjury. It is the submission the State that n,'.)ne of the ese people had any reason to lie. The v all admitted having had a good relationship with him and in some cases to have benefited from his generosity. This was som thing which the accused himself

nesses to come to

managed to get out of every single witness of facf. It is therefore SimR!I hot true that they would come to court to lie. They had no reason to.

What I find overwhelm(ng in this case is the fact that the Office of Hie Om bu dsm an had given the Accused a chance to serve the societ y but he squandered it by allowing himself to be swayed by greed. If prot ector becomes perpetrator, the fl who will save the syste?

The Prosecution has ad8l1ted no evidence in support of the allegations tontained in counts 165-168.. I have therefore discountenanced these four counts and **dtitit** only with counts 1-164. From the totalit **bf** all the evidence adduced before the Cou'rf¥J am satisfied that the case against Francis A. Gabbidon has been proved beyond reasonable doubt. In the result, I hold that the Prosecution has proved its case against Francis A. Gabbidon beyond all rea\$On ab le doubt in respect of the 164 counts as charged in the Indictment. I therefore find the Accused guilty on each count from count 1 to count :164 and I convict him accordingly.

Just ice Sey q/6/09.