

Disgraced German journalist now suspected of charity scam



An award-winning German magazine writer who resigned in disgrace for making up stories is suspected of embezzling cash he collected on behalf of children orphaned by the war in Syria, according to his former employer.

Der Spiegel said Sunday it had uncovered information that Claas Relotius allegedly solicited contributions after writing an article about Syrian urchins living on the streets of Turkey — but directed donations to his own bank account.

“Der Spiegel will give all the information it collects to public prosecutors as part of a criminal complaint,” the magazine said on its Web site, according to Agence France-Presse.

The influential publication said it was unaware of the purported charity campaign at the time and didn’t know how much money Relotius, 33, may have raised, apparently by responding to readers who emailed him after reading his July 2016 report.

A Turkish photographer who worked with Relotius has since claimed that the article has major inaccuracies, and Der Spiegel said Relotius apparently invented the two young siblings who featured prominently in it.

He later wrote about trying to help the children get adopted by a German family, which Der Spiegel also said appeared to be a lie.

Der Spiegel announced last week that Relotius had admitted fabricating interviews and information in at least 14 articles, a scam it called the “worst thing that can happen to an editorial team.”

Relotius went into hiding in the wake of the scandal but sent a message of apology to Germany’s Reporter Forum, which gave him four awards that he said he was returning.

CNN also stripped him of two Journalist of the Year awards that he won for articles in the Swiss magazine Reportagen.

Source: <https://nypost.com/2018/12/23/disgraced-german-journalist-now-suspected-of-charity-scam/>

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