

Written Statement of Lam Wing Kee

May 3, 2017

My Testimony regarding the “Causeway Bay Books” event

Prologue:

Between October and December 2015, the disappearance of five persons of Causeway Bay Books in Hong Kong was investigated and confirmed by the Hong Kong media. The five were suspected to have been **arrested or** abducted by the Chinese government. On 17 October, GUI Minhai (shareholder) was taken away from an apartment in Pattaya, Thailand by a man. LUI Bo (shareholder) was arrested by public security people in Shenzhen while having lunch in a restaurant. CHEUNG Chiping (employee) was taken away from his home in Dongguan by armed policemen on 23 October. I myself (employee) was detained by Customs when I entered Shenzhen via the Lowu Border on 24 October, and secretly taken to Ningbo the next day. LEE Bo (shareholder) was abducted on 30 December in a warehouse carpark in Chai Wan and forcibly taken across the border to the mainland of China by nine persons.

I, LAM Wing Kee, provide my testimony below:

At 11 a.m. on 24 October 2015, I crossed the border at Lowu, Shenzhen, to meet my girlfriend in Dongguan. I was detained by Shenzhen Customs, taken onto a 7-seater car and driven to a Shenzhen police station the same day. I asked those who were taking me what crime I had committed and nobody gave any answer. Sometime after 7 o'clock in the evening, two investigative officers came to interrogate **me**. I had met one of them in 2012, when I was found **carrying** a book across the border **for** postal delivery **to** a reader. The officer taking records on that occasion was surnamed LEE, **in his** mid-twenties, while the person asking me questions was also surnamed LEE, **in his** early-fifties. **On that occasion** I was interrogated for over six hours and it was eventually confirmed that I really operated a bookshop in Hong Kong with no other intent.

Then the older one left the room to handle procedural matter for my release **and** I had a conversation with the recording officer. Because of the prior encounter, **the younger Lee** and I recognized each other immediately when we met again that evening. I felt a little delighted and was rather naïve in thinking that China Customs had mistaken **me** for someone else **because I thought that the** recording staff in his early-thirties could prove that I ran a book shop and I would be released in no time.

However, when I nodded and smiled at him, he roared at me saying that I was unrepentant even till death. I thought he was mistaken. Ever since I was held up and investigated last time, I no longer help others in bringing books across the border. Through the iron bars of the custody room, I took a look of the other officer who was somewhat older. I told the one whom I recognized that I had not committed wrongdoing again. Furthermore, I signed a letter of remorse last time and gave my word. Yet, upon hearing my explanation, he got even angrier. He banged on the table and rebuked: “Do you know who

you are? Your sending books is intended at overthrowing the Chinese government. We are the Central Task Force. It is our task to impose proletariat dictatorship rule over Hong Kong people like you.” I was extremely surprised, not quite believing what I heard. I know that the Central Task Force was a tool used in the Cultural Revolution to tackle class enemy and that many people were put to death by it. I sensed the seriousness of the situation, but at the same time I was rather confused. To make sure, I asked him to repeat what he said. But he seemed to be aware that he had given something away. He merely stared at me, still in anger. At that time the one next to him opened a note book, signaled his colleague to sit down, and started interrogation.

The next morning, sometime past 7 am, I ate the bread given to me by the guard. I was then handcuffed, blindfolded, got a cap on my head; taken on a 7-seater car to Shenzhen train station, and changed onto a **speed** train. Roughly 13-14 hours later, we arrived at Ningbo Station. Throughout the journey I was anxious and restless, eager to know where I was being taken. Though I was tied to the iron seat and despite the fact that I had not slept the night before, I tried hard to keep up spirit and paid attention to the stops made. When we got off the train, I peeked through the fringe of the eye mask and saw an illuminated station sign: Ningbo station. The car used after we got off the train was probably also a 7-seater. I was placed in the middle seat at the back with people by my two sides. After 40 minutes or so, I was held to go up to the 1st floor of a building and then into a room. When the handcuffs, eye mask and cap were taken away, sudden exposure to light prevented them from opening fully. Before I could see the environment clearly, I was told to go to a corner where there was a half-translucent screen, six-and-a-half ft. high and serving as partition for a squat-type latrine. I was told to take off all my clothes, squatted and stretched out my arms and feet for examination. Then I changed into prisoner top, orange in colour, and cotton sweat pants in cement-like colour. What crime have I committed? As my glasses were taken from me when I boarded the train blindfolded, I was directing my question at people with blurred faces. Again I got no reply.

I was waken up at 7:30 in the morning. I washed and brushed up; and later had breakfast at 8 a.m. It included congee of corn which had been grinded like sesame, a bun, fried egg and **pickle** etc. As I was about to eat, the guard standing by the screen came close for fear that I might take some other action. As I ate, I made observation of the surrounding. The previous night I was so tired that when they pointed a bed to me indicating I could lie down, I tumbled into it and readily fell asleep. Once I finished eating, the guard immediately removed the plastic meal box and plastic spoon and handed them to another guard at the door. The one sitting at the door kept staring at me with his arms crossed. I knew that there would be interrogation later, so I made use of the time gap to think things over and figure out the situation. From where I was merely a day ago, I was taken to this place a thousand miles away. I picked up one of the plastic slippers they gave me and inspected the sole. It bore the place of manufacture: Ningbo. Is this place Ningbo? I showed the slipper to the guards. Both of them were still young and had an air of innocence, apparently not yet nurtured into “angry youths”. Although I repeatedly asked many times what crime I had committed, no answer was given still. I turned my head and saw that the other guard behind was also staring at me. At that moment two persons entered.

One was a tall big guy who did not identify himself. He later said that he surnamed **SHI**. He was the chief interrogator. The other one, who had about the same height as mine, should be the assistant. They started by asking my name, address in Hong Kong, job, position and why ownership of the bookshop was transferred to Mighty Current etc., which were about the same questions asked during the interrogation in Shenzhen. Then I was asked about the mailing of books: when did it start, the kind of books sent, how many had been sent, the means of sending etc. I gave factual answers while SHI, who remained expressionless on his face throughout, made record on computer. At that point I made further attempt to ask: what crime had I committed? The tall guy kept on typing without any response. I looked at the other one. Leaning against the back of chair, he looked at me with a strange expression in his eyes, **surprised that I was unaware of a serious disaster to come**. Mr. SHI gave me a piece of paper and told me to sign. **It included two statements**: one was to voluntarily give up **the right to notify** my family, another was to voluntarily **give up the right** to employ a lawyer.

Interrogation continued like that, from 4 or 5 times a week in November to 2 or 3 times a week in December. They brought up questions about co-workers in the bookshop: GUI Minhui, LEE Bo, CHEUNG Chiping and how I got to know them. I answered factually to the best of my knowledge. At that time, I had no idea of their lock-up yet. GUI Minhui, in particular, was abducted in Thailand on 17 October 2015. LEE Bo disappeared in the evening of 30 December 2015, whereas LUI Bo and CHEUNG Chiping had their mishap even earlier than me: LUI Bo on 14 October 2015 in Shenzhen and CHEUNG Chiping on 23 October in Dongguan. (CHEUNG Chiping himself told me about the date of his mishap when the four of us met over dinner in "Unicorn Hill" in Shenzhen, under the arrangement of the Chinese investigative staff handling our cases. It was in the same evening that I was told by LUI Bo that his arrest took place in a restaurant in Shenzhen.) In mid-December 2015, the guy surnamed SHI showed me some computer records which startled me. Those were records of postal purchases with the book shop from September 2013 to October 2015. Names, telephone numbers and addresses of all subscribers, overseas and in mainland China, and even the number of books ordered and postal record numbers were there. Everything was shown clearly. As I viewed the screen, I quietly wondered how they managed to get the information of readers' book orders. Did they get hold of my key and sent people to the book shop to steal? Could they be so audacious and reckless as to engage in cross-border jurisdiction?

Indeed they were audacious and reckless enough to carry out cross-border jurisdiction. In an interview with "Initium Media" in Hong Kong before his disappearance, LEE Bo had clearly indicated that he would not enter mainland China. The interview was conducted in November 2015. Yet he suddenly disappeared on 30 December. Two days later, his wife found his Home Return Permit in a drawer. LEE Bo returned to Hong Kong in March 2016 to cancel the case which had been reported to the police. He met the media and said that he smuggled into China **so as to assist** the mainland authority in some investigation. He was clearly not telling the truth It was merely because his child was in Fujian that he was compelled to cooperate. Furthermore, when I went to LEE Bo's office on 14 and 15 June 2016 to get hold of the computer (with records of postal-order subscribers) at the request of SHI, LEE privately told me twice that he had been taken away and escorted to the mainland by some people. Although he denied this afterwards, it is really not difficult to infer from various details of the case that LEE Bo was

forced to go to the mainland against his wish. Obviously, the Chinese government has inflicted damage to the One-country, two-systems and violated its assurance to Hong Kong people under the Basic Law.

I was alone and helpless. I am not sure if it was the endless interrogation or infinite custody without charge that made me start to consider suicide in just 3 months. Whenever I looked carefully, I could see that the four walls were covered with soft pads. Obviously, any attempt to break my neck by knocking against the wall would not work. The ceiling was close to 20 ft. high, and there was no way I could twist my pants into rope for hanging on it. There was a big inaccessible window, with iron bars blocked by barbed wire which could not ~~pr~~ be opened with bare hands. The shower head, installed high up, was arc-shaped and could not hang anything. The more one looked at the set-up of the room, the more one got frightened because, clearly, long-term solitary confinement and isolation must have resulted in nervous breakdown for somebody and led to suicide in the past. All the measures in the room were aimed at preventing suicide. I was probably in such a state of mind when the idea of suicide came up. I think I did not feel too frightened of death itself because, after all, every person must die. It is the fear of death that I feared. All of a sudden, I seemed to be experiencing the inner feelings of someone with desire to die.

Around the middle of January 2016, they brought a document for me to read. It was a letter of confession regarding a charge against me: "Selling books illegally". The letter head was The People's Republic of China. The date - in year, month and day - was given at the bottom. I held my head up. The assistant staff wanted me to sign, similar to the day when I was imprisoned in Ningbo and asked to sign those statements of giving-up **my rights**. I thought that since I had signed on the previous occasion, there was no way not **to** sign this time although I knew that such method in handling the case was illegal. Fine. Upon signing, Mr Shi had a more relaxed expression on his face. Then he turned on the computer and asked me to identify some people. I leaned forward to view the screen. It was information relating to postal delivery for readers. Some readers placed orders via email. I never met them. Some people came to the shop to make purchases for postal delivery. "Who is this person, do you know?" I saw the names against the cursor. They were ordinary readers, I told him. I did not know their background. Then a few more were pointed out to me to see if I were familiar with them. I kept shaking my head. They knew I would cooperate.

Several days later, I was asked to write a letter of remorse. Actually I had not committed any crime. I did not know how to write such a letter. Somehow I began like this: "Because I have committed a crime, I now sincerely express regret to the Chinese government" With difficulty I waffled on and managed to fill up an A4 sheet. The next day the assistant staff came to take the sheet away, probably to be handed to SHI for inspection. I thought my half-hearted confession would work. I went to the window and viewed up the sky again. The opposite building was visible from this side. Sometimes I gave the excuse of using the toilet and tip-toed on the raised step of the squatting toilet to look outside. I counted 20 big windows on the opposite building. It had 5-storeys, probably the same for the building where I was. There were a few more buildings on the right. If there was no mist, I could see the top of several hills. Later, when there was arrangement to make video recording of me, I was moved to another room along the corridor. There, I could see that next to another building at the back was also a

small hill. I reckoned that I was detained in a place surrounded by hills on three sides. Misty in the morning and at night, it should be a basin. Furthermore, when I was taken outside during that period, blindfolded, and driven by car to another place for taking my confession video, both exit and return entry were made through the right-hand side at the back, which means there must have been only one entrance. Therefore I was even more certain about it. Later on, news reports in Hong Kong said that we were kept in custody in Ci Xi Detention Centre of Ningbo. That was probably a mistake. As seen from photos of the Ci Xi Detention Centre, the place does not appear to be a basin. Besides, I had subtly taken a peep at the entrance which was only an electric gate with no sign whatsoever.

Around January to February, I signed the letters of confession and remorse. I thought the case would soon be over. With all procedures completed, one only has to wait for sentencing by the Court. SHI provided a case for my reference. In 2011, a person from north-eastern China had also committed the crime of "Selling books illegally", involving a sum of over three hundred thousand dollars. In the end he was given a jail term of five years. SHI said that if the Chinese government held me responsible for the criminal guilt since the change in ownership of the book shop, and because the sum involved in mail delivery of books was not high, somewhat over a hundred thousand dollars only, most likely the sentence would be two years. At that time I had already given in to fate. I know that the Court is merely for show. The so-called judicial courts in China are only responsible for passing sentences, as all suspects are already regarded as convicts once the trial procedure is completed. Solicitors are employed merely for the purpose of making pleas. Little did I know the situation was more complicated than that. They later showed me some books, about eight or nine of them, all being publications of Mighty Current. SHI picked a few and asked me about the contents, source of information and whether I knew the authors. I explained to him that I was only engaged in the selling of books and was not knowledgeable about the things he asked because those were publication matters. Only the bosses GUI Minhai and LEE Bo knew all about the publications of Mighty Current. Not long afterwards, I was told I could get a bail but before that, I had yet to wait for people from Beijing to examine my behavior.

By then confession videos had already been taken. The recording process took place six or seven times in the room where I was imprisoned, and three times in another place where they took me **there in a 7-seater car**. After leaving the building, the drive took about 45 minutes, passing through an express highway and ending up in a big complex with many low-rise houses. All the recording of so-called confession was conducted in accordance with the script they gave me which I followed. Mr. SHI doubled as the director. The weirdest incident happened on one occasion when I was taken to a building. After getting off the car in the carpark, there was a staircase. Probably to save trouble, they removed my eye mask to let me walk the stairs myself. After getting down to the lowest floor and along the passage way, a policewoman walked past by, facing me directly. On her shoulder was the badge of Ningbo Public Security Bureau. Same as on the previous occasion, I got into the same room and took the prisoner seat. While preparation was being made for recording, the policewoman came in too, having changed into civilian clothing, and sat by the wall. "Miss Fong?" asked Mr. SHI, who was seated in an interrogator's stand like that in court. The policewoman nodded. He opened the document on the desk and briefly examined it. Then he said it was fine for Miss Fong to remain seated. She nodded. Camera was turned on by the assistant at the back and with the two sitting side by side, questions and answers

progressed in sequence, following prior rehearsal. When recording was finished, I asked SHI out of curiosity, "What was the seated lady doing there?" He removed the recording equipment and answered me at the same time, "She is a witness." I could not withhold my surprise. She was undoubtedly a policewoman, with no connection to my case whatsoever. They found themselves a so-called witness just like that? It was utterly unbelievable how reckless they were, not to mention that the case had been handled in an unlawful manner all along.

I could not help worrying because of what happened afterwards. For the purpose of making application for bail, a remorse video had been made. It was submitted to Beijing along with the letter of remorse. While waiting for news about the outcome, one day I heard SHI said that the higher authority was not satisfied. What was to be done? I was terribly anxious. If no approval forthcoming, I would be in jail for the **Chinese** New Year. Several days later, further news was heard. Beijing would send people here. To observe me, it was said. Right away I felt that it was ominous. One afternoon, two persons came in. I was squatting by the toilet and washing clothes. I hurriedly returned to my seat. I waited till they were seated. I was about to sit down when one of them suddenly banged the table and said I was not allowed to sit. I was startled, and had to remain standing. The other person started to talk, "Do you know who we are?" I shook my head, still in shock. Then the other person banged the table also. "We belong to the Central Task Force from Beijing. The kind of books you publish defame our national leaders. People like you are vicious to the extreme, not worthy of pardon. We can impose proletariat dictatorship over you for ten, twenty years, even till death. No one in Hong Kong knows. We can even pinch you to death like a bug." I was dumbfounded by such sudden abusive outbursts and did not know what to do. I could only stare blankly, incapable of any reaction but to let them continue their rounds of relentless cursing. I had no idea how long the outbursts lasted. I kept standing there. Not until two guards entered later did I realize that they had left. Very clearly, release on bail was out of the question.

Let's make another videos; write another letter of remorse, said SHI later. So the video was re-made, and a letter of remorse written again for submission. By then the Chinese New Year was drawing near. SHI knew I was so worried that I suffered from insomnia. Maybe he wanted to help. He showed friendly gesture. I am not sure if it was due to similarity in our sentiments or interests, or whether there was some other reason. I understood that he was following orders to interrogate me. He was a little sympathetic towards me, hoping that I could get released on bail. Later, he even said to me that he would be ready to write a letter of plead and be my guarantor, as long as I cooperate in the future. At that time I had no choice but to believe him.

Strangely, SHI came several days later to say that approval from the higher authority had come; our fates were tied together; that he would be ruined by me if I jumped bail. I felt relieved and my heart was at ease. I certainly felt grateful for Mr SHI's assistance from the bottom of my heart and promised that I would definitely cooperate with him in the future. However, as I recall the matter now, things looked somewhat suspicious. Based on my observation of Mr SHI, I still believe in him. He was only used as a pawn in a situation that bundled him and me together. That had been deliberately arranged by others, it seems.

I am not groundless in saying the above. Why did Beijing suddenly send people to berate me like mad? While release bail seemed very remote, somebody knew that Mr SHI would righteously give a hand. That somebody could well be his boss. He understood Mr SHI. And Mr SHI was both a police officer and an educated person. Educated people have their own mentality and at the same time sympathy for others. They tend to be more sympathetic than ordinary folks. If Mr SHI and I were somehow bundled together on the same boat, the risk of me jumping bail would be reduced, because I could not flee on my own and forsake someone who had helped me. The situation was even more obvious if my case was compared with the three others who had been taken to the mainland. They all had relatives in the mainland whereas I only had a girlfriend there. That was how I viewed Mr SHI then. Apart from that, facts which I observed later on indicate that the whole affair involved some scheme even more horrid.

One afternoon SHI came over and said that a half-length photo was to be taken. The person who came along was not the assistant but the person surnamed LEE whom I previously knew in Shenzhen. When I got up, he held the camera with one hand and pushed me towards the wall with the other. He told me to keep a good standing posture, and held up the camera to take photos. Every time a photo was taken, the camera flashed. I blinked my eyes at the flare, and he examined the image. It did not seem to work because every time a photo was taken, I blinked and my eyes were closed in all the photos. Seeing that LEE could not manage, Mr SHI took over the camera, made some adjustment and turned off the flash. He took several photos consecutively, examined them and nodded to indicate the job was done. I returned to my seat. Mr SHI went to the door, looked back over his shoulder and told me I could leave in a few days but would have to stay for a while in Shaoguan first. As I saw him disappear, I realized that he too also belonged to the Central Task Force.

I could not leave China when I was on bail. After the Chinese New Year i.e. in end-March 2016, they placed me in Shaoguan. I worked in a library for free until June. Then arrangement was made for me to return to Hong Kong to report to the police to cancel my case. I would visit my family and bring back the computer hard disk storing records of subscribers. I asked them why was the hard disk required when they already had all the software information. SHI said it was because the books were posted by me and the data had been input by me. Therefore I would have to bring it back to serve as evidence in court, to make prosecution against those subscribers more forceful. Such a request by SHI obviously meant that they wanted me to betray other people. At that time I had no choice but to agree involuntarily. On 14 June 2016, I took express rail to Shenzhen under the surveillance of accompanying people. Besides SHI, the other one was Supervisor CHAN. They asked me to cross the border first because they didn't want to be seen crossing border with me, lest exposing themselves in conducting cross-border surveillance. Later on, when I made statement at the police station in Wanchai and viewed the recorded video, I could see that I crossed the Lowu Bridge at 11:25 whereas they could be seen at 11:55. At 12:15:30, they appeared at the exit of immigration.

After careful thought, I met the press on 16 June 2016 accompanied by Mr. Albert HO Chun-yan of the Democratic Party of Hong Kong. The event was made public. All to be said has been said, but I have one thing to add. In the middle of November 2015, the Central Task Force asked a local gangster-surnamed

CHAN, to acquire ownership of Causeway Bay Books from Lee Bo, pre-paid the rental for two years with over HK\$ 1 million, with the intention that I would resume work there. (Mr. SHI said to me in Shaoguan that arrangement would be made for me to return to the book shop and that I would have to remain in touch with him.) Hong Kong people or people from the mainland of China making purchases in the book shop would be monitored. In other words, the book shop would be a point of surveillance. Undoubtedly, the whole affair shows that the Chinese government tries to restrain the freedom of speech and freedom of publication in Hong Kong. Such illegal activity has been carried out with elaborate planning and careful arrangement throughout.

LAM Wing Kee

Manager of Causeway Bay Books (ex-owner of the book shop)

10 April 2017